Joybrato Mukherjee
Department of English
Justus Liebig University, Giessen
Joybrato.Mukherjee@anglistik.uni-giessen.de

Describing verb-complementational profiles of outer circle varieties of English: the case of Indian English

Corpus-based research into second-language varieties of English in the 'outer circle' (Kachru 1985: passim) has traditionally focused on the analysis of lexical items (e.g. the core vocabulary of varieties, cf. e.g. Peyawary 1999) as well as syntactic structures and grammatical deviations (e.g. article usage and phrasal verbs, cf. e.g. Sand 2004, Schneider 2004). Recently, corpus linguists also have set out to analyse the differences between – and the culture-specificity of – native and non-native varieties of English in the field of collocations (cf. e.g. Ooi 2000, Mair 2004). In this context, the standard one-million-word corpora (as, for example, the Kolhapur Corpus of Indian English and the various subcorpora of the International Corpus of English, ICE) proved too small and have been complemented with much larger newspaper archives and data obtained from the world-wide web.

In the present paper, the focus is on Indian English, the largest outer circle variety (in terms of number of speakers). The paper reports on a pilot study of verb complementation patterns, a much neglected area in syntactic research into second-language varieties of English (cf. Olavarría de Ersson/Shaw 2004), using ICE-India and the world-wide web. Special emphasis is placed on the emergence of "new ditransitives", i.e. verbs which usually do not occur in the complementation pattern 'V [O_i:NP] [O_d:NP]' in British English (e.g. *convey*, *put*), and on the differences between Indian English and British English with regard to the complementation of established ditransitive verbs (e.g. *give*, *offer*). The findings show, firstly, that there are identifiable differences between Indian English and native varieties at the level of verb complementation and, secondly, that data obtained from the world-wide web may fruitfully complement traditional corpus data in syntactic research into varieties of English.

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