

## Grammatical variation in Indian English: The role of gender and age

Lucía Loureiro-Porto (University of the Balearic Islands, Spain) and Cristina Suárez-Gómez (University of the Balearic Islands, Spain)

This paper focuses on the role played by age and gender in language variation in Indian English, and is based on previous studies showing that young people promote language change (Tagliamonte 2016) and that women tend to be the leaders of such change (Labov 1990). The significance of the variables age and gender in language change has only recently been addressed in L2 varieties of English, and little is known about variation in Indian English in this respect. Notable exceptions are Lange (2009), who shows that women and young speakers seem to be leading language change from below in the use of the discourse particle *yaar* 'pal, mate' in Indian English, and Davydova (2015), whose exploration of the use of quotatives finds that women are less conservative than men. The presentation seeks to expand our understanding of this variety by analyzing spontaneous conversations (S1A files) in the Indian subcomponent of the International Corpus of English (ICE-IND), using the metadata revised and corrected by Hansen (2018). Four grammatical phenomena are considered: (i) relative clauses, with variation in the use of relativizers; ii) contracted vs non-contracted forms, iii) modals and semi-modals of necessity, iv) epicene pronouns (*he, he or she* and *they*).

A preliminary analysis of a partial sample of the data shows that the four phenomena seem to be undergoing change in Indian English, in that decreasing age correlates with an increasing frequency of innovative features here. Likewise, women seem to be leading these changes, with significant differences found between male and female speakers. If the systematicity of these preliminary findings are reflected in the analysis of the remaining sample of the data, it will be confirmed (i) that the ICE corpora, in particular ICE-IND, are of use in the analysis of apparent-time change in World Englishes, corroborating Hansen's (2017, 2018) findings for ICE-HKE, and (ii) that Labov's (1982: 78-79) consideration that "where women have not traditionally played a major role in public life, cultural expectations will lead them to react less strongly to the linguistic norms of the dominant culture" seems to apply to Indian English.

### References

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