

Babu English Revisited: A Sociolinguistic Study

V. Sreeja

St. Xavier's College for Women, Aluva, Kerala, India

Abstract

Babu English is arguably one of the most popular varieties of Indian English and ironically the least studied too. An attempt to define the variety lands one in a mushy land of definitions that are untenable. It has been described variously by different scholars while German linguist Schuchardt classifies it as a pidgin, Kachru defines it as a register. Most descriptions emphasize on the highly overt stylistic features of the variety. This paper analyses the stylistic and syntactic features of samples from a collection of Babu English letters to identify the characteristics of the variety. It also studies various definitions of the variety and arrives at the conclusion that Babu English is in fact a non-variety and is interlanguage or learner's language.

Keywords: Babu English, Babu, Pidgin, Creole, Interlanguage

Introduction

The term "Babu English" summons an image into the mind of every Indian – poor, bombastic and unidiomatic English of an Indian Babu, that often resulted in un-intended, embarrassing and therefore comical instances. The phrase has its origin in the colonial period. It was used to refer to the "funny" English written by English educated Indians, many of whom were clerks who worked for the English. "Babu" originally a term in Bengali, Hindi and other North Indian languages is used as a respectful term of address, to refer to educated men of high social standing. At some point in the colonial rule, it came to acquire an offensive sense. Babu English became a derogatory term along with Butler or Kitchen English, used by the British to refer to the English used by Indians.

Today in modern India the term has acquired a new meaning. "Babu" has become an umbrella term that signifies any Indian who was a clerk and wrote in officialese English. There is a general tendency to describe all officialese and stilted writing as Babu English. All government employees who do clerical work are *Sarkari Babus*. The word has generated other terms such as babudom, babucracy, all referring to bureaucracy. According to Sailaja (2009), today any Indian who wrote flawed English is dubbed a Babu.

This paper analyses a 19th century collection of miscellaneous specimens written by Indians in English. The English colonial officers in India collected letters, articles, poems, reports etc. written by Indians as instances of Babu English. These were written by Indians with lesser education and prospects. These letters open to a lesser known world of colonial India - that

of the middle class, aspiring Indian; his workplace, home, and even his national and identity politics.

The scope of this paper is a study of the language variety called Babu English. It analyses a collection of letters written by Bengali men, compiled by an English man called TWJ, and published in 1890 under the title "*Baboo English*"; or, *Our mother -tongue as our Aryan brethren understand it: Amusing specimens of composition and style*. The paper studies various commentaries and descriptions of the variety, to argue that what is termed Babu English is not a variety at all, but an interlanguage or learner's language. Although Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory is used for the analysis, it has been modulated to include discursual analysis, beyond the structural analysis visualised by Selinker.

What is Babu English?

Baboo. [p]roperly a term of respect attached to a name like Master or Mister. . . in Bengal and elsewhere among Anglo-Indians, it is often used with a slight savor of disparagement, as characterizing a superficially cultivated but often effeminate Bengali. And from the extensive employment of the class, to which the term was applied as a title in the capacity of clerks in the English offices, the word has come often to signify "a native clerk who writes English". (Yule & Burnell, 1986, p. 44)

Back in 1886, the *Hobson Jobson* defined a *Baboo* (or Babu) thus. Most descriptions of "Babu" are slight variations of that by *Hobson Jobson*. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911) defines a Babu as "a native Indian clerk":

The word is really a term of respect attached to a proper name, like "master" or "Mr," and *Babu-ji* is still used in many parts of India, meaning "sir"; but without the suffix the word itself is now generally used contemptuously as signifying a semi-literate native, with a mere veneer of modern education.

A Babu was an Indian clerk who had a smattering of English. With the advent of the English, Babu, a prestigious term of address in the Indian languages, became a derogatory term. Tirumalesh (1990) states that "when you describe somebody's English as *babu*, you are disparaging it by comparison" (p. 98). The author of "Comical Baboo-English" (1882) describes it "the really funny English of India" which he says is "fairly grammatical" and is quaint due to "laborious use" by young men who have learned English at schools from thesauruses and dictionaries. The writer gives the following excerpt from a newspaper article as an instance:

The bullocks of Kattyawar are grand beings. They are white, colossal, with eyes and foreheads whose expression is impenetrable, crowned with immense horns which curl up towards the sky or taper sideways like the moustaches of Sir Richard Temple. The buffaloes are equally great, perfectly tame, calm, contemplative; and while they look at you they seem almost venerable, with the hair falling off their glossy skin as with excess of mental labor and worry.

One of the earliest attempts to study Babu English is that of Schuchardt's (1891). He classifies Babu English along with Butler English, Boxwallah English, Pidgin English of Bombay and Cheechee as varieties of "Indo-English". He defines Indo-English as the English of the Eurasians and natives in India, which according to him is a pidgin. What exactly Schuchardt's definition of pidgin is, is not clear.

The recurrent description of a Babu as a clerk, leads to the common assumption that Babu English is a register – the register of administrative or bureaucratic language. Kachru (1994) classifies Babu English as a variety of South Asian English along with Butler English and Boxwallah English. In the case of Babu English, Kachru (1994) does not come to a definite conclusion as to the variety it is. He defines Babu English as the English that was spoken in Bengal of undivided India, used by English-using clerks. Babu English referred to the style of administrative English, but these regional and registeral restrictions are not applicable anymore. The style, he says, is marked by "excessive stylistic ornamentation, politeness and indirectness" (Kachru, 1994, p. 512) and the discourse organization is that of a South Asian language.

Kachru's (1994) definition placed later in the chronology of definitions gives an idea of the evolution and current conception of the term. The definition is no longer narrowed down to Bengal or to administrative English. However, it is clear from his definition that Babu English was once a variety of English used by Bengali-speaking clerks and that it referred to administrative English. It can be inferred that he classifies it as a register.

Most or all of the definitions focus entirely on the stylistic features of the specimens such as obsequiousness, flowery or ornate language etc. The examples are also chosen accordingly. These exclude instances of the other peculiarities of language that can be seen in the specimens collected by T.W.J. It is clear that the writers have chosen specimens which reveal only stylistic oddities and not grammatical ones. This makes the description of Babu English simpler. Letters written by men with lower levels of proficiency which contain both stylistic as well as grammatical deviations have been excluded.

So, what exactly is Babu English? Is it only the English of the sarkari babus? Is it just officialise and if so is it a register? Is all officialise Babu? Is it a pidgin, a crude mixture of Bengali/Hindi and English? What comprises this variety? Above all is it a variety at all? In order to answer these questions, it is

necessary to describe the features of Babu English. From the above descriptions one could construe vaguely that Babu English is the English written by less educated Indian clerks. It is described as pidgin and register. There is thus a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the term *Babu English*. There is no consensus or definite conclusion as to the variety it is. This paper tries to sort out from this clutter of definitions and observations, a linguistic term to define Babu English. It is an attempt to identify the characteristics and thereby describe the nature of Babu English.

Hosali's (1997) study of Butler English in her book *Nuances of English in India: What the butler really said* is of significance here. Butler English, another variety of Indian English is often dubbed "minimal pidgin". Hosali (1997) analyzes the speech of Butlers through interviews and questionnaires and the study focusses on the syntactic and morphological features that characterize Butler English. She concludes that it is neither a minimal pidgin nor broken English but closer to learners' approximations along with folk believes about English. Hosali's (1997) analysis provides a framework for the analysis of Baboo English, though factors like the sources, kind of data collected, and context are quite different.

Methodology

To define any variety it is important to identify its features. The text chosen for this purpose is "*Baboo English*"; or, *our mother-tongue as our Aryan brethren understand it: Amusing specimens of composition and style* collected and edited by T.W.J. and published in 1890. It is also titled *English as written by some of Her Majesty's Indian subjects*. It is a collection of over 200 specimens of letters, advertisements, essays, notices etc. These were selected from a number of such specimens that the compiler came across during his 25 years in India.

Collecting letters and other specimens written by the Babus was a favourite pastime of the British as they found these quite amusing. T.W.J.'s "*Baboo-English*" published in 1890 is possibly one of the only two available collections of Babu English today. Almost all of these were written by English educated men from the Bengal Presidency and a few from other provinces like Sindh. Though there are different text types in the collection, the analysis is restricted to letters (136 in number) as they form over 80% of the specimens in the collection.

The main features of *Baboo English* letters are classified under two sections – Syntax and Style. For each feature, instances have been cited from the letters.

Characteristics of Babu English

Stylistic features

The foremost stylistic feature used to describe Babu English is obsequiousness. The discourse of all the letters in *Baboo English* except eight is obsequious. This is evident from the use of subservient address forms, subscriptions, certain phrases used etc. The following is an instance of such servile language: “With deep regret and unfeigned sorrowfulness your poor slave approaches his poor tale at the footsteps of your honours throne . . . he may meet with forgiveness of his sins. . .” (TWJ, 1890, p. 6) The writers use address forms like “Honored sir” or “Hon’d Sir”, “Respected Sir”, “Worshipful Sir” etc.

An equally important characteristic is verbosity. This includes the use of high sounding or Romance words, adjective/adverb piling, excessive use of compound words etc. Of the 32 verbose letters, 15 are highly verbose and 17 relatively less verbose.

- (1) “. . . damnable miserable . . . unfortunate petitioner. . .” (p. 24),
- (2) “In heavy tribulation and honest solicitation . . .” (p. 33),
- (3) “. . . tantalizing assurance hollow in nature and shallow in performance” (p. 35)

Another striking feature is the use of fixed, readymade expressions which the writers have used indiscriminately in letters of different situations. These are classified as fixed phrases. The most common formulaic phrase to begin a letter is: “I beg (most respectfully/humbly) to report for your honours information/notice”. Sixteen letters close with “hoping” for something. This is a fixed phrase used in the concluding paragraph of letters. For instance, “Hoping my poor prayer will meet with your almighty approval” (TWJ, 1890, p. 103).

Random uses of fixed phrases create odd situations such as these: “I have the honor to inform you that I am quit unable to attend my works . . . owing to sudden death of my parent . . .” (TWJ, 1890, p. 172). 21 letters conclude with blessings and prayers for the receiver’s long life, prosperity etc. which also is a fixed, formulaic use: “. . . I and my family ever pay for your and family health and wealth and prosperity for evermore amen” (TWJ, 1890, p. 121).

There are also instances of inappropriate or odd use of vocabulary. In the attempt to use a high-sounding word, the writer ends up using an odd one and conveys a different meaning from what was actually meant. Use of incorrect or inappropriate words, wrong word formation is characteristic of the vocabulary of *Baboo English (1890)* which lends it a humourous tint. Here are some instances:

- (1) “. . . the multiplicitousness (for multiplicity) of my duties . . .” (p. 172)
- (2) “All impotent (for omnipotent) God” (p. 118)
- (3) “. . . to stand on my own bottom” (p. 7)
- (4) “I entreat your honour to deem me illegible (for eligible) for it.” (p. 85)

Syntactical features

Along with the stylistic features we see certain syntactical features specific to Babu English such as Missing or Incorrect articles in *Baboo English* (1890):

- (1) “. . . whereby he experience the severe wound. . .” (p. 29)
- (2) “. . . your honors servant is poor man. . .” (p. 23)

Incorrect prepositions:

- (1) “Since my coming to here. . .” (p. 29)
- (2) “Kindly come at me. . .” (p. 49)

Incorrect auxiliaries:

- (1) “I am regret again. . .” (p. 30)
- (2) “. . . he not understands the English language. . .” (p. 4)

There are run-on sentences where the whole letter is one long sentence; either with incorrect punctuation or no punctuation at all. Eleven letters have run-on sentences. Along with these, nine other letters use very long sentences.

When it comes to tense, the excessive use of present continuous in place of simple present is a feature that Babu English shares with Indian English. However along with this there are several other usages that do not exhibit any consistent pattern in tense deviation.

- (1) Simple past instead of simple present: “. . . it required more eloquent pen than mine . . .” (p. 3)
- (2) Simple present for past perfect: “. . . no one of my masters tell me before . . .” (p. 15)
- (3) Present perfect instead of simple past: “one gentleman has come at my station” (p. 15)

Speakers of different varieties of English prefer different auxiliaries. Parasher (1983) in “Indian English: certain grammatical lexical and stylistic features” says that while British and American users preferred *would/will* in requests, Indians used *could/would*. The use of *will* in requests is common in *Baboo English* (1890). The following are some examples:

- (1) “. . . you will very much oblige. . .” (p. 8)
- (2) “Therefore your honor will be pleased appoint me without further delay” (p. 38)

The spelling errors reveal that the writers have spelled the words as they sound, which is not always the case with English: popper (pauper) (p. 34), honor (honour) (p. 90), mite (might), plees (please) (p. 94), Dickshunharrys (dictionaries), terrifick (terrific), eenglish (English), petishan (petition), hart (heart), ruff (rough) (TWJ, 1890, pp. 141-152).

There are several features that are not very common but present nonetheless, such as use of transitive verbs as intransitive or vice versa: "I humbly beg to transfer from this place" (p. 15), incorrect word class "... widely circulation journal..." (p. 43), use of non-countable nouns as countable: "cares" (p. 8), "bloods" (p. 11), "relaxations" (p. 25), iteration of the subject using an anaphoric or cataphoric pronoun: "the booking clerk he called to me..." (p. 1).

Though the most prominent features can be classified in this manner, one cannot absolutely neglect many more utterances that exhibit more than one feature such that they become incomprehensible and hence difficult to classify. There are also those usages that occur much rarely but cannot be ignored all the same: combination of verbosity and indirectness, lack of exactitude, incorrect idioms, ambiguous sentences, combination of both syntactical deviation and verbosity and many more miscellaneous ones.

While these are the general features, common to a good number of writers, the analysis also brings forth the fact that there are features which are not widespread or are idiosyncratic. Features like spelling errors, use of transitive and intransitive verbs, countable and non-countable nouns, incorrect idioms and several others classified as miscellaneous are idiosyncratic ones. Even the common features are present to different extents in each letter. While some letters do not exhibit these features, some others have more than one instance of a feature. For example, the feature "Literary or poetic language" identified as common is present only in four percent of the 136 letters. Even within these four percent, the degree of literariness or poetical language varies. As shown in the analysis, though there are deviations in the use of tense, the errors are different for each writer. There is no consistency in the error patterns.

Therefore, we could say that each letter is at a different proficiency level. While there are letters which display considerably high level of proficiency, there are others which are low on the proficiency scale. In addition to these, within the same letter one can see fluctuating levels of competence. A writer who can produce correct sentences may use incongruous vocabulary or idioms. Another writer uses the transitive verb "transfer" as transitive and intransitive in the same letter. A writer may use the same preposition correctly and incorrectly or the progressive instead of simple present in one instance and not repeat the same in another instance. Another writer may spell a word in different ways in his letter. Therefore, the analysis reveals that there is a lack of not just consistency in the occurrence of the different features, but also of a homogenous group of writers. These features qualify Babu English as non-variety.

Babu English as interlanguage

This leads to the assumption that Babu English is not a variety at all but a collection of interlanguages. An interlanguage is a learner's language. Here the Babu's English proficiency is described as that of a learner's and hence Babu English as interlanguage proficiency. In the following pages it is argued that Babu English is a collection of interlanguages. This interlanguage analysis tries to account for the utterances produced by the learner i.e. the Babu.

The term interlanguage was introduced by the American linguist Selinker (1972) to describe the linguistic system produced by an adult second language learner when he/she attempts to express meanings in the language being learned. The interlanguage is a separate linguistic system, different from both the learner's native language and target language but linked to both native language and target language by interlingual identifications in the perception of the learner.

Though Selinker (1992) identifies five central processes responsible for this interlanguage, D'Souza (1977, as cited in Srinivas, 2005) suggests that the five can be reduced to just three. Research evidence is provided to prove that all these psycholinguistic processes affected the formation of interlanguage.

- (1) Transfer from previous learning experience; errors due to interference
- (2) Simplification and overgeneralization of elements of the target language system; errors due to learning strategies
- (3) Errors arising from teaching methods and materials employed; teaching induced errors

Interlanguage analysis

However, Selinker's (1992) interlanguage theory has completely ignored discursal and cultural aspects of language learning which is of prime importance in a multilingual context such as that of the Babu. Some of the major characteristics of Babu English are at the discourse or stylistic level – obsequiousness, literary/poetic language, verbosity etc. Therefore, an analysis that excludes these will be incomplete and invalid. In order to make the analysis more credible, Selinker's theory was modulated to include aspects beyond the structural features of a learner's language.

In the analysis the different characteristic utterances of the *Baboo English* letters have been explained using the three psycholinguistic processes explained earlier.

- (1) Transfer from previous learning experience; errors due to interference (MT Language transfer). It could be assumed that (as the Babus were from the Bengal Presidency) the learners' native language was Bengali

and the other language that the writers possess is Hindi. Hence, the possible language transfer could be from these two languages.

- (2) Inappropriate usage like “green minds”
Transfer of the word “kachcha” from Hindi/Bengali into English. *Kachcha* in Hindi is used in different senses such as “raw/green, immature” etc.
Use of “stop” for “close” as in “Please send men to stop all holes in my quarters...” (T.W.J, 1890, p. 152) is the result of transfer from Hindi or Bengali. The words *band* and *rok* can be used interchangeably in Hindi.
- (3) Missing or incorrect use of articles
This feature is explained by the absence of Articles in Hindi and Bengali.
- (4) The use of fixed formulae such as blessings and prayers for the receiver such as “I shall ever pray your long lifes and prosperity.” (p. 86)
This is a transfer of cultural practice from the Indian languages. Though not as a concluding phrase, Mehrotra (2002) cites the practice of salutation in the name of a deity seeking his blessings for the addressee, in personal letters. Personal letters written in most Indian languages follow the pattern of following an address form by a salutation or greeting, appropriate to the context.
- (5) The closing phrase that begins with “hoping” used in many letters, “Hoping to hear your action...” (p. 101) for instance is a transfer of the Hindi usage *aasha karta hun ki...* or *asa kori...* in Bengali. These are concluding phrases common in letter writing in many Indian languages.
- (6) Simplification and overgeneralization of elements of the target language system; errors due to learning strategies:
- (7) Incorrect word forms such as the following are the result of overgeneralization of target language rules.
troublusness (p. 8), mechanicism (p. 38), respectableness (p. 40), stupidness, botheration, costive (p. 101), loosed (p. 100), shamefulness, generositying (p. 174), stupidness, zealousness, bended, jokative, beforetimes, unhurted, poorness, shotted (p. 88), thoughtfoolness (p. 142), deepness (p. 142).
- (8) What is normally pointed out as the lack of exactitude resulting from the Babu’s ignorance of the exact word in English, is in interlanguage terms communication strategies adopted by the learner. The writers resort to the strategy of elaborating in order to express the right sense as seen in these usages: “in back part” (for “behind”) (p. 82), “such like things” (for “similar things”) (p. 37), “in like manner” (for “similarly”) (p. 88) etc.
- (9) Errors arising from teaching methods and materials employed; teaching or training induced errors.

- The introductory phrase, “I beg (most respectfully/humbly) to report for your honours information/notice” is classified as a Fixed phrase in the analysis. These were part of linguistic forms prescribed for subordinates to use in addressing their superiors during the early days of the British rule in India. This could thus be a usage the learners learned by rote. But this learning strategy did not help in alternative situations to which the writers over generalized, such as these: “I humbly beg to inform to your honour that you will be graciously pleased to grant to me ten days leave...” (p. 11).
- The occurrence of literary language could be attributed to teaching materials. The use of Romance words and high - sounding words could be the effect of colonial English education. Meenakshi Mukherjee (2000) in her essay “Nation, Novel and Language” states that the English introduced a literary canon consisting of selections from Chaucer, Bacon, Milton, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats among others in the Indian universities. Thus, the use of literary/ poetic language in formal letters is the influence of these learning materials along with the lack of acquaintance with the other registers as well as the lack of communicative knowledge.
- Usages such as the following are the influence of learning/reading the Bible: “. . . I am as a bark tossed on the wind of adversity, seek and it shall be given you; ask and ye shall find, full measures and nothing wanting” (p. 155). The incorrect use of Biblical allusion in inappropriate situations result in usages like: “...as feeding pearls before swines...” (From the Bible ”Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” - KJV, Matthew 7:6)
- Obsequiousness, the most dominant feature of Babu English, is the result of a combination of several complex factors. As mentioned above, the teaching methods/materials of the British resulted in servile usages like “I humbly beg to inform to your honour that...”, “Yours obediently/obedient servant” etc. Verma (1982) cites usages in Indian English which he thinks are the result of exposure to the “frozen” English preserved in old literary texts:
 “Most humbly and respectfully I beg to submit the following few lines for favour of your kind consideration.”
 “I need your esteemed help”
 “With due respect I beg to inform you that...”
 “Respected Sir/Madam” (p. 34)

The obsequious usage “...some crumbs which fall from the rich mans table may be available for me” (p. 7). is an adaptation of the Bible verse Matthew 15:27: “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table”.

Nevala (2007) explores the use of address forms in personal letters in the 17th and 18th century England. Her analysis reveals that the English writers in 17th century used extremely deferential address forms especially when written by social inferiors. These writers addressed their superiors as “most honourable sir” “your highness/excellency” Bijkerk (2007) says that the subscription “your most obedient humble servant” was used by the English before the eighteenth century. So, if Indians were exposed to the English literature of these ages, the appearance of these features in the Babu letters is the result of teaching-induced errors too.

Transfer of certain cultural practices from the native language of the user could be one of the reasons of the extremely polite usages. Politeness in Indian English is determined by the restraints of politeness in Indian languages and culture. Pandharipande (1992) identifies the term “respectable sir/madam” as terms from Indian languages; it could be the transfer of the Hindi phrase *aadarneey mahoday*. Therefore, the long history of British colonialism as well as India’s socio-cultural practices is the twin source of excessive politeness in these letters.

Conclusion

It is thus clear that the factors that produced the features characteristic to Babu English are those that are responsible for a second language learner’s interlanguage. Hence Babu English can be defined as interlanguage proficiency. Each specimen is a separate linguistic system different from the learner’s native language as well as target language. There are features from both languages in the interlanguage. The writers have used different strategies employed by second language learners. As in the case of most interlanguage data there are some language behaviours that are unexplained. Hence, *Baboo English* is a collection of interlanguages. A Babu is thereby a second language learner who is placed in uncommon social contexts which too contributed to his interlanguage. The features that distinguish Babu English from other interlanguages are mostly the result of cultural and contextual transfer, an area in interlanguage which has not been accounted for in Selinker’s (1972, 1992) works.

The fact that Babu English is interlanguage helps make sense of the statements made by many writers with regard to Babu English. The writer of “Comical Baboo-English” says that Babu English is similar to the Latin written by English schoolboys. Schuchardt (1891) who also expresses the same opinion describes the Latin as “turgid to the point of incomprehensibility” (p. 51). He also adds that “[i]n the foreign language, which is the medium of education, people strive to express themselves in as “educated” a way as possible” (p. 51). Though these writers do not use the term interlanguage, they all talk about learner’s language, especially within a colonial context. As Tirumalesh (1990) says, Babu English is a kind of attitude that forms part of the psyche of once-colonized people. Thus, there is

Babu Latin, Babu French, and Babu Dutch. These are all learners' languages. These are the interlanguage universals as well as the cultural universals that shape a learner's interlanguage. These observations add impetus to the statement that Babu English is interlanguage. The fact that Babu English instead of "babu Latin" was the object of stigma and scrutiny indicates the power politics in play in the selection, compilation, classification and distribution of knowledge.

The scope of the findings can extend beyond the purview of Sociolinguistics into Applied linguistics. These findings suggest that incorporating the cultural aspects of the learner into the classroom is crucial in SL teaching and learning. Interlanguage analysis of students along with cultural and discorsal aspects can create a database of patterns of deviations or errors. This in turn points at the significance of performing error analyses by SL teachers to get further insight into the learning process of students. It is recommended that teachers devise remedial measures based on such a study. The key findings of the study – that Babu English is neither pidgin nor register, but interlanguage – also implicates that in further research on pidgins and creoles, examination of cultural and discorsal aspects is vital or inevitable, without which such a study is in fact incomplete and biased.

References

- Encyclopaedia Britannica. (1911). Retrieved January 14, 2010, from http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Babu.
- Bijkerk, A. (2007). Yours sincerely and yours affectionately. In T. Nevalainen & S. K. Tanskanen. (Eds.). (2007), *Letter writing* (pp. 11-129). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bolton, K., & Kachru, B. B. (Eds.). (2007) "Babu English" 1890-1891. *Asian Englishes*, 11.
- "Comical Baboo-English". (1882). *New York Times Online*. Retrieved August 10, 2009, from <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archivefree/pdf?res=F40D10FB3A5A11738DDDAD0A94DC405B8284F0D3>.
- Hosali, P. (1997). *Nuances of English in India: What the butler really said*. Pune: Centre for Communication Studies.
- Kachru, B. B. (1994). English in South Asia. In R. Burchfield (Ed.), *The Cambridge history of English language: Vol. 5* (pp. 497-553). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mehrotra, R R. English in private letters in India. *English Today*, 18 (4), 39-44.
- Nevala, M. (2007). Inside and out. In Nevalainen T., & Tanskanen, S. (Eds.). *Letter writing* (pp. 89-110). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Pandharipande, R. (1992). Defining politeness in Indian English. *World Englishes*, 11(2/3), 241-250.
- Parasher, S. V. (1983). Indian English: Certain grammatical, lexical and

- stylistic features. *English World-Wide*, 4(1), 27-42.
- Sailaja, P. (2009). *Indian English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Schuchardt, H. (1891). Indo-English. In G. G. Gilbert (Ed.), *Pidgin and creole languages. Selected essays by Hugo Schuchardt* (pp. 38-64). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. In *International review of applied linguistics in Language Teaching*, 10, 209-231.
- Selinker, L. (1992). *Rediscovering interlanguage*. England: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Srinivas, R. (2005). Selinker and Jean D'Souza on Interlanguage. Retrieved November 17, 2009 from
<<http://www.teachingstylesonline.com/selinkerandjeand'souza.htm>>
- Tirumalesh, K. V. (1990). Babu English: Where is it? *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 16(2), 97-108.
- T.W.J. (Ed.). (1890). "*Baboo English*"; or, *Our mother -tongue as our Aryan brethren understand it: Amusing specimens of composition and style*. Calcutta: H. P. Kent & Co.
- Verma, S. K. (1982). Politeness in Indian English: An exploration in the functions of language. *Indian Journal of Linguistics*, 9(2), 26-40.
- Yule, H., & Burnell, A. C. (1886). *Hobson - Jobson: A glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases, and of kindred terms, etymological, historical, geographical and discursive*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

Note on Contributor

Sreeja teaches English at St. Xavier's College for Women, Aluva, India. She has an M.Phil. in English from the University of Hyderabad, India. Her research interest includes popular culture and human rights. She also writes some poetry. Email: sree5hari.v@gmail.com