

Need for Tailor-made English Coursebooks to Meet the Desired Learning Outcomes with Special Focus on Phonetics and Spoken English

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Abstract

World's second highest number of English speakers (125,344,737) are in India. But there is no comprehensive linguistic description of Indian English. The reasons are: no one pattern of spoken English; diversified pronunciation and spoken English problems in each State. When all these problems converge towards one English, a standard variety of Indian English is possible. The solution is the 'Arpiciency' model. Implementing 'Arpiciency', through tailor-made English coursebooks can possibly bring solution. Different pronunciation problems are to be dealt to acquire one standard variety of Indian English. This study attempts to address this need by reviewing the English textbooks of Andhra Pradesh. The review reveals the gaps in meeting the objectives. Additionally, 'National Assessment Centre' plans to guide 'school boards to shift assessment patterns towards meeting the 21st century skills' through NEP 2020. So, there is a need for tailor-made English coursebooks focusing on 'Indian' students' speaking problems. 'Arpiciency' proposes to focus on listening and speaking. The study focuses on Phonetics and Spoken English. It tries to offer solutions to pronunciation and speaking problems of Telugu speaking English learners pertaining to segmental, suprasegmental levels and functional aspects of English to design tailor-made coursebooks using 'Arpiciency'. Keeping the diversity of Indian languages in view, similar study in other mother tongues eventually result in a standard Indian English.

Keywords: tailor-made English coursebooks, Indian English, 'Arpiciency', phonetics, spoken English, NEP2020

Introduction

The highest number of English speakers next to the United States are in India (125,344,737). However, the total English speakers' percentage is 12.18 only.

Activities from Class X to I											
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total
L	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	19	10	7	91
S	6	6	4	8	7	8	8	10	10	7	74
R	24	24	24	24	21	24	24	30	25	7	227
W	11	10	9	8	8	15	8	10	10	7	96
G	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	5	0	0	63
V	11	9	8	8	8	8	8	10	10	7	87
											638

The alarming situation is that though the number of speakers is so high, the spoken variety of English of India has not been established. The reasons and root cause are worth exploring to arrive at a tangible solution. A logical progression could be looking at the teaching learning situation, materials and the content; examining the objectives of the current textbooks, mapping with the expected outcomes and identifying the gap between the two.

The current textbooks reviewed for the study are the latest and very recent ones. The textbooks of classes I to X are brought into effect in a phased manner during three academic years 2012 – 2015 and are being continued since then. This new curriculum is based on:

1. The State Curriculum Framework – 2011
2. Position Papers in tune with the National Curriculum Framework – 2005 and
3. The Right to Education Act - 2009

However, in 2020 the National Education Policy 2020 has been launched. The new policy brought in many changes in the pedagogy as well as teacher education. These updates in the sector bring an obvious demand of reviewing the existing textbooks to identify the gaps between the existing and the expected learning outcomes. Moreover, reviewing the recent relevant research brings clarity on the steps to be taken. One such review underscores the fact that there are reasons for hindrance of the students of Andhra Pradesh (AP) from mastering

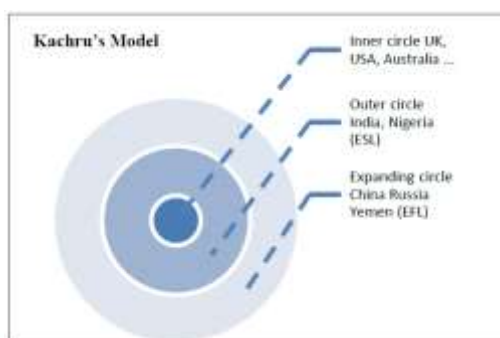
English. Added to this the gap widens with the new expectations of NEP 2020. This raises questions like:

1. What should be done in order to meet the desired learning outcomes based on NEP 2020?
2. Why students are not able to master English language?
3. Could this be the reason for why we still do not have an established variety of Indian English? In other words, could this be the reason for not having a comprehensive linguistic description of Indian English?

The possible answers to these questions would be:

- a. One can accept undisputedly that the textbooks need to be changed to meet the expectations of the latest policy along with the knowledge update of the teachers.
- b. An apt input, linguistically sound, based on the learners' needs can enable the students to achieve their goals.
- c. The reasons are obvious, there is no one pattern of English spoken across the country. The pronunciation and the problems in speaking English are different from one state to the other depending on the local language spoken in the region. Arriving at one standard Indian variety of English is possible only when all the diversified mother tongue interferences converge towards one English. The solution should begin at the core of the problem. Then only learners and users of the English language be able to produce an internationally recognisable Indian English worth establishing as a variety.

The study is intended to highlight the need for tailor-made English coursebooks. This study presents the need by reviewing the existing textbooks and presenting the gap between the objectives of the existing English textbooks and the expectations of the NEP 2020.



The following section reviews Kachru's model for another model based on Kachru's model is taken as a model for the proposed coursebooks. This is followed by another relevant literature review. The methodology section presents details of the data collected/used to review the textbooks and how the data is processed. The section connects textbook reviews, NEP 2020 Telugu speaking English learners' problems and the 'Arpiciency' model in which the curriculum is expected to be carried out. The discussion section presents the details of the data process leading to conclusion.

Literature review

Kachru's three circle model of World Englishes presents the status of English across the globe. These circles represent 'the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used' (Kachru, 1985). English is the mother tongue / first language for those who belong to the Inner Circle. English is the second language and foreign language for the population in the Outer Circle and the Expanding circle respectively. A variety of English is recognized based on the way it is spoken and the majority pattern of the people of a particular territory. In the light of the above description Indian English still needs to gain status as a variety of English. The possibility is explored in the current study which would result in arriving at tailor-made English coursebooks.

Anjaneyulu (2014), in his article 'A Critical Analysis of the English Language Text Books in Andhra Pradesh, India' explores the reasons for hindrance of the students of Andhra Pradesh from mastering English. He reviews the textbooks and system of teaching English in order to point out the shortcomings. The researcher opines that the teachers' ELT knowledge should be updated. The primary data collection tool is a questionnaire with multiple choice and open-ended questions for students of Class VI. The questionnaire is administered to

female and male students. The aim of the tool is twofold: (1) Gathering information about textbooks and (2) Finding AP teachers' attitude towards ELT. The findings of the work throw light on the importance of the need to plan for designing a suitable curriculum. He adds that the students' learning needs should be the basis for planning curriculum. The article concludes with recommendations to improve AP English Textbooks. It is evident that there is need for improvement of the textbooks and this need is intensified to an extent of designing tailor-made English coursebooks with the introduction of the NEP 2020.

Methodology

This study attempts to address this need, by reviewing the English textbooks of Andhra Pradesh. The data collected for review comprises the I to X class English textbooks of Andhra Pradesh state syllabus.

The details of the units across the standards are as follows:

Class 1: 7 units

Class 2: 10 units

Class 3: 10 units

Class 4: 8 units

Class 5: 8 units

Class 6: 8 units

Class 7: 8 units

Class 8: 8 units

Class 9: 8 units

Class 10: 8 units

Starting from 5th class, each unit has Lessons A, B and C. A detailed picture of the skills dealt in each unit is depicted in the following table. For 1st class, Lessons A, B and C are not separated. 7th class and 6th class assessment details are not explicitly mentioned in the textbooks but are arrived at by observing of the activities. The following table shows the number of activities and assessments of all the skills of all the classes.

Class	Skill	Unit 1				Unit 2				Unit 3				Unit 4				Unit 5				Unit 6				Unit 7				Unit 8			
		Lesson A	Lesson B	Lesson C	Assessment	Lesson A	Lesson B	Lesson C	Assessment	Lesson A	Lesson B	Lesson C	Assessment	Lesson A	Lesson B	Lesson C	Assessment	Lesson A	Lesson B	Lesson C	Assessment	Lesson A	Lesson B	Lesson C	Assessment	Lesson A	Lesson B	Lesson C	Assessment				
10	L				2							2				1				1				1				1					
	S				1							1				2				2				2				1					
	R				3				3			3				3				3				3				3					
	W				1							3				3				2				3				4					
	G				3							2				3				6				8				2					
	V				6				6			5				8				6				4				5					
9	L				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	S				0				1			1				0			1				0				0						
	R				3				3			3				3			3				3				3						
	W				1				2			2				1			4				2				1						
	G				2				1			2				2			1				1				1						
	V				1				2			2				2			2				2				3						
8	L								1			1				1			1				2				1						
	S				0				0			1				0			0				1				1						
	R				3				3			3				3			3				3				3						
	W				1							1				1			1				0				2						
	G				1				1			1				1			1				2				1						
	V				1				1			1				1			1				2				1						
7	L				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	S				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	R				3				3			3				3			3				3				3						
	W				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	G				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	V				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
6	L								1			1				1			1				1				1						
	S								1			1				1			1				1				1						
	R				1				3			3				3			3				3				2						
	W				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	G				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	V				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
5	L				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	S				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	R				3				3			3				3			3				3				4						
	W				3				2			3				2			2				3				2						
	G				2				2			1				1			2				1				1						
	V				1				1			1				1			0				1				0						
4	L				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	S				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	R				3				3			3				3			3				3				3						
	W				2				2			2				2			2				2				2						
	G				1				1			1				1			1				1				1						
	V				0				0			0				0			0				0				0						
3	L																																
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The study focuses on the skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, in addition to Grammar and Vocabulary activities. It attempts to analyse the weight given to each of the skill and the assessment of these aspects. The analysis can be seen in the Results section.

NEP 2020

Since NEP 2020 (National Educational policy 2020) has been introduced, the curriculums henceforth are expected to reflect the intricacies of the policy. The policy discourages rote learning and encourages assessment with practical value. ‘National Assessment Centre’, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)’ is planning to guide ‘school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century’ (4.41. NEP 2020). This has been partially initiated in the new textbooks of Andhra Pradesh. Just as mother tongue / local language medium of education is recommended by the Policy, English though is one subject, should be based on the mother tongue of the student.

Meeting the needs as expected by NEP 2020 is possible by shifting the focus from Reading and Writing to Listening and Speaking. For practical purposes language is much used in speaking than writing. Apart from official purposes, written English is generally not expected rather not demanded to be used. Since NEP 2020 looks for practical application, the obvious expected outcome has to be proficiency in spoken English.

Telugu speakers’ problems

‘Many of the problems faced by the speakers of Dravidian languages when they learn English are shared with speakers of other South Asian languages.’ (Narasimhan, 2013). Telugu is a Dravidian language spoken in two states viz. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana of India with an approximate population of 1 million.

Vowels

i:	ɪ	e	æ	eɪ	aɪ	ɔɪ
ɑ:	ɒ	ɔ:	ʊ	aʊ	əʊ	ɪə
u:	ʌ	ɜ:	ə	eə	ʊə	aiə auə

Shaded phonemes have equivalents or near-equivalents in Telugu (mother tongue), and should therefore be perceived and articulated without serious difficulty, although some confusions may still arise. Unshaded phonemes may cause problems.

1. The Telugu vowel system comprises five short vowels and their long counter parts: /ɐ/, /ɛ:/, /i/, /i:/, /u/, /u:/, /e/, /e:/, /o/, /o:/.
2. The vowels /o/ and /o:/ do not have similar sounds in the Received Pronunciation.
3. There are two diphthongs: /aɪ/ (as in *ice*) and /aʊ/ (as in *out*).

Some problems:

1. English diphthongs /eɪ/ is pronounced as /e:/ (for example *table* /te:bul/); /əʊ/ as /o:/ (for example *goat* /go:t/)
2. The sound /æ/, though not a phoneme, is available in the inventory but is mispronounced in most of the occurrences by inserting a /j/. 'bank' is pronounced /bja:nk/ or /bja:nku/, apple is pronounced /ja:pil/ and so on.
3. Vowel length may be altered in examples like *wool* pronounced as /vu:l/ and *food* as /fud/.
4. Learners tend to insert /u/ or /i/ in a syllabic consonant (*terrible* [tɛrɪbul]; *bottle* [ba: tɪl]) and add /u/ in the end of a word (*stick* [stɪkku], *salt* [sɛ:lʊ]).

5. Differentiating and producing *cot* and *caught* can be extremely difficult, which have no close Telugu equivalents.

Consonants

p	b	f	v	θ	ð	t	d
s	z	ʃ	ʒ	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
m	n	ŋ	l	r	j	w	h

Shaded phonemes have equivalents or near-equivalents in Telugu (mother tongue), and should therefore be perceived and articulated without serious difficulty, although some confusions may still arise. Unshaded phonemes may cause problems.

Consonants

1. Telugu speakers do not aspirate initial /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds of the English consonants. These aspirated sounds are phonemes but not allophones as in English. So, the learners find them hard to produce correctly in the appropriate contexts/environments. For example, *pen* is pronounced as /pen/ instead of [p^hen] which may be interpreted as /ben/.
2. Telugu speakers tend to produce consonants with retroflexion. For example, *ten* is pronounced as [tɛn] or [tɛnnu] instead of [t^hen].
3. The learners may mispronounce /z/ and /ʒ/. For these sounds the learners may produce /dʒ/. For example *lazy* is pronounced as /le:dʒi/. This happens despite the fact that Telugu has [/dʒ/] sound; and *measure* as [mezər].
4. The distinction between /v/ and /w/ is also a problem for Telugu speaking English learners. They tend to produce [v] for both the sounds.
5. Telugu consonants are ‘geminated’. For example, *utter* is pronounced as [ʊt̪t̪ər].

6. /θ / and /ð/, as in *think* and *then*, cause great difficulty, since the approximate Tamil equivalents are dental rather than interdental. Learners' pronunciation may come close to /t/ and /d/.
7. There is no /f/ sound in Telugu phonemes. However, the sound is available in the inventory of Telugu speakers. Learners may produce English /f/ as an aspirated /p/, leading to confusion. For example, *physics* is pronounced as [p^hidziks] or [p^hidziksu].

Syllable structure; consonant clusters

Telugu, the Italian of the east, is a vowel ending language. The words do not usually end in consonants, and learners may add /u/ in the end of some English words.

Stress and rhythm

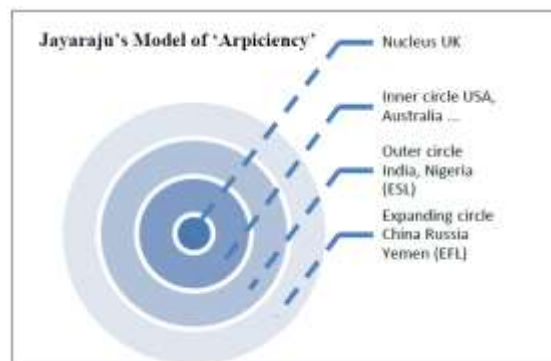
Speakers who have learnt English largely from studying written texts may tend to pronounce each word as a separate unit, so that no sentence rhythm emerges (Micahel Swan, 2002). The statement is said about Tamil speakers which holds good for Telugu speaking English learners as well.

The 'Arpiciency' model

'Arpiciency' is proficiency in RP (Received Pronunciation). (Jayaraju, 2020)

The 'Arpiciency' proposes the following (which are relevant for the study):

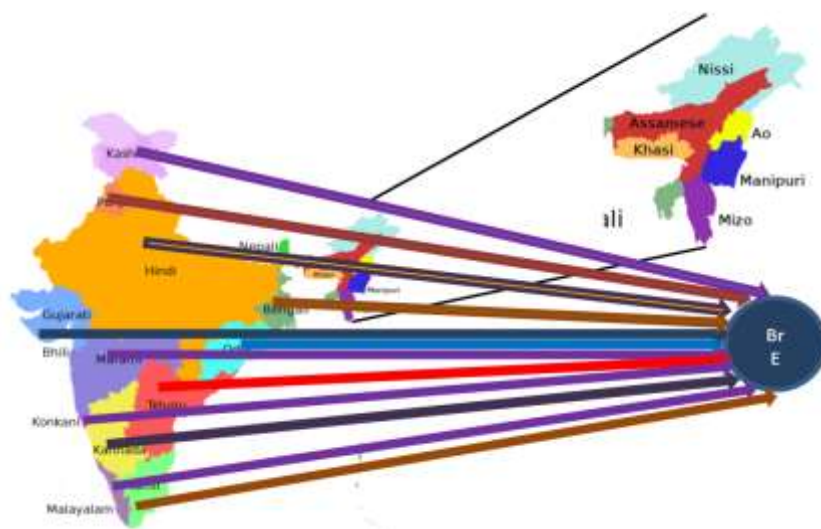
1. Focus on listening and speaking before looking at reading and writing
2. Approximate to RP while speaking and



3. Train ears to get exposed to as many varieties of English as possible.

Thus 'Arpiciency' helps in acquiring a global variety.

The model is apt to the current situation where the gap between the existing textbooks and the expected outcomes as per the policy (NEP 2020) can be covered effectively. This



can also result in arriving at a unified variety of English – if a similar treatment is given to English in as many languages of India as possible, or at least in all the official languages of India - which could possibly be recognized on the international platform as the Indian English. In other words, it can be possible to have a comprehensive linguistic description of Indian English.

The solution is implementing 'Arpiciency' – 'Proficiency in RP is Arpiciency' (Jayaraju, 2020) –in tailor-made English coursebooks. When the problem itself is diversified, the solution should also be brought in the same manner. It is a many to one relation where different pronunciation problems are to be dealt to acquire one standard variety of Indian English.

Results

The following tables depict a consolidated view of the activities and self-assessment of listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary of all the classes from Class 1 to Class X.



Number of activities of LSRWG&V of all the classes from I to X.



Number of self-assessments of LSRWG&V of all the classes from I to X



Weight given to the activities and assessment of skills in X Class

Discussion

The findings of the study bring the details of the weight given to each of the activities and the assessment onto the surface. The percentages are clearly shown in pie-charts as follows:



Weight given to the activities and assessment of skills to all the classes from I to X

Listening Activities = 14%

Listening Assessment = 10%

Speaking Activities = 12%

Speaking Assessment = 8%

Reading Activities = 35%

Reading Assessment = 37%

Writing Activities = 15%

Writing Assessment = 16%

Grammar Activities = 10

Grammar Assessment = 14%

Vocabulary Activities = 14%

Vocabulary Assessment = 15%

There is a drop of 40% weight given to Listening and 30% weight given to Speaking between activities and assessment. On the contrary, for Grammar there is a raise of 40% weight from activities to assessment. For Reading, Writing and Vocabulary the weight given to activities and assessment are almost the same.

In the objectives it clearly says ‘The language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated in the larger context of the themes.’ In almost every unit there is an oral activity. However, pronunciation is not dealt with. Moreover, not more than 10% of weight is given to speaking skill. The review throws light on the gaps in meeting the objectives targeting speaking. Additionally, NEP 2020 with its ‘National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)’ is planning to guide ‘school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century’ (4.41. NEP 2020).

Evaluation

Since the focus on reading is three times more than listening and speaking and the weight given to speaking is 10% as per the design of the curriculum (Director of School Education, 2014), it is obvious that the syllabus prioritises reading and writing over listening and speaking. This helps in making the following observations:

- Students are not given sufficient exposure to a model in listening.
- They cannot get sufficient opportunities to practice speaking.
- As a result, students cannot be able to develop speaking competence.
- As mentioned already, learning English from studying written texts may tend to pronounce each word as a separate unit. Therefore, sentence rhythm is hindered. (Micahel Swan, 2002)
- It is possible to practice Reading out of the classroom.

The afore-mentioned realities are clearly far away from the expectations of NEP 2020 (4.41. NEP 2020).

Since the study focuses on Phonetics and Spoken English, it tries to offer solutions to the pronunciation and speaking problems of Telugu speaking English learners by bringing the speaking problems on to the surface from segmental (vowels, diphthongs and consonants) and suprasegmental (stress, intonation and rhythm) levels and even to the functional aspects of the target language in order to design tailor made coursebooks using 'Arpiciency'. Keeping the diversity of languages of India in view, this study may be carried out on people of other mother tongues as well which eventually result in arriving at a standard Indian English.

Conclusion

Though the textbooks of Andhra Pradesh have initiated focusing on skills rather than content, maintaining appropriate proportions of weight to each skill considering the learners' needs is still needed. These textbooks focus on reading and writing while NEP 2020 is inclined towards knowledge for holistic development. The weight given to listening and speaking needs modification to meet the skill requirements of the 21st century and the standards expected by NEP 2020. Hence the need for tailor made coursebooks arises.

Despite the fact that the study attempts to cover listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary of classes I to X, the study has limitations as follows:

Limitations

- The study analysed LSRWG&V leaving the Study Skills and Project Work activities
- This paper presents pronunciation problems at segmental level only.
- The study was limited to Telugu speaking English learners.
- The study is limited to reviewing and recommending change of methods and materials/textbooks.

Recommendations

- Proportionate weight is to be given to all the skills in the coursebooks/textbooks.
- Weight given to each skill should be based on the learners' problems and needs
- Modifications to be made to meet the skill requirements of the 21st century and the standards expected by NEP 2020.
- Considering 'Arpiciency' would fulfil the need of the hour.
- Establishing an internationally recognisable standard variety of Indian English must be kept as a goal while designing coursebooks/curriculum.

So, there is a need for Tailor-made English Coursebooks where the focus has to be on the problems faced by the 'Indian' students and Indians in real time situations. These coursebooks follow the 'Arpiciency' model. 'Arpiciency' proposes to focus on listening and speaking before looking at reading and writing. It suggests to approximate to RP while speaking and train ears to get exposed to as many varieties of English as possible. Thus 'Arpiciency' helps in acquiring a global variety.

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