THE USE OF SLANG AS A LINGUISTIC RESOURCE IN THE CREATION OF AN ANGLO-INDIAN IDENTITY: THE CASE OF HYDERABAD ANGLO-INDIANS[1]

Smita Joseph

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how the Anglo-Indian community in Hyderabad uses slang, an ethno-linguistic artifact, to express their unique identity. A combination of interview and survey techniques was employed to elicit the data on slang. The data on slang were obtained through interviews, but the application of a t test (p < .001) on data collected from Anglo-Indians and their neighboring community, obtained through a survey, validated the usage of slang as an Anglo-Indian code. English-based slang (such as, plug, rubbermouth, fire off) and contact-induced borrowing from colloquial Telugu and Tamil (including, jao, pulling the jao, catching crows) combine to form Anglo-Indian slang. The study suggests that one of the strategies by which the community conveys its distinctive identity vis-à-vis English, and the regional second-language users of English, is through the integration of linguistic material from various sources into Anglo-Indian English. The study suggests that the Anglo-Indian community maintains distinct identities through the usage of slang or hybrid English.

INTRODUCTION

This study shows how slang, as an ethno-linguistic artifact, is used in marking the ethnicity of a speech community. The Anglo-Indian speech community in Hyderabad provides a unique opportunity to explore how speakers convey ethnicity through slang.

Ethnicity is not something that is biologically determined; it is a social category that is believed to be socially constructed through practices (Zack & Healey, as cited in Fought, 2002, p. 444), language being an instance of one such practice. Readers who are new to the concept of ethnicity can depend on the simplest definition of an ethnic group given by Giles which is based on individuals' perceptions of themselves as belonging to an ethnic category (as cited in Fought, 2002, pp. 444-5).

There are very few works on Anglo-Indian English. The huge corpus of literature on South Asian English, which has mostly concentrated on the English of second language users, has paid relatively little attention to their English (Coelho, 1997). Of the few works that exist on the variety, Spencer's work on the Anglo-Indians of Allahabad, for instance, contrasts the pronunciation of Standard British English with Anglo-Indian English and obliquely traces the differences between the two varieties to Bengali influences (1966, pp. 65-70). On the other hand, Coelho's research of the English used by Anglo-Indians in Perambur (Chennai) is a comparison between Anglo-Indian English and General Indian English[2] varieties. According to the study, the distinctions between the varieties mostly result from British English dialects, while the features shared by both types are viewed as influences from the local language or languages (1997).

By analysing how the Anglo-Indians in South Lallaguda use English as their first language, and that the Anglo-Indian English spoken in informal settings in this area exhibits linguistic innovation, I contribute to the study of South Asian English. The variety spoken by the community differs from non-native varieties of English or second-language users of English as well as from the native varieties of English, i.e., the British English dialects. This study, therefore, challenges Coelho's claims about Anglo-Indian English, according to which the variety cannot demonstrate independent developments since it is too recent (1997, p. 564). The Anglo-Indians focussed on in this study show a unique identity by mixing Telugu and Tamil slang into their English. In other words, by using slang, the community preserves a separate identity from both the local Indian communities and the British. The systematic investigation of slang in this study differs from previous sociolinguistic work as well. Additionally, it differs from other works on Anglo-Indian English, which have mostly concentrated on their phonological and syntactic features.

This study examines the use of linguistic features, as lexical items or slang terms, in the speech of Hyderabad Anglo-Indians, as indicator of acts of identity[3] associated with their ethnic group. There were two reasons why the speech of the Anglo-Indians of Hyderabad was studied. Firstly, the English used by the Anglo-Indians has received very little attention within the vast body of literature on South Asian English that has mainly focused on English as a second language (Coelho, 1997), and secondly, the Hyderabad Anglo-Indians were easily accessible through the local networks of the researcher.

To determine if the community uses particular examples of slang exclusively, the speech of the South Lallaguda Anglo-Indians (the place is one of the first bases of the community in Hyderabad [Sengupta, 2021, p. 117]) was compared to that of their neighbors. I investigated whether the use of Anglo-Indian slang acts as a community marker relative to its usage in the adjacent non-Anglo-Indian population while holding all other social factors (e.g., age, gender, region) constant in the two groups for comparison. By doing this, it was possible to rule out the influence of region, demographics, or even gender or age.

Accordingly, the following research questions are addressed in the study:
- (1) Do the Anglo-Indians of Hyderabad convey their ethnic identities through language?
  (1a) If yes, what kind of linguistic resources are used by Hyderabad Anglo-Indians as community markers?
- (2) What attributes do the Anglo-Indian slang terms identified in the study, i.e., *plug*, *fire off*, *rubbermouth*, *catching crows*, *pulling the jao*, *jao*, show vis-à-vis the attributes of slang discussed in the sociolinguistic literature? There were six slang terms that emerged from the surveys undertaken in the study (a pilot study and a face-to-face survey; see a detailed discussion in the "Data Elicitation Methods" section).
- (3) Is Hyderabad Anglo-Indian slang an instance of a hybrid variety?
  (3a) Why or why not?
- (4) Is Hyderabad Anglo-Indian slang an instance of linguistic innovation?
  (4a) Why or why not?

The term ethnicity refers to shared traditions and practices. It is a group's shared linguistic, religious, and cultural practices that have helped shape its culture, value system, and attitude. Race, on the other hand, refers to the outward physical differences that members of a certain social group value highly (Little, 2014). Some sociologists make a distinction between race and ethnicity (Little, 2014), while others consider an ethnic group to be a combination of race and culture (Yang, 2000).

Additionally, some sociologists think that ethnicity and ethnic group are two distinct but connected ideas. For instance, according to Yang, "ethnic group" refers to a social category based on ancestry, culture, or place of origin, whereas "ethnicity" refers to affiliation with an "ethnic group." It is agreed upon that "ethnicity" is both "subjective" and "objective." It is the sensation of identification with a certain ethnic group, which is a "subjective" idea (Yetman, as cited in Yang, 2000, p. 40). In that one's nativity and ancestry cannot be chosen, it also has "objective" dimensions. The term "ethnicity" as it is used in a larger sense encompasses physiological, cultural, geographical, and emotive characteristics (see Yang, 2000, pp. 48-55, for more details).

It can be argued that Hyderabad Anglo-Indians belong to the same ethnic group since they trace their ancestry to Europe, evident through their surnames. They also show affiliation as a community through shared linguistic behaviour. The community members, for instance, use the six slang terms mentioned in the preceding discussions to construct their identity as Hyderabad Anglo-Indians.

The combination of many ethnic groups to create novel kinds and identities is known as "hybridity," and it is a key concept in ethnic studies (Little, 2014). Given that it combines English and Dravidian languages, the use of slang by the Hyderabad Anglo-Indian community (the community on which the study is based) is an illustration of a hybrid variety. The Hyderabad Anglo-Indian slang comprises English words (e.g., plug, rubbermouth, fire off), borrowed material from colloquial Telugu (e.g., jao), and translated idioms from Tamil (e.g., catching crows). The influence of Dravidian languages (i.e., Telugu and Tamil) in the slang illustrates their identity as an Anglo-Indian belonging to the southern region of the country. Although the variety does not integrate into the dominant languages that are in contact, it still challenges the supremacy of a particular variety or cultural identity, namely English. It differs from the

inherited British and the non-native Indian English varieties due to the fusion of vernacular Tamil and Telugu phrases with English. I argue that varying from the mainstream register is a strategy for claiming linguistic resources, that is, slang, for use as a community marker.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Slang words and phrases are categorized in sociolinguistics using a "set" of attributes rather than a single characteristic (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, pp. 71-74). The fact that slang words and phrases are closely related to informal contexts is one of their characteristic traits (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 71; Zhou & Fan, 2013, p. 2209; Hummon, 1994, p. 77). Thus, it is a type of code that deviates from formal, conventional speech (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, pp. 71-72; Zhou & Fan, 2013, p. 2209; Hummon, 1994, p. 77). Another attribute of slang is that it is frequently used by ethnic minorities to refer to other members of their group, often with specific group meanings. African Americans refer to one another using phrases like "bro," "sister," and "girl" (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 72). Slang terms are linked to specific generations and close-knit social networks where they are used to denote membership (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 72; Moore, 2005). However, slang terminology might not always be connected to groups like ethnic minorities, young people, homosexuals, hippies, etc., who challenge mainstream discourses (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 72). Despite being a result of the youth revolution, for example, the American slang term "cool" replaced the word "swell" in the 20th century and quickly assimilated into mainstream society (Moore, 2005, pp. 360-361). Another attribute of slang is that it is a reprocessed form of vocabulary, idioms, or phrases of the mainstream language that have been given new meanings. The connection of slang to meanings that are not conventional is a deliberate effort to challenge accepted linguistic practices and standards (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, pp. 71-73). Finally, slang is also transient in nature. It is developed by a small number of individuals, often the young, and then other people adopt them (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 73).

Slang often consists of a specific set of words, idioms, and "holophrastic lexations." "Holophrastic lexations" are linguistic constructions in which the meaning of the individual words or the arrangement of the words cannot convey the meaning of the

full phrase (Agha, 2007, p. 117). The Anglo-Indian slang *catching crows* would be an instance of a holophrastic lexation. The individual words in the phrase *catching* and *crows* do not give the meaning of the entire phrase. It is the entire phrase that gives the conceptual meaning of 'flattery'.

The degree of resemblance between slang and standard register is quite marginal. In other words, slang terms and expressions are partially similar and dissimilar to the linguistic material of the standard register (Agha, 2015, pp. 319-321). Partial similarity and dissimilarity to the standard register can be seen in the slang term *cool*. This is a term that shows similarity to the standard register since it is derived from it. But at the same time, it is also dissimilar in meaning. As a slang term, it refers to anything approved by the youth or positively evaluated. Thus, it is similar to the standard language as a lexical item but not in meaning, making it partially similar and dissimilar to the standard language.

Slang serves a variety of social purposes, including the rejection of mainstream culture and ideals (Zhou & Fan, 2013) and to project group identities; this is seen, for instance, in African urban youth languages (Kiessling & Mous, 2004). The social categories that are important for the members of the community are also considered in the creation of slang terminology. The use of student slang is one example of how it has a specific place in student life (Hummon, 1994; Dundes & Porter, 1963; McPhee, 1927). The creation of slang may also include psychological motivations, such as the release of unpleasant feelings. Gordon's (1983) research on hospital slang, for example, shows how slang may be used by medical professionals as a way to release their negative emotions. This slang is used for patients who demand unwanted attention or for whom services are a waste. The hospital slang *squirrel* for instance refers to somebody who complains all the time. The humorous connotations of hospital slang fulfill the personal and professional necessity of the medical staff in a hospital context where social bonding becomes important among the staff but personal feelings towards patients need to be kept away.

As indicated, slang serves a variety of purposes, from challenging mainstream cultures (as in youth slang) to providing a vent for unfavourable feelings (as in hospital slang). Slang is also employed to symbolize contemporary ways of living or new belief

systems that are connected to the next generation (such as youth slang). Student slang is one example of how slang may also represent the culture of a community.

THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HYDERABAD ANGLO-INDIANS AND OTHER ANGLO-INDIANS

In this section, I will discuss the similarities and differences that Hyderabad Anglo-Indians share with the rest of the Anglo-Indian population in India.

Anglo-Indians throughout India have many things in common. They are almost all Christians, mostly Roman Catholics but also Protestants[4] (Andrews & Roy, 2021, p. 7; Muthiah & MacLure, 2013, pp. 5-6). Their mother tongue is English, though, in addition to English, they speak the local languages, perhaps as their first language, of the place in which they reside. However, the use of English is an important criterion for membership in the All India Anglo-Indian Association (AIAIA) which defines an Anglo-Indian as a person whose mother tongue is English. Hence, an Anglo-Indian must use English in their day-to-day lives to be perceived as a community member (Andrews & Roy, 2021, p. 9) by in-group and out-group members.

Other aspects of their distinct shared culture and practices include Christmas parties, dancing, and special foods[5] that constitute their own cultural traditions. In addition, several of their relatives are likely to have "worked in the railways or armed forces or as teachers" (Andrews & Roy, 2021, pp. 7-9).

Another attribute that is associated with Anglo-Indians is western clothes (e.g., dress, frock) [see Andrews & Roy, 2021, p. 8; Muthiah & MacLure, 2013, pp. 5-6]. However, the majority of the female respondents to my surveys and interviews said that over time, their preferences had changed from Western to Indian fashions. The attire worn by Anglo-Indian women in South Lallaguda at home was an extension of any ankle-length formal attire that was worn in formal domains. The attire worn at home was shorter than the average person's maxi yet longer than the ankle-length formal dress.

Since the middle of the 19th century, the community has dominated middle-level and technical employment in telegraphic services and the railways. The community was therefore primarily supported by employment in these two sectors during the first half

of the 20th century, but they also had jobs in other government services (see Muthiah & MacLure, 2013, pp. 36-37). The older men of South Lallaguda's Anglo-Indian community were largely employed by the Railways, while the women worked as teachers, nurses, and secretaries. When their reservations in telegraphs, railways, and other government services were removed in 1964[6], a large portion of community members migrated to Canada and Australia.

The development of the Secunderabad cantonment town as a railway center in the last decades of the 19th century can be linked to the origins of the Anglo-Indian community in the Secunderabad-Hyderabad area. The British had a long-standing desire to expand the local railway system in order to further their interests in the south by keeping a strategic presence there (Jaganath, as cited in Sengupta, 2021, p. 117). The railways provided the connection that was necessary for the rapid movement of soldiers and staff throughout the country. The Anglo-Indian community led railway services everywhere in British India and had to be present because they possessed the necessary skills in order to run them (Sengupta, 2021, p. 117).

As the base of railway operations at Secunderabad evolved to act as both a portal to the interior areas of the south and the Deccan, as well as the focal point for the operations of the enormous railway built by the Nizam of Hyderabad, a sizable colony of Anglo-Indians were relocated there. Over time, Secunderabad developed a unique identity of its own, was recognized as a twin town of Hyderabad, and presented a demographic contrast to its larger twin. Secunderabad was mostly populated by officials working for the British, including Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and members of various ethnic groups from all across the country (Kochattil, as cited in Sengupta, 2021, p. 117).

The army and the railways were the major service providers to the flourishing community in Secunderabad. A significant population of the residents in the area were the Anglo-Indians. They established extensive residential complexes in particular regions (e.g., Lallaguda, Mettuguda, etc.) of the new city (Sengupta, 2021, p. 117).

After employment reservations were discontinued, the community experienced a severe downturn. Since working for the railways was no longer a possibility, the

community lost numerous advantages and privileges. Children could no longer take advantage of reservation privileges at schools and universities, and the comfortable Railway residential quarters were no longer a residential option. Both men and women were driven into menial labour by a lack of education and railway reservations. From the 1960s until the late 1980s, the Anglo-Indian population's whole way of life underwent a significant upheaval[7]. After that, the call centre or the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)[8] industry was a big benefit to the community starting in the early 1990s. Due to English being the Anglo-Indians' native language, they had an edge in these call centres. They could readily comprehend calls coming from Australia, England, and other Western nations, which allowed them to teach others how to speak English that was internationally understandable. Many Anglo-Indian teachers went to work in call centres at this time in order to increase their income[9].

The job opportunities that came through the call centres impacted the Anglo-Indians of Secunderabad differently. It was their command over the English language that required their presence in the call centres. The BPO or call centre industries in other cities such as Pune and Bangalore were more oriented towards engineering and technical fields. Thus, despite limited education, the community members in Secunderabad could secure a job in the call centres owing to their communication skills in English due to the IT boom that the region witnessed since the mid-1990s (Sengupta, 2023, pp. 116, 119).

The Anglo-Indian community had its bases in many parts of the country. Even though they were meant to serve the imperial objectives of the British (e.g., the railways, which served as the community's primary source of employment, were used by the British to access all regions of the country and for a quick movement of staff and personnel from one part to another part of the country; in addition, the railway colonies and the schools in hill stations served as sites for enforcing discipline to inculcate the British value system), it can be argued that their circumstances have been shaped by "the historical, sociocultural, economic, and political" factors of the region in which they lived (Andrews & Roy, 2021, p. 3). For instance, the members of the railway colonies would have different experiences than those settled in the hill stations. These experiences and conditions in turn affected the lifestyles and life chances of the community members differently. The railway colonies were centres for finding employment in the

railways whereas the hill stations were seen as the summer resorts of the resident Europeans and the Anglo-Indians. The latter were also places where the children of the resident Europeans and Anglo-Indians were trained in schools in the British way of life (Andrews & Roy, 2021, pp. 3, 14-15), and where Anglo-Indian teachers sought employment.

THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

It is very difficult to define a speech community. One way to approach the concept of a speech community is by starting with Marcyliena Morgan's definition: "it is the product of prolonged interaction among those who operate within shared belief and value systems regarding their own culture, society, and history as well as their communication with others." A speech community is not just about speaking the same language. It is an outcome of frequent and extensive contact between people who communicate with each other while adhering to a set of common ideologies and value systems about their own community (2004, p. 3).

Several scholars have highlighted the significance of face-to-face interaction and the notion of steady, recurrent, and predictable interactive networks essential for the existence of a speech community (Gumperz, in Morgan, 2004, p. 8). This feature was also found among the members of Lallaguda Anglo-Indians who knew one another and were connected to each other in some way (i.e., as relatives, friends, parishioners, etc.); thereby, belonging to a dense network. A dense network consists of members who are in multiplex ties. A multiplex tie is one in which individuals are connected to each other in multiple roles, such as a friend, relative, neighbour, etc.

A speech community forms a coherent system because of its association with a set of common social rules (Gumperz, in Morgan, 2004, p. 8). Hence, as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the concept of a speech community is not just about language or regional boundaries (though I would argue that another reason why Lallaguda Anglo-Indians belonged to the same speech community was because they attended the same church, that is, the Sacred Heart Church, and shared a common geographical area) but it also encompasses "attitudes and ideologies" about the language being used by community members (Morgan, 2004, pp. 3, 8).

Participation in "a set of shared norms" may also refer to the linguistic variables or norms that cause social stratification in the community (Labov, cited in Morgan, 2004, p. 9). This means that members tacitly agree on the social divisions (e.g., class, style, etc.) that exist in the community and the role language plays in indexing these social divisions (Morgan, 2004, pp. 9-10). For example, the Lallaguda Anglo-Indians shared the same consensus on the usage of slang terms. That slang was to be used in the most informal contexts and between fellow Anglo-Indians was shared knowledge among community members. Nobody used slang in a formal, professional setting. In other words, members of the Lallaguda Anglo-Indian community shared similar linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of what constituted standard and nonstandard varieties of English.

The Anglo-Indian community of Hyderabad perceives South Lallaguda as their centre. In Secunderabad, South Lallaguda is located on the side of the road that leads to the Railway Degree College. The residential colony for Anglo-Indians is located at one end of the road, while the railway colony is on the opposite side (Borah, 2014, para. 5); see Figure 1. About 55 years ago, there were about 100 families residing in the Railway colony (Umanadh, 2011, para. 1). Currently, Anglo-Indians might be considered a dying community due to the large-scale exodus of members to Western countries. The Anglo-Indian community numbered 20,000 in the 1960s but is now on the decline, numbering a mere 2500 families in 2004 (Chinoy, 2004).
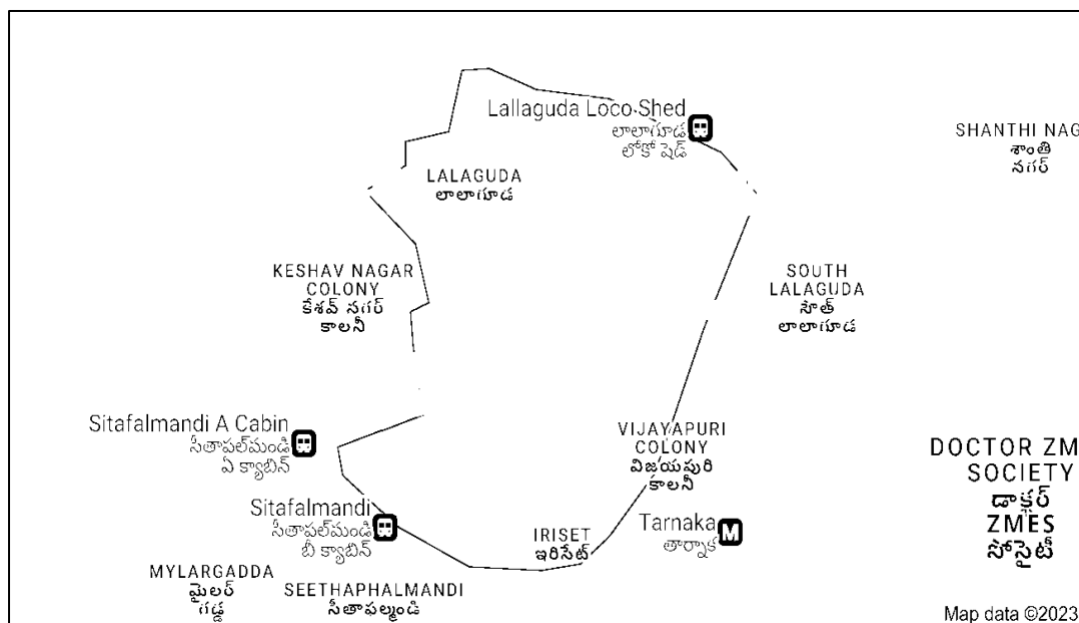

Figure 1: Lallaguda Railway Colony (Google Maps, 2023)

The Anglo-Indian slang were collected through a face-to-face survey in which participants were asked to respond to a set of direct elicitation test items out of which some were open-ended (see the next section on Data Elicitation Methods). The listener perceptions of slang based on the evaluation of the slang terms (i.e., plug, fire off, jao, pulling the jao, catching crows, rubbermouth) by community members in the survey was yet another factor that helped to establish the Lallaguda Anglo-Indians as a speech community. This agrees with Labov's idea of a speech community, which is primarily described as having "shared norms" in the evaluation of language usage (see Schilling, 2013, p. 20).

DATA ELICITATION METHODS

In order to elicit slang from the Anglo-Indian community, I used judgment sampling. Speaker categories, in judgment sampling, are predetermined by the researcher. The researcher chooses the appropriate number of informants for each of these categories after they have been identified. These are either filled randomly or using the social networks of the informants (Schilling, 2013, p. 35).

I looked at three age groups: 20-40, 41-60, and 61-80, to analyse generational shifts in the usage of Anglo-Indian English because I wanted to investigate the nativized variety of English in light of widespread migrations and inter-community marriage patterns. There were five men and five women in each of the three age group categories. So, 30 Anglo-Indians in all were surveyed on slang. In order to find contacts, I made use of oral introductions. The initial contacts were made through the parish priest and later the friend-of-a-friend method was used to contact community members.

I also tested the survey questionnaire on the general population (i.e., the non-Anglo-Indians) in the same neighbourhoods where Anglo-Indians lived (i.e., South Lallaguda, the native place of the community in Hyderabad) in order to rule out regional influences and establish the use of slang as a community indicator of the Anglo-Indians in Hyderabad. The demographic categories for the general population were the same as those of the Anglo-Indians. In other words, the social variables (e.g., age, gender, region) were held constant in the two groups for comparison while examining whether the use of Anglo-Indian slang serves as a community marker relative to its usage in

the nearby non-Anglo-Indian population. This was done to rule out the effects of region, age, or gender on the usage of slang.

A pilot study of the community was carried out. The sociolinguistic interview, which was designed to produce the "informal" speech style, was the main method used to elicit linguistic data. The sociolinguistic interview consists of different types of activities designed by the researcher. These activities make the informant pay more or less attention to their speech. Minimal pair, word list and reading passage styles generate formal speech styles. The interview generates an informal speech style and the casual style, the vernacular, which is also the most informal speech style. The vernacular speech is associated with the casual style of the sociolinguistic interview. In this style, the informant is the least conscious of their speech. This style emerges when there is a break in the interview due to the conversation between the informant and their relatives or friends. The presence of the interviewer and the recording equipment does not affect the flow of the conversation. A few slang terms appeared in the vernacular or the casual style of the interview, while others emerged as local knowledge shared by the community members. I gained a lot of understanding about the importance of slang as a community marker through my field notes and conversations with community members. An essential part of the ethnographic observation is listening for utterances that convey 'common knowledge' and belief systems regarding language use (see Schilling, 2013, p. 118).

A survey was used to further investigate the linguistic variables (*plug*, *jao*, *pulling the* jao, *catching crows*, *fire off*, *rubbermouth*) that emerged from the pilot study. The survey was conducted one-on-one, mostly face-to-face, but occasionally conducted using mobile phones. The test items were direct elicitation in nature. A direct elicitation frame mentions the linguistic variant that needs to be tested in the questionnaire (Schilling, 2013, pp. 69-70). The first test item asked the participants to choose the most frequently used verb to refer to failure in exams from the options provided to them as in "*flop, fail, flunk, plug*." The test item also investigated the status of slang as transitive and intransitive verbs: "Fill in the blanks choosing the most frequently used verb given in brackets. Remember that this is the verb you use most often in informal conversations with friends, relatives, etc.   (*flop, fail, flunk, plug*): The exam results are out. He _____; I'm not surprised he _____ his exam—he didn't try very hard!"

The second test item of the survey asked whether participants used *flop*[10] and *plug* as transitive and intransitive verbs in their vernacular. The test item was as follows: "Will you use these italicized verbs in the English you speak? If not, can you replace these with the verbs you use in informal conversations?: The exam results are out. He *flopped*; The exam results are out. He *plugged*; I'm not surprised he *flopped* his chemistry exam—he didn't try very hard!; Adrian *plugged* his math paper."

The next test item tested the use of another slang term jao. The test item was as follows: "What do you call that thing in meat, which hangs between the skin and flesh? It is a waste, also called *slops*. It is generally given to dogs. It is a mix of fat and veins. The hard, unused part of the meat. What is jao? Is jao only applicable to beef wastes?" The last two test items of the survey were also open-ended and were framed as follows: "When do you use the following phrases?: *pulling the* jao, *catching crows*, *fire off*"; and "Who is a *rubbermouth*?"

Thus, to elicit data on Anglo-Indian slang, a combination of the sociolinguistic interview, survey, and ethnographic methods[11] was employed.

ANGLO-INDIAN SLANG AS COMMUNITY MARKERS AND A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF ANGLO-INDIAN SLANG

In this section, I will first discuss how Anglo-Indian slang can be proven to be used as community markers. I will also present the structural analysis of slang in terms of the partial similarity and dissimilarity model given by Agha (2015).

An independent-samples *t* test was used to determine if Anglo-Indian slang was used as a community marker. An independent-samples *t* test is an inferential statistical test that compares the means of two groups that are different from or unrelated to each other. The scores of the two groups (in this study, the frequency with which the two sets of populations use Anglo-Indian slang) are used to calculate whether the differences between them are significant or not. The following research question served as the basis for the independent-samples *t* test: "Do Anglo-Indians and the general population of South Lallaguda speak different varieties of informal English?" The null hypothesis (H_0) of the research question was as follows: "There is no

difference in the informal variety of English spoken by Anglo-Indians and the general population of South Lallaguda." The alternative hypothesis (H_1) was as follows: "The informal variety of English spoken by Anglo-Indians and non-Anglo-Indians of South Lallaguda differs significantly."

The Anglo-Indians and non-Anglo-Indians were comparable across the variables of age (three age groups: 20-40, 41-60 and 61-80), gender (five males and females each from each age group), region (both groups were from South Lallaguda), education (members of both groups had educational backgrounds ranging from Grade 10 to a Master's degree), and linguistic background (members of both groups used English fluently).

The responses of the survey were used to determine the differences between the two groups. The results of the independent-samples *t* test[12] attested to the usage of slang as a community marker of Lallaguda Anglo-Indians[13]. The Anglo-Indian participants used slang more frequently and perceived slang as an aspect of the Hyderabad Anglo-Indian identity. The non-Anglo-Indian population also perceived these slang terms as Anglo-Indian and either avoided their usage or used them in low frequency.

The effects of gender, age, and their interaction on Anglo-Indian slang were also tested for statistical significance through a two-way ANOVA[14]. The use of a two-way ANOVA investigated what impacted the more-or-less frequency usage of Anglo-Indian slang—gender, age, or the interaction between gender and age. The results of the two-way ANOVA[15] showed that there were no significant effects of these variables and their interaction on Anglo-Indian slang.

Let me now discuss the structural analysis of Anglo-Indian slang with respect to the partial similarity and dissimilarity model given by Agha (2015). The Anglo-Indian slang *plug* refers to 'failure in exam,' and hence it is used in the same grammatical contexts as *fail* (both as a transitive and intransitive verb) of the standard register. However, *plug* is not a new term created by the Anglo-Indian community; rather, it is a word from the standard register that deviates in meaning as an Anglo-Indian slang. Therefore, the Anglo-Indian slang *plug* shows dissimilarity in meaning from *plug* of the standard register but syntactic and semantic similarity with the word *fail* of the standard register.

Telugu *javvu*, *jaua* 'the waste part of the meat that hangs between the flesh and skin' appears to be the source language of the Anglo-Indian slang term *jao*. When two languages come into contact and the linguistic material of the source language is incorporated into the target language, the outcome is borrowing. Over time, the borrowed material completely integrates into the linguistic structure of the target language and is no longer recognized as being borrowed. The assimilation of the borrowed material is divided into two categories by Zuckermann: open borrowing and camouflaged borrowing (as cited in Mailhammer, 2008, p. 178).

In open borrowing, the borrowed material retains its non-native features for a while in the borrowed language. On the other hand, camouflaged borrowing rapidly transforms the borrowed linguistic material so that it ceases to look foreign (Mailhammer, 2008, p. 178). Camouflaged borrowing can be further divided into calques and phonetic calquing (Zuckermann, as cited in Mailhammer, 2008, p. 178). Calques include "loan translation," "loan creation," and "semantic loan" (Busse & Görlach, as cited in Mailhammer, 2008, pp. 178-179), and in this case, the target language material resembles the borrowed material semantically but not phonetically. However, in "phonetic calquing," the borrowed content is right away modified in accordance with the phonetics of the target language. In other words, "phonetic calquing" imitates the phonetic form of the borrowed linguistic item while simultaneously changing phonetically to the target language (Mailhammer, 2008, pp. 179-180).

The Anglo-Indian slang word *jao* is a phono-semantic equivalent of informal Telugu *javvu/jaua* because it exhibits phonetic calquing, which involves imitating the phonetic shape of the etymon of the source language while also adapting it phonetically to the target language, similar to *how*, *cow*, etc., in English. This borrowed word is spelled *jow* by Anglo-Indians. The word retains the semantics of the borrowed language. This word is thus a case of phono-semantic matching since the borrowed word exhibits phonetic calquing and semantic matching (Zuckermann, as cited in Mailhammer, 2008, p. 180).

Jao substitutes waste meat in informal situations, making it a syntactic equivalent of waste meat in Standard English. However, because a borrowed word is included in

the slang register and results in fractional correspondence to the standard expressions, the slang exhibits morphological deviations across register boundaries.

Pulling the jao 'stretching a conversation' and *catching crows* 'flattery' are Anglo-Indian idioms. The Tamil idiom kaka piDikartu[16], which translates to 'flattery,' is the source of the Anglo-Indian idiom *catching crows*. This is an instance of loan translation—a type of calque in which the meaning of a linguistic component is replicated in another language via imitation by using the linguistic material of the target language (Larizgoitia, 2010, pp. 15-30). This Anglo-Indian idiom is an example of phrasal calque, which is the copying of an idiom in the source language, in this case, colloquial Tamil, by combining words of the target language. Though *catching crows* is a phrasal analogue of kaka piDikartu in colloquial Tamil, it differs syntactically from 'flatter,' its counterpart in standard English, resulting in partial correspondence with the standard expression.

Although *pulling the jao*, another Anglo-Indian idiom, is similarly a phrasal calque, in this case, the imitation is based on the Standard English idiom *pulling your leg*. As a result, Standard English serves as the source language for *pulling the jao*. The two Anglo-Indian idioms serve as examples of how calques and phonetic calquing can introduce a new word, a new phrase, etc., to the target language (Mailhammer, 2008, p. 179). *Pulling the jao* is similar to *pulling your leg* in the standard register phrasally, but it differs syntactically from the verb phrase of the non-idiom of the standard register 'extending a narrative.'

Since *rubbermouth* 'a talkative person' is based on the modifiee of the exocentric compounds found in the standard informal register, that is, *blabbermouth* and *big mouth*, it is said to exhibit morphological similarity with its counterparts in the standard register. However, the slang exhibits deviation in the modifier of the slang *rubbermouth* by using a word not often employed in the standard informal register as a modifier, as in: *blabbermouth* and *big mouth*. With a similar modifiee but a different modifier, *rubbermouth* is thus only partially similar to its standard informal equivalents.

Fire off is a lexeme of the standard register. But since it is a slang variant, the meaning deviates from the standard register. The meaning of the phrasal verb in the standard

register is to write, say, or send something quickly or in anger. However, it takes on the meaning 'steal' when used as Anglo-Indian slang.

Instances of these slang terms being used in spoken conversations are: Peter fired off an expensive watch from the shop; She's a rubbermouth; she can talk for hours about herself; You are pulling the jow, you must stop now; Are you catching crows with me?; He speaks all jow man; I plugged the exam or I plugged.

CONCLUSION

Ethnicity is constitutive and not reflexive. It is constitutive because an ethnic identity is constructed through social and linguistic practices unlike biological sex which is reflexive. When people perceive themselves as belonging to a particular ethnic group, they use unique linguistic features. The dialects of minority communities might show similarities in some linguistic levels such as the sound system and dissimilarities in other linguistic levels such as the grammatical features (Rickford, as cited in Fought, 2002, p. 446).

Instances of unique linguistic features could be a distinct realization of a variable (e.g., the constraints operating on word-final consonant cluster simplification in Chicano English, an ethnic variety, used by Mexican-American speakers in the southwest U.S. are different from the constraints found in the mainstream varieties of English) or permutations which are unique to a minority ethnic group (e.g., the use of negative inversion by certain groups of African-Americans) [Labov; Wolfram, as cited in Fought, 2002, p. 446].

This study demonstrates how slang functions as an ethnic marker among the Anglo-Indian community of South Lallaguda. The speech of the Lallaguda Anglo-Indians was contrasted with that of the neighbouring non-Anglo-Indian population in order to examine an aspect of ethnicity, that is, shared understandings and usage of slang. By comparing the varieties of English used by the two groups, one could see divergence between the two dialects at the level of the lexicon.

The six slang variants that emerged from the interviews and survey (i.e., plug, jow, pulling the jow, catching crows, fire off, and rubbermouth), identified as unique lexical

features, were compared with the local population across the variables of gender, age, and region. I was able to rule out regional, age, and gender-based slang usage by comparing the two groups. The results of the t-test were used to determine the differences in the usage of the lexical features or slang terms between the two groups. In other words, the t-test associated the use of slang terms with Hyderabad Anglo-Indians.

In my findings, Anglo-Indian slang, which includes influences from Telugu and Tamil in this study, is a combination of English-based slang and contact-induced borrowing from colloquial varieties in the same linguistic landscape. The partial congruence of Anglo-Indian slang with Standard English, such as plug (vs. fail of the standard register), rubbermouth (vs. blabbermouth of the standard informal language), etc., is seen as evidence of linguistic innovation.

Additionally, I suggest that Anglo-Indian slang demonstrates a hybrid variety since it contains contact-induced borrowings from informal Telugu and Tamil. The imposition of a single English language identity is contested by a hybrid variety, which is instead a product of several linguistic influences. Slang is one way that Anglo-Indians distinguish themselves from other Indians (i.e., speakers of Indian English) and Europeans (from whom they inherited the British English varieties) in this part of India.

It can be argued that Anglo-Indian English has unique lexical features in the form of slang terms and expressions. A few of these terms can be traced to the influence of Dravidian languages, while others represent independent innovations. The variety has integrated features of Dravidian languages and has also developed into a stable dialect with lexical norms of its own. Chicano English, a minority ethnic variety, shows similar patterns (see Wald, cited in Fought, 2002, pp. 446-7).

It would be interesting to investigate how Hyderabad Anglo-Indians constitute their ethnic identities through other means such as naming practices, etc., and the role language plays in such practices.

Smita Joseph *is an Assistant Professor of Sociolinguistics at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Her research interests are Anglo-Indian English and socio-onomastics. She can be reached at joseph.smita@gmail.com.*

REFERENCES

Agha, A. (2007). *Language and social relations* (p. 117). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/ukmats/docs/_asif_agha__language_and_social_rel

Agha, A. (2015). Tropes of slang. *Signs and Society, 3*(2), 306-330. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/683179

Andrews, R., & Roy, A. G. (2021). Introduction. In R. Andrews, & A. G. Roy (Eds.), *Beyond the metros: Anglo-Indians in India's smaller towns and cities* (pp. 7-11). New Delhi: Primus Books.

Borah, P. M. (2014, April 19). The allure of the Anglos. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/society/the-allure-of-the-anglos/article5925909.ece

Chinoy, M. (2004, April 11). Fun-loving and at home in "Little England." *Times of India*. Retrieved from http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Fun-loving-and-at-home-in-Little-England/articleshow/610509.cms

Coelho, G. M. (1997). Anglo-Indian English: A nativized variety of Indian English. *Language in Society, 26*(4), 561-589. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4168803

Dundes, A., & Porter, C. F. (1963). American Indian student slang. *American Speech, 38*(4), 270-277. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/453225

EasyCalculation.com. (2016). *Effect size, Cohen's d calculator for t test*. Retrieved from https://www.easycalculation.com/statistics/effect-size-t-test.php

Fought, C. (2002). Ethnicity. In J. K. Chambers, P. Trudgill, & N. Schilling-Estes (Eds), *The handbook of language variation and change* (pp. 444-472). UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Google Maps. (2023). [Lallaguda Railway Colony]. Retrieved July 18, 2023, from https://www.google.co.in/maps/place/Lallaguda+Railway+Colony,+IRISET,+Mettuguda,+Secunderabad,+Telangana/@17.4330467,78.5238254,16z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x3bcb9bd5ab598491:0x722d7752b5b98cbc!8m2!3d17.4317087!4d78.5249104!16s%2Fg%2F1tf_rb5p?entry=ttu

Gordon, D. P. (1983). Hospital slang for patients: Crocks, gomers, gorks, and others. *Language in Society, 12*(2), 173-185. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4167396

GraphPad Software, Inc. (2015). *QuickCalcs*. Retrieved from http://graphpad.com/quickcalcs/ttest2/

Hummon, D. M. (1994). College slang revisited: Language, culture, and undergraduate life. *The Journal of Higher Education, 65*(1), 75-98. Retrieved from

http://www.jstor.org/stable/2943878

Joseph, S. (2020). *The Anglo-Indians in Hyderabad: Sociolinguistic, historical, and anthropological perspectives*. New Delhi: Primus Books.

Joseph, S., & Suvarna Lakshmi, G. (2022). Perceptions and attitudes of English teachers towards Indian English: An empirical study. In C. Smaoui, & A. Rahal (Eds), *World Englishes and language assessment* (pp. 58-85). UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Kiessling, R., & Mous, M. (2004). Urban youth languages in Africa. *Anthropological Linguistics, 46*(3), 303-341. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/30028964

Larizgoitia, X. A. (2010). A typology of calques. The calquing mechanism in contemporary Basque. *ELUA, 24*, 13-35. Retrieved from http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/21709/1/ELUA_24_01.pdf

Lazarus, C., Personal communication dated 29 September 2014.

Lazarus, C., Personal communication dated 16 October 2014.

Little, W. (2014). Race and ethnicity. *Introduction to Sociology - 1st Canadian Edition*. Retrieved from https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter11-race-and-ethnicity/

Longstreet, D. (Teacher). (2013). *Introduction to two-way ANOVA (factorial analysis)* [YouTube]. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZFmFuZGQTk

Longstreet, D. (Teacher). (2013). *How to calculate a two-way ANOVA (factorial analysis)* [YouTube]. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNlIn9bConY&ebc=ANyPxKr3WoCzUKxk nUziKZrWbb6hB7AiMuzg5sLSDtfFk7RXNpDGo_JwxCfOJisAPN85iCcnLb39e xsei4nLFjJzqc1VxMzQ4w

Longstreet, D. (Teacher). (2013). *How to interpret the results of a two-way ANOVA (factorial analysis)* [YouTube]. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajLdnsLPErE&ebc=ANyPxKr3WoCzUKxk nUziKZrWbb6hB7AiMuzg5sLSDtfFk7RXNpDGo_JwxCfOJisAPN85iCcnLb39e xsei4nLFjJzqc1VxMzQ4w

Mailhammer, R. (2008). The wolf in sheep's clothing: Camouflaged borrowing in Modern German. *Folia Linguistica, 42*(1), 177-193. Retrieved from https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/17676/1/flin.2008.177.pdf

Malekandathil, P. (2013). Trade, religion and politics: A study on the meanings of Portuguese activities in the northern zones of Bay of Bengal, 1632-1840. In *The Mughals, the Portuguese and the Indian Ocean: Changing imageries of maritime India* (pp. 185-204). New Delhi: Primus.

McPhee, M. C. (1927). College slang. *American Speech, 3*(2), 131-133. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/451517

Moore, R. L. (2005). Generation Ku: Individualism and China's Millennial Youth. *Ethnology, 44*(4), 357-376. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3774095

Morgan, M. (2004). Speech community. In S. A. Duranti (Ed.), *Companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 3-22). Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Retrieved from https://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl_images/content_store/sample_chapter/0631223525/Duranti_001.pdf

Muthiah, S., & MacLure, H. (2013). *The Anglo-Indians: A 500-year history*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books.

Schilling, N. (2013). *Sociolinguistic fieldwork*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Secunderabad. (2023, July 17). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secunderabad#:~:text=Geographically%20divided%20from%20Hyderabad%20by,sixth%2Dlargest%20metropolis%20in%20India.

Sengupta, U. (2021). Voicing a return: Exploring the impact of the BPO sector on the Anglo-Indian community in Secunderabad. In R. Andrews, & A. G. Roy (Eds.), *Beyond the metros: Anglo-Indians in India's smaller towns and cities* (pp. 116-131). New Delhi: Primus Books.

Spitzer, L. (1952). Slang. *Modern Language Notes, 67*(2), 99-103. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2909962

Spencer, J. (1966). The Anglo-Indians and their speech: A socio-linguistic essay. *Lingua, 16*, 57-70.

Tabouret-Keller, A. (1998). Language and identity. In C. Florian (Ed), *The handbook of sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishing. Retrieved from https://liduaeka.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/7/6/10761275/19_language_and_identity.pdf

The Constitution of India, 'Art. 366(2)', 1949. Retrieved from https://india.gov.in/sites/upload_files/npi/files/coi_part_full.pdf.

Umanadh, J. B. S. (2011, December 19). No homemade wine for Hyderabad's Little England. *Deccan Herald*. Retrieved from http://www.deccanherald.com/content/212734/no-homemade-wine-hyderabads-little.html

Wolfram, W., & Schilling-Estes, N. (2006). *American English: Dialects and variation* (2nd ed.). U.K.: Blackwell Publishing.

Yang, P. Q. (2000). Theories of ethnicity. *Ethnic studies: Issues and approaches* (pp. 39-60). [Adobe Acrobat Reader DC]. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Theories%20of%20Ethnicity.pdf

Zhou, Y., & Fan, Y. (2013). A sociolinguistic study of American Slang. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 3*(12), 2209-2213. doi: 10.4304/tpls.3.12.2209-2213

NOTES

[1] The data and much of the content of this article is derived from my Ph.D. thesis, which was published as *The Anglo-Indians in Hyderabad: Sociolinguistic, Historical, and Anthropological Perspectives*, (Primus Books, 2020). Despite being referred to as twin cities, Secunderabad and Hyderabad have separate histories and cultures. Secunderabad was directly influenced by British authority until 1948, while Hyderabad served as the seat of the princely state of Hyderabad under the Nizams. Secunderabad, which is geographically separated from Hyderabad by Hussain Sagar Lake, is now a

part of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation and no longer exists as an independent municipal body. Hyderabad, the name given to both cities together, is the sixth-largest city in India ("Secunderabad," 2023). In this article, both cities are collectively referred to as Hyderabad.

[2] Indian English is also referred to as General Indian English in sociolinguistic literature. The term Indian English or General Indian English refers to pan-Indian English features (Joseph & Suvarna Lakshmi, 2022).

[3] The language spoken by an individual and their identity as a speaker of the given language are intertwined. In this sense, language acts function as acts of identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, as cited in Tabouret-Keller, 1998). Language can be perceived as an extrinsic activity that readily identifies an individual as a member of a group, and at the same time, language can also be seen "as the means of identifying" self as belonging to a linguistic group (Tabouret-Keller, 1998).

[4] In fact, practicing Christianity is central to an Anglo-Indian identity (Andrews & Roy, 2021).

[5] Some of the typical Anglo-Indian specialties include spicy sausages, ball curry and yellow rice, vindaloo, *kul kuls*, etc. (Andrews & Roy, 2021, p. 9). Anglo-Indians are renowned for their prowess in cooking and the production of drinks. For instance, the Lallaguda people are renowned for their ability to produce wines from fruits like grapes, gooseberries, and blackberries. On my frequent trips to their houses, they were provided as beverages.

[6] Christine Lazarus (personal communication, September 29, 2014). She was a nominated member of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly from the Anglo-Indian community, from 2004 to 2009.

[7] Christine Lazarus, personal communication, September 29, 2014.

[8] The terms call centres and BPOs are used synonymously (Sengupta, 2021, p. 130).

[9] C. Lazarus, personal communication, October 16, 2014.

[10] A few participants used *flop* more frequently than *plug* and hence the term was also included in the test item.

[11] The ethnographic method used in the study was participant-observation.

[12] The total scores of Anglo-Indian slang were computed for the two groups and a t test was calculated online. In order to calculate t-test scores, the following website was used: "GraphPad Software Inc." (2015). Cohen's d or d was computed from the following website: "EasyCalculation.com" (2016).

[13] The null hypothesis can be rejected since $p < .001$ and the standardized mean difference of $d = 3.53$.

[14] The two-way ANOVA examines the mean differences between groups that have been divided based on two independent variables (also known as factors). A two-way ANOVA is mostly used to determine if the two independent factors and the dependent variable interact. In the study, the independent variables were gender and age and the dependent variable was Anglo-Indian slang.

[15] The calculation of two-way ANOVA was based on Longstreet (2013).

[16] The orthographic symbol D in kaka piDikartu refers to the voiced retroflex tap or flap sound. It is articulated by curling the tip of the tongue and hitting it against the postalveolar or palatal region in the roof of the mouth.