

# ENGLISH (INDIAN ENGLISH) AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

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## Part 2 (Aug 31, 2010)

In this section I will try to point some mannerisms, intonations, and gesticulations that are commonly seen when an Indian speaks English. Since English is not a native tongue to most Indians and both the Sanskrit derived languages of the North and Dravidian languages of the South India have different grammar and structure, it becomes second nature for Indians to incorporate their languages' structures into English.

For example, in Tamil (a Dravidian language of South India) when one wants to ask whether the other person is going to work (interrogative), they simply add an extended vowel to the end of the regular expression (affirmative).

Affirmative: நான் (I) வேலைக்குப் (work) போறேன் (go).

Interrogative: நீ (you) வேலைக்குப் (work) போறியா (go)?

So, when an Indian speaks in English they invariably add the extended vowel to the end of the sentence to convert an affirmative into an interrogative sentence, rather than moving the verb to beginning of the sentence. This will completely confound a person whose native language is English.

Let us look at an example, where Person A asks Person B whether they are going to work. A native English speaker will expect hear the following:

Regular affirmative: *I am going to work.*

Regular interrogative: *Are you going to work?*

Interrogative natural to Indians: *You are going to work, ha?*

So, if you didn't hear the 'ha?' at the end of sentence, you can't distinguish an affirmative from an interrogative sentence. So, please pay attention to the ending.

Don't get offended when an Indian asks you, "What is the time?" instead of the usual "Do you have the time?" Similarly, one should familiarize with these colorful terms Indians use to describe various colors (Indians relate to a familiar objects more often than the absolute name of the colors).

USAGE IN INDIA	USAGE IN THE WEST
She bought a <u>rose-coloured</u> dress	She bought a <u>pink</u> dress
<u>Cement-coloured</u> suitcase was lost	<u>Gray</u> suitcase was lost
The flower's <u>violet</u> colour was attractive	The flower's <u>purple</u> color was attractive

He has an *ivory-coloured* suit

He has an *off-white* suit

**Table 1** List of colorful terms Indians use to refer to everyday colors

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