

## インド：過去と未来-コースの紹介とレビュー

### India: Past and Future - Course Introduction and Review

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#### **要旨**

この論文では、2020年度前期に実施した国際英語学科の発展科目のうち、Area Studies (Asia & Oceania) において、インド文化をテーマにした科目の展開方法について詳しく説明します。理論的基礎、合理性、およびシラバスの開発について説明します。次に、この科目がどのように提供され、Covid-19によってどのような影響を受けたのかを調べます。最後に、簡単な学生調査で、この科目の目標がどの程度達成したか、また将来どのように改善されるべきかを評価します。

#### **Keywords**

CBI, India, World Englishes, Native Speakerism, Course development,

#### **Introduction and literature review**

#### **India**

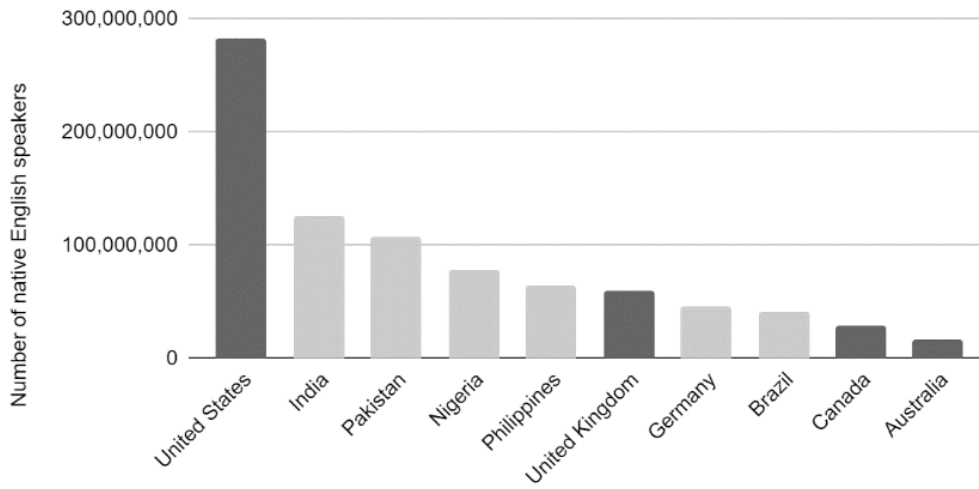
India has the world's fastest growing economy, the second largest population and one of the world's oldest civilizations. It also has the second largest number of English speakers, behind only the United States and far ahead of more 'traditional' English speaking countries such as the United Kingdom (ranked 6) and Canada and Australia (ranked 8 and 9 respectively).

By 2050 India is expected to have overtaken not only Japan but also the US to have the world's second largest economy. (PwC 2017) It will likely have grown to be the most populous country with over 1.64 billion people. India's tech giants may soon rival any of the US companies. (CNBC 2020) Thus we should expect trade and business with India to play a vital part of the Japanese economy.

Beyond business, India has a long and fascinating history, gorgeous palaces, amazing wildlife and fantastic cuisine and culture. It was also the inventor of everyday things such as shampoo, buttons, cotton and the number '0'. It is also the home of yoga, Buddhism, chess and sugar. India makes more movies than Hollywood, more tea than China and has all the best cricket players.

In short, it seems therefore lacking that most university English courses never mention India or other global English speakers.

Number of native English speakers



"English speaking" countries marked in dark grey

World Englishes

Learning “World Englishes” is a vital part of becoming a global citizen. By recognising that England is no longer the ‘owner’ of the Language we

expand our ideas of what ‘native English speakers’ look like and the validity of their accents and dialects.

Native speakerism plagues the English teaching industry. For example, of the 5200 ALTs (assistant language teachers) employed by the Japanese government’s JET programme 89% come from just 6 countries; the UK, US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Ireland. (JET Website) So whilst the programme may now boast that they have ALTs from 57 different countries, the majority of children taught by them will never meet a teacher from a ‘non-traditional’ native English-speaking country. So, not only do English Language Students receive only a very narrow perspective of English, but they also miss out on cross-cultural experiences and communication opportunities. As Kubota (2002) says “*learning English, particularly with an emphasis on the inner circle white middle class varieties, does not lend to international understanding. Rather, it is likely to promote a narrow view of world cultures and, furthermore, produce essentialized images of both inner circle countries and japan.*”

In Galloway and Rose’s (2013) wonderfully titled paper; “*They envision going to New York, not Jakarta*”. They say that as English is the lingua franca of the business world and that to find success in an ever more globalised world students need to see English as a tool for multilinguals to operate internationally.

## **India: Past and Future**

In Spring 2020 however a course was started at this university, to begin to give students an appreciation of the second largest variety of English, and the history and culture that created it - India. 38 students signed up, and I hope, enjoyed their classes and gained valuable knowledge. I certainly did.

This paper serves to set out the goals and objectives of the course, show how it achieved those and investigate participants' reactions before suggesting improvements for the future.

## **CBI**

CBI or content-based instruction is the method of teaching language via learning another subject in the L2. There are two main goals of the CBI method, firstly as Villalobos (2014) writes *"learners' motivation seems to increase when students learn about something that interests them, rather than just studying the language"*. Secondly whilst traditional language lessons cover grammar and discourse, CBI encourages the development of "Sociolinguistic and Strategic competencies" (Stryker 1997). Students learn about the world and see the L2 being used for academic purposes.

In Brinton (2003), she sets out the 5 key principles of CBI.

### **1. Base instructional decisions on content rather than language criteria.**

This means focusing on delivering a full understanding of the topic without avoiding texts and topics because the language is 'too difficult'. This follows Krashen's 1981 theory of "comprehensible input" - where "perhaps we acquire by understanding language that is "a little beyond" our current level of competence" (page 102)

### **1. Integrate skills**

A good CBI course is a multi-skill course. Reading, writing, listening as well as group project work and presentations should all be used. Not only does this make the class more dynamic it also allows students the opportunity to use language in realistic tasks.

### **1. Involve students actively in all phases of the learning process**

CBI should also be student centric. This means students taking a more active role in classroom activities and discussions and moreover becoming more responsible for their own learning.

1. **Choose content for its relevance to students' lives, interests, and/or academic goals.**

Students will clearly be more engaged with subject matter that interests them. While trying to deliver the content, topics chosen should be stimulating and pertinent.

1. **Select authentic texts and tasks.**

Whenever possible and practical the use of authentic materials is best. While modifications might have to be made for elementary students, it is “true that the use of authentic material promotes the learning of the culture of the target language” Villalobos (2014)

### Teaching culture

Most guiding in this project were Perez and Jolley (2020) and their paper *Increasing Awareness of Marginalized Communities with Unstructured Writing Tasks and TEDx Talks*. In their project they were able to promote understanding of women and minorities using CBI in their context of a Japanese University. Whilst it seems wrong to refer to Indian people as a minority group, Perez and Jolley's approach seemed a useful way of raising awareness of cultural differences.

In their course, Perez and Jolley used short, filmed lectures detailing the personal journeys, struggles and success of members of three marginalized groups: LBGT, women and 'halfu'. By using the real stories of these groups, it enables students to connect and sympathize with the minority groups.

Unfortunately, there is little in the way of material on teaching Indian culture to Japanese students. One article Dowling (2011) used the then recently published book and movie “Slumdog Millionaire” as a core of a course that covered not only the text but a wide variety of cultural and linguistic content. To make the course accessible to the student his three key steps were:

1. Scaffolding (to make the text more comprehensible and accessible to the students)
2. Authenticity (bringing India into the classroom as much as possible)

3. Involvement (where students are, in class, not passive but active and interactive)

Other methods and ideas were drawn from materials and activities created for UK and US cultural textbook adapting them to India.

### **KEY Resources for Indian Culture**

To bring authentic texts and voices to the classroom several online resources proved invaluable. Some of the most important ones are discussed below.

#### **Asian Boss**

Founded by Stephen Park and Kei Ibaraki in 2013 they describe themselves as a “Global media company for culturally-curious and socially-aware millennials”. They produce videos, often in the vox pop interview format, discussing social, political and environmental issues in many countries across Asia. Interviews are usually in English and always subtitled. They allow normal young people to share their views and say their mission is “to bridge cultural and social gaps” and improve cross cultural communication.

Videos used in this course include: “Do Indians Know How Their English Accent Sounds?” An excellent look at Indian self-perception of their dialect and how they are ridiculed around the world. And “We Spent A Day in The Largest Slum in India” which had interviews with a number of residents of the largest slum in Mumbai, discussing their homes, struggles and lives.

#### **TED Talks**

Started in 1984, TED talks were created to spread ideas and raise awareness of new discoveries, social issues and personal stories. The use of TED talks has been well explored in the context of the EFL classroom. (Abdulrahman 2018, Broadaway 2012 and Harb, 2018). What makes them most useful of the learner is the full transcripts, subtitles and translations into the L1. (Broadaway 2012) This scaffolding allows all students to learn from the content and engage with the topic.

One of the talks used in this course was Chetna Gala Sinha’s 2018 lecture “How women in rural India turned courage into capital” describing how she worked with poor uneducated rural women to set up their own bank after facing discrimination.

## **Dangal**

When choosing a Bollywood movie for this course several criteria had to be filled. Firstly, the movie had to be available in Japan. Secondly it needed to have Japanese subtitles to make it accessible for all the students. Then it had to be representative of both Bollywood movies and of Indian culture overall. Finally, it had to be of a subject of interest to students from Japan. After a long search I eventually decided on the 2016 movie Dangal directed by Nitesh Tiwari and starring Bollywood legend Aamir Khan. The plot is based on the true story of the Indian women's wrestling champion Geeta Phogat. Her father, a retired wrestler himself, was greatly disappointed by his lack of sons to continue his wrestling legacy. He decided instead to train both his daughters in traditional Indian wrestling. Though at first reluctant, the girls both soon realise this is a way to escape a life of arranged child marriages and domestic duties. Geeta goes on to win gold at the Commonwealth Games and qualify for the Olympics. Currently all 6 Phogat sisters are professional wrestlers.

The movie was chosen for its focus on the lives and struggles of young women. It highlights the social and cultural pressures faced by women, but also shows that they can be overcome. It is a heart-warming true story that can shed light on this aspect of Indian society. As said by the Times of India (2017) in their review “[the film’s] messages on our obsession with the male child (prevalent since the dark ages), myopic stand on bringing up our daughters and the administration’s pathetic disposition towards sports, are loud and clear.”

## **India: past and future - course methodology**

Following the CBI principles

This course maintained the key principles of a CBI course.

### **1. Base instructional decisions on content rather than language criteria**

1. The course syllabus topics were chosen to form a natural progression, starting with basic geography, history, regional differences etc before moving onto more detailed topics. The order was chosen to best give an overview of the country with little regard to any linguistic need.

2. The only consideration to language was the choice of some American accented videos towards the start of the course and working up to full Indian English speakers later.

## **2. Integrate skills**

1. Students on this course were able to practice a wide range of skills from passive listening, and reading to group work, research, essay writing, presentations and collaborative writing.

## **2. Involve students actively in all phases of the learning process**

1. Students played a very active role in the classroom with frequent research and presentation activities as well as information swapping and discussions.

## **2. Choose content for its relevance to students' lives, interests, and/or academic goals.**

1. At several points in the students learnt about the lives and issues surrounding young women in India. This was done so that students would hopefully identify and empathise with them.

## **2. Select authentic texts and tasks**

1. This course contained a wide range of authentic texts. Notably: the Bollywood movie Dangal which was shown in the original Hindi (with Japanese subtitles).
2. Other texts, while often prepared for a non-Indian viewer, were generally meant for a native English-speaking viewer and as such were 'authentic'

### **Goals and objectives of the course**

My goals when setting out this course were to attempt to broaden students' understanding of Native Speaker English, to demystify India and hopefully encourage students to have warm feelings towards and a desire to visit the country. In addition, students should develop their independent learning skills with research and presentations. Let us look at each in turn and how it could be achieved:

**Goal:** familiarity with 'Indian English' and to see them as Native speakers

When, as stated above, there are about twice as many Indian English speakers as British Indian speakers, ESL learners should at least be able to at least partly comprehend it. The Indian English dialect is quite distinctive but no less valid than any other variety.

**Method:** Wherever possible authentic listening texts are to be used, with English subtitles. By repeatedly hearing the Indian dialect with matching subtitles students will be able to attach the sounds to the letters and learn to understand it. One lesson in the course is dedicated to the dialect, with explicit lessons on the phonetic and grammatical changes to Indian English as well as Indian vocabulary and expressions.

**Goal:** Understand India. Students could probably name a dozen states and cities in America, its president, film stars and popular foods. It would likely be impossible for them to do the same for India. After the course they should also feel more familiar with the country and hopefully want to visit it someday.

**Method:** The students' disparity in knowledge was highlighted in the first lesson. In a simple quiz they were asked basic trivia questions about the US and India. Obviously, they found one half the quiz much easier than the other. In the following weeks, the course attempted to fill in those gaps, highlighting traditional and pop culture, food and key tourist spots.

While difficult issues such as poverty, women's rights and caste must be included on a course like this, care must be taken to avoid the impression that India is a backward and regressive country. There are dark sides to every country, but an impression gained only by watching the news could be quite unfairly negative. India does have slums and violence, but it also has cities and subways and the potential for a bright future.

### Course plan

The original course plan as stated on the Baika Campus Community System website was as follows. The number refers to the week in the semester.

1. Introduction and overview



2. Geography and pen-pals
3. History
4. Religions and customs
5. Pop culture, Movie Part 1
6. Food, Movie Part 2
7. Dialect, Movie Part 3
8. Law and politics
9. Sport and dance
10. The future, Start research project
11. Around India
12. Research revision
13. Presentation day
14. Indian food party!
15. TBA

Grades would be distributed as follows:

- 20% Pen-pal participation
- 30% Report
- 30% Presentation
- 20% Weekly Homework

### **Coronavirus**

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in many adjustments and changes having to be made suddenly all over the world in every aspect of life. This course was no exception. With the virus hitting hard in India the pen pal section of the syllabus had to be shelved. Stay at home orders meant the Indian restaurant trip and any plans for guest speakers became impracticable.

The move to online classes necessitated huge changes to the lessons themselves. For example, while group work and discussion are possible via Zoom breakout sessions it is much harder to monitor and assist when problems arise. The order and style of various lessons had to be

changed. In addition, rather than one big research project the students engage in several smaller research homework assignments.

In addition, the lessons on Indian film became challenging. The movie had to be shown via zoom in class over several weeks. Although it cannot be said to have given the best viewing experience, it was the pragmatic choice.

Should it be safe to do so, these aspects of the syllabus will be revisited in 2021.

### **Spring 2020 course review**

With all the adaptations being made to shift to online learning, the revised course plan with details and explanations is below.

Class	Topic	Details
1	Introductions and overview	Course Introduction. Students learnt about the basic geography of India. For homework students researched key geographical and demographic facts about both India and Japan so as to compare the two countries in an essay.
2	The Regions of India	Students learnt about how the geography of the subcontinent affects each region and how they differ in things such as religion, ethnicity, climate and colonial influences. For homework, each student was assigned one of the 36 states and territories of India to research and present to class in the next class.
3	History	After presenting their region, students had a lecture on the key points of the history of India. For homework they watched two further short lectures of history before writing a summarising essay.

4	Hinduism	In this class students learnt about the practices and tenets of India's most popular religion. They learnt about sacred texts, the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Ramayana and the Mahabharata. We also covered the main gods and the story of Hinduism and how it relates to Buddhism
5	Bollywood and Movie part 1	Students learned about the history of Bollywood and were shown the first part of the movie Dangal. For homework they had to listen to and write their impressions of a selection of Indian pop music.
6	Movie Section 2	After discussing pop music, we watched the second part of the movie. For homework students answered questions on the movie.
7	Movie section 3	Students finished watching the movie and their homework was to write an essay on the movie and their impressions
8	Dance	Students learnt about one of the earliest forms of Indian dance Bharatanatyam; its history, key movements and story-telling methods. For homework they researched one of the 8 traditional forms of dance and prepared a short presentation for their classmates.
9	Indian English	After giving their dance presentations, students learn about Indian English; the phonetic, vocabulary and grammatical changes that are common. They also learnt about how young Indian people feel about discrimination about their accent.
10	Poverty	Students learnt about slum life in Mumbai and other social and health issues brought on by income inequality and how some charities and organizations are changing this.
11	Food	Students watched cooking vlogs by Indian chefs and learnt about 6 delicious recipes. Their homework was to make one of the dishes

		themselves and upload a picture. Students unable to cook in dorms were encouraged to visit or order takeaway from an Indian restaurant instead for an authentic experience.
12	Women	In this class students learnt about some of the struggles faced by women in India. The TED talk by Chetna Gala Sinha, “How women in rural India turned courage into capital” was used to show how women working together can overcome their problems.
13	Sports - Cricket	In this class students learnt about India’s most popular sport, its history from England, its development under the British Raj and now how India’s 2020 League is dominating the sport
14	The future of India	Students learnt about India’s Silicon Valley, tech sector and start-ups. The lesson also talked about India’s future prospects and plans.
15	Final class	In this class students consolidated what they had learnt and discussed their thoughts and impressions overall.

### Evaluating the Spring 2020 course

As this is a new course, for both Baika and myself, I thought it would be useful to assess how well the course fits the needs of the students and whether it achieved the goals and objectives it set out to.

#### Methodology

During the final class of the semester all 40 students were asked to fill out a 6-question survey on the key goals to review the course. 36 of the students chose to complete it.

In the questions, inspired by those of Perez and Jolley (2020), the students were asked to what extent, from completely agree to completely disagree, they agreed with the following statements that corresponded to the goals of this course:

- Knowledge of India

- After taking this course I feel I understand Indian Culture more
- After taking this course I would like to visit India someday
- CBI and academic English
  - Taking this course improved my research skills
  - I feel that this course has improved my listening skills in a constructive way.
- Appreciation of Indian English and other global Englishes
  - I feel that I have become able to understand and listen to Indian English.
  - I feel that it is important for students of English to learn global Englishes

There was a final open question allowing the students to bring up anything they liked or disliked about the course.

To facilitate answering, all the questions were translated into Japanese by a professional translator. The survey was administered via google forms. Students were informed that the survey was anonymous, and they were not obliged to answer it.

### Results

The results of the survey were analysed using excel. Firstly, presented are the results for the statements about becoming more familiar and gaining a good impression of India itself.

- Knowledge of India

After taking this course I feel I understand Indian Culture more		
	Students	Percent
5. Strongly Agree	9	25%
4. Agree	26	72%
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	3%
2. Disagree	0	0%
1. Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Mean score	4.22	

After taking this course I would like to visit India someday		
	Students	Percent
5. Strongly Agree	4	11%

4. Agree	17	47%
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	8	22%
2. Disagree	7	19%
1. Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Mean score	3.5	

As can be seen from these tables, in the first respect the course successfully achieved its goal with almost everyone agreeing that they had improved their knowledge of India. In the second, the majority (almost 60%) said that they would now like to visit India someday. Although a significant proportion did seem less enthused, it is important to highlight both the positives and negatives of a country, especially when there are not insignificant dangers to young women.

- CBI and academic English

Taking this course improved my research skills		
	Students	Percent
5. Strongly Agree	9	25%
4. Agree	10	28%
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	17	47%
2. Disagree	0	0%
1. Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Mean score	3.78	

I feel that this course has improved my listening skills in a constructive way.		
	Students	Percent
5. Strongly Agree	3	8%
4. Agree	14	39%
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	50%
2. Disagree	1	3%
1. Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Mean score	3.53	

For these goals, again the course was generally positive. Though perhaps some of the negative responses are due to the nature of zoom and online classes. Nonetheless I will consider ways to assist students in these areas next year; suggesting websites and books they might turn to for

information. It may also be useful to provide students with vocabulary lists of key Indian vocabulary as these are both especially important for understanding but also entirely new to them.

- Appreciation of Indian English and other global Englishes

As a learner of English, I feel that it is important to learn global Englishes		
	Students	Percent
5. Strongly Agree	6	17%
4. Agree	26	72%
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	11%
2. Disagree	0	0%
1. Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Mean	4.06	

I feel that I have become able to understand and listen to Indian English.		
	Students	Percent
5. Strongly Agree	1	3%
4. Agree	17	47%
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	39%
2. Disagree	4	11%
1. Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Mean	3.42	

Happily, the vast majority of the students now recognise the importance of global Englishes. However, unfortunately they do not feel that confident in their ability to understand Indian English. 50% feel more able but 50% do not feel positively about their comprehension of the accent. Next semester I would like to spend more time on this, with more structured listening practice and scaffolding.

### **Answers to the free question**

In the final question of the survey students were encouraged to freely write anything good and/or bad about the course. There were a large variety of answers, but some common themes emerged.

One typical answer is *“My favorite place is where I have new learning about India. What I am not good at is that Indian English is hard to hear and there are too many tasks. “Another one “I like students can speak their free opinions. But I research many things about India to do like this so, it’s difficult for me to research about India.” Another mentions issues with the medium “It was good to use YouTube. I’m not good at breakout rooms because it makes it difficult for some people to talk.”*

The overall consensus was that the amount of task and the content of the listening were particularly challenging for the students. Whilst some enjoyed the research and video aspects, others found them too difficult. This I believe is partly an effect of online classes, as an instructor is unable to monitor student progress and get instant class feedback. It is much easier to spot and assist struggling students in face to face classes. There were also issues with how students were accessing the online learning environment. Many could only attend via smartphone, which with its small screen and lack of keyboard does make classes tough.

There may also have been too many tasks. With all students having to adapt to a new style of learning many assignments did become more time consuming. Depending on the format of next year’s teaching this issue may have to be revisited.

### Conclusion

India: Past and Future was an enjoyable course to teach. It is not often that an instructor gets to be so creative and bring new ideas and experiences to the classroom. The sudden change in teaching medium necessitated a lot of adjustments and reduced the scope of this course.

It did seem however that the students enjoyed and learnt a lot from taking it. Their knowledge of a fascinating country and culture increased, their listening research and presentation skills improved and their appreciation for world Englishes expanded.

I hope to be able to continue to improve and develop this programme and would encourage the inclusion of world Englishes at other institutions.



It is too early to tell how Covid-19 will affect the course next year, whether teaching remains online or returns to the classroom. From the experience I have gained this year I hope that whatever format the course takes it will build upon this year's and continue to grow.

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