

జనరల్ ఇంగ్లీష్

Common Errors - 1

Look at the following Telugu sentence:

అతను మాకు మంచి సలహాలు ఇచ్చారు.

A Telugu person may try to translate the above sentence into English in the following way:

He gave us good advices.

For a native speaker of English the usage of 'advices' seems quite odd and funny because 'advice' is an uncountable noun and it has no plural form. So the correct sentence is 'He gave us good advice'.

If we have to speak or write in English accurately, we should keep in mind all the rules, exceptions and oddities of the language. We can avoid such errors by extensive reading, learning and practice.

Common Errors With Nouns

Incorrect	Correct	Explanation
The sceneries are beautiful.	The scenery is beautiful.	The following nouns are generally used in the singular form only and they are not used with plural verbs: advice, luggage, hair, machinery, information, bread, equipment, alphabet, furniture, baggage, cash, scenery, news, etc.,
The furnitures are damaged.	The furniture is damaged.	
The machinery are not working properly.	The machinery is not working properly.	
The informations about him is true.	The information about him is true.	
The committee, which were formed in 2015, are made up of four men and four women.	The committee, which was formed in 2015, is made up of four men and four women.	Some collective nouns are used with singular verbs when they are used as a body or group and not as members: audience, board, committee, crowd, family, jury, ministry, mob, police, public, staff, team etc.,
The audience were spellbound.	The audience was spellbound.	
The family are on holiday.	The family is on holiday.	
The police has arrested the thief.	The police have arrested the thief.	But when the above nouns denote members or individuals, the verb is used in plural form.
The committee has asked for sandwiches for lunch.	The committee have asked for sandwiches for lunch.	
The cattle is grazing in the fields.	The cattle are grazing in the fields.	Some nouns are singular in form but plural in meaning and they always take a plural verb. e.g.: infantry, gentry, cattle, clergy, nobility, poultry etc.
The peasantry is very happy.	The peasantry are very happy.	

Incorrect	Correct	Explanation
Politics are an interesting subject.	Politics is an interesting subject.	Some nouns are plural in form but they are used as singular.
The news are false.	The news is false.	
Measles have broken out in this area.	Measles has broken out in this area.	e.g.: Mathematics, Economics, Physics, Politics, Linguistics, Mechanics, Statistics, Measles, Mumps, Billiards, Carroms, Athletics, Gymnastics, Innings, series, news.
The scissors is very sharp.	The scissors are very sharp.	Some nouns are used only as plural. They have no singular forms. e.g.: jeans, pants, trousers, scissors, binoculars, glasses, spectacles, tongs, shoes, socks, alms, oats, savings, auspices, surroundings, stairs, ashes, refreshments, earnings, quarters, arrears, assets, statistics (data), outskirts, thanks, premises etc.
My spectacle is missing.	My spectacles are missing.	
His trouser is loose.	His trousers are loose.	
I am allowed to stay in the quarter.	I am allowed to stay in the quarters.	
The surrounding is not clean.	The surroundings are not clean.	
I bought shoe yesterday.	I bought shoes yesterday.	
His asset is seized.	His assets are seized.	
He provided the blinds with food.	He provided the blind with food.	
The government should pay attention to the problems of the poors.	The government should pay attention to the problems of the poor.	The expressions 'the blind', 'the deaf', 'the unemployed', 'the dead', 'the poor', etc., are plural. The word 'the blind' refers to all blind people.
I have two son-in-laws.	I have two sons-in-law.	Plurals of compound nouns are formed by adding 's' to the main word. e.g.: brothers-in-law, commanders-in-chief, passersby etc.
There are thirty females in the class.	There are thirty girls in the class.	'Male and 'female' are used as adjectives but not as nouns.
Many males attended the meeting.	Many men attended the meeting.	
It is my friend's Kartik's car.	It is my friend Kartik's car.	When two nouns are in apposition, the 'apostrophe +s' is added to the second noun to show possession

Incorrect	Correct	Explanation
I asked my cousin sister why she was anxious.	I asked my cousin why she was anxious.	Cousin is a genderless word that's usually clarified by saying he or she in the context.
Ramya bought five dozens mangoes.	Ramya bought five dozen mangoes.	Words like dozen, score, hundred, thousand, lakh, million etc. do not take plural when preceded by a numeral.
Two lakhs students applied for the civil services exam.	Two lakh students applied for the civil services exam.	
Give me a hundred-rupees note.	Give me a hundred-rupee note.	If a compound word is formed by joining a definite numerical adjective and a noun (by a hyphen), the noun so used will always be in the singular number.
A three-men enquiry committee has been set up.	A three-man enquiry committee has been set up.	

Common Errors With Pronouns

It is me who drew the picture.	It is I who drew the picture.	If a verb 'to be' has a pronoun for its complement, the pronoun must be used in the nominative form.
If I were her, I would accept the proposal.	If I were she, I would accept the proposal.	
We enjoyed at the party.	We enjoyed ourselves at the party.	When the subject of the verb is the receiver of the action, the action is said to be reflected. Such verbs are used reflexively.
You should avail the opportunity.	You should avail yourself of the opportunity	
Myself did all the work.	I myself did all the work.	Reflexive pronouns alone cannot be used for emphasis and they should be preceded by pronouns in nominative case.
Yourself and I may be asked to attend the function.	You and I may be asked to attend the function.	A reflexive pronoun (e.g.: myself, himself, themselves, yourself) cannot be used as the subject of a sentence.
We have to sort out the differences between you and I.	We have to sort out the differences between you and me.	Verbs and prepositions are followed by objective case of a pronoun.
She is teaching Bhavya and he.	She is teaching Bhavya and him.	

PRACTICE TEST

In each of the following questions, there are four sentences. Choose the correct sentence that has no errors.

1.
 - 1) I don't need your advices.
 - 2) The news is very disappointing.
 - 3) Her hairs are very beautiful.
 - 4) He doesn't know the alphabets of the language.
2.
 - 1) Statistics is a difficult subject.
 - 2) The police has arrested the thief.
 - 3) I met my cousin brother yesterday.
 - 4) While walking on the road we found a thousand-rupees note.
3.
 - 1) Majority is in favour of the proposal.
 - 2) It is my friend's Kishen's house.
 - 3) The scissors belongs to me.
 - 4) That book is yours, not mine.
4.
 - 1) Neither Rishi nor Khyati are attending school tomorrow.
 - 2) Six females are working in our office.
 - 3) He fell down from a ten-foot high wall.
 - 4) I send herewith my hearty thank for your timely help.
5.
 - 1) You, I and he are allowed to go.
 - 2) I, you and he are allowed to go.
 - 3) You, he and I are allowed to go.
 - 4) He, I and you are allowed to go.
6.
 - 1) I have eaten two breads.
 - 2) We have purchased many furnitures.
 - 3) Let she say something.
 - 4) If I were he, I would not do it.
7.
 - 1) Poultry are domesticated fowl kept for eggs and meat.
 - 2) The poors should be helped by the riches.
 - 3) My shoe is very expensive.
 - 4) Bring me two dozens oranges.
8.
 - 1) My spectacle is on the table.
 - 2) He has three brothers-in-law.
 - 3) Herself finished the project without taking help from anyone.
 - 4) They who live in glass houses should not throw stones on others.

9. 1) Somebody is crying in the room, isn't somebody?
2) One should respect once teachers.
3) Each of the girls have been given a mango.
4) Neither of the fans is working.
10. 1) I enjoy during summer holidays.
2) We should avail ourselves of our opportunities.
3) His trouser is very tight.
4) Athletics are good for health.

ANSWERS

1-2; 2-1; 3-4; 4-3; 5-3; 6-4; 7-1; 8-2; 9-4; 10-2

Writer: CVS Ravindranath