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A Study of Mother Tongue Interference in the English Pronunciation of Pothohari Speakers

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate the interference of mother tongue in the English pronunciation of Pothohari speakers. The distinctive features of English pronunciation of Pakistani Pothohari speakers are analyzed keeping focus on selected vowels, diphthongs and /r/ sound. A set of nine phonemes: diphthongs ɪə, aɪ, eɪ, əʊ, ɔɪ, vowels ɒ, ɜ:, æ and /r/ phoneme are focused. The study has foregrounded, in distinctive features, theory for theoretical considerations. Twenty native Pothohari speakers participated in the study. A list of eighteen sentences with the target sounds is used for data collection purpose. The utterances of sample participants are recorded and analyzed to realize the objectives of the study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are utilized to analyze the recorded data. Received Pronunciation (RP) is used as a reference tool to determine the differences. The findings identified certain distinctive features in English pronunciation of the Pothohari speakers marked by the influence of the mother tongue.

Keywords: distinctive features, English language, interference, Pothohari language, pronunciation

Introduction

Language is a tool of communicating ideas, thoughts and desires for psychological and physiological survival of human race. It is one of the attributes that distinguishes humans from animals due to its distinctive qualities like productivity, arbitrariness and displacement. “Technically speaking, a language is a dynamic set of visual and vocal symbols of communication and the elements which are used to manipulate them” (Hashmi, 2012, p.2). “Crystal sees language as a controlled behavior, shared in various degrees systematically and conventionally by all the people in a given speech community for the purpose of communication” (Hashmi, 2012). As per Ethnologue (2020) on Languages of the World, there are nearly 7097 languages spoken across the globe and the widely spoken languages are Mandarin Chinese, English, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Malay, French, Portuguese, Bengali,

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Russian, German, Japanese etc. English is widespread in the United States, the United Kingdom, Africa, Republic of Ireland, Asia, Caribbean, Pacific Islands and Australia. According to Jason (2016) English has 371 million native speakers and 611 million non-native speakers which continue increasing and it is the official language in seventy countries. The use of English in world's economically influential countries have raised its status to the second most spoken language as English speaking countries are responsible for 40% of world's total GNP.

Apart from the mother tongue, we need to have a common language for communicating with outer parts of the world and English is a lingua franca known to most of the people in the world. Several countries in South Asia have adopted English as their official language for advantages in terms of commerce, trade and general communication. Many of the countries in Asia have multilingual environment where more than one language is prevalent. As English is a widespread language, it has established its varieties like African English, Indian English and Pakistani English. These varieties were transplanted by the deliberate language policies of the British Empire in colonial era.

The present study attempts to investigate the interference of mother tongue in English pronunciation of Pothohari by considering selected vowels, diphthongs and /r/ sound. Pothohari is the Indo-Aryan language spoken in the Pothohar Plateau in the northern Punjab, in most of the Pakistani polity of Azad Kashmir, and in the western areas of the India held state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is a language with oral tradition. It has at least three major dialects: Pothohari, Mirpuri and Pahari. Pothohari, is spoken in the Pothohar Plateau, an area that includes parts of the districts of Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Chakwal and Gujrat. The three dialects of pothohari are mutually intelligible, but the difference between the northernmost and the southernmost dialects is enough to cause difficulties in understanding.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the distinctive features of pronunciation of selected English vowels, diphthongs and /r/ sound as spoken by Pothohari speakers?

RQ2: How interference of mother tongue influences the English pronunciation of Pothohari speakers?

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the distinctive features of selected Pakistani English vowels, diphthongs and /r/ phoneme in comparison to RP.
2. To study the influence of mother tongue on English pronunciation of Pothohari speakers.

Significance of the Study

Pothohari language is a less studied variety and the present work will contribute to understanding the distinctive features of English pronunciation of Pothohari speakers. It is expected that the study will help to explore the pronunciation difficulties of the speakers. The knowledge raised through this study will facilitate English teachers and learners to identify and know how to utter speech sounds to improve their pronunciation skills. The study will be a significant contribution in expanding the debate of mother tongue impact in acquiring pronunciation of foreign languages.

Literature Review

World Englishes

As mentioned earlier that English holds second position in the list of most widely spoken languages in the world, it has emerged into different varieties in different geographical regions and has been localized in those contexts. “The indigenization or localization of English occurs whenever it is used by a speaker of another language” (Rahman, n.d.). Baumgardener (1993) cited by Kilickaya (2009) states, “world Englishes form a unique and variegated sociolinguistic mosaic and each variety whether already standard or in the process of standardization is an integral part of this unprecedented international phenomenon” (p.50). “Kachru (1996) provided an influential model of the world Englishes. The model comprises three concentric circles of English usage: inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle. Each circle represents different types of spreads, pattern of acquisition, and functions of English in diverse cultural contexts” (Khan, 2012, p.90). Lekova (2010) says that “Kachru’s model continues to provide useful shorthand for classifying contexts of English worldwide” (p.172).

The established and codified varieties make the inner circle of language usage model while the varieties included in the outer or expanding circle are striving for standardization (Jenkins, 2007). English bears official or historical status in the countries that are the part of the outer circle. It means majority of the Common Wealth Nations and populous countries like Pakistan, Nigeria and India are included in outer or expanding circle. Jenkins (2007, p. 16) asserts “varieties of English spoken in the outer circle are often described as norm developing as they are currently developing their own standards”. As mentioned earlier that varieties of English spoken in diverse communities and nations have developed their own phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic systems that differentiate them from

Standard English or British English. According to Khan (2012, p.90) “World Englishes may vary according to the culture or nation in which they are spoken and resultant convergences with that nation’s native language”. According to Mesthrie (2006) as cited by Khan (2012) the varieties of English “deviate from native British or American Englishes and have often been treated as heavily influenced by co-existing indigenous languages” (p.20).

According to Kachru (1982) as cited by Rahman (2005) “a deviation is different from the norm in the sense that it is the result of the new ‘un-English’ linguistic and cultural setting in which the language is used; it is the result of a productive process which marks the typical variety specific features” (p.15). These variety specific features have originated in the form of varieties like Chinglish, Pinglish, Inglish etc. Language change is a constant, divergent and universal phenomenon that is responsible for language variation. These variations may be at phonetic, phonological, morphological or syntactic levels. In other words these linguistic levels provide grounding to generate new variety of a language. “Due to the influence of native languages, regional English varieties are emerged with some distinctive features that distinguish them from native English” (Noor, 2016, p.2). Ashraf (2012) proposed that new varieties of English emerged due to transformations caused by the interaction of the local languages. So only imperialism is not the main impetus behind the global dominance of English. The local varieties are a major contributor to strengthening its world-wide status.

Pakistani English

The roots of English in Asia date back to colonial era. It has enjoyed a remarkable status in the multilingual and multicultural makeup of South Asia and still continues to adapt itself to its new environment. English is valued highly in Pakistani society where a lot of prestige is attached to it; and a lot of time, energy and money is invested for learning English language. According to Khan (2012) “English is used as a native language and non-native standard language in ex-colonies of the British Empire”. “English was introduced in the areas now comprising Pakistan by the British colonial power in the nineteenth century. As it was the language of domains of power---government, bureaucracy, judiciary, military, education, commerce, media---at the elitist level, it became a preserve of the elite and a means of empowerment. It also became a status marker and a social asset, thus functioning as a class differentiation” (Rahman, 2005, p.1). English enjoys the status of co-official language along with Urdu in Pakistan and is the language of education, legislation, bureaucracy, etc.

It is an admitted fact that expansion of English in Pakistan is very quick. According to Botlan (2008), eighteen million, constituting 11% of total population, speak it in Pakistan making it the third largest English using Asian country” (Raza, [2008](#), p.104). The roots of Pakistani English are embedded deeply in colonial era before the partition of the sub-continent and it occurred on account of the British policy of pushing back the indigenous languages in India and introducing English at the administration level to consolidate their rule. (Hassan, [2014](#))

Pakistani English is an established variety with its peculiar features as Sheikh ([2012](#)) claims that Pakistani English has developed its own linguistic identity and culture that does not make it inferior to British Standard English. Pakistani English has now established its own linguistic identity and justification with its distinct phonological features, syntactic differences and culture-specific lexicon” (Noor, [2016](#), p.2). Pakistan is a multilingual country having six major and seventy two minor languages (Rehman, [2005](#), Coleman, [2010](#), Ethnologue, [2020](#)) which have added significantly to a different shade of Pakistani English.

Baumgardener ([1993](#)) has talked over the localization of Pakistani English that occurred on account of the impact of local languages on its lexicon, pronunciation, syntax etc. English is undergoing constant transformation in Pakistan and also in South Asia that is evident from the use of hybrid structures. “It displays many characteristics of its own norm and these distinctive features signify the independent trend of the Pakistani English” (Ahmad & Ali, [2014](#), p.63). The major difference between Pakistani English and British and American English is in terms of pronunciation. According to Rahman ([1999](#)) as cited by Mehmood ([2009](#), p.114) “Pakistani English has at least four distinct varieties named as, anglicized Pakistani English, acrolect, mesolect and basilect” with respect to social class.

Interference of Mother Tongue in English Varieties

Pronunciation is a fundamental capability that the learners need to acquire in language learning because it can directly affect comprehension and accuracy. The learners of a foreign language face major difficulties with pronunciation. There are multiple factors that affect pronunciation but the native language is the most influential factor affecting a learner’s pronunciation (Dhillon, [2016](#), p.121). The phonetic differences between the native language and the foreign language hinder effective communication. Most of the times sound combinations in one language are not pronounced in the same way as are pronounced in another language. Languages are specific in their phonology (Mamo, [2016](#)). Like in English vowels are classified as long, short, cardinals and diphthongs. It is a challenge for the non-

native speakers to approach these differences as a result they commit errors in pronouncing them.

One of the major causes of variation among varieties of English language is the adaptation of phonological features by the non-native speakers as according to Sheikh (2012) “there is a strong tendency in non-native varieties to restructure the sounds of native English to suit their purpose” (p.2). Ahmar & Ahmer (2004), in their study of Pakistani English vowels have divided the vowels into two groups. The first group contains invariant vowel realizations which are spoken without variation by Pakistani speakers and some of them are similar to RP. On the other hand, the second group consists of vowels that vary in their realization as spoken by different speakers.

A significant factor that keeps a Pakistani learner or speaker of English from understanding the native RP speakers’ speech is that in connected speech the native RP speakers do not pronounce every sound of every word individually (Ahmed, 2014). This disturbs a Pakistani learner’s listening and speaking ability. In our local languages especially in Pothohari there is no concept of deletion or shortening of sound. Moreover, in Pothohari besides consonant sounds majority of the vowel sounds are produced with a high frequency of friction in the vocal tract. Pothohari sound system is highly stressed sound system and sounds are produced with force. This local density of sound production affects the foreign language (English) pronunciation of the native Pothohari speakers.

Methodology

The present study is qualitative and descriptive in nature. It concerns with Pothohari speakers’ English pronunciation problems. The purpose of this study is to investigate the distinctive features of selected participant’s pronunciation of English vowels, diphthongs and /r/ sound. Previous studies have demonstrated that the errors made by non-native speakers of English are systematic, they have a specific pattern. English pronunciation problems are generally caused due to the influence of mother tongue or due to the absence of particular sounds in local varieties which results in substitution. “They substitute the sounds that they do not have in their native language, with other sounds which are close to them in the place of articulation” (Hassan, 2014, p.31). Lack of correspondence between sounds and spellings is another major issue.

To explore the reasons for mispronunciation, the present study’s population comprises female students of Govt. degree college women kallar syedan Rawalpindi. The sample was selected randomly comprising twenty female

students whose mother tongue is Pothohari while Urdu and English are spoken in college.

Data Collection Technique

Audio method was used for data collection. A list of eighteen sentences was prepared for the selected sounds, with two sentences for each sound. The participants were asked to utter the sentences and their utterances were recorded. The target words in the recorded utterances were transcribed using IPA symbols and were then compared to Standard Received Pronunciation (RP) based on *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 3rd Edition* for the assessment of accuracy and variation.

Data Analysis Technique

The following techniques were utilized to process the data:

1. The recorded sounds of the participants were listened repeatedly.
2. The participants' pronunciation was transcribed by using IPA phonetic symbols.
3. Compared to Standard Received Pronunciation (RP) based on *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 3rd Edition*.
4. The recorded data was analyzed qualitatively to look for variation; and quantitative method was used to express the results in percentages. Received Pronunciation was used as a reference model to look for differences.

The study is limited to studying the distinctive features of the selected vowels, υ , ε , æ diphthongs, ɪə , aɪ , eɪ , əʊ , oɪ , and $/r/$ sound of Pakistani English as pronounced by Pothohari speakers. The preference for selection of these sounds is based on personal observation. Being Pothohari speaker and in the capacity of English teacher of the native Pothohari students the researcher frequently observed that Pothohari speakers mostly deviate from standard RP rules while pronouncing these sounds.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the distinctive features of selected Pakistani English vowels, diphthongs and $/r/$ phoneme as spoken by Pothohari speakers. The study relies upon distinctive features theory for theoretical underpinning. The theory was proposed by Roman Jakobson, a member of Prague school of linguistics, during the period of Second World War in 1941. The theory was subsequently developed by Halle and Chomsky later on. Before that the classical phonetics focused upon places and manner of articulation for

classification of sounds. Then there was a shift from these classical approach to features for labelling whole set of sounds instead of individual sounds and describing the behavior of various sets of distinctive features was made possible by distinctive features theory. According to Schneider (2003) “The use of distinctive features in phonology enables us to capture 'natural classes', and, by extension, to generalize regularly occurring phenomena and to formulate predictions about the behaviour of class members”.

Various sets of distinctive features were proposed differing in number of features. Jacobson and Halle proposed 14 while Chomsky and Halle 45. “These ideas are embodied in three principles surrounding the distinctive feature set:

1. It should be able to characterize all contrasting segments in human languages;
2. It should be able to capture natural classes in a clear fashion; and
3. It should be transparent with regard to phonetic correlates”.

The main postulates of this theory as propounded by Jacobson are that features are binary in nature and features are of phonological nature. The theory makes a differentiation between phonetic and phonological features. Phonetic features are surfaced realizations of underlying phonological forms. A phonological feature may be a combination of more than one phonological feature. These distinctive features correspond to a particular acoustic or articulatory property of sound that distinguishes the meaning of a word from another Hume-O’Hair and Winters, 2006). It is on the basis of this theory that present study investigates the distinctive features of selected sounds in Pakistani English.

There are 24 consonant phonemes and 21 vowel sounds including 12 monophthongs and nine diphthongs in RP. The features of the consonants are determined by the place of articulation, manner of articulation and vibration of vocal cords. While the features of vowels are determined by the position of tongue, lower jaw and lips. These features are concentrated to investigate English pronunciation of Pothohari speakers.

Data Analysis

The present study is concerned with exploring the distinctive features of the following sounds of Pakistani English:

1. ɒ
2. ɜ:
3. æ
4. əʊ

5. aɪ
6. eɪ
7. oɪ
8. ɪə
9. ɪ

The list of the sentences for each of these sounds is attached as Appendix.

According to Yule (1996) “Vowel sounds are produced with a relatively free flow of air. They are all typically voiced” (p.48). They are described with respect to the position of tongue or height of tongue. There are twelve vowel sounds in RP classified as front, central and back, depending upon which part of the tongue is raised in their articulation. They are also termed short and long vowels according to the duration of articulation. Apart from vowels, also called as pure vowels, there are also diphthongs and triphthongs. Diphthongs involve a glide from one vowel position to another. There are eight diphthongs in RP categorized as centering and closing diphthongs. Centering diphthongs include ɪə, eə, əə, ʊə and closing diphthongs are eɪ, əʊ, aɪ, aʊ, oɪ respectively. The present analysis focuses diphthongs ɪə, aɪ, eɪ, əʊ, oɪ, vowels ɒ, ɜ:, æ and /ɪ/ phoneme.

1. /ɔ:/

/ɔ:/ is a back, rounded vowel between half-open and half-close. It is pronounced with rounded position of the lips and the back part of the tongue rises to the lower position. In the present study, the pronunciation of the vowel /ɔ:/ was observed in the words such as tall, ball, boss, hot, long, and talk. 12 participants produced the vowel /ɔ:/ correctly in the words tall /tɔ:l/ and long /lɔ:ŋ/, while 8 participants were unable to pronounce it correctly as per RP. They replaced it with back open /ɑ: / vowel as tall /tɑ:l/ and long /lɑ:ŋ/. 11 participants pronounced the words ball and talk correctly as /bɔ:l/ and /tɔ: k/, while the remaining participants substituted the /ɔ:/ sound in these words by back open long vowel /ɑ: / as /bɑ:l/ and /tɑ:k/.

The pronunciation of the word boss /bɔ:s/ was pronounced correctly by 15 participants, while 2 participants replaced the /ɔ:/ sound by /o:/ and pronounced it as /bo:s/. 2 participants pronounced by using the /ɑ: / vowel in boss as /bɑ:s/. 13 participants pronounced the word hot according to RP as /hɔ:t/, while 2 participants pronounced it by replacing /ɔ:/ vowel by /ɑ:/ as /hɑ:t/. 5 participants pronounced this word by using /o: / vowel such as /ho:t/. Thus, most of the participants pronounced the /ɔ:/ vowel sound correctly in the above mentioned

words as according to RP. Due to the absence or restricted combination of sounds in their native language, the deviation occurred.

2. /ɜ:/

/ɜ:/ is a central vowel. The tongue is grooved like in [ɹ] and pronounced correctly but sometimes substituted by /ɜr/ or /ʌr/. The lip position is neutral. 17 participants were able to pronounce the ɜ: vowel in words such as nurse, church, bird and thrust according to RP in sentences (3) and (4). 2 participants had replaced the ɜ: sound by an open mid vowel sound /ʌ/ or added /ʌ/ after ɜ: sound in words such as nurse /nʌrns/ and church /tʃʌrʌtʃ/ and their pronunciation deviated from the RP. According to Platt, et al. (1984) the varieties of English used by non native speakers have “a tendency to shorten vowel sounds as in words like ‘purse’, the /ɜ/ is sometimes replaced by /ʌ/”. Otherwise, they didn’t find any difficulty in pronouncing ɜ: sound in words such as bird and thirst as the pronunciation of these words were close to RP by them.

3. /æ/

/æ/ is realized as a front, unrounded vowel with half-open tongue position as in ‘man’: /mæn/. The front part of the tongue is raised during its articulation and the lips are slightly spread. 16 participants were able to pronounce the /æ/ sound in words such as fat /fæt/, cat /kæt/, and /ænd/, and clay /klæ/ according to RP. However, 3 participant had replaced the /æ/ sound by /eɪ/ (a diphthong that is informally called “long a”) in words such as /fert/, /kert/, and /eɪnd/. In this case, an item is replaced by the participants to the phonetically-close phonemes in the recipient language (Hock, 2009). The perception is always influenced by the phonological system of the native language, that is why the participants replaced /æ/ by /eɪ/ in the afore-mentioned words.

4. /əʊ/

The tongue starts from the position of /ə/ and glides towards relatively close open /ʊ/. However, the selected participants all have replaced it with long /ɔ:/. There is no glide in its articulation and the words like “phone” /fəʊn/, and “coach,” /kəʊts/ are pronounced as “fɔ:n and kɔ:ts” by the participants. It is noteworthy that all the participants made the same error due to the fact that there is no such gliding sound in their native language. Their articulators have difficulty in pronouncing them accurately due to mother tongue influence as “it is a natural phenomenon that the mother tongue has certain influences which always affect the second language learning” (Noor, 2016, p. 155).

5. /aɪ/

The tongue starts from relatively open position /a/ and glides towards close position /i/. In the present analysis it was found that four participants mispronounced the diphthong and by replacing /i/ with long /i:/ producing the words “fry and dry” as /frai:/ and /drai:/ respectively. The rest of the sixteen participants pronounced it accurately. The majority of the participants had no problem in articulating this diphthong and it is close to RP version.

6. /eɪ/

This diphthong starts from half close front position and moves in the direction of /i/. The selected participants all replaced it with long vowel /e:/ and no glide could be realized in its articulation. The reason for this deviation is the absence of such glide in their mother tongue and that’s why they all have substituted it with simple vowel sound.

7. /ɪə/

In English /ɪə/ is a centering diphthong. It begins from /ɪ/ and moves towards /ə/. The lip position remains neutral as in ‘pear’ /pɪə/. The words ‘near’ and ‘clear’ were used to test the feature of this sound. Twelve participants pronounced this diphthong accurately while eight mispronounced it. They substituted it with /ɜ/ and /j/ sound.

8. /ɔɪ/

In English /ɔɪ/ is a closing diphthong. It glides from /ɔ/ towards /i/. While pronouncing this diphthong lips are rounded in the beginning and unrounded in the end as in ‘toy’ /tɔɪ/. In the sample sentences two words ‘toy’ and ‘choice’ were used to test this particular sound. Nine participants out of twenty pronounced this sound correctly while the rest of the participants substituted it with diphthong /ai/ and /æ/. Four participants substituted it with /æ/ and seven substituted it with /ai/ diphthong. The reason observed here is that in phothohari this diphthong is not pronounced with rounded lip position rather with neutral or little spread lip position like /pal/, tal/ and /mal/. This acquaintance with native patterns is reflected in the L2 pronunciation of the speakers.

9. /r/

This sound is articulated by the raising of the tip of the tongue towards the back of the teeth-ridges and the air flows out without any noise or friction between the palate and the tip of the tongue. In the sample data majority of the participants did not pronounce the /r/ phoneme per the standard of RP. Only six participants

out of twenty pronounced the sound correctly. In standard pronunciation the ‘r’ is not pronounced when occurring before a consonant or when occurring finally. Here the sample words used to test the distinctive feature of /r/ phoneme were *Farmers*, *harvesting* and *transformer*. In the first two words the /r/ sound is occurring before consonants and in the last word /r/ sound is coming in the final position. So according standard rule of RP for /r/ sound pronunciation, /r/ should remain silent or should be dropped. Majority of the participants pronounced it clearly. On one hand it shows their non-familiarity with the RP pronunciation rules and on the other hand it also makes it evident that participants are usually accustomed to patterns of their native sounds and also use them in foreign languages i.e., there is no concept of dropping or keeping silent /r/ sound in Pothohari unlike English.

Findings and Discussion

According to Jesry (2005), it is not necessary to speak English language like native speakers but it should be well understood. The Phonological interference of mother tongue poses a challenge in adopting a native like accent. The articulatory apparatus gets settled according to phonemic patterns of the mother tongue. So it has least flexibility to accept variations. Mother tongue also influences in the way that the native sounds are generalized by the speakers due to lack of knowledge about the correct pronunciation of the target language. Moreover, the phonemic variations create problems in learning L2 pronunciation. Similarly, replacement with a slightly similar sound is common practice among the non-native speakers. For instance, the replacement of /ɔ:/ vowel by /ɑ:/ vowel found through the sample data was due to the excessive use of /ɑ:/ sound of their mother tongue and the participants were unable to recognize the difference.

As it has already been discussed in the previous section that deviations occur when the non-native speakers give a local shade to a foreign language pronunciation. The reason for this deviation is the influence of L1 which hinders the acquisition of L2 pronunciation. “The main problem of English pronunciation is to build a new set of sounds corresponding to the sounds of English, and to break down the arrangement of sounds which the habits and the systems of our L1 have strongly built up. So it becomes difficult to change such habits which a learner has established since his childhood” (Hassan, 2014, p.33) and also it requires a lot of regular practice and time. The data in the following table displays Pothohari realization of the sample English vowels identified through the sample utterances.

Table 1*Potohari realization of the sample English vowels*

S.No	English vowels	Potohari realization
1.	/ɔ:/	/ɑ:/ or /o:/
2.	/ɜ:/	/ʌ/
3.	/æ/	/eɪ/
4.	/əʊ /	/ɔ:/
5.	ai /	/i:/
6.	/eɪ/	/e:/
7.	/ɔi/	/ai / or /æ/.
8.	/ɪə/	/ɜ/ or /j/
9.	/r/	Clearly pronounced in all environments

The data in the following table provides facts regarding accurate RP pronunciation of the sample sounds by the selected participants.

Table 2*Data regarding pronunciation accuracy as per RP standard.*

Sr.No	Sound	No. of participants pronounced accurately	No. of participants mispronounced/used variation/substitution	Accuracy Percentage
1.	/ɔ:/	12	08	60%
2.	/ɜ:/	17	03	85%
3.	/æ/	16	04	80%
4.	/əʊ /	00	20	00%
5.	ai /	16	04	80%
6.	/eɪ/	00	20	00%
7.	/ɔi/	09	11	45%
8.	/ɪə/	12	08	60%
9.	/r/	06	14	30%

The data shows that a considerable number of participants used substitution and variations in pronouncing the sample sounds. Since these variations and substitutions do not fall under RP pronunciation criteria for these sounds. Thus technically these are considered mispronounced sounds. Moreover, such type of

substitutions leads to misinterpretation of sounds and create confusion particularly for native speakers.

Conclusion

The above data indicates that overall 12 participants produced the vowel /ɔ:/ correctly in the words tall /tɔ:l/, long /lɔ:ŋ/, while 8 participants were unable to pronounce it correctly as per RP. 17 participants were able to pronounce the ɜ: vowel in words such as nurse, church, bird and thrust according to RP. 16 participants were able to pronounce the /æ/ sound in words such as fat /fæt/, cat /kæt/, and /ænd/, and clay /klæ/ according to RP. All the selected participants replaced /əʊ / with long /ɔ:/ and none of the participants pronounced it accurately. Sixteen participants pronounced /ai / accurately; four participants mispronounced the diphthong and replaced /i/ with long /i:/. The diphthong /eɪ/ was replaced by all participants with long vowel /e:/ and no glide could be realized in its articulation. The diphthong /ɔi/ was accurately pronounced by only nine participants out of twenty while the rest of the participants substituted it with diphthong /ai / and /æ/. Twelve participants pronounced /ɪə/ diphthong accurately while eight mispronounced it. They substituted it with /ɜ/ and /j/ sound. Only six participants out of twenty pronounced the /r/ sound correctly according to RP standard. The percentage values indicate that none of the sample sound was pronounced 100% accurately according to RP criteria.

The data proved that the pronunciation of the majority of the participants was marked with distinct features not aligned to RP standard. It indicates the dominant influence of the mother tongue on English pronunciation of the Pothohari speakers. It also gives realization that local languages tune articulatory apparatus and exert strong influence on phonic learning of foreign languages and such influences ultimately give rise to new and local varieties of foreign languages.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Phonetic transcription must be taught in schools and colleges as the learners find it difficult to recognize the correct pronunciation due to non-familiarity with phonetic symbols used in dictionary. There is strong need to give due importance to the pronunciation learning like other language skills learning. Moreover, teachers must have sound knowledge of phonetics and phonology of English language to teach the L2 learners effectively.

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Appendix

Sentences

1. The tall boy threw the ball toward his boss. **ɒ**
2. I enjoyed a long walk in her company and then had hot tea and an interesting talk with her. **ɒ**
3. The nurse went to the church on Sunday. **ɜ:**
4. The bird was feeling extreme thirst. **ɜ:**
5. The fat cat is hungry. **æ**
6. I hate the pots and bowls made of clay. **æ**
7. She travelled in a coach to reach the hotel located on the south road. **əʊ**
8. I talked to my coach on the phone. **əʊ**
9. Tom loves to eat fry fish. **aɪ**
10. She put a piece of dry ice into a cup of water. **aɪ**
11. He failed to win the game. **eɪ**
12. He says he will arrive the next day. **eɪ**
13. I brought her a toy. **ɔɪ**
14. There were multiple choice questions in the test. **ɔɪ**
15. The explosion took place near the market place. **ɪə**
16. The sky is clear. **ɪə**
17. The farmers were busy in harvesting the crops. **r**
18. This transformer supplies electricity to one thousand houses. **R**