

A Survey Of Phonological Characteristics Of Pakistani English

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ABSTRACT

The study is an attempt to investigate and describe the phonological features of Pakistani English, an emerging variety of non-native Englishes. The study analyzes the pronunciation patterns concerning its phonemes, borrowed from indigenous languages, and stress patterns. English holds a de-facto official status in Pakistan, along with Urdu, which is also the national language of the country. The data is collected from students of BS English, University of Sargodha. The participants are purposefully selected and divided into three groups based on their mother tongues, i.e. Pushto speakers, Punjabi speakers, and Urdu speakers. The study attempts to identify key phonetic peculiarities of Pakistani English, exploring how these idiosyncrasies are manifested in speech. Specifically, the study examines tendencies towards assimilation with indigenous languages, including the softening and reduction of certain sounds, the emergence of retroflex articulations, and substitution of interdental consonants with dental occlusives. Moreover, variations in stress patterns are analyzed, shedding light on the influence of linguistic and socio-cultural factors shaping the phonology of Pakistani English. Through descriptive-analytical method, the study provides an understanding of the essential mechanisms driving phonetic adaptation in Pakistani English.

Keywords: Pakistani English, stress patterns, phonological landscape, phonetic adaptations.

Introduction

English has become part and parcel of official and academic life in the subcontinent. The historical course of English in the subcontinent generally and in Pakistan particularly, is marked by significant milestones. The declaration of Macaulay's Minutes in 1835 represents an essential moment in its journey. Although Macaulay's ambition to anglicize the then-India did not fully materialize, English education was firmly established during the colonial era, laying the groundwork for its lasting significance (Kumar, 2018).

During the last two centuries, the power remained in the hands of two English-speaking nations, thus, leading English to dominate the world linguistically (Crystal, 2003; Tomlinson, 2008). Though the British Empire faced decline throughout the world and had to eave its colonied during the mid twentieth century, and lost the status of the super power of the world, especially after the second world war, yet the power shifted from one English speaking nation to the other, i.e. from the British Empire to the United States of America. Thus, this power shift did not effect the status of English around the globe, rather the emergence of the United States

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as a single super power in the late 20th century led to the flourishing of the English language, the sub-continent being no exception.

Today, English holds a multifaceted role in the subcontinent, serving as the official language of many countries including Pakistan, a medium of instruction in higher education, and a lingua franca among educated individuals in linguistically diverse settings. This linguistic landscape has given rise to unique language patterns, shaped by the influence of various local languages and socio-cultural contexts (Ali, 2013). According to the constitution of Pakistan (Pak. Const., 1973), English is the defacto official language of the country. The constitutions states that English would remain the official language of the country for 15 years from the proclamation of the 1973 Constitution, and during this time, efforts would be made at the government level to replace English with Urdu as its official language. But no such effort has been made and English enjoys the status of official language in the country.

The development and adaptation of English in Pakistan has led to differences at many linguistic levels, particularly in phonology. These deviations are ascribed to differences in the articulatory apparatus of Pakistani speakers, characterized by the influence of mother tongues. The oral cavity in Pakistani English pronunciation tends to be more open compared to its British counterparts, due to the phonological patterns of indigenous languages. Scholars have identified these phonetic peculiarities as distinctive features of Pakistani English, highlighting the complexity of language variation within the Pakistani linguistic context (Baumgardner, 1993; Tallat, 2002, 1993).

English is the de facto official language of Pakistan. Though it is less spoken language in everyday communicative situations, yet it is comprehensible to around 50% of the population (Talbot, 2023). English holds significant influence in Pakistani society, as a language of academia, media, and governance. Efforts to standardize Pakistani dialect of English have been met with challenges due to the linguistic diversity of the country. Moreover, people's animosity towards English and campaigns against it in Pakistani society highlight the complex dynamics between language politics and nationalism and are a reflection of broader feelings of cultural preservation and identity assertion (Sarwar & Rashid, 2022). English in Pakistan is a complex phenomenon, as it reflects the phonological features of many indigenous languages of the country, including Pushto, Punjabi, Sindhi, Urdu, etc (Schneider, 2007, 2010; Mahboob & Ahmar 2004a, 2004b; Hickey, 2005)

Rahman (1990), a prominent Pakistani linguist, has identified four distinct varieties of Pakistani English based on sociolinguistic and functional criteria. His classification reflects the diversity and complexity of English usage in Pakistan, influenced by factors such as education, social status, and regional background.

The first variety is Acrolectal Pakistani English, which is spoken by the highly educated elite. These individuals often have studied abroad or attended prestigious English-medium schools within Pakistan. This variety is closest to Standard British English (SBE) and is characterized by accurate pronunciation, with minimal influence from local languages. Speakers tend to adhere closely to SBE pronunciation norms, showcasing a sophisticated vocabulary and complex syntactic structures that often resemble native English usage. Despite their fluency, acrolectal speakers frequently engage in code-switching and code-mixing, blending English with Urdu or other local languages while maintaining predominantly English structures. This variety is primarily used in formal settings, academic writing, media, and by professionals in urban areas.

The second variety is Mesolectal Pakistani English, which is spoken by the moderately educated population. This group includes individuals who have received some form of higher education in English-medium institutions but lack the extensive exposure of acrolectal speakers. Their pronunciation and intonation show noticeable influence from Urdu and regional languages. The syntax and vocabulary are less complex, with more frequent grammatical errors and simpler vocabulary than in acrolectal English. Mesolectal speakers exhibit frequent and

extensive mixing of English and local languages in both speech and writing. This variety is common in semi-formal contexts, mid-level professional environments, and among the urban middle class.

The third variety, Basilectal Pakistani English, is spoken by individuals with limited formal education in English. These speakers have often learned English as a second or foreign language in government schools or through informal means. Their English shows heavy influence from local languages on pronunciation, intonation, and grammar. Basilectal English features basic vocabulary and syntax, with frequent grammatical errors and non-standard forms. There is a high degree of code-switching and code-mixing with local languages, often resulting in a hybridized form of communication. This variety is commonly used in informal settings, among lower socioeconomic groups, and in rural areas.

The fourth and final variety is Educated Standard Pakistani English, which represents a standardized form of Pake used by educated speakers aiming for a neutral and intelligible form of English. These speakers strive for moderate accuracy in pronunciation, approximating SBE or American English, though some local influence remains. They use correct grammatical structures and a relatively rich vocabulary, with less frequent code-switching compared to mesolectal and basilectal varieties. Educated Standard Pakistani English is predominantly used in formal written communication, education, and by professionals in urban settings.

Rahman's classification of Pakistani English into these four varieties—Acrolectal, Mesolectal, Basilectal, and Educated Standard—highlights the linguistic diversity and varying degrees of English proficiency and usage in Pakistan. This framework helps in understanding how English functions as a second language in a multilingual society and how it reflects the social and educational stratification within the country. Each variety serves distinct social functions and reflects the speaker's level of education, exposure to English, and socio-economic status, illustrating the rich tapestry of language use in Pakistan.

The current study explores the phonetic characteristics of Pakistani English, shedding light on the linguistic characteristics that distinguish it from its British counterpart. Drawing upon insights from linguistic research and sociocultural analysis, the study seeks to deepen our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, identity, and societal dynamics in Pakistani context.

The phonological characteristics of Pakistani English present a fascinating field of study within the broader context of World Englishes. Pakistani English has developed its own distinct features due to historical, social, and linguistic influences, especially from the native languages spoken in Pakistan such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi. This literature review aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the existing scholarly work on the phonological characteristics of Pakistani English, focusing particularly on vowel sounds, segmental and suprasegmental features, and the influence of native languages.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study include:

- To investigate the phonological characteristics of Pakistani English including segmental and supra-segmental features
- To identify patterns of pronunciation deviation in Pakistani English, particularly in relation to indigenous language influence.
- To analyze variations in stress patterns and their relationship to linguistic and socio-cultural factors.

Research Questions

The following are the specific study questions:

- What are the specific segmental and supra-segmental phonological features of Pakistani English compared to Standard British English?

- How do indigenous languages influence the patterns of pronunciation deviation observed in Pakistani English?
- What correlations exist between variations in stress patterns in Pakistani English and linguistic and socio-cultural factors?

Theoretical Framework

Numerous studies have explored the intricacies of the English language in the subcontinent. Kumar (2018) notes that a comprehensive survey across postcolonial cities unveils diverse varieties of English influenced by regional languages and the mother tongue of the speaker. The prevalence of multilingualism in the subcontinent poses challenges in the teaching and learning of English, primarily due to the stark contrast between English—a non-phonetic language—and phonetic Indian languages. This linguistic dichotomy underscores the need for a paradigm shift in syllabi design, accounting for the vast geographical and linguistic diversity across the country. Consequently, a proliferation of English coaching centers and institutes has emerged to address these challenges (Bansal, 1990; Pandey, 2015).

In response to these issues, Kumar (2018) proposes the adoption of a 'Functional English' approach, which integrates both form and function of the language. This approach aims to equip students with practical language skills essential for everyday communication and future endeavors. Emphasizing the importance of phonetics, Kumar (2018) advocates for the inclusion of pronunciation instruction in English education, alongside vocabulary enrichment and grammatical structure. Implementing a specialized Functional English Course, tailored to the needs of students, is deemed imperative to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Moreover, Rajendran et al. (2021) conducted a study on lexical stress perception among adult English speakers in the subcontinent. Their findings reveal that participants exhibit varying degrees of accuracy in perceiving lexical stress in non-idiomatic words, with private school attendees demonstrating higher accuracy rates compared to their public school counterparts. Additionally, Maxwell and Fuchs (2019) suggest that schooling significantly influences variability in pronunciation, with no systematic effect observed based on participants' first language background.

Pakistan is witnessing a growing demand for English language education, with a variety of English courses now available across the country. These courses encompass ELT (English Language Teaching), TEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language), TEFOL, Masters in English programs, English Diplomas, and Spoken English Courses (Sarwar & Rashid, 2022).

English has gained prominence in Pakistan, becoming the language widely used in media, trade, and scientific fields. Consequently, English language instruction has become mandatory in nearly all schools and colleges nationwide. This recognition of English's importance underscores its pivotal role in communication, education, and global engagement.

Phonological features of Pakistani English have been explored by many scholars and researchers (Bilal et al, 2011, 2012, 2020, 2021; Bilal & Asghar, 2023; Malik et al, 2021, Mahboob, 2004, Kamran, Afsar & Khan, 2017) They have described consonants, vowels, and stress patterns of Pakistani speakers of English in different socio-linguistic contexts.

Despite these insights, a comprehensive examination of the phonetic peculiarities of Pakistani English remains scarce in the literature. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the distinctive aspects of Pakistani English pronunciation, shedding light on the distinctive phonetic features that distinguish it from other varieties of English. By building upon existing research and incorporating empirical data, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics shaping Pakistani English phonology.

Review of the Existing Literature

Several qualitative and quantitative studies have been reported linguistics features of Pakistani English. One of the notable phonological traits of many Asian English varieties, including

Pakistani English, is the absence or limited use of the schwa /ə/ and the blending or substitution of central vowels. Deterding (2005) observed a widespread tendency to avoid reduced vowels across South-East Asian Englishes, including varieties spoken in Singapore, Brunei, and other ASEAN nations, as well as China. This phonetic feature results in a less distinct differentiation between vowel sounds such as /ʌ/ and /ə/, /a/ and /ɔ/, and /ɛ/ and /æ/ in these English varieties. Similarly, in Philippine English, the unstressed central vowel 'schwa' is often missing (Gonzalez & Alberca, 1978).

Indian English shares this characteristic, with Kachru (2005) noting that strong and weak vowels are not consistently distinguished. Sailaja (2009) further highlights the occasional neutralization of /ʌ/ and /ə/ in Standard Indian English Pronunciation. Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) identify six short vowels in Pakistani English, particularly emphasizing the distinctive nurse /ɜ:/ vowel due to its rhotic quality. In Pakistani English, the phonotactic constraints from Urdu influence vowel articulation, leading to resyllabification and the insertion of additional vowels in many words (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a).

Specific Vowel Features in Pakistani English

Pakistani English retains certain distinctive vowel features, including the notable absence of the schwa /ə/ which is replaced by a full vowel, typically /ʌ/. This phenomenon aligns with Bilal et al.'s (2011) findings, which reported only two central vowels in Pakistani English and highlighted the conspicuous absence of the schwa. The use of full vowels instead of reduced ones contributes to the syllable-timed nature of Pakistani English, differentiating it from the stress-timed rhythm of Standard British English (SBE).

Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) provide a detailed analysis of Pakistani English vowels, emphasizing the six short vowels present in this variety. Their research underscores the unique phonetic quality of the nurse vowel /ɜ:/ in Pakistani English, attributed to its rhoticity, which sets it apart from non-rhotic varieties of English. This rhotic quality is a significant feature of Pakistani English, influenced by the phonological systems of native languages like Urdu and Punjabi, where rhotic sounds are prominent.

Segmental Features of Pakistani English

Consonants. Pakistani English exhibits distinctive consonantal features shaped by the phonological constraints of native languages. These features include the substitution of alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ with dental plosives [t̪] and [d̪], reflecting the influence of Urdu and other regional languages (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a, 2004b). Additionally, retroflex consonants, common in native languages, are frequently used in Pakistani English. For instance, /ɖ/ and /ʈ/ are often employed instead of /d/ and /t/ by L1 Urdu speakers (Baumgardner, 1993).

The dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are typically substituted with /t/ or /d/, or /s/ and /z/ respectively, leading to pronunciations such as "tink" or "sink" for "think" (Rahman, 1990). This substitution is a common feature in many non-native English varieties where these fricatives are not present in the native phonemic inventory. Moreover, the palato-alveolar affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are maintained in Pakistani English, although their articulation may differ slightly due to native phonetic environments (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a).

Vowels. Pakistani English vowels exhibit several distinctive qualities influenced by native languages. The distinction between long and short vowels is less pronounced, leading to minimal pairs such as "ship" /ɪ/ and "sheep" /i:/ being pronounced similarly (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a). Diphthongs in Pakistani English are often monophthongized, with /eɪ/ in "face" realized as /e/ and /aɪ/ in "price" as /ɑ:/ (Baumgardner, 1993).

Additionally, the central vowel schwa /ə/ is less frequently used, often replaced by a full vowel, contributing to the syllable-timed rhythm of Pakistani English (Kachru, 1994). This

replacement leads to pronunciations such as "sofa" with /ou/ or /a/ in the second syllable, rather than the reduced schwa.

Suprasegmental Features of Pakistani English

Stress Patterns. Pakistani English displays unique stress patterns influenced by native languages, particularly Urdu. Primary stress in Pakistani English often differs from native English varieties, with words that typically have initial stress in British English sometimes stressed on the final syllable in Pakistani English, reflecting Urdu's tendency towards final syllable stress (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a).

Sentence-level stress in Pakistani English often emphasizes different words compared to native varieties, with functional words sometimes receiving more stress. This shift alters the rhythm and intonation patterns of sentences, making Pakistani English sound distinct from other English varieties (Baumgardner, 1993).

Intonation. Pakistani English intonation patterns are significantly influenced by native language prosody. Declarative sentences in Pakistani English may exhibit a rising intonation at the end, contrasting with the falling intonation typically found in native English varieties (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004). Yes/no questions often have a high rising intonation, while wh-questions may display a level or slightly rising intonation, influenced by the intonation patterns of Urdu and other regional languages (Kachru, 1994).

Influence of Native Languages on Pakistani English Phonology

Urdu Influence. Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, exerts a strong influence on Pakistani English phonology. Urdu speakers often substitute English phonemes with their closest Urdu equivalents, particularly dental and retroflex consonants (Rahman, 1990). The prosodic features of Urdu, such as syllable timing and stress patterns, significantly affect the rhythm and intonation of Pakistani English (Baumgardner, 1993).

Regional Languages Influence. Speakers of regional languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi also bring distinct phonological traits to their English pronunciation. Punjabi speakers may exhibit gemination, or the lengthening of consonants, influenced by Punjabi phonology (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a). Sindhi speakers might retain voiced implosives, a feature of Sindhi phonology, in their English speech (Kachru, 1994). The vowel length distinctions in Pashto, such as longer vowels, can influence English pronunciation, leading to elongated vowels in Pakistani English (Baumgardner, 1993).

Phonological Variability within Pakistani English

Pakistani English is not monolithic; it exhibits significant regional and sociolectal variability.

Regional Variations. Different regions in Pakistan contribute to distinct phonological characteristics within Pakistani English. Urban speakers, particularly in metropolitan areas like Karachi and Lahore, often exhibit less pronounced regional features and a greater influence from standard British English due to more exposure to formal education and media (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a, 2004b). Provincial differences are marked, with speakers from Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan each displaying unique phonetic traits reflective of their native languages (Baumgardner, 1993).

Sociolectal Variations. Social factors such as education, class, and exposure to native English speakers also influence Pakistani English phonology. Higher education levels correlate with

closer approximations to British or American English phonology, particularly among those educated in English-medium institutions (Kachru, 1994). Greater exposure to English media (television, films, and the internet) can lead to the adoption of native English phonological features, though this varies widely among speakers (Rahman, 1990).

Lexical Borrowing and Code-Switching in Pakistani English

Pakistani English is characterized by significant lexical borrowing from local languages, primarily Urdu. Various scholarly contributions, including works by Baumgardener (1993), Kennedy (1993a, 1993b), and Tallat (2002, 2003), have explored this phenomenon. Anwar (2009) and Tallat (2002) have observed instances of code-mixing and code-switching in Pakistani English, reflecting the linguistic diversity of the region. This practice involves the integration of Urdu words and phrases into English sentences, resulting in a hybridized linguistic form that is unique to Pakistani speakers.

Phonological Disparities within Pakistani English

Mahboob and Ahmar (2004a) have highlighted phonological disparities within Pakistani English, noting differences in both pure vowels and diphthongs compared to Standard British English. These differences are not uniform across all speakers, with variations influenced by factors such as regional background, educational level, and exposure to native English varieties. Previous studies by Bilal et al. (2011, 2021), Abbasi et al. (2019), and Mahmood and Farooq (2017, 2018) have examined these phonological characteristics in detail, providing a comprehensive understanding of the unique features of Pakistani English.

Methodology

The primary research approach adopted in this study is descriptive-analytical (DA), comprising observation, generalization, and interpretation as its fundamental components. The descriptive-analytical approach combines elements of descriptive and analytical methods in research. In this approach, researchers first describe the characteristics or attributes of a phenomenon using observational or descriptive techniques. Then, they analyze these descriptions to identify patterns, relationships, or underlying factors. This approach allows researchers to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by both describing its features and analyzing its implications or significance. It is commonly used in social sciences, education, and other fields to explore complex phenomena in detail (Cote, 2021).

In the realm of social sciences, observation stands as a cornerstone research approach, encompassing a variety of methods and approaches tailored to the specific research issue and scientific context. Observation serves as a fundamental aspect of everyday life, facilitating the examination of behaviors and the material environment (Ciesielska, Boström, & Öhlander, 2018).

Generalization, on the other hand, entails the abstraction of common properties from specific instances, resulting in the formulation of general concepts or claims. These generalizations establish the existence of a domain or set of elements, along with one or more shared characteristics, thus laying the groundwork for deductive inferences requiring verification to ascertain their applicability across different situations.

For a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic features of speech, this study also employs a comparative historical method, facilitating the identification of trends in the evolution of the grammatical system of the national literary language. Additionally, comparative-typological and statistical methods are utilized to enhance the depth and breadth of the analysis, allowing for a nuanced exploration of linguistic phenomena within the specified context. Through these methodological approaches, this study aims to provide a robust examination of the phonetic peculiarities of the English language in India, shedding light on its distinctive characteristics and underlying mechanisms of development.

Procedure

The participants, chosen from the students of BS English, University of Sargodha were divided into three groups based on their mother tongues, i.e. Punjabi, Pushto and Urdu. Each group was further divided based on gender distribution. The participants were led to group discussions and face-to-face interviews in English. Initially, each group was assigned topics for discussion within their group. Later, the groups were cross-examined in open discussions. The discussions and the interviews were recorded for the analysis.

The descriptive-analytical method was employed to describe phonemes and stress and intonation patterns. Phonetic features and stress patterns were systematically identified and documented through phonetic transcription and stress marking. These descriptions were then analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and variations in phoneme distribution and stress placement.

Results

Due to the phonetic nature of Pakistani vernacular languages, individuals encounter challenges in mastering stress, tone, and intonation while speaking English. Several problematic consonant sounds persist, complicating pronunciation for Pakistani learners. Among these challenges are differentiating between /f/ and /v/ sounds (for Pashtoon English speakers). Moreover, aspirated consonants such as /p/, /t/, and /k/ pose difficulties, with many Pakistani speakers pronouncing them as voiced sounds irrespective of their position within words.

In addition to consonant challenges, Pakistani English exhibits distinctive phonetic deviations, including the replacement of alveolar consonants with retroflex consonants, particularly affecting sounds such as [t] and [d]. Furthermore, variations in the pronunciation of sounds like [r], [ð], and [θ] are observed, with [r] often being pronounced as flap and trill, and the fricatives [ð] and [θ] are pronounced as plosives, i.e. [ð] as voiced alveolar plosive [d] and [θ] as unvoiced alveolar plosive [tʰ], which show the influence of local languages, particularly Urdu. The nasa consonant [ŋ] has been replaced by three different consonants, i.e. [i, n, g].

The contrast between sounds such as [v] and [w] may not be discernible in Pakistani English, with the labio-dental approximant often used interchangeably. Similarly, the pronunciation of sounds like [z] and [dʒ] may differ from Standard British English, reflecting the influence of native languages. Additionally, syllabic patterns in Pakistani English may deviate from those in standard varieties, affecting stress placement and vowel reduction. Pakistani speakers aspirate many consonants like [bh, gh, tʃh, dʒh], etc.

British Standard English has 24 consonant phonemes but Pakistani English has a greater number of consonants, i.e. 39 including glottal stop. The exact number of the consonants of Pakistani English may not be identified at this stage, yet it can be concluded that it has more consonants than British Standard English.

		Labial	Dental	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Stop	Voiceless	p p ^h	t t ^h	ʈ ʈ ^h		k k ^h		ʔ
	Voiced	b b ^h	d d ^h	ɖ ɖ ^h		g g ^h		
Affricate	Voiceless				tʃ tʃ ^h			
	Voiced				dʒ dʒ ^h			
Fricative	Voiceless	f	s		ʃ	x		h
	Voiced		z		ʒ	ɣ		
Nasal		m	n	ɳ	ɲ			
Liquid			l r	ɭ ɭ ^h				
Glide		v			j			

Fig 1: Consonants of Pakistani English

(The study is based on observatory analysis, and the list of consonants may not represent the whole spectrum of consonants of Pakistani English)

As far as vowels are concerned, Pakistani speakers do not distinguish between low-back vowel and mid-back vowel, i.e. [ɒ, ɔ:]. These vowels are merged into a single phoneme. The two central vowels [ə, ɜ:] are also found missing. The speakers of Pakistani English replaced them with low central vowel [ʌ]. Pakistani English has nine monophthongs, unlike British Standard English which has 12 monophthongs. Pakistani English has four front vowels, like the British Standard English. But as far as the central vowels are concerned, Pakistani English has only one central vowel. While the British Standard English has three central vowels. Pakistani English has shown unique features regarding the back vowels as well. There is a merger of low and mid-back vowels. So Pakistani English has four back vowels. This variation in vowel phonemes is due to the influence of local vernacular languages, which has given Pakistani English an idiosyncratic status.

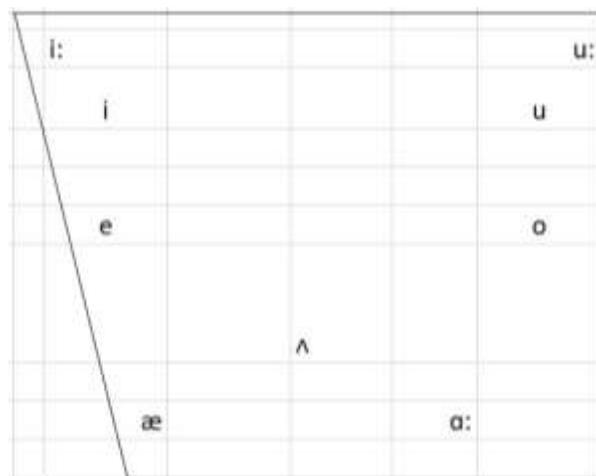


Fig 2: Monophthongs of Pakistani English

(The figure shows the monophthongs of Pakistani English. Acoustic studies on monophthongs, diphthongs and triphthongs are going on and the final number of the vowel phonemes in Pakistani English is yet to be concluded.)

There is also a phenomenon of monophthongization of diphthongs. [ei], and [əu] are articulated as monophthongs. (The diphthong [uə] was also monophthongized but only by Pushto speakers of Pakistani English.) These two diphthongs are monophthongized while the remaining six diphthongs of British Standard English are pronounced as diphthongs by Pakistani English. Pakistani English follows the other Asian English varieties in this particular aspect. Indian English (Gargesh, 2004; Nihalani et al., 2004; Trudgill and Hannah, 2008), Singapore English (Wee, 2004; Deterding, 2007), Malaysia English (Hickey, 2005), Nigerian English (Dyrenko & Fuchs, 2018), all show the same tendency.

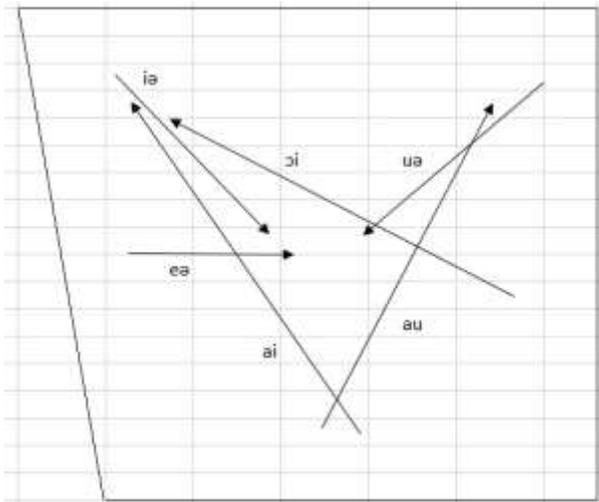


Fig 3: Diphthongs of Pakistani English

There are also triphthongs in Pakistani variety of English. The word boy /bɔi/ is articulated as /buai/ in Pakistani English. Farooq and Mahmood (2018) have concluded that there are two triphthongs in Pakistani English, i.e. [uai] and [uaə].

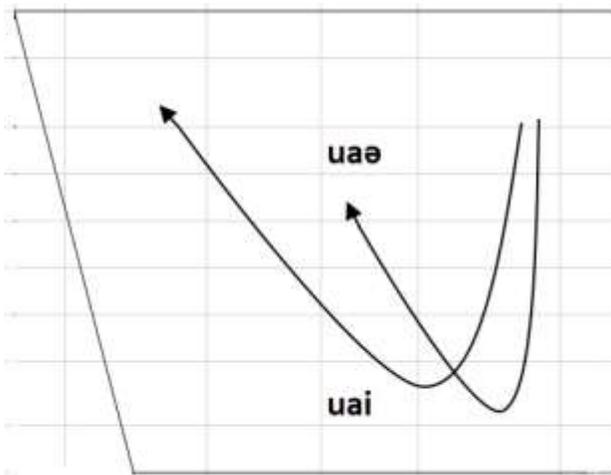


Fig 4: Triphthongs of Pakistani English

Prosodic structures in Pakistani English also differ, with variations observed in the use of lexical stress. While stress patterns may differ from British Standard English, there is individual variation among speakers, with some adhering closely to standard pronunciation rules while others exhibit idiosyncratic stress patterns.

Pakistani English exhibits a syllable-timed rhythm, differing from the stress-timed rhythm of British Standard English. Stress patterns in Pakistani English often deviate from the standard, with inconsistencies observed. A comparison of stress patterns between Pakistani English and BSE reveals notable differences. While multi-syllabic words in British Standard English exhibit three stress patterns (ultimate, penultimate, and antepenultimate), Pakistani English typically displays only two (ultimate and penultimate). Additionally, stress patterns in bi-syllabic words of British Standard English may change with the syntactic category, unlike in Pakistani English where stress remains primarily on the ultimate syllable regardless of syntactic variations.

Overall, Pakistani English presents a unique phonetic landscape characterized by deviations from standard pronunciation norms. Despite these challenges, understanding the phonetic peculiarities of Pakistani English is crucial for effective communication and language teaching in diverse linguistic contexts.

Discussion

In Pakistani English, intonation plays a crucial role in conveying various shades of meaning and emotional tones within phrases. Complete intonation serves to divide phrases based on their intended expression, with narrative intonation typically characterized by a gradual lowering of tone towards the phrase's conclusion. Conversely, interrogative intonation involves a rise in tone towards the end of a phrase, particularly highlighting the crucial word that forms the essence of the question. Incentive intonation shares similarities with narrative intonation but begins with a higher pitch compared to narrative phrases. Additionally, incomplete intonation may be observed in complex sentences where subordinate clauses are separated by brief pauses.

Speech pauses in Pakistani English serve various meaningful functions, occurring between morphemes, verbal roots, and phrases within sentences. These pauses aid in avoiding phonetic ambiguity and contribute to the overall clarity of speech. For instance, individuals may pause between two words in a phrase to prevent confusion, as demonstrated in the speech of a filmmaker and actor from Karachi on the television show "BVB Media."

Phonetic peculiarities in Pakistani English include the lack of differentiation between soft and hard [l], as well as the substitution of the sound [w] with the labio-dental approximant. Furthermore, syllabic sounds such as [l], [m], and [n] are often replaced by vowel-consonant groups, altering the pronunciation of words like "concentrate." Variations in the pronunciation of sounds such as [z] and [θ] further contribute to the distinct phonetic landscape of Pakistani English.

It can be affirmed that Pakistani English represents a unique form of English, distinguished by its differing number of phonemes. This characteristic aligns with the views of numerous linguists (Bauer, 2002; Gimson, 1989; Barber et al., 2009), who suggest that variations in phoneme counts signify distinct language varieties.

Stress in Pakistani English typically falls on all stressed syllables, resulting in categorical speech delivery. Falling intonation is predominantly used, contributing to the overall prosodic structure of speech. While some features of Pakistani English may align with standard British pronunciation, others are unique to the Pakistani context, influenced by local languages and varying levels of education.

Pakistani English is a rich and dynamic variety of English, shaped by the complex interplay of native languages and socio-cultural factors. This literature review highlights the distinct segmental and suprasegmental features of PakE, the significant influence of native languages, and the regional and sociolectal variations within PakE. Understanding these phonological characteristics is crucial for effective language teaching and further linguistic research, acknowledging the unique identity of Pakistani English while promoting intelligibility and communication in a global context.

Pedagogical Implications

Understanding the phonological characteristics of PakE has significant implications for English language teaching in Pakistan. Efforts to "neutralize" Pakistani English accents should be approached with sensitivity to preserve linguistic identity while enhancing intelligibility (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004a). English language curricula should incorporate the phonological features of Pakistani English, providing learners with realistic models that acknowledge their linguistic background (Baumgardner, 1993).

The study of phonetic peculiarities in Pakistani English reveals significant differences from standard English pronunciation, reflecting the distinctive articulation patterns of Pakistani speakers. These findings contribute to our understanding of linguistic diversity within Pakistan and provide valuable insights for communication in formal and informal settings. Further research in this area is warranted to explore the full extent of phonetic variation across Pakistan and its implications for language teaching and communication strategies. Future research should aim to provide more comprehensive and systematic descriptions of Pakistani English phonology, particularly accounting for regional and sociolectal variability (Kachru, 1994). Sociophonetic studies examining the influence of social factors on Pakistani English phonology can offer deeper insights into the dynamics of language variation and change in Pakistan (Rahman, 1990).

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