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The English Pronunciation of Senior English Teachers in Public Sector Schools of District Dir Lower: An Analytical Study of Major Errors in the Articulation of English Diphthongs and Underlying Factors

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Abstract
Mastering the English pronunciation, especially the segmental phonology, has always been challenging for Pakhtoon learners because of the variations in the phonological systems of Pashto and English. The research reported here has its origin in the observation that many Pakhtoon learners of English as a second language have major difficulties with English pronunciation, often even after years of English lessons, with concomitant major disadvantages in all areas of life, notably in their academic endeavours and employment. This observation, combined with the observation that many English language teachers have major problems with English pronunciation themselves, prompted a proposal to systematically unravel the major pronunciation errors made by senior English teachers at the segmental level and identify the main factors responsible for these errors, and to give recommendations for improving the situation. This study has been theorised in Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH). The project involved a survey based on questionnaires and interviews with Senior English Teachers, who teach English in public sector schools in District Dir Lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan). The study established that the Senior English Teachers (SETs) do make errors at the segmental level in their English pronunciation, and that the major factors responsible for their incorrect pronunciation are L1 transfer and lack of knowledge about English phonology.

Keywords: Errors, Diphthongs, L1 transfer.

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1. Introduction

Correct pronunciation is one of the main contributing factors to successful face-to-face oral interaction. Unless an interlocutor has sufficient command over the sounds and sound patterns of the target language, he can neither satisfactorily encode nor decode a message. We agree with Wong (1987) who argues that if the learners' pronunciation falls below a certain threshold level, they are unable to communicate effectively, despite the fact that their vocabulary and grammar are excellent. Wong (1993) also underscores the role played by correct pronunciation in listening comprehension. Varonis and Gass (1982) pointed out that native speakers often judge the intelligibility level of non-native speakers on the basis of correct pronunciation. Hence, correct pronunciation is an important ingredient of the overall communicative competence.

But what is correct pronunciation? Should the correctness be equated with native-like proficiency in pronunciation? Or is setting the task of achieving native-like proficiency extremely ambitious and beyond the reach of most L2 learners? Most linguists and phoneticians (e.g. Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2005; Kenworthy, 1987; Morley, 1992; Pica, 1994) believe that native-like pronunciation, though desirable, is, however, not absolutely necessary.

For English teachers, the importance of correct pronunciation can hardly be overstated, as they serve as role-models to their students and the students' pronunciation largely depends on their pronunciation. It is for this reason that I undertook the task of identifying the major pronunciation errors committed by senior English teachers at the segmental level (in the articulation of the English diphthongs) as well as establishing the main factors responsible for these

teachers' incorrect pronunciation. I am aware of the fact that pronunciation is a wider phenomenon, encompassing not only individual speech segments, but also supra-segmental elements (stress, pitch, rhythm, length, and intonation, etc.), but given the scope of the research, only the segmental errors made by Senior English Teachers in District Dir Lower were investigated. The study was further delimited to the errors in the articulation of the English diphthongs. The teachers' pronunciation was evaluated against the standard British variety known widely as the "Received Pronunciation" (RP for short), as this is the variety generally used in our public sector educational institutions for the teaching and learning of English language. Further, the researcher is also trained in this particular variety. Thus by the term "English" I mean "Received Pronunciation" throughout this study.

This study aims to identify the major phonemic mistakes in the articulation of the English diphthongs made by Senior English Teachers at the high and higher secondary schools in district Dir (lower) and to suggest measures to help them overcome those problems. Hence, the main objectives of this study are:

1) To identify the main segmental errors (in the articulation of English diphthongs) in the pronunciation of selected teachers.
2) To identify the factors which hamper the learning of correct English pronunciation.

2. Background to the study

The phonological systems of different languages vary, some to a greater degree, some slightly. Two languages may have similar sound system which may vary significantly in their physical characteristics "including both acoustic characteristics (e.g. the pitch of sound) and articulatory characteristics (how widely the mouth is open in producing a sound)" (Odlin, 1989, p. 112). In Chinese, for example, there are no vowels like /æ/, and no consonants as /ð/ and

/θ/. Therefore, the Chinese learners of English generally substitute /s/ for /θ/ and /z/ for the English /ð/, and /ai/ or /e/ for the English /æ/ (Zhang, 2003).

Work done on the pronunciation of Arab learners of English also shows that they make certain errors. Al-Shuaibi (2009) investigated the errors made by Yemeni learners of English and concluded that they had difficulty in producing both English initial and final consonant clusters having three or more consonants. Binturki (2008), after investigating the pronunciation errors of five Saudi learners of English, concluded that they had difficulty in producing the voiceless bilabial stop /p/, the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ and the alveolar approximant /r/. He also found that the difficulty was more acute when these consonants occurred in the word final position as compared with the word initial position. Hall (2007) concluded that English phonemes not available in the Farsi inventory of sounds made them hard for Farsi learners of English to pronounce. Rehman (2012) concluded that the non-availability of five English fricative consonants in the phonological system of Pashto made the English pronunciation of learners with Pashto as their L1 erroneous as they substituted these fricative sounds with their nearest Pashto counterparts.

The above-cited examples show that the first language (L1) has an effect on the target language (English), as the nature of errors (in the above examples) varies from L1 to L1. Moreover, the fact that an Urdu native speaker, for example, can tell whether someone is Sindhi or Pashtun after few words of exchange in Urdu language with them testifies that our L1 influences our L2 phonology. Thus we can safely say that mispronunciation on part of L2 learners can be partly attributed to mother-tongue influence, i.e., L1interference (See Conley, H., 2008; Han, 2005; Hoey, 2007; Jiang, 2007; Kimberly, 2009).

The role of L1 in SLA has been acknowledged throughout the history of Language teaching. Between 1940s and 1960s, emphasis was laid upon the

contrastive analysis of languages with the view to finding out similarities and differences among them in order to improve pedagogy. The contrastive analysis hypothesis claimed that transfer can be both positive, resulting from resemblance between languages, and negative (and language interference), caused by difference between languages. Interlingual errors are said to occur due to L1 interference, whereas intralingual errors are committed regardless of L1 (Larsen-Freeman and M. Long, 1991). The main claim with regard to transfer is that "the learning of task A will affect the following learning of task B" (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 54).

But the so-called transfer phenomenon that is generally defined as "the incorporation of features of the L1 into the knowledge system of the L2 which the learner is trying to build" (Ellis, 1994, p. 28), has been under discussion among experts for quite some time. In the 1950s-1960s, transfer was seen as the main cause of learning difficulties and in the 1970s, it was denied any place in the L2 acquisition process. But transfer is no longer seen as a unidirectional phenomenon (as was e.g. the case in Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1957) but as a multidirectional one, as has been suggested by Pavlenko & Jarvis (2002) on "bidirectional transfer" and Jarvis & Pavlenko (2008) on "forward transfer", "reverse transfer", and "lateral transfer". In a recent review of the evidence on transfer, Eliss (2006b) argues that "second language is … faced with maximal transfer and interference from L1" (2006b, p. 186). Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) recognize L1 transfer as a variable worthy of investigating. It is this variable that has been brought under consideration in this study, along with other minor variables.

English and Pashto, which have descended from the same mother-language (Indo-European), have similarities as well as differences in their phonological systems. It is these differences which makes it difficult for the Pashto learners to

have mastery over certain aspects of English phonological system. Similarly, Pashto and English employ two fundamentally different orthographies. The Pashto orthography, despite the fact that it violates one-letter-to-one-phoneme correspondence, is largely shallow or transparent, whereas the English orthographical system is deep or non-transparent, since it allows the same letter to represent two or more sounds, and two or more sounds can be represented by one letter. Studies carried out by Hayes-Harb (2007) and Erdener & Burnham (2005) suggest that languages with an opaque spelling system are comparatively difficult to learn. As has been shown in the analysis section of this study below, this is another area which hampers learners' endeavours to attain a level of comfortable intelligibility in terms of correct pronunciation.

3. Research questions

This study is aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

1) What type of errors do the Senior English Teachers (SETs) make in the articulation of the English diphthongs?
2) What are the main factors responsible for these teachers' pronunciation errors?

4. Theoretical framework of the Study

This study is based on the phonological theory of markedness, particularly on Eckman's (1977) Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) which regards the common sounds in various languages as unmarked and the less common sounds as marked. Eckman hypothesized that the acquisition of unmarked sounds would be easier than the marked sounds (Fellbaum, 1996). In other words, the learners' L1 phonological system influences the articulation of the target language sounds both positively (in the case of unmarked sounds) and negatively (in the case of marked sounds). This study identifies the various types of errors made by SETs

in the articulation of the English diphthongs and the main underlying factors for these errors.

5. Significance of the study

On the theoretical side, this research contributes to a large body of linguistic knowledge accumulated so far, as it has attempted to explore, though on a limited scale, the hitherto largely unchartered phonological system of the Pashto language. From practical perspective, the study will enable the English language teachers with Pashto as their L1 to bring their pronunciation to a level of comfortable intelligibility, especially in terms of the articulation of the English diphthongs. Moreover, it also helps the syllabus designers in designing English language courses both for the academic as well as professional purposes.

6. Research Methodology

The study is quantitative in nature as data was collected and analyzed quantitatively. The main reason behind using this method is that it is, in Dornyei's (2005) words, "systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts." Moreover, quantitative findings carry more validity and are considered to be more reliable than qualitative ones (Brown and Rodgers 2002).

The population for the study was all the senior English teachers in the government high and higher secondary schools in district Dir Lower, which consisted of 359 male teachers and 146 female teachers at the time of study. All the participants spoke the Yusafzai variety of Pashto. Since it was almost impossible for the researcher to have access to and collect data from all the senior English teachers in the above-mentioned schools, a sample of up to ten percent (50 teachers) from the selected population was taken through random sampling technique. Written consent of all the participants was sought and obtained.

Questionnaire, a list of words and a reading passage were used as research instruments for this study. Both the list of words and the reading passage contained words having the English diphthongs under study. Words for the list of words and the reading passage were carefully selected in order to ensure that the targeted sounds occur at all the three syllable positions, where possible, (onset, rime and coda). For each sound in the list of words, 3 words were chosen in each position which led to a total of 9 words per sound. Thus the list of words contained a total of 72 words. The same 72 words dispersed over the reading passage which contained a total of 300 words.

Questionnaires were carefully prepared and distributed among the 50 participants with the aim of obtaining the relevant data. Data about academic and professional qualification of the respondents' years of teaching experience, phonetic training, their attitude towards the importance of pronunciation and their awareness of the role and efficacy of modern technology in improving pronunciation was gathered through questionnaires.

All the recordings were made in quite places. First each respondent was given the reading passage and the list of words to read in order to familiarize himself with the content. For this purpose, they were given 15 minutes. The actual recording was started only when the respondent had expressed his readiness. Digital sound files were recorded on to a laptop using Labtec PC Microphone. Each participant read the passage as well as the list of words twice with normal reading speed.

It has been presented in the form of tables and discussed in section 7 below. Each participant was allocated four work sheets: first and second attempts for words in context (i.e. in the reading passage); and first and second attempts for words in isolation (i.e. in the list of words). For this purpose, an Excel database was created. Each correct pronunciation of a sound was coded as zero while each

mispronounced instance was coded as one. Conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the analysis of the data gathered.

7. Data presentation and Analysis

Data is presented in the form of tables and its analysis made at both the descriptive as well as inferential levels. First, data gathered through questionnaires is presented and analysed (tables 1 and 2). It is followed by the presentation and analysis of data gathered through the word list and the reading passage. Tables 1 and 2 show the subjects' teaching experience, phonetic training and professional and academic qualification, whereas in table 3 information is presented about their attitude towards correct pronunciation, the use of dictionary when in doubt about the pronunciation of a particular word, listening to native speakers via radio, television and internet etc.

Table 1: Experience and Phonetic Training of the Participants

Years of experience	Percentage	Phonetic training
1 to 5 years	30 %	Nil
6 to 10 years	38 %	Nil
11 to 15 years	22 %	Nil
More than 15 years	10 %	Nil

Table 2: Qualification and Phonetic Training of the Participants

Academic qualification	Percentage	Phonetic training
M.A in English	08 %	Nil
M.A in Islamic Studies	62 %	Nil
M.A in Urdu	16 %	Nil
M.A in other subjects	14 %	Nil

As has been shown in table 1, these teachers have been teaching English for a considerable period of time. Their teaching experience ranges from five to more than fifteen years. Although they have been involved in teaching English for a considerable period of time, yet they seem to have paid little attention to their pronunciation, as has been shown in the subsequent parts of this study. Thus there

appears to be little correlation between the teaching experience and correct pronunciation of these teachers.

The data in table 2 shows that most of the subjects have masters' degrees in Islamic Studies (62 %). It is followed by Urdu (16 %) and only eight percent of them studied English literature and linguistics at their masters' level. It may be noted that English is taught as a compulsory subject till the under-graduation level in KPK. Another point worth noting is that having a Master's degree in English is not mandatory for getting the job of a senior English teacher. An individual having a master's degree in any subject is eligible for the said post as long as he fulfils the other criteria. That is the reason that eight percent had master's degrees in English literature and linguistics, but, ironically even they also committed the same errors in their English pronunciation as the other teachers. They might be better than the others in terms of other aspects of the English language (grammar and vocabulary), but in terms of pronunciation, they manifested the same level of proficiency.

Table 3: Professional Qualification of the Participants

Professional Qualification	Percentage	Phonetic Training
B.Ed	64 %	Nil
M.Ed	22 %	Nil
Both M.Ed and B.Ed	14 %	Nil

As table 3 shows, all the respondents had good professional qualification, as they had done either B.Ed (Bachelors in Education) (64%), or M.Ed (Masters' in Education) (22%) or both (14%). It may be noted that these degrees are mandatory for obtaining teaching jobs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A glance at the syllabi of these professional courses reveals that it encompasses almost all the aspects of English language (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing skills, etc.), but pronunciation receives hardly any place in it. Not only the syllabi of these professional courses, in fact English phonology does not form

part of the syllabus of all the academic disciplines from the primary to the masters' levels. Thus it is not surprising that the respondents made errors in the articulation of most English diphthongs, as is obvious from table 5.

Apart from the teachers' academic and professional qualification, their experience and their knowledge about English phonology, data was also gathered through questionnaires (and corroborated in interviews) about their attitude to the importance of correct pronunciation, the use of dictionary when in doubt about the pronunciation of a word and whether they exposed themselves to the speech of native speakers via radio, television or internet.

Table 4: Participants' Attitude, Dictionary Use and Exposure to Native Speakers

Attitude	**Percentage**	**Dictionary Use**	**Percentage**	**Listening to NS**	**Percentage**
Not important	24 %	Seldom	64 %	No because I don't understand them	86 %
Important	56 %	Often	28 %	Yes but partially understand them	10 %
Very important	20%	Always	08 %	Can't understand them, but enjoy listening to them	4 %

As table 4 shows, most of them view correct English pronunciation essential and realise its value. The encouraging aspect about the respondents' attitude towards correct pronunciation is that the majority of them (56 %) consider it important and to some (20 %), it is very important. Only 24 percent consider it unimportant.

Thus the majority of the subjects have a positive attitude towards correct pronunciation, and if given an opportunity to improve their pronunciation, they would eagerly work on it.

The majority of the respondents (64 %), however, despite having positive attitude towards correct pronunciation, seldom consulted a dictionary when in doubt about the pronunciation of a particular word. The main reason for this, they themselves stated during the course of the interviews, was their inability to associate sounds to the phonemic symbols. The rest of the subjects who often (28 %) and always (08 %) used a dictionary when in doubt about the pronunciation of a particular word also face the same problem of associating sounds to phonemic symbols, but it is their sheer determination and high motivation which compel them to do so. This again shows these teachers' enthusiasm and high level of motivation to improve their pronunciation, but unfortunately they do not seem to have any proper guidance or opportunities in this regard.

Another important issue, which surfaced during the course of the interviews (and which too may be attributed to these teachers' lack of directionality with respect to pronunciation), is that the majority of respondents use the indigenously produced, sub-standard English-into- Urdu dictionaries. These dictionaries follow some vague self-devised rules for the pronunciation of various entries, and hence it cannot be relied on, as they do not follow the phonemic chart provided by the IPA (International Phonetic Association).

Moreover, it also emerged that the majority of the subjects (86 %) do not expose themselves to speech input from the native speakers via radio, television or internet. The reason they advance for their non-exposure to the native speakers is their inability to comprehend them. The rest of them (10 %) do listen to the native speakers from time-to-time, but, as they state, they too cannot fully understand them. One of the main reasons for their lack of comprehension of the

native speakers is the subjects' incorrect pronunciation. This was established when the native speakers' utterances were played to them, they found it hard to understand them; but when the same utterances were transcribed and then shown to them, they quite easily comprehended them. Now there might be other reasons (e.g. tempo, intonation, co-articulation effects, etc.), but one reason can be their own incorrect pronunciation of individual phonemes. As has been emphasized time and again, correct pronunciation is essential for listening comprehension. On the other hand, exposure to the speech of the native speakers does improve the learners' pronunciation. Thus lack of exposure to the native speakers might be another reason for these teachers' incorrect pronunciation.

In this section, the teachers' qualification (both academic and professional), their teaching experience, their knowledge about English phonology and their attitudes towards correct pronunciation were taken into perspective and some general factors responsible for their incorrect pronunciation established. Next, the researcher will focus upon the segmental errors which the teachers made in the articulation of the English diphthongs. It may be noted that the respondents were given a list of minimal pairs and a reading passage containing the English diphthongs to read aloud (see section 5.3 above).

Table 5: Errors Made by the Subjects

The English Phoneme	**Symbol**	**Mistakes**
The closing English Diphthong	/ei/	Substitution with /æ/ Problem of Length
The closing English diphthong	/əʊ/	Substitution with /ɒ/ Problem of length
The closing English diphthong	/ai/	Problem of length
The closing English diphthong	/au/	Substitution of the 2nd element /u/ with the approximant /w/ Problem of length

The closing English diphthong	/ɔ/	Substitution with /ai/ Problem of length
The centring English diphthong	/iə/	The articulation of /r/ when it is present in spelling Problem of length
The centring English diphthong	/eə/	The articulation of /r/ when it is present in spelling Problem of length
The closing English diphthong	/ʊə/	Substitution with /iə/ The articulation of /r/ when it is present in spelling Problem of length

As may be noted in table 5, the subjects made the following errors in the articulation of the English diphthongs: (1) proper length; (2) substitution of one diphthong with another; (3) substitution of a diphthong with a pure vowel; and (4) the articulation of /r/ whenever it was found in the spelling.

To begin with, they failed to get the length of all the diphthongs right. In terms of length, an English diphthong is just like a long vowel. It is fully long when followed by a voiced consonant and comparatively short when followed by an unvoiced one. The subjects articulated all the diphthongs with the same amount of length regardless of the context in which they occurred. Further, the teachers substituted a diphthong with either another diphthong or a monophthong. They substituted the diphthong /ɔ/ with the diphthong /ai/ and pronounced the words "joy" as /dʒai/, "choice" as /tʃais/, "noise" as naiz/ and "voice" as /wais/. (In the last example, it may be noted that the subjects not only substituted the diphthong, but also replaced the labiodental fricative /v/ with the bilabial approximant /w/). Similarly, they substituted the centring diphthong /eə/ with the other centring diphthong /iə/ and pronounced the words "care" as kiər/, "air" as /iər/ and "hair" as /hiər/. The phonetic transcription in the preceding sentence shows that the subjects not only substituted one diphthong with another, but also

articulated /r/ as it appeared in the spelling of these words. The same error was made in the case of the other closing diphthong /ʊə/ as well. Hence they pronounced the words "poor" as /pʊər/, "sure" as /ʃʊər/ and "truer" as /trʊər/.

The subjects substituted the closing diphthong /ei/ with the pure mid front vowel /æ/. Thus they pronounced "say" as /sæ/, "may" as /mæ/ and wait" as /wæt/.

Similarly, they substituted the second element of the closing diphthong /au/ with the bilabial approximant /w/, especially when this diphthong occurred in the word-final position. Hence they pronounced "now" as /naw/, "how" as /haw/ and "allow" as /əlaw/.

The errors made in the articulation of the English diphthongs can be attributed to L1 transfer (as some diphthongs are not found in Pashto, the mother-tongue of the respondents), the opaque nature of the English orthography and the subjects' lack of knowledge about the phonology of the English language. For instance, Pashto language does not contain the diphthong /ɔ/, but has the diphthong /ai/ in its inventory of sounds. Since /ai/ is the nearest in sameness to /ɔ/, therefore the teachers substituted the later with the former. The same goes for the diphthongs /ei/, /eə/ and /əu/. Since all of them do not form part of the Pashto phonological system, thus the respondents substituted /ei/ with /æ/, /eə/with /iə/ and /əu/ with/ɒ/. The respondents' inability to correctly articulate them and their substitution of them with the nearest available sound in Pashto language clearly indicate L1 transfer.

Moreover, the differences between the orthographical systems was another major factor for these teachers' inaccurate pronunciation. The Pashto orthography, as has been mentioned above, although it violates one-letter-to-one-phoneme correspondence, is in the main transparent, whereas the English orthographical system is deep or non-transparent, since it allows the same letter

to represent two or more sounds, and vice versa. That is the reason that where the subjects saw the letter "r" in the spelling, they articulated it which made their pronunciation sound incorrect. This again demonstrates L1 transfer.

8. Conclusions

It was found that the respondents (senior English teachers in public sector schools) made a variety of pronunciation errors in the articulation of the English diphthongs. These errors can be categorized into the following major types:

1) The substitution of one English phoneme with another English phoneme.
2) The substitution of an English phoneme with a phoneme from the mother-tongue.
3) The articulation of a phoneme on the basis of the presence of its corresponding letter in the spelling; and
4) Their inability to get the length of the diphthongs correct.

On the basis of the analysis of the collected data, the following factors were identified to be responsible for these errors:

1) L1 transfer;
2) The exclusion of any practical course on English phonetics and phonology from both the academic and professional syllabi.
3) Lack of knowledge about English phonology.
4) The opaque nature of the English orthography; and
5) The subjects' lack of exposure to native speakers input.

9. Recommendations

In this section, some suggestions and recommendations are offered for bringing about improvement in the pronunciation of the teachers on the basis of the findings of the study. The recommendations and suggestions offered in section 9.1 are specifically intended for the teachers, whereas section 9.2 consists of

recommendations which are of direct concern to syllabus designers and educationists, and are of interest to Senior English Teachers only in an indirect way.

9.1. The use of computer-based technology for individualized learning

Over the last few years, various research studies, such as (Walker 2005 & Chen 2008), have tested the efficacy of computer-based technology in bringing about improvement in the learners pronunciation and have found it immensely helpful. It not only increases learners' motivation, but also makes them more autonomous both in terms of learning as well as self-assessment. The availability of highly sophisticated speech analysis softwares in the market has made it possible for learners to work on their pronunciation independently. For example, currently very sophisticated STT (speech-to-text) programs are available in the market which are as good as a human judge of pronunciation and can be used instead of human listeners to evaluate the quality of pronunciation by comparing against a standard accent and pronunciation. Similarly, different softwares are particularly well suited as a medium for imparting information about pronunciation and pronunciation teaching, e.g. (Cauldwell, 2002; Protea Textware, 2009) which teaches different features of connected speech. Moreover, huge amount of authentic and ESL/EFL-specific material is available on the internet. Teachers can download or use it on line for free for self-study and self-assessment. For instance, teachers can work on their English vowels and diphthongs by visiting http// www.praat.org, where an interactive program developed by Boersma and Weenink is available for assistance round the clock.

Another use of computer-based technology in pronunciation learning is in the field of dictionaries. Many of the major English dictionaries (*The Oxford Talking Dictionary*, *BBC English Dictionary*, and *Longman English Dictionary*, etc.) are available now on CD-roms. These dictionaries offer a chance to learners

to hear words in isolation and, in some cases, in connected speech. Some dictionaries also offer the opportunity to the users to record and listen to themselves and compare their own pronunciation with the dictionary version. The latest edition of *Daniel Jones's English Pronouncing Dictionary* (Roach, Hartman, & Setter, 2003) with CD-ROM, provides copious details of both North American and British English pronunciation. Computer-literate teachers can benefit from the available technology in improving their pronunciation on their own.

Although there is a plethora of softwares and CD-roms claiming to be effective in improving and pronunciation teaching, yet teachers should be made aware of the most genuine and effective ones. It is recommended that the Directorate of Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should, either publicise information in the media, or formally inform the schools via memos, about what sorts of materials are helpful.

9.2. Suggestions for Improving the English Language Syllabi

One major reason, among others, for the teachers' incorrect pronunciation is the existing English language syllabus which is taught from the Primary to the Masters level. The syllabus up to B.A level is largely structural or traditional and focuses only on the reading and writing skills. The other two skills, listening and speaking, are largely ignored. Teachers, therefore, do not feel the need to improve their pronunciation, as it is a pre-requisite for listening and speaking and not for the other two skills. Hence, it is recommended that there should be a review of the existing syllabus and the listening and speaking skills should be incorporated into it. It would not be easy, as it requires huge resources and cannot be done overnight. However, without bringing about these changes in the English language syllabus, in the long run, neither the oral communicative proficiency of

both the teachers and students can be improved, nor their pronunciation errors be removed.

Similarly, a look at syllabus taught at the Masters level reveals the fact that it focuses predominantly on the teaching of English literature, as the weightage given to linguistics and language teaching amounts to only twenty percent of the entire syllabus, and there too, the focus is on the theoretical rather than on the practical aspects of linguistics and language teaching. Consequently, even teachers with Masters' degrees in English literature and linguistics have problems with their pronunciation.

It is recommended, therefore, that the universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should revise their respective English syllabi taught at the BS Honours and Masters levels and give at least forty percent weightage to linguistics and language teaching, focusing both on the theoretical as well as practical aspects of these areas. English phonetics and phonology, particularly articulatory phonetics, should be made a compulsory subject.

Articulatory phonetics should also be made a compulsory part of the courses mandatory for obtaining teaching jobs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, e.g. PST (Primary School Teaching), CT (Certificate of Teaching), B.Ed (Bachelors of Education) and M.Ed (Masters' of Education), etc. Presently no attention is given either to the improvement of the under-training prospective teachers' pronunciation or to pronunciation-teaching in the courses of the above-mentioned categories.

The above recommendations are not only more long-term and enduring, but also desirable, it will take years, however, before they can be put into effect, as redesigning the language syllabi at such a large scale requires both time and funds. There are, however, more short-term but no less effective solutions to the problem of correcting the pronunciation of the teachers.

The Directorate of Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should on priority basis arrange an intensive training course on articulatory phonetics for the Senior English Teachers with the collaboration of English departments of the major universities of the province. I agree with Gallardo del Puerto & Lecumberri (2006), and Bongaert, et al. (1997) who argue that phoneme acquisition can be facilitated through formal instruction. Each university (particularly its department of English) should be given the responsibility to train from two to three hundred SETs, as each district contain approximately the same number of SETs. The task can be accomplished in sixteen to eighteen weeks. Initially, one hundred teachers should be trained and then the successful teachers should be handed over the responsibility of training other teachers in certain selected schools. The process should be repeated until all the Senior English Teachers of the province are trained in articulatory phonetics.

Universities can take their own initiative and arrange pronunciation workshops for Senior English Teachers on the different aspects of pronunciation. The main reason for recommending a course on the English phonetics and phonology is that acquaintance with English phonemes, phonetic and phonemic scripts and different patterns of arrangement of the English phonemes will facilitate these teachers of English to attain good pronunciation. Armed with the knowledge of articulatory phonetics, the teachers would be able to analyse their own pronunciation errors, as they would know about the role of articulators in the articulation of individual speech sounds, as well as the places and manners of articulation of different English phonemes. The course will also acquaint the teachers with the nuances of supra-segmental phonology.

Another reason for suggesting the study of English phonetics and phonology is that the English language is largely unphonetic in nature, i.e., it allows the same letter to represent two or more sounds, and vice versa. In order

to help these teachers overcome those pronunciation mistakes which are specifically due to orthographic interference, phonemic transcription should be taught to them.

9.3. Further Research

This study is of limited scope, since it aimed only at pronunciation errors made by Senior English Teachers in public sector schools in District Dir Lower in individual speech segments (diphthongs) and did not take account of the other speech segments and supra-segmental aspects of the English pronunciation of these teachers. Since the other speech segments along with supra-segmental aspects form an integral and indispensable part of pronunciation (to some, more important than the segmental aspects), therefore, that is an area which also needs to be investigated. Moreover, the issues as to how disadvantageous in correct pronunciation can be in terms of job prospects (both indigenously and overseas), academic pursuits abroad (particularly in English speaking countries) and social status, etc. also need to be investigated.

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