



Glocalization of English: An Analysis of the Phonological Deviations of Semivowels and Liquids in Pakistani English

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ABSTRACT

Being a global lingua franca, English is widely used as a medium of communication, particularly among the educated class in Pakistan. It serves not only as one of the country's official languages but also as a medium of instruction in the higher education sector. Over the years, it has evolved so much that it stands as a distinctive variety of English identified as Pakistani English (PE). Though numerous studies have briefly focused on the phonological deviation of consonants in PE, an in-depth research is needed to analyse each consonant thoroughly. In this regard, this paper aims to explore how PE speakers pronounce the selected English consonants, semivowels [w] and [j], and liquids [l] and [r]. For this purpose, a sample of 20 participants (10 males and 10 Females) enrolled in Masters in English linguistics and literature was selected from a public sector university in Islamabad. Each participant was provided with a list of preselected words for each phoneme and was asked to pronounce them individually. Firstly, we recorded the sessions, then transcribed the data phonemically, and finally, we analysed the data in comparison with the Received Pronunciation (RP) obtained from the PhoTransEdit Online application. The results were illustrated in the stacked bar graph. The findings show that PE deviates from RP in all the respective English semivowels and liquids because these phonemes were not present in their first language, Urdu. Consequently, PE speakers substitute the English phonemes with the nearest available Urdu equivalent. The study is significant because it highlights the salient features of PE in terms of its deviation from RP.

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INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, around 73 languages exist (Abbas, Pervaiz, & Arshad, 2018), out of which Urdu was given the status of a national language due to specific historical and ideological reasons. Though Urdu is owned by only 8% of the population as their first language (Gujjar, 2007; Qadri, 2021), it is commonly used by the general public for interprovincial communication. Unlike Urdu, which serves as a lingua franca at the national level, English is an international lingua franca (Rasool & Mansoor, 2007; Rao, 2019). English has served as an official language in Pakistan since 1973 (Shamim, 2008). Notwithstanding, it was only allowed to be used in the official capacity for a brief time after the independence until its replacement by Urdu once the arrangements were completed (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, Article 251). Accordingly, English is associated with power and status in Pakistan (Rasool & Mansoor, 2007). Thus, English skills assure a safe future and a respectful job in the government machinery which becomes a sufficient reason to associate prestige with it (Haidar & Fang, 2019) even in the multilingual profile of Pakistan. Being the language of prestige and status, English is taught and learned at all levels, even though only 5 % of the educated population of Pakistan can understand it (Hussain, 2002).

In Pakistan, English is evolving its identity, especially in the spoken form, due to its deviations from the Received Pronunciation (RP), the British variety of English. These deviations allowed Pakistani English (PE), often referred to as Paklish or Penglish, to be known as a variety of English having its own distinctive phonological features (Baumgardner, 1990; Hassan, 2004). Despite many phonological deviances from RP, the current study considers Pakistani English as a distinctive variety of English rather than deeming the deviations incorrect. These variations occurred due to the presence of numerous languages and language dialects in Pakistan. Alongside, to date, in most of the schools in Pakistan, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) of teaching is used, which keeps maintaining the impact of Urdu on the English language. Accordingly, the state of teaching English pronunciation is not satisfactory (Shah, 2007), as most of the English teachers in Pakistan are the products of the same educational system where they listen to the same distant sounds present in their first language that deviates from RP.

Aims and objectives:

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- To explore the phonological deviations of semivowels and liquids in Pakistani English by drawing its comparative analysis with Received Pronunciation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though Pakistani English, with all its deviations from RP, serves as a distinctive variety of English, as indicated previously, it nevertheless becomes challenging for most PE speakers as every third or fourth educated Pakistani complains that they cannot understand a native's accent (Ali, 2009; Yasir et al., 2021). However, they could attain mutual intelligibility with the native speakers, RP, only if they knew the intricacies of phonological differences between PE and RP. In this way, they can eventually participate in a successful communication marked by mutual intelligibility on the part of both the listener and speaker is necessary (Alvi, 1993). Linguists also opine that to acquire better speaking skills, only learning vocabulary is not sufficient as it should be supported by rigorous training in the pronunciation patterns of the target language (Bygate, 1987). In the opinion of Guiora (1972) learning the target language is often hurdled by the accurate phonology production. The pronunciation aids in differentiating between a native and non-native speaker of any language because it is often obvious that learners face hurdles in learning the native accent (Akram et al, 2017). The same is the case with the connected speech where the natives do not articulate each sound as in single words (Alamee & Levis, 2015), this becomes another challenging factor for the Pakistani English speaker to comprehend the native accent.

For a thorough understanding and comprehension of the native accent, Pakistani speakers need to understand and articulate all the 44 sounds of English properly with respect to the manner and place of articulation. In this regard, voicing denotes the action of the vocal cord; the consonant is voiceless when the vocal cords are open, but when closed and also vibrating, the sounds are called voiced. The place of articulation points out the area in the resonating cavities where the articulator forms friction or hindrance. The manner of articulation is basically the way articulators take the positions so that the resonance effect is possible. The brief description for each consonant of RP is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Brief Description of Consonants in RP

e articulated stream. The consonant of RP can be described in three dimensions, voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation.

MANNER OF ARTICULATION	VOICING	PLACE OF ARTICULATION						
		bilabial	labiodental	dental	alveolar	Palate alveolar	velar	glottal
Stops/Plosives	Voiceless	p			t		k	
	Voiced	b			d		g	
Fricative	Voiceless		f	ð	s	ʃ		h
	Voiced		v	θ	z	ʒ		
Affricate	Voiceless					tʃ		
	Voiced					dʒ		
Nasal	Voiced	m			n		ŋ	
Approximants liquids	Lateral				l			
	Rhotic					r		
	Glides		w			j		

Since this study explores the semivowels of PE with respect to Semivowels of RP, the detailed description of RP semivowels is as follows: Davenport and Hannahs (2013) describe semivowels and liquids by mentioning that glides are more like vowels as compared to consonants as there is no contact between articulators and that is why the alternative term for glides is Semi Vowels. Furthermore, these phonemes are like vowels phonetically, but as far as phonology is concerned, they are like consonants, for example, the articulation of /j/ is practically like the front close vowel such as /i:/, and /w/ and is closely similar to /u:/ (Mahdi, 2012).

In phonetics, the semivowels are included in the class of consonants as they do not form the nuclei of syllables, for example, in the first sound of 'yacht'. English has two semivowels: the labial velar /w/ as in 'watch' and palatal /j/ as in 'yes'. Whereas liquid is a cover term that is given to many 'l' and 'r' sounds

called laterals and rhotic, respectively. Moreover, semivowels are also termed independent vowel-glides because the articulators initially form a close vowel and then instantly move to another vowel of more prominence, also, the early position does not last long. The swift gliding nature of these sounds, united with the use of relatively weak exhalation force, makes them consonantal.

This research would be significant in many ways as English has become essential in Pakistan for acquiring higher education as well as professional development. It would contribute to differentiating between consonants, i.e., semivowels and liquids in two varieties of English —PE and RP. Several studies have been conducted on PE, including illustrating the Pakistani variety of English (Saleemi, 1985; Baumgardener, 1987), exploring Pakistani Pronunciation of RP vowels (Ali, 2009), merging of /i:/ and /I/ in PE, differentiating between PE and RP in terms of consonant phonemes in general (Afsar & Kamran, 2011), fricatives /θ/, /ð/ in PE consonants (Shabbir et al., 2013), and so on. In this regard, the study aims to draw a comparative analysis of semivowels and liquids in PE and RP —an area relatively under-researched in Pakistan. Besides, it is also significant for pedagogical implications because English is taught at all levels, from primary to Higher Education Institutions, as a compulsory subject. The English instructors may find the findings of this study significant to incorporate in teachers' training sessions and also teaching pronunciation in order to improve the listening as well as speaking skills of the English-Speaking populations.

Since the educational systems have contributed to spreading the standard English (Leith, 1983), Pakistani students and academicians must learn English who plan to go for studies overseas and also for those who desire to immigrate to countries where English is the common lingua franca to qualify International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). These tests assess the students for their level of competency in all the basic language skills of the English language. Still, speaking and listening are mainly based on the phonology of English. Consequently, this study will help Pakistani English speakers identify the differences in sound articulation from RP and work on these differences accordingly. This understanding of semivowels and liquid can be helpful in overcoming the problem of unintelligibility, particularly related to these consonants, as deviations are observed in the articulation of all the selected four sounds by PE speakers while listening to the native speakers as speakers need to be intelligible so that they can communicate effectively (Kenworthy, 1987)

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Keeping the social variables of gender and occupation as suggested by Freeborn, French and Langford (1993), twenty MA English (i.e., ten males and ten females) students from the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, were selected as the sample speakers who represent the educated class of Pakistani society, as Trudgill (1983) and Freeborn (2006) elaborate that Standard English is the dialect of education or a dialect of 'educated speech'. Hence the inclusion criterion of the participants was that they should have been exposed to English for at least 16 years in their educational career. Moreover, the participants were of the same age group (21-24 years) and belonged to different rural as well as urban areas of Pakistan, so having other mother tongues.

Material

Selection of Words

Cook (1997) considers conversation as informal and reading aloud as formal; subsequently, to get the formal speech data, a list of words for each phoneme appearing in different positions (initial, middle, and final) was provided to the speakers. The selected list of words is as follows:

Table 2

Selected list of words

Phonemes	Initial Position	Middle Position	Final Position
<u>/w/</u>	Wave, Wood, Walk, Warm, Watch	Vowel, Power, Backward, Flowers, Always	
<u>/i/</u>	Yeast, Year, Yacht, Yolk, Yell	Argument, Population, Opportunity, Calculate, January	
<u>/l/</u>	Lull, Leaf, Loud, Lame, Light	Please, Explode, Reload, Float, Clot	Feel, Couple, Bible, Bottle, Whistle

<u>/r/</u>	Rare, Round, Robot, Rescue, Revive	Strength, Street, Progress, Frog, Stroll	Letter, Terror, Father, Poor, Stair
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Recordings

Data was collected by recording the voice of 20 speakers articulating the ten carefully selected words for each phoneme. Their voice was recorded and then transcribed.

Procedure

All the twenty participants were informed individually about the nature of the research and were provided with the selected list of words. Each participant was asked to read each word in the given list twice to remove any misunderstanding or a slip of the tongue. Later after the transcription, it was compared with RP by using the PhoTransEdit Online application

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the speakers in the form of voice recordings were analysed by comparison of semivowels and liquids of PE with RP. In this regard, the analysis of the sample data is elaborated under different heads and with the description of each sound to better understand the variations compared to RP.

Differences in the articulation of Semi vowels by PE speakers from RP

(i) Analysis of /w/ in PE

In RP, the phoneme /w/ is articulated when the tongue is withdrawn and then elevated towards the velum in the high-mid to the high back region. Cruttenden (2014) opines that Lip-rounding is obvious in RP; however, in articulating this phoneme in PE, the lip rounding is either not present at all or is not clearly evident. It is also observed that having no realisation of the phonemic difference between the two sounds /v/ and /w/, the speakers felt the freedom to pronounce anything from /v/ to /w/. The speakers generally tend towards a looser pronunciation, resulting in /v/ phoneme. This is because the Urdu language has no

distinction between /v/ and /w/ (Rehman, 1990). That is why Pakistani speakers are not able to differentiate between worse and verse, wet and vet.

The data collected from the participants illustrate that the sample Pakistani speakers do not make any phonemic difference between /w/ and /v/. In certain words, lip rounding was found, but the phoneme was more articulated like a labiodental resulting in /v/. As these sample speakers are students of English Masters level so that could be one of the reasons that we could also see appropriate lip rounding while articulating /w/ phoneme by four of the speakers, maybe because they are conscious of this, and that is why the data deviates from the previous research that there is no lip rounding in PE while articulating this phoneme.

Table 3

Articulation of /w/ by PE Speakers

Sr No	PE	Percentages
1	/w/ as /w/	20%
2	/w/ as /v/	40%
3	/w/ as /v/	40%

(ii) Analysis of /j/ in PE

Jones (1966) states that the passage of the air is narrowed down when trying to pronounce this consonant /j/, particularly by raising the front of the tongue to the extent that it is almost touching the hard palate. With this, the soft palate is also elevated; voicing is evident and pronounced with mild friction in RP. Alongside, the sound is to be pronounced extremely short and is followed by a vowel. It is labelled as a voiced palatal approximant.

In PE, this phoneme is also present and is also articulated by all the twenty speakers without making an evident variation in its manner or place, but in certain words, it is dropped by the speakers. This is called "Yod-dropping", the elision of the sound /j/ in specific contexts (Gomez, 2009). Yod-dropping before [u:] occurs in most English varieties such as American English and is also found in PE.

The data collected from the selected sample of speakers illustrate that this phoneme is present in the inventory of PE, but in certain words, it is dropped, so it is environment-dependent. However, this study also shows that if it is in the word-initial position, it is articulated, but when it comes before vowel /u:/ in the word's middle position, it is dropped by all the speakers. It is also noteworthy that only in the word 'value' the PE speakers could articulate /j/ despite being in the word middle position. However, in the rest of all the other words included in the list having /j/ in the word middle position, it was dropped by all the speakers.

Table 4

Articulation of /j/ by PE Speakers

Sr No	PE	Percentages
1	/j/ in word-initial position	100%
2	Dropping /j/ in word middle position	100%

(iii) Analysis of /l/ in PE

The /l/ sound is produced by keeping the tongue tip to the middle part of the alveolar ridge. The sides of the tongue are let open on one side or maybe both. The vocal cords remain in vibration and the passage of the nasal cavity is shut off by elevating the soft palate (Davenport & Hannahs, 2013). The most evident allophone of /l/ in RP is the dark [ɫ] which appears in such words as bottle, candle, tiddle, couple, mettle, etc. This dark [ɫ], a phonetically different form, is produced by withdrawing and elevating the back of the tongue near the soft palate while the tip is kept to the alveolus. However, as in Urdu, there is no allophonic difference between dark /l/ and light /l/ so the sample speakers could not make the difference.

All the twenty speakers only uttered light /l/ in all environments, even where dark /l/ was to be produced. This shows that Pakistani English speakers do not have any realisation of the allophonic difference between dark /l/ and light /l/. Due to this reason, all speakers in a word ending position articulated light /l/, a variation from RP. The same was observed by Rehman (1990), Mahboob and Ahmar (2008) and Afsar and Kamran (2011). It is also noticed that in certain words like 'bible', 'couple' and 'whistle', where

the phoneme /l/ occurs as a syllabic consonant in words' final position, a schwa sound was added by the Pakistani speakers, so it was replaced from its nucleus position. However, in the word "beautiful", though its nucleus position is replaced but vowel /ʊ/ is used. The reason is most Pakistani speakers use spellings as a guide to pronunciation.

Table 5

Articulation of /l/ by PE

Sr No	PE	Percentages
1	/əɫ/ instead of /l/ as a syllabic consonant in word-final position	100%
2	/l/ instead of /ʌ/	100%

(iv) Analysis of /r/ in PE

The phoneme /r/ is articulated in English once the tongue tip goes to the alveolar area the way it goes to articulate /t/ or /d/ but not actually forming any contact with any part of the mouth roof. Accordingly, the tongue gets curvy and the tongue tip points to the hard palate near the alveolar ridgeback, the front is a bit low and the back gets rather high. The tongue tip is not quite close to the palate to cause any strong friction. Especially when /r/ comes at the initial position of words, the lips are rather rounded (Miyawakiet all., 1975). Some of the accents of English are termed rhotic and others are termed as non-rhotic. Cook (1997) has called American English a 'rhotic' dialect because it lets /r/ before vowels. Contrary to it, British English does not have /r/ in all positions. In RP, it comes before vowels and never before consonants, so words like learn, sort, and farm do not contain /r/ (lɜ:n, sɔ:t, fɑ:m).

The findings of this study show only one speaker in only one word has not pronounced /r/ when it is at the end. Rest at all places, all the speakers including the same speaker has pronounced the /r/ sound in all environments which makes the Pakistani variety of English a rhotic variety. The appearance or nonappearance of this phoneme in words' final position is not categorical for the speakers of PE. Since the sound was articulated by more than half of the sample so it was considered a representative feature of PE. It is significant to note that this observation deviates from the study conducted by Rehman in

1990 who called PE a non-rhotic variety of English. At the same time, the current research finds that Pakistani speakers' accent is rhotic, maybe because of the trend of pronouncing words according to their spellings or under the influence of American media as mentioned by Afsar & Kamran (2011).

Table 6

Articulation of /r/ by PE

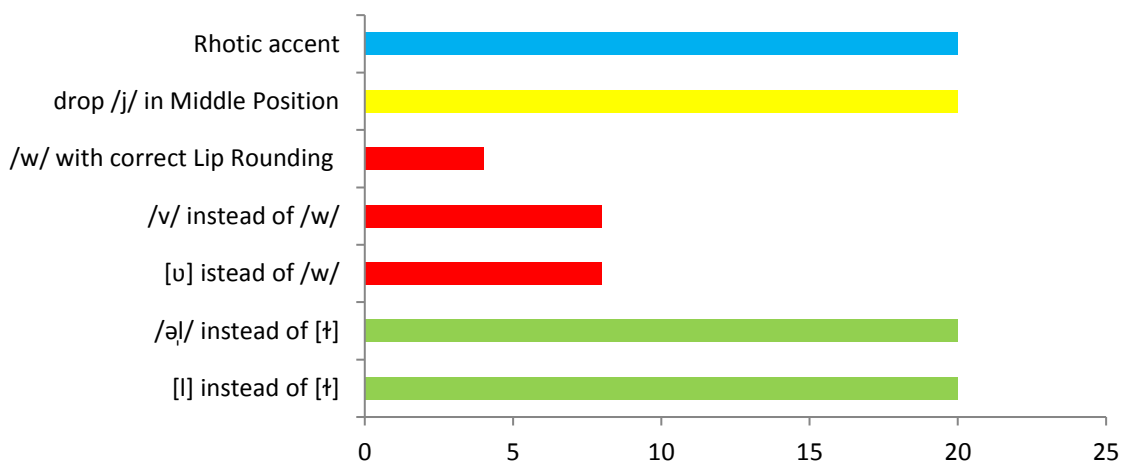
Sr No	PE	Percentages
1	Rhotic Accent	100%

DISCUSSION

The study analysis in detail the differences between RP semivowels and their articulation by PE speakers. The data presented in tabular forms above are consolidated in the following graph to give a holistic overview of the differences in semivowel in both varieties of English.

Figure 1

Graphical Representation of PE Semivowels and Liquids in Comparison to RP



In the above chart, the horizontal axis shows the number of participants and the vertical axis shows the differences in the sounds produced by the participants. The first two bars from the bottom show that all the sample PE speakers do not make any difference between dark /ɹ/ and light /l/ and in the articulation of words ending on dark /ɹ/, they also insert an additional shwa sound before /l/. The third, fourth, and fifth bars from the bottom represent the articulation of /w/ sound by PE speakers. Eight out of twenty speakers pronounced /v/ instead of /w/ and another eight speakers substituted it with /ʊ/. Only four speakers pronounced /w/ in their word-initial position with correct lip rounding deviating from the findings of earlier studies (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2008; Afsar & Kamran, 2011) where the correct lip rounding was not at all observed in PE. This shows that speakers of PE are conscious of adopting the RP accent and resultantly try to overcome the differences between the two accents. The sixth bar again represents the peculiar feature of yod dropping in PE; all the sample speakers dropped the /j/ sound in the word middle position, making it a representative feature. The topmost bar represents PE as the rhotic accent as American English, showing the influence of American media on PE speakers.

CONCLUSION

During the course of this study, it was revealed that for similar sounds available in Urdu, Pakistan's national language,, PE speakers pronounce the same as given in RP but for dissimilar sounds, near-equals from Urdu are replaced. The comparison of semivowels and liquids of PE with RP shows some variations in these two varieties. In the articulation of gliding consonant /w/, there is no realisation of the phonemic difference between /w/ and /v/ whereas while articulating the gliding consonant /j/, it is dropped in the word middle position if occurs before vowel /u:/. In the articulation of lateral (approximant) /l/, there is no realisation of the allophonic difference between light /l/ and dark /ɹ/ while /r/ is articulated in all environments making PE a rhotic accent.

English because of interaction with regional languages has undergone a transformation, therefore, the global dominance of English is not imperialism but a product of the local hegemonies of English (Khan, 2012). It is concluded that the overall pattern of pronunciation emerging from the study points strongly towards the existence of an educated Pakistani accent. It is closer to the British RP than any other native English accent (Sheikh, 2012). It is suggested in this regard that PE, as a distinct variant of the English

language, should be widely introduced by taking suitable steps for its growth and acceptance at an international level. Though it has certain features which make it different from RP, the differences become a reason for its distinct identity and a reason to retain its pivotal role in the socio-political spectrum of the world's contemporary affairs while articulating the communicative needs of the present-day English-speaking populations.

This study may contribute to a better understanding of semivowels and liquids of PE. The findings of this study have a real pedagogic value for Pakistani English speakers to help them identify the differences in sound articulation from RP and accordingly work on these deviations for the achievement of various goals in academic and professional settings. Further studies can be carried out for other phonemes of English as well and a more accurate and precise natured spectrographic analysis can be added by using different software.

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