A STUDY OF LEXICAL DIFFERENCE IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AMONG INDIAN ENGLISH SPEAKERS

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ABSTRACT

Languages differ in their phonological, grammatical and systems of meaning. Any language is able to describe things, notions, phenomena and facts of life which ensure cognition of the outside world. But the ways of expressing these things and notions usually vary in different languages. The Indian English lexicon has many distinct terms which are commonly used by its speakers. These terms arise through the use of old and new morphological features, acronyms and abbreviations. Many terms from Indian languages are utilized and new usages for English words or expressions are created. Many of these terms and usages are specific to the population of Indian English. The ability of speaking English depends on the correctness of pronunciation but there appears lexical difference in pronunciation which directly affects the meaning in communication. A study was conducted to know the lexical difference in English pronunciation by the English as second language learners. The Investigator collected data from 500 students and 60 teachers from 20 educational institutions located in NCR Delhi in order to know their lexical difference in English Pronunciation of ESLs in India. The findings of the study show that Most of the students were found at moderate level and at below average level of Knowledge of Stress and Lexical Variation in English pronunciation. The mean score of Knowledge of Stress and Lexical Variation Test was calculated to be 14.92 with standard deviation 1.97. Referring to pronunciation some basic parameters may be settled to see the difference in their pronunciation of English language. The teacher should give the knowledge of various vowels, consonants such plosives, affricates, nasal consonants, homophones, homonyms etc. to their students.

KEY TERMS: *Language, Lexical difference, ESLs, Pronunciation*

INTRODUCTION

All languages change over time and vary from place to place and society to society in different community setting. Lexical variation meaning differences in words and phrases by comparing the way English is spoken in different places and among different social groups can be seen vividly. Despite the belief that dialect words are no longer very widely used, there remains a great deal of lexical diversity among Indian English speakers. The ability of speaking English depends upon the correctness of pronunciation and intonation which directly affects the communication in conversation. In the grammar-translation method of the past, pronunciation was almost irrelevant and therefore seldom taught. In the audio-lingual method, learners spent hours in the language lab listening to and repeating sounds and sound combinations. At the time, "foreign-language learning is basically a mechanical process of habit formation." **(George, 2002)**. Nowadays, it would be hard to find a linguist who would agree with the statement, yet versions of the audio-lingual method are still very commonly used in language learning. With the emergences of more holistic, communication methods and approach to instruction, pronunciation is addressed within the context of real communication.

Lexical study in linguistics refers to the vocabulary of a language. It encompasses the words and their formation, the type of words used, and the deviation from the norms of standard variety. The lexical study deals with the lexical set – nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs etc. which occur in the writing. It is the lexical items that are remarkable for their semantic aspect. Unlike grammatical/functional words, the lexical items have a lot to do with semantic as well as contextual point of view. It also deals with the types of noun phrases being used in speaking either they are functioning as only heads or have pre/post-modifiers or they are simple or complex having phrases within a phrase. It also focuses on types of the verbs used such as dynamic or static, transitive or intransitive etc. The lexis of dialects is perhaps the most conspicuous feature for listeners and readers.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN ENGLISH

General Indian English (GIE) represents one of the most prominent new English (Mesthrie and Bhatt 2011). Indian English as it is spoken among Indians is quite different from American and British English. Many Indians are preoccupied with the notion in regard to approximating British English when they are speaking. Indian English differs from British English just as much as American English. English has a special status in India. Apart from having a place in the public institutions of the country, in parliament, the law courts, broadcasting, the press and the education system English has spread in our daily life. English plays a key role in professional relationships between foreign and Indian companies. English permeated symbolizes in Indian minds better education, better culture and higher intellect. Actually 4% of Indian use English. Thus India ranks third in the world after USA and the UK to use English as spoken language. Indian English comprises several dialects or varieties of English spoken primarily in India. This dialect evolved due to British colonial rule of India for nearly two hundred years.

The English spoken on the Indian subcontinent has some distinctive characteristics that set it apart from other international varieties of English such as RP (Received Pronunciation) and GA (General American). These differences arose as a result of a long period during which English was in constant contact with languages spoken natively in India. As a result, the variety of English spoken on the subcontinent is frequently called Indian English. Indian English morphology is very creative and it is filled with new terms and usages.

Phonological Variation: Phonological variation refers to differences in pronunciation within and across dialects. Certain differences in pronunciation are distinguishable. Indian English speakers do not make any difference between the sound /v/, which is produced using one's lower lips and top teeth and sound /w/ in the production of which both lips are used. Also, the two th sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are usually replaced by /d/ and /t/.

Grammatical Variation: Grammatical variation evolves in two ways viz. morphology and syntax. Morphology refers to the structure or forms of words, including the morphemes or minimal units of meaning which comprise words and syntax refers to the structure of larger units like phrases and sentences, including rules for combining and relating words in sentences.

Regional Variation: Regional variation in Indian English is due to languages which are spoken in different geographical areas display regional dialect.

Social and Stylistic Variation : Social and stylistic variation is due to the social groups who use them, for instance, upper middle class versus working class speakers (social class), men versus women (sex or gender), young people versus old (age), ethnicity or race, people who are part of a particular network versus those who are not in network (social network).

Vocabulary Variation: English spoken in India are under the dominant influences of the native languages of the subcontinent, which is reflected in its lexicon. Sometimes, speakers of English in India add a new level of meaning of existing words.

Lexical Variation: Lexical variation can be seen as salient in distinguishing the speech of different socioeconomic classes. Lexical differences are also a factor in stylistic variation and in what are sometimes called the "genderlects".

In English lexical difference is usually truly lexical which must be memorized as part of the

pronunciation of an individual word. In such languages lexical difference may be phonemic, in that it can serve to distinguish otherwise identical words. For example, the English words insight and incite are distinguished in pronunciation only by the fact that the lexical difference falls on the first syllable in the former and on the second syllable in the latter. English compound nouns can change their meaning based on lexical difference, as with paper bág (a bag made of paper) and páper bag (a bag for carrying newspapers).

THE BILINGUAL LEXICON

The lexical study deals with the lexical set such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs etc. which occur in the writing. It is the lexical items that are remarkable for their semantic aspect. Unlike grammatical/functional words, the lexical items have a lot to do with semantic as well as contextual point of view. It also deals with the types of noun phrases used. It also focuses on what types of the verbs occur. The Indian English lexicon has many distinct terms which are commonly used by its speakers. Some arise through the use of old and new morphological features, and these come from acronyms and abbreviations. Many terms from Indian languages are utilized and new usages for English words or expressions are created. In the bilingual lexicon, the network of associations between words in one language is enriched by further associations with words in the other. The words in one language and their translation equivalents in the other (when such exist) are related in the brain in a nonrandom way, much as a word and its synonym in the same language may be connected in an associational network.

LEXICAL SEMANTICS

Lexical semantics deals with a language's lexicon, or the collection of words in a language. It is concerned with individual words (unlike compositional semantics, which is concerned with meanings of sentences). Lexicon is a term that refers to the words and phrases that a listener actually employ to transfer meaning to others. How an individual choose to express thoughts and ideas, and perhaps even which thoughts and ideas an individual choose to express, are lexical choices. The Indian English lexicon has many distinct terms which are commonly used by its speakers. There may be various lexical distinctions arise through the use of old and new morphological and phonological features, acronyms and abbreviations. Lexical semantics focuses on meanings in isolation, that is, without attention to their contribution to reference or truth conditions. There are many ways for two words to be related as;

- morphologically related: lift/lifted which both share the same stem

- syntactically related - write/paint both verbs

- phonologically related - night/knight, which share the same pronunciation.

The lexical difference pattern of an English polysyllabic word is as intrinsic to its phonological identity as the string of segments that make it up. This type of asymmetry across syllables distinguishes lexical difference languages from languages that have no lexical difference in their word phonology. Lexical difference can vary across syllable positions within words.

The Standard Lexical Sets for English introduced by **John C. Wells** in accents of English are in wide usage. Wells defined each lexical set on the basis of the pronunciation of words in two reference accents, which he calls RP and GenAm.

"RP" refers to Received Pronunciation, the traditionally prestigious accent in England while "GenAm" refers to an accent of the General American type, which is associated with a geographically "neutral" or widespread sound system. Wells classifies words of the English language into 24 lexical sets on the basis of the pronunciation of the vowel of their lexical differenced syllable in the two reference accents.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Indian English (IE) refers to those varieties of English that developed on the Indian subcontinent. Indian English (IE) is currently the co-official language of India with Hindi, and it is the primary medium of education, law, media, and business throughout India. Indian English (IE) is also used for social interactions. Indian English is being used widely throughout the country in the fields of education, economy, industry, as well as in India's political and social life. This is the reason, besides Hindi, English language is the official language of India. The English spoken on the Indian subcontinent has some distinctive characteristics that set it apart from RP (Received Pronunciation) and

GA (General American). These differences arose as a result of a long period during which English was in constant contact with languages spoken natively in India.

British and American English are the reference norms for English as spoken, written and taught all over the world. Most of the countries concerned have developed their own unique dialects, particularly with respect to pronunciation, idioms and vocabulary. A native speaker definitely affects the students' accent, intonation and choice of words. Frequent contact with a native speaker improves communication and fluency of the learner's language. The majority of institutions offer the possibility of being taught by a native speaker. When learning with a native speaker, students are restricted in the usage of Indian terms and sentences and their reliance on their English language skills improves their communication abilities in the foreign language. As a native speaker biases learners´ preferences, it is given as an influencing factor.

Maxwell and Fletcher (2009, 2010) investigated the acoustic–phonetic characteristics of Indian English (IE) vowels in L1 speakers of Punjabi and Hindi. Although Maxwell and Fletcher noted that both Punjabi and Hindi are Indo-Aryan languages, they were careful to document differences in the vowel inventories and suprasegmental features of the two languages based on phonological descriptions of these languages. Although very few differences were observed in the Indian English (IE) vowels produced by the two groups, Punjabi speakers produced IE diphthongs with more phonetic variation than Hindi speakers. Maxwell and Fletcher concluded that Punjabi and Hindi speakers shared vowel categories for IE Indian English (IE) monophthongs, but that native language phonology may influence the representation of IE diphthongs. Although the differences observed between the Punjabi and Hindi speakers of IE may indicate persistent L1 influences on IE. There are speakers whose spoken English is heavily influenced by speech patterns of their ethnic language, alongside those whose speech reveals nothing of their racial background and some who are ranged somewhere in between.

Despite the fact that many languages people use in National Capital Region of Delhi English is still their preferable tool of communication inside and outside the academic and educational settings. For this purpose, phonological, morphological and lexical variations, are discussed and then compared to the type of English used by Indian people residing at NCR Delhi. The study aimed to investigate the causes of lexical differences of Indian English speakers produced by native Hindi speakers and the possible solutions in order to remove their problems. So, it was really imperative to unearth real reasons behind the lexical difference in English pronunciation by the Indian English learners. The implications of the study may be useful to students, teachers, business personals, common Indian English speakers and policy making bodies in restructuring the Indian education system.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The research is entitled as, **"A Study of Lexical Difference in English Pronunciation among Indian English Speakers".**

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the research are given below;

1) To identify the problems encountered by the Indian English learners in the process of English pronunciation.

2) To identify Indian English learners' recognizing ability of sound lexical difference, vocabulary, and information in the process of linguistic skills.

3) To suggest remedial measures to improve linguistic skills of English.

HYPOTHESES TESTED

Keeping in view of the objectives the following null hypotheses were tested.

1) The native language has no any direct impact on lexical difference of English pronunciation.

2) Indian English learners do not differ significantly with respect to the lexical difference in English pronunciation.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Methodology works more as an overall guide to the research. The researcher used the Descriptive Analytical Method. In this study, participants, whose first language was Hindi or any native language and second language was English, were the respondents. Questionnaires were prepared by the researcher for respondents in order to know their lexical difference in English pronunciation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analyzing measures of the variables specified in the research study. In the present research work the researcher tried to study the lexical difference in English Pronunciation among Indian English learners of NCR, Delhi.

Population and Sample; Population for the present study consisted of the students and teachers of the educational institutions located at NCR Delhi where English was being taught as second language. The Investigator selected 500 students and 60 teachers from the 20 educational institutions located at NCR Delhi where English is taught as second language. The sample and the educational institutions were selected by random sampling technique.

TOOLS USED

The under mentioned tools were used for the data collection for the present study;

1. **Stress And Lexical Variation Test For Students**

2. **English Interest And Language Preference Test for Students**

3. **Questionnaire For Teachers Prepared By The Investigator**

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study was delimited to the Indian English learners in various academic institutions of NCR /Delhi.

- The study was delimited to Indian English learners whose native language was Hindi.

- Criteria for analysis of pronunciation were based on British and American English.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Word recognition is a necessary prerequisite for Knowledge of stress and lexical variation in English pronunciation. Knowledge of stress and lexical variation is simply identifying the word, recognizing the alphabets and putting them together to make a word. The tests were constructed in order to know the status of English language and problems of the students whose second language was English. The items prepared for the test were based on Indian English learners' recognizing ability of sound stress, vocabulary and lexical differences in English with correct pronunciation in NCR Delhi.

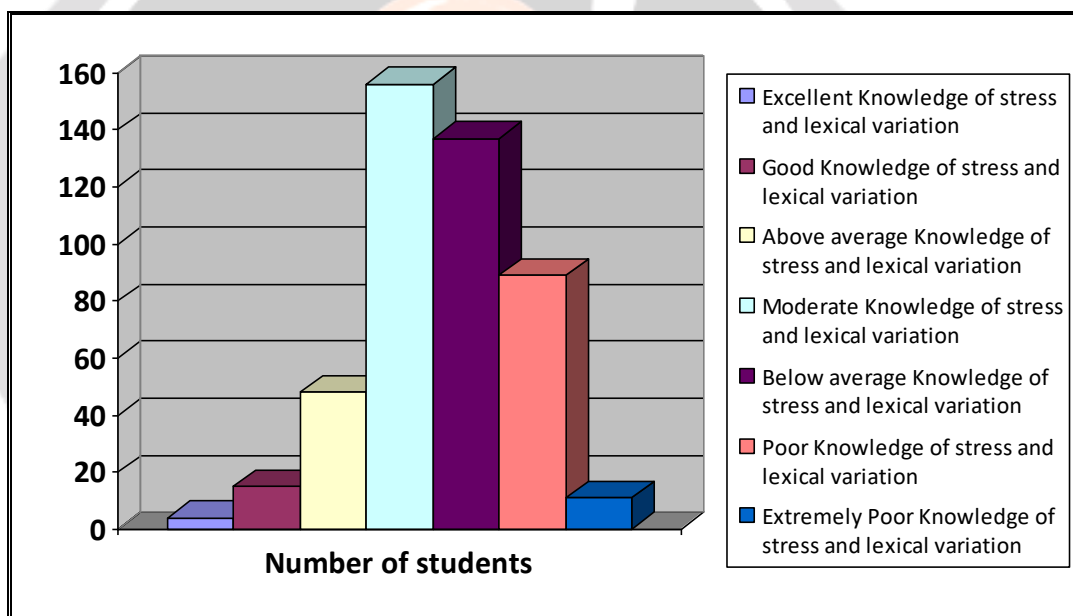**Z-Score Norms for Knowledge of Stress and Lexical Variation Test**

The raw score obtained by an individual on a test does not in itself have much significance unless table of norms have been provided to facilitate interpretation.

Z-score norms were used for analysis and interpretation of the data as given below;

Table -1: Z-Score Norms for Knowledge of Stress and Lexical Variation Test			
S.N.	Z-scores Range	Level of Knowledge of stress and lexical variation	Number of students
1.	+2.01 & Above	Excellent Knowledge of stress and lexical	4

		variation	
2.	+1.26 to +2.00	Good Knowledge of stress and lexical variation	15
3.	+0.51 to +1.25	Above average Knowledge of stress and lexical variation	48
4.	-0.25 to +0.25	Moderate Knowledge of stress and lexical variation	156
5.	-0.51 to -1.25	Below average Knowledge of stress and lexical variation	137
6.	-1.26 to -2.00	Poor Knowledge of stress and lexical variation	89
7.	-2.01 and below	Extremely Poor Knowledge of stress and lexical variation	11

On analyzing the data of Knowledge of stress and lexical variation in English of 500 students of ESL, it was concluded that 4 students were found at the extremely high level of Knowledge of stress and lexical variation in English, 15 students were found to be under high level, 48 students were found to be at above average level, 156 students were found at average level, 137 students were at below average level and 89 students were found to be at low level of Knowledge of stress and lexical variation and 11 students were found to be at extremely low level of Knowledge of stress and lexical variation in English.

Graph-1: Showing Number of Students at Various Levels of knowledge of stress and lexical variation Ability Test

English proficiency relates to one's skill with English language that may directly influence access to communication between speaker and listener. Learners' needs have to be taken into consideration because they can help educators to design and develop suitable learning materials that will allow them to engage in language learning. Most of the students were found at moderate level and at below average level of English Interest and English Language preference.

Most of the students were found at moderate level of Knowledge of stress and lexical variation and below average Knowledge of stress and lexical variation test in English.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings on the basis of the responses of the students are given below;

- Most of the students were found at moderate level and at below average level of Knowledge of Stress and Lexical Variation.

- The mean score of Knowledge of Stress and Lexical Variation Test was calculated to be 14.92 with standard deviation 1.97.

- Only 16.8% students had the ability to distinguish the English words as monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic while 83.2% students responded that they don't distinguish the English words as monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic.

- Only 13.4% students responded that they have knowledge of English phonology. Only 15.6% students had knowledge of voiced and voiceless consonants. Only 24.6% students had the knowledge of stressed words in English. Only 16.4% students use pronouncing dictionary for pronouncing difficult words.

- The findings of the study show that 73% students agreed that pronunciation taught by the teacher was useful to them while 52% students responded that they feel that mother tongue has an impact on their pronunciation.

- Only 44% students felt that the lack of foreign exposure brings down the standard of one's pronunciation while 56% students responded that they don't feel so.

- The findings of the study show that 85% students practiced to pronounce a word correctly while 15% students responded that they don't practice to pronounce a word correctly.

- The findings of the study show that 82% students blindly followed the spelling in pronouncing a word and 64% students felt that the speech organs affect their pronunciation. Only 56% students responded that they ever felt that they were pronouncing a word wrongly.

- Only 24.2% students studied transcription along with a word. 93.6% students responded that they give more importance to examination rather than learning the basics of pronunciation. 54.4% students responded that they learn more by reading about a topic than by listening to a lecture or a class discussion.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that British and American pronunciations are two pronunciation models that compete for the acquisition of prevalence. 82% of the respondents marked that their pronunciation is affected by use of native languages.   The lexis was broadly marked by the usage of British textbooks therefore the lexis was not excessively affected by American usage. It is clear from the data analysis that simple and familiar words enable the learners to comprehend them easily and unfamiliar vocabularies hinder them to understand the concept. Thus, they failed to recognize the distinction between nouns, phonological and morphological structure of words and sentences. The findings show that many respondents from the selected sample were not too conscious to the lexical difference in pronunciation with in the words.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the study concentrates on lexical difference in English pronunciation, it will present a total picture about the English language spoken in India and suggest remedies in order to remove errors in pronunciation. Correct pronunciation and grammar is emphasized. Correct speech is emphasized over fluent speech in the Indian context. It is thus important to understand the factors affecting correct spoken English. The results of this study help us understand these factors and have implications for classroom planning and curriculum transaction. Teachers in the Hindi speaking belt can benefit from the study and help their learners work on their pronunciation skills by planning appropriate classroom activity and instruction. In the case of second language, it may be useful to integrate the systematic study of cognates into teaching programmes, as Meara (1993) suggested that it may also be possible to express some productive morphological rules in terms of translation equivalences.

A good way to learn English reading, speaking and listening skills is with the video. For practicing, correcting and developing the pronunciation the ESLs should listen regularly to English sounds and words using audio aids like cassettes, CDs and sound dictionaries. Observing public announcements (Railway announcement, corporation transport announcement, etc.) will help to strengthen the sociolinguistic knowledge and the presence of mind. Teachers can help students by highlighting elements such as sounds, syllables, lexical difference and intonation. Once the students understand the

functions of these elements, they will know what to focus on and can build upon this basic awareness. There should be pronunciation lessons to draw the attention of the ESLs to the importance of pronunciation in learning English.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

On the basis of the present study, some of the areas are identified in the same field for further study. If Indian English (IE) phonology is acquired separately from native language phonology, then there should be little to no measurable differences in the Indian English (IE) sound patterns produced by Hindi speakers.

1. The present research has advocated some apt remedial measures to eliminate the problems encountered by the students in the process lexical difference in pronunciation of English language. The other linguistic aspects may be included for further study.

2. L1 influences on L2 and its impact on other skills of language i.e. speaking, Reading and writing. This phenomenon can be studied further.

3. Negative and positive transfer of L1 between L2 writing can be studied separately.

4. A comparative study may be made between the two or more states or countries with reference to communicative competence of English language.

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