

An analysis of pronunciation errors in the articulation of the /r/ sound among Intermediate students of a public sector university in Lahore

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Abstract

The study aims to focus on examining the specific pronunciation errors in the articulation of 'r' sound that intermediate-level Pakistani students encounter when producing this sound. This involves not only examining the instances where the /r/ sound is mispronounced but also includes analysing the pronunciation of the consonant /r/ in all /r/ positions (initial, middle, and final or prevocalic and postvocalic /r/). The purpose of this research is to deepen the understanding of the specific pronunciation challenges faced by intermediate students in articulating the /r/ sound, to provide them the insights to guide through effective instructional approaches and to help them improve their pronunciation and enhance their overall oral communication abilities. The sample for this research was twenty intermediate-level students of a public sector university in Lahore. The study employs a qualitative approach. The

primary sources for collecting data were the 'classroom observation' and 'paragraph reading'. As the learners are not familiar with the rules of /r/ in English Language, so they endeavor reading words as they are written. The goal of this study is to find out the difficulties faced by students in pronouncing the /r/ sound. The study also aims to provide practical recommendations for educators by analyzing the pronunciation errors in all positions (pre-vocalic /r/ and post-vocalic /r/). The specific errors which were observed vary depending on their native language backgrounds, exposure to English language, and the effectiveness of English pronunciation instructions received. The factors included in the mispronunciation of /r/ sound are; the influence of the students' first language (phonetic system and the phonological patterns in their mother tongue), lack of knowledge to phonological patterns, and the complexity of /r/ sound in English Language. The recommendations may include targeted pronunciation exercises, explicit instructions on articulatory techniques, providing feedback on specific errors, raising awareness of the differences between the student's first language and English pronunciation. The words pronounced by students still do not meet the Standard English pronunciation. Most of the students have problems in pronouncing English consonant /r/, although they get English lessons daily in the college, but they haven't mastered the English pronunciation. Therefore, students often make errors especially in the pronunciation of 'r' sound.

Keywords: pronunciation errors, phonological patterns, rhoticity

Introduction

The role of pronunciation in communication

Pronunciation plays a crucial role in effective communication, and mastering the correct production of sounds is essential for language learners. Accurate pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of language learning, as it greatly impacts effective communication. English is widely spoken as a second language in Pakistan and it has developed its own distinct variety known as Pakistani English. However, due to the influence of the native languages spoken in Pakistan, such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto, learners often encounter difficulties in accurately articulating certain English sounds, especially the /r/ sound. The articulation of the /r/ sound poses a significant challenge, among the various sounds in the English language for many English language learners.

/r/ a post-alveolar approximant

The r sound is called the **'post-alveolar approximant,'** which means that the tongue is put near the roof of the mouth and voice out. The /r/ sound is made through the mouth and is voiced, this means vocal cords are used in it. To produce this sound, the tongue is curled near the roof of the mouth and voice is out through mouth. The tip of the tongue is right behind the little ridge that is behind the teeth but it does not touch any part of the mouth. This approximant sound is made by making a narrow space in the mouth through which air flows.

This sound occurs initially as in 'run', between vowels as in 'forest' and after consonants as in 'try'.

The /r/ Phoneme is spelled with the letter 'r', or sometimes with a double 'r' as in the word:

- carry /'kæri/

Some words that start with /r/.

- really /'riəli/
- right /raɪt/
- result /rɪ'zʌlt/

Some words with the /r/ sound in the middle.

- three /'θri:/
- program /'prəʊgræm/
- parent /'peərənt/

In British English, words do not normally end with the /r/ phoneme. Words that end with the letter /r/ instead normally end with the /ə/ phoneme.

The /r/ sound is also considered a liquid consonant in most languages including English and is produced with a voiced manner of articulation. This consonant is important because of considerable differences in its articulation and distribution which are found in different accents of English. The /r/ sound is produced with a specific manner of articulation known as an approximant or a liquid.

The exact articulation of the /r/ sound can vary across languages and dialects. It can involve the tongue tip or blade approaching or vibrating against the alveolar ridge (as in the trilled or tapped /r/), or the tongue body may bunch or curl without making significant contact (as in the retroflex /r/). These variations contribute to the diverse range of /r/sounds found in different languages and accents. The /r/

sound is typically classified as a liquid consonant, specifically an approximant. Approximants are consonant sounds produced with a narrow constriction in the vocal tract that allows air to flow relatively freely. In the case of the /r/ sound, the tongue plays a significant role in shaping the sound. The exact positioning and movement of the tongue during the production of the /r/ sound can vary across languages and dialects.

Variations in the production of 'r' sound:

The /r/ sound exhibits significant variation across languages and dialects. For example, English has multiple /r/ sound variations, including the retroflex approximant /ɹ/ (as in "run") and the rhotic vowel /ɜ:/ (as in "bird"). Other languages may have different "r" sound articulations, such as the uvular /ʀ/ in French or the alveolar trill /r/ in Spanish.

The production of the /r/ sound can be influenced by the surrounding sounds and linguistic context. For example, the /r/ sound may be pronounced differently at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, or in different syllable positions. Some individuals may experience articulatory difficulties that affect the production of the /r/ sound. These difficulties can be related to coordination issues with the tongue, lips, and other articulatory structures involved in producing the sound. Articulatory disorders, such as apraxia of speech or dysarthria, can contribute to errors in the production of the r/ sound. Someone with AOS has trouble saying what he or she wants to say correctly and consistently. Weakness or paralysis of the speech muscles results in a separate speech disorder, known as dysarthria. The production of the /r/ sound can influence the neighboring sounds due to coarticulatory effects. Coarticulation refers to the way sounds can influence one another in connected speech.

Variations and errors in the production of the "r" sound can be influenced by individual differences, language background, dialectal variations, and speech disorders and manifested in different ways depending on the language or dialect being spoken. The /r/ sound in English exhibits considerable variation across different dialects and accents, making it a complex sound to master. Contextual variations can lead to different error patterns and challenges in pronunciation. Variations in pronunciation and errors in the /r/ sound can be influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as social identity, cultural background, and language attitudes. The /r/ sound can affect the quality and articulation of preceding or following sounds, leading to variations in pronunciation.

The errors in the /r/ sound can be associated with phonological processes, which are systematic patterns of simplification that children or individuals with speech disorders use to simplify the production of complex sounds. Common phonological processes related to the /r/ sound include vocalization (replacing /r/ with a vowel sound) and gliding (replacing /r/ with a glide sound such as /w/ or /j/). The students from diverse linguistic backgrounds often encounter difficulties due to differences in their native language, phonetic systems and the specific articulatory demands of the /r/ sound in English. The /r/ sound is prevalent in many languages, and errors in its pronunciation can affect communication. Errors in the /r/ sound are common among language learners, especially those who are non-native speakers. Some common variations and errors associated with the /r/ sound are the following:

- 1. Trilled /r/:** Some languages, such as Spanish or Italian, have a trilled /r/ sound, produced by rapidly vibrating the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge. Errors in producing this sound may result in an inability to trill the /r/ or substituting it with other sounds.
- 2. Tap /r/:** In some languages, including American English, the /r/ sound is produced as a tap or flap. The tongue briefly taps the alveolar ridge, producing a quick, single contact. Errors may involve difficulty executing the tap, resulting in a prolonged or trilled /r/ sound.
- 3. Retroflex /r/:** Certain languages, like Hindi or Swedish, have a retroflex /r/ sound where the tip of the tongue curls upwards and approaches the roof of the mouth. Errors may involve incorrect tongue positioning or substituting it with a different sound.
- 4. Rhotic Approximation:** In some varieties of English, particularly non-rhotic accents like British English, the /r/ sound is weakened or not pronounced in certain contexts. Errors may involve over-pronouncing or misplacing the /r/ sound in words or omitting it altogether.
- 5. Vocalic /r/:** In some dialects or regional accents, particularly in certain parts of the United States, the /r/ sound can take on a vocalic quality, functioning as a vowel sound. Errors may involve inconsistent or inaccurate production of this vocalic /r/ sound.
- 6. Deletion or Substitution:** Errors can involve the deletion or substitution of the /r/ sound with other sounds. For example, "car" may be pronounced as "cah" or "coat" as "coast." These errors can occur due to phonological patterns or influence from other languages or dialects.
- 7. Coarticulation:** Errors may involve difficulties with coarticulation, where the /r/ sound affects the neighboring sounds. For example, a speaker may have difficulty transitioning smoothly between the /r/ sound and other sounds, resulting in coarticulatory errors.

8. **Accent-related Variation:** Different accents and dialects can exhibit variations in the production of the /r/ sound. Errors may involve non-standard pronunciations influenced by regional accents, leading to differences in tongue placement, voicing, or duration of the /r/ sound.
9. **Lateral Approximation:** In some cases, errors may involve producing an "L"-like sound instead of the /r/ sound, a phenomenon known as a lateral approximation. This error can occur due to incorrect tongue placement or muscle coordination.
10. **Hypercorrection:** Some individuals, when attempting to correct errors in the /r/ sound, may overcompensate and overemphasize the sound, resulting in hyper corrected pronunciations that sound unnatural or forced.

The errors in the production of the /r/ sound are common among second language learners. Some errors are age-related where children learning to produce the /r/ sound may experience errors as they develop their speech abilities. These errors can include substitutions, distortions, or omissions of the /r/ sound. The challenges associated with acquiring a new sound system and differences in the phonetic and phonological rules of the native and target languages can lead to errors and variations in pronunciation. Some individuals may have difficulties in perceiving or discriminating the /r/ sound, which can impact their ability to produce it accurately. Perceptual difficulties can also contribute to errors and challenges in learning and producing the sound correctly.

The /r/ Phoneme (prevocalic and postvocalic)

The /r/ phoneme is an unusual sound. It's typically categorized as either prevocalic or postvocalic based on its placement relative to a vowel and treated like a consonant. However, when /r/ comes after a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) in the post-vocalic position, it takes on vocalic properties. This is recognized as a unique subcategory known as *vocalic r*, *vowel r*, or *r-controlled vowel*. The /r/ phoneme typically is treated consonantly, lumped together with the phonemes /b/, /d/, /f/, /g/, etc. which has become an issue when targeted the phoneme /r/.

Prevocalic /r/: Prevocalic /r/ refers to the /r/ sound occurring before a vowel in a word. For example, in the word "red," the /r/ sound is prevocalic because it precedes the vowel /ε/. In this position, the /r/ sound is typically pronounced with more emphasis and is often referred to as the 'rhotic vowel.' "Prevocalic /r/ can exhibit variations across different dialects and accents. It can be pronounced as a trill, tap, or approximant, depending on the language or regional norms. For example, in American English, the prevocalic /r/ is often produced as a retroflex approximant or as a retroflex flap.

Postvocalic /r/: Postvocalic /r/ refers to the /r/ sound occurring after a vowel in a word. For example, in the word "car," the /r/ sound is postvocalic because it follows the vowel /ɑ/. In this position, the /r/ sound is often pronounced with less emphasis and can exhibit additional variations across different dialects. Postvocalic /r/ is often not pronounced or is weakened in some dialects, particularly non-rhotic accents like British English. This can result in the omission or reduction of the /r/ sound, leading to differences in the pronunciation of words like "car" or "park."

When someone finds difficulties producing the /r/ phoneme, each variation of the /r/ phoneme should be assessed in order to determine which variation needs to be targeted.

Here is a list of 8 variations of the /r/ phoneme: (prevocalic and postvocalic)

- 'ar' as in car
- 'air' as in software
- 'ear' as in beer
- 'er' as in butter
- 'ire' as in tire
- 'or' as in seashore
- 'rl' as in girl
- Prevocalic /r/ as in rain

Rhoticity in English

Rhoticity is a feature that leads to many differences between varieties of English.

Accents of English scattered in the world can be either rhotic or non-rhotic. It is described in a very interesting article on BBC online, three-quarters of the world's languages have at least one 'r' sound which linguists call a rhotic. Rhoticity in English is one of the most prominent distinctions by which varieties of English can be classified. The 'r' sound is pronounced in every context in rhotic varieties of English whereas we find 'r' dropping in non-rhotic varieties of English. Two phonetic transcriptions for the following word;

'wear' → /weə^r/ and /wer/. Whereas the /r/ is dropped in the first transcription (non-rhotic variety) the /r/ is pronounced in the second transcription (rhotic variety).

Rhotic accents are those accents of English in which non-prevocalic /r/ is pronounced, i.e. in which words like *star* have retained the original pronunciation /star/ 'starr' rather than having the newer pronunciation /sta:/ 'stah,' where the /r/ has been lost. Rhotic /r/ is generally an audible /r/ in pronunciation. Rhotic accents of English include nearly all accents of Scottish and Irish English, most accents of Canadian and American English, accents from the south-west and north-west of England, some varieties of Caribbean English and a small number of New Zealand accents.

Rhotic varieties in English are the pronunciation of the consonant /r/ in all r position contexts (word-initially, word-medially, and word-finally), while other varieties of English language are classified as non-rhotic. In non-rhotic varieties, speakers do not pronounce /r/ when it is at the end of a word or in postvocalic environments that is, when it is immediately after a vowel and not followed by another vowel.

Non-rhoticity in English

The opposite of rhotic is non-rhotic. This means the /r/ sound is not pronounced if it comes after a vowel and is followed by a consonant, or if it is at the end of a word. For example, take the word *mother*. A non-rhotic accent would drop the /r/ in *mother*, as it comes at the end of a word. On the other hand, a rhotic accent would pronounce the /r/.

In non-rhotic varieties, the realization of /r/ changes. Word initially, intervocalically or in a consonant cluster, /r/ is pronounced as a rhotic consonant, while in other positions the sound value of /r/ changes. In most non-rhotic varieties, /r/ becomes schwa in words like *fear*, /fiə/, and lengthens the vowels in words like *star*, /sta:/, and *port*, /pɔ:t/. The change from /r/ to schwa in non-rhotic varieties has caused an assortment of triphthongs to exist that do not exist in rhotic varieties such as /fa ə/ in *fire*. In addition, in non-rhotic varieties, the pronunciation of some sets of words, such as *pander-panda*, /pændə/, and *source-sauce*, /sɔ:s/ have become homophones. There is also a phenomenon called linking or intrusive /r/. In the case of linking /r/, /r/ will only occur if it follows a vowel. Linking /r/ occurs across the boundaries of words *Africa* and *Asia*, /'æfrikə nd 'eɪʒə/, and within a word, *drawing*, /'drɔ:ɪŋ/. Linking /r/ causes words like *sawing* and *soaring* to be homophones in most non-rhotic varieties. All of this complexity in regard to rhoticity has the potential to confuse non-native English language learners who are unaware or have a low-level awareness of non-rhoticity.

/r/ sound in Pakistani English

Pakistani English is an institutionalized non-native variation of the English Language that developed from contacts between Pakistani and indigenous languages spoken in Pakistan, such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and others. It emerged as a result of historical and sociolinguistic factors, including British colonial rule and subsequent language policies in Pakistan.

Pakistani English has its own distinct characteristics, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and usage patterns, which have been influenced by the native languages spoken in the region. These influences can be observed in various aspects of Pakistani English, including the pronunciation of sounds like the /r/ sound, as well as the use of idiomatic expressions and loanwords from indigenous languages. The use of the /r/ sound in Pakistani English can vary depending on the speaker's background, education, and regional accent. Generally, Pakistani English speakers tend to pronounce the /r/ sound differently compared to speakers of other English varieties, such as American or British English. The production of /r/ sound is the phonological pattern of American English i.e. to pronounce final /r/ sound after vowel. This sound is suppressed or eliminated in Standard British English if found after a vowel.

Pakistani English has developed specific features due to the historical and ongoing contact between English and indigenous languages that distinguish it from other varieties of English. These features reflect the linguistic and cultural context in which Pakistani English is used and are shaped by the language backgrounds and language acquisition processes of Pakistani speakers. Pakistani English is usually termed to be a rhotic variety of English because the liquid /r/ is generally pronounced in all circumstances.

It's worth noting that Pakistani English is a dynamic and evolving variety, and different speakers may exhibit variations based on factors such as their level of education, exposure to English, and individual linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, there can be regional variations within Pakistani English, influenced by the linguistic diversity present in different parts of the country.

Factors involved in the pronunciation of /r/ sound in Pakistani English

The pronunciation of the /r/ sound in Pakistani English can be influenced by various factors, including linguistic, cultural, and individual factors. Here are some key factors that can affect the pronunciation of /r/ in Pakistani English:

Native Language Influence: The native languages spoken in Pakistan, such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto, can significantly influence the pronunciation of /r/ in Pakistani English. These languages have

their own distinct /r/ sounds, which may differ from the English /r/ sound. Speakers may transfer the articulatory patterns of their native language to English, leading to variations in the pronunciation of /r/.

Phonological Rules: Pakistani English has its own phonological rules that govern the pronunciation of sounds, including /r/. These rules can vary among different regions and communities within Pakistan. For example, some regions may exhibit a stronger retroflex pronunciation of /r/ while others may have a weaker or omitted "r" sound in certain positions.

Educational Background: The level of education and exposure to English can impact the pronunciation of "r" in Pakistani English. Individuals with a higher level of education and more exposure to English may have a better understanding of English phonetics and be more likely to produce the English /r/ sound accurately. On the other hand, those with limited exposure or lower levels of education may exhibit more pronounced influence from their native language.

Socio-Cultural Factors: The socio-cultural context in which individuals use Pakistani English can also affect the pronunciation of /r/. For example, individuals who primarily interact with speakers of their native language may be less motivated to acquire a native-like English pronunciation, leading to the retention of native language pronunciation patterns, including the /r/ sound.

Individual Variation: Each individual has their own unique way of pronouncing sounds, including /r/. Factors such as age, gender, and personal speaking style can contribute to individual variation in the pronunciation of /r/ in Pakistani English. Some individuals may naturally produce a more accurate English /r/ sound, while others may exhibit more distinct retroflex or non-rhotic pronunciations.

It's important to note that these factors interact with each other, and the pronunciation of /r/ in Pakistani English can vary among individuals and regions. As Pakistani English is a diverse and evolving variety, the pronunciation of /r/ continues to be shaped by these factors and individual speech patterns.

Significance of the Research

The significance of the study is to identify the common pronunciation errors in the articulation of the /r/ sound that can benefit students in order to improve their pronunciation in the pre-vocalic and post-vocalic /r/. This research would be beneficial for the instructors as well as the students. The study of the pronunciation errors in the /r/ sound is substantial for improving communication, facilitating language

acquisition, exploring accent and linguistic variation, enhancing the knowledge of language and phonological patterns associated with the /r/ sound.

Research Objectives:

The aim of the present research is to:

- 1) To identify the pronunciation problems faced by Pakistani students
- 2) To analyze the specific errors in the pronunciation of /r/ sound made by the intermediate students of public sector university
- 3) To highlight the factors contributing to the mispronunciation of the /r/ sound among intermediate students of public sector university

Research Questions:

The present study will address the following questions:

- 1) What are the pronunciation problems faced by Pakistani students?
- 2) What specific errors in the pronunciation of 'r' sound are made by intermediate students of a public sector university?
- 3) Which factors contribute to the mispronunciation of the 'r' sound among intermediate students of a public sector university?

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the occurrence of pronunciation errors specifically related to the /r/ sound among intermediate-level students. Students make frequent errors in learning a second language, especially, the rules of /r/ are violated while pronouncing the English words. They encounter challenges in the pronunciation of second language i.e. English Language. The students' lack of awareness in pronouncing the words appropriately i.e. not following the rules of 'r' sound in pronunciation and the habit of pronouncing the words as they are written.

Literature Review

Yasir et. al.(2021) conducted this research in order to investigate ‘Phonological shifts of Pakistani English from Standard British English.’ This research was conducted in different universities of Lahore. The sample was based on population of students belonged to different universities situated in Lahore. Qualitative approach was used to highlight the phonological aspects of Pakistani English. Convenience sampling technique was used to select sample of 25 students between the ages of 20 to 25 years. The sample contained 15 female and 10 male students who are currently studying in universities in the region of Lahore and voluntarily agreed to participate in this research. The students were guided through online communication by using WhatsApp. The respondents were asked to read a poem and send it in voice notes so that their pronunciation could be analyzed. The respondents sent their voice recordings which were, later on, transformed into speech sounds with the help of IPA symbols. The analysis was carried by taking transcription of poem by using online WhatsApp application based of IPA transcription. The speech sounds of respondents and RP of poem was compared in order to see changes in speech sounds. The focus was on distinct vowel changes and consonant changes in respondents’ speeches. After this procedure distinct phonological deviations and characteristics were highlighted. The eminent works of Ahmar Mehboob (2003) and Tariq Rehman (1990) are discussed as marked description of Pakistani English Phonology. This study delineated inclination of Pakistani English phonology towards American English. The findings showed that the underlined phonological characteristics of Pakistani English are used by the majority Pakistani English speakers. These characteristics include rhoticity, insertion of vowel sound in consonant cluster, shortening of vowel, absence of diphthongs and mispronunciation of vowels or diphthongs. The study has supported the works regarding Pakistani English as a legitimate variety of English Language. This research has explored different characteristics of Pakistani English phonology which were unique to the majority of the sample. It was concluded that Pakistani English has its own features which deviate from Standard British English. Pakistani English varieties undergo some changes under regional, religious, social and cultural factors. There are no specific rules for phonology of Pakistani English to make it more stable. This research was a contribution towards distinct phonology of Pakistani English deviated from its origin and would lead Pakistani English towards legitimacy of English variety. Jadoon and Ahmed (2022) describe the ‘Phonetics and Phonological features of Pakistani English in relation to the standard variety of British English.’ The research was conducted in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Hazara University, Mansehra. This study is a thorough exploration of specific consonants, vowels, and non-segmental characteristics which follow a wide examination of systemic differences at the outset of the study. The data for this study comes from the following sources:

- Personal observation
- The written Pakistani Anglophone literature

This study described the phonetics and phonological features of Pakistani English in relation to the standard variety of British English. The analysis is based on the researchers' observation and intuitive understanding in the context of the findings of the existing studies on Pakistani English. The detailed observations of the phonetic and phonological features of Pakistani English show that the Pakistani variety of English deviates from the standard variety of British English in the use of segmental and non-segmental features. The findings suggest that the Pakistani English's phonetics and phonological features deviate significantly from those of Received Pronunciation. The analysis is based on the researcher's intuition and observation in light of the conclusions of previous studies on Pakistani English. However, the researchers recommended a more detailed examination of each and every feature of Pakistani English, such as consonants, vowels, and rhythmic patterns.

Khattak et. al (2022) explore in this paper the 'Glocalization of English.' A sample of 20 participants (10 male and 10 female) 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, the sessions were recorded, then data was transcribed phonemically, and finally, the data was analyzed in comparison with the Received Pronunciation (RP). The findings showed that Pakistani English deviates from RP in all the respective English semivowels and liquids because these phonemes were not present in their first language, Urdu. Consequently, Pakistani English speakers substituted the English phonemes with the nearest available Urdu equivalent. The study highlights the salient features of Pakistani English in terms of its deviation from Received Pronunciation.

Somroo (2022) describes the 'Pronunciation and semantic differences in Pakistani and British English.' The study identifies phonological, lexical and semantic features of both languages which vary in pronunciation. The purpose was to determine in what ways their usage is different. Two participants were selected for this study. Both were male and graduated in the same year from the Institute of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh. Their informal conversation in English was recorded to find the phonological and semantic deviation from Standard English. The participants were briefed about the study before their informal conversation. Their conversation was recorded by the researcher on his phone, transcribed into written form and then it was listened to carefully several times to find the

phonological and semantic deviation from Standard English. A qualitative method was used in this research along with convenience sampling technique. The data obtained from the recording was then further analyzed and found that Pakistani English speakers do not pronounce the common words according to the Standard pronunciation. It was concluded in this study that Pakistani English speakers pronounce the common words deviant to the Standard pronunciation. Their accent or pronunciation might be unintelligible to the native speakers and are reminded of speaking the wrong English. First language interference was the reason while speaking in English. They were not aware of the process such as rhotic, aspiration, and intonation etc.

Memon and Memon (2023) conducted the research that was about 'The errors of mispronunciation in silent letter words.' The population of the research was the students of 10th class at GBHST. The nature of the research was descriptive. A qualitative approach for the research was chosen. A pronunciation test having fifteen words and an open-ended interview was sufficient for data collection. Furthermore, the observation was also practised in all the process of research. The findings showed that the factors affecting the pronunciation were the influence of L1, absence of letter-sound parallelism and lack of training and teaching standard pronunciation. On the basis of findings, some recommendations such as teaching standard pronunciation and pronunciation practice were offered for teachers and students to improve the pronunciation.

The use of /r/ sound is not mentioned explicitly in past researches. The present research focuses on the errors specifically in the articulation of /r/ sound by Pakistani English speakers. The purpose is to identify the common pronunciation errors in the articulation of the /r/ sound that can benefit students in order to improve their pronunciation in the pre-vocalic and post-vocalic /r/. This research would be beneficial for the instructors as well as the students. The study of the pronunciation errors in the 'r' sound is significant for improving communication, facilitating language acquisition, exploring accent and linguistic variation, enhancing the knowledge of language and phonological patterns associated with the "r" sound.

Research Methodology

The current study was designed based upon qualitative approach. The population comprised intermediate level students of a public sector university from Lahore. A sample of 20 students with good pronunciation

skills was selected. Since the purpose of the present study was to identify the misarticulation of /r/ phonic, a reading paragraph was selected as an instrument. The paragraph contained more than 30 word with /r/ phonic at initial, medial and final positions. The students were directly observed during reading and their errors were marked on a checklist. Later, the samples of the students' pronunciation were transcribed and compared with the phonetic transcriptions of Standard British English.

Discussion and Analysis

The present research explored the phonological differences of Pakistani English in comparison with standard British English. Pakistani English deviates from standard British English phonologically. These deviations and variations come under influence of other languages spoken across Pakistan especially mother tongue plays an important role in phonological differences of English language of Pakistan.

The tables show the words the researcher found were pronounced differently from the standard British English by the population sample. The majority of the participants pronounced these words deviated from the standard British English in a way that they pronounced the alveolar approximant /r/ at all positions i.e. initial, medial and final. This indicates that Pakistani speakers do not produce English /r/ in a native-like manner. The native speakers of English exclusively those of British English, produce /r/ on the syllable-initial position with a single touch of tongue to the passive articulator but Pakistani speakers produce it as a rolled or trilled consonant produced by vibrations between the active and passive articulators. Actually they have developed a phonetic category for English /r/ which is similar to that of their L1 /r/. In most of the Pakistani languages /r/ is a rhotic produced with strong trilling on both onset and coda of syllables. As per findings of this study, Pakistanis can discriminate English /r/ from other consonants of English and there is no perceptual assimilation of this consonant with any other consonant of English. This study also suggests that Pakistani English is somehow like American English as it follows rhotic accent like American English.

/r/ at initial position

Sounds observed	Standard British Pronunciation	Sample of Speakers' Pronunciation
real	/rɪəl/	/rɪəl/

red	/red/	/red/
raining	/reɪnɪŋ/	/reɪnɪŋ/
right	/raɪt/	/raɪt/

It was observed that the participants produced pre-vocalic /r/ with strong trilling at absolute initial position. Most of the participants pronounced it with strong vibration between the articulator and the place of articulation. There was stress on the /r/ sound in the articulation of these words by the speakers. In normal RP /r/ is not trilled, it is post-alveolar approximant.

/r/ in middle position

Sounds observed	Standard British Pronunciation	Sample of Speakers' Pronunciation
party	/'pɑ:ti/	/'pɑ:rti/
charming	/'tʃɑ:.mɪŋ/	/'tʃɑ:r.mɪŋ/
sharp	/ʃɑ:p/	/ʃɑ:rp/
hard	/hɑ:d/	/hɑ:rd/
parked	/pɑ:k/	/pɑ:rk/
parking	/'pɑ:.kɪŋ/	/'pɑ:r.kɪŋ/
unfortunately	/ʌn'fɔ:tʃənətli/	/ʌn'fɔ:rtʃənətli/
water	/'wɔ:tə/	/'wɔ:tər/
shirt	/ʃɜ:t/	/ʃɜ:rt/
dirty	/'dɜ:ti/	/'dɜ:rti/
right	/raɪt/	/raɪt/
hurt	/'hɜ:t/	/'hɜ:rt/
started	/stɑ:təd/	/stɑ:rtəd/
morning	/'mɔ:nɪŋ/	/'mɔ:rnɪŋ/

In all the aforementioned words, /r/ was pronounced by the majority of the population in the middle position (after a vowel sound) whereas standard British speakers do not pronounce post-vocalic /r/ sound.

It can be said that /r/ is silent in the middle position in standard British pronunciation. Pakistani speakers do pronounce it in every position which is considered wrong by the native speakers of British English.

/r/ at final position

Sounds observed	Standard British Pronunciation	Sample of Speakers' Pronunciation
monster	/ˈmɒn.stə/	/ˈmɒn.stər/
wear	/weə/	/weər/
scare	/skeə/	/skeər/
for	/fɔː/ /fə/	/fɔːr/ /fər/
after	/ˈɑːftə/	/ˈɑːftər/
summer	/ˈsʌmə/	/ˈsʌmər/
mother	/ˈmʌðə/	/ˈmʌðər/
slower	/sləʊ/	/sləʊr/
hour	/ˈaʊə/	/ˈaʊər/
better	/ˈbetə/	/ˈbetər/
never	/ˈnevə/	/ˈnevər/
enter	/ˈentə/	/ˈentər/
water	/ˈwɔːtə/	/ˈwɔːtər/
cheer	/tʃiə/	/tʃiər/

Another variation between Pakistani English and British English occurs in the pronunciation of /r/ at the final position (post-vocalic). In this investigation, it was found that majority of the students pronounced /r/ at final position whereas standard British speakers do not pronounce it. This is the major difference between Pakistani variety of English and standard British English that is viewed as an error also.

Conclusion

This research targeted the objectives that include identifying the pronunciation problems of Pakistani students, analyzing the mispronunciation of /r/ words and highlighting the factors contributing to the errors in pronunciation of the /r/ words by Pakistani students. The researcher collected the data from

selected sampling (20 students of Intermediate level). The students were observed giving voice to /r/ words. According to the detailed analysis and observation, it is clear that the most Pakistani English speakers pronounce the common words deviant to the Standard British pronunciation. Due to this their accent or pronunciation might be unintelligible to the native speakers for which they are considered of speaking with wrong English pronunciation. Furthermore, the Lexico-semantic dimension of Pakistani English deviates from British English, in the usage of words. According to the findings of this study, Pakistanis speakers can discriminate between English /r/ from other consonants of English and no perceptual assimilation of this consonant with any other consonant of English was observed in the current study.

Pakistani English has its own features which deviate from Standard British English. Since every variety undergoes some changes because of regional, religious, social and cultural factors and these changes gradually become a standing part of that variety, same is the case with Pakistani English. It has certain characteristics under factors which are identification of Pakistani variety of English language. We don't have specific rules for phonology of Pakistani English to make it more stable, because not much research is being done on phonological aspects of Pakistani English which has been pointed out by some Pakistani linguists, too. This research will act as a contribution towards distinct phonology of Pakistani English deviated from its origin as well as it will play a role to lead Pakistani English towards legitimacy of English variety.

The factors behind making errors in the articulation of /r/ phonic found from the study are; influence of the learners' first/native language, having less/no knowledge of basic phonological rules, educational background and exposure to the English, individual variation and lack of trained teachers in education. Interference of the first language while speaking in English can be the major reason. The speakers are not aware of the rules of rhoticity, aspiration, and intonation. Moreover, English is a non-phonetic language. The conventions of spelling/writing do not match with the conventions of speaking. This is also a major factor behind the mispronunciation of English words.

On the basis of the results of the investigation, the following suggestions are proposed for learning Standard English pronunciation:

- 1- English teachers should use the rule pattern when they mention or utter English words with silent letters or assimilation. The learners having difficulty pronouncing words correctly can be benefitted in this way.

- 2- Targeted pronunciation exercises can be of great help. The language teachers should focus on practicing either one phoneme or minimal pair at a time. e.g. there should be separate sessions for teaching /p/, /b/ ; /v/, /w/ ; /k/, /g/ etc. Sound drilling should be ensured in all language classrooms to practice the basic sounds of English.
- 3- The use of phonetic alphabet at primary level is recommended as it paves the way for better pronunciation at higher levels. The students must be made familiar with phonetic alphabets and symbols in order to develop better understanding of how to pronounce the words accurately.
- 4- The use of AV aids can surely be of great help for language learners to learn accurate pronunciation. Besides, it makes learning easy and enjoyable. The learners may practice side by side.
- 5- Students' individual differences need to be taken into account while teaching English pronunciation. Pronunciation enhancement sessions can be scheduled as per needs and moods of the learners.
- 6- The use of digital dictionaries and online phonic dictionaries will be a boon in learning English phonics and pronunciation.
- 7- For pronunciation enhancement reading aloud drills and imitation can prove beneficial. On spot feedback by the trainer will boost the performance.
- 8- Students are naturally inclined to imitate their teachers. Hence, the teachers should act as a model and demonstrate proper word pronunciation.
- 9- English teachers need to be provided with professional development courses and materials to improve their language and pedagogical skills that they can use to improve their effectiveness in teaching pronunciation.
- 10- Another practical way is to draw the mouth diagrams while articulating different sounds to help the students know the place and manner of articulation of different sounds. The students need to be aware of the position of the tongue in the articulation of vowel sounds, as well.
- 11- Listening to standard pronunciation through English news channels and exposure to native speakers is also recommended. Listening to the standard pronunciation would result into better production of speech sounds.

Students should be made to try pronouncing English words repeatedly in order to become more attentive of proper word pronunciation. When they first learn English, they tend to focus on grammar and vocabulary rather than pronunciation. Resultantly, they speak English without comprehending how to pronounce accurately. Paying attention to pronunciation can help them enrich spoken input. This will reduce errors in pronouncing the words and automatically strengthen their communicative competence.

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Appendix I

Task: Please read aloud the passage below.

Sam was proud of his new monster T-shirt. He was a little excited to wear it for a fancy party tonight to look charming. The bones looked real, the eyes were red, and the claws were long and sharp. He thought

it would scare his friends. Sam had been waiting for this party. He would meet his friends after two months of summer break. But now he was late because it was raining so hard. His mother had to drive slower than usual. Sam hated the rain so much. After an hour, they finally arrived and parked the car in the parking lot. "Better late than never," Sam thought. "It's time to enter the party". Unfortunately, Sam jumped out of the car and stepped into a hole full of water and mud. His shirt was wet and dirty. His knees hurt and they started to bleed. He was taken to a hospital right away. Such a pity for Sam! In the next morning, his friends came to visit and cheer him up. They even bought him a new, better shirt. Sam was lucky to have such good friends.