

INTRODUCTION

This is a modest and sincere attempt to describe the weak forms of English words as pronounced by Indian speakers. It is generally agreed by all that Indian English is a different variety like American English and British/English English. Indian English is different from the native Englishes chiefly in phonology. English is spoken almost all over the world and so there are different varieties used by its speakers. English spoken by educated people in India does not radically differ from the native English with regard to its grammar and vocabulary but it is different from both British and American English in respect of pronunciation. We can observe that the pronunciation of even the educated Indian speakers of English has a variety depending upon the region they belong to. It is impossible to describe all the features of spoken Indian English in a limited study such as this. However, we have restricted ourselves to the description of weak forms which occur frequently in the use of English.

The Choice Of Subject

'Weak forms' is an important feature of Indian accentual pattern. The unaccented syllables between the accented syllables tend to become reduced.

Example // It wəz 'tu: IK'spensɪv fə zəm tə bɔɪ //

Now let's consider the pronunciation of some words.

/wəz, fə, tə, ʒəm / etc. If these words are pronounced without any context, their pronunciation will be /wɒz, fɔ:, tu: ʒem / etc. But generally, these words are not pronounced alone and they are not stressed. Such words are called 'weak forms.'

English people use these weak forms naturally. But it is a question whether the Indian speakers also use the weak forms like the native speakers. We have noticed that the non-native people who use English are not at all aware of the weak forms. So a systematic study of the pronunciation of weak forms by Indian speakers is necessary.

Justification

The educated people in India, as mentioned above, use some weak forms but they are not aware of the fact that they use them as a feature of connected speech. The users are not at all aware of the phonetic environment where the weak forms are used as 'weak' and sometimes they are also used as 'strong'. So a survey can give an idea about the actual pronunciation of weak forms. It is also necessary to mention here that there is hardly any work done in this area.

Scope of dissertation

We have decided to restrict ourselves only to pronunciation of weak forms. Now it depends upon the phonetic environment such as the nature of preceding as well as the succeeding consonant

or vowel.

For Example - The movie / θə mʊvi /
The end / ʒɪ end /

We can observe that 'The' can be pronounced in two different ways. / θə / is pronounced when the following word begins with a consonant, and / ʒɪ / is pronounced when a vowel follows it. So we are going to study the pronunciation of weak forms depending upon their phonetic environment. Again we think that it is important to mention that we have used 'phonemic transcription' in (/ /). Some of the vowels, consonants and diphthongs have Indian variety of pronunciation which radically differs from R.P. The following difference should be taken into account.

1) In Indian English / ɔ: / is used instead of / ɒ / and / e: / instead of / eɪ /.

2) Indian English has only one phoneme / ə / corresponding to RP / ʌ /, / ə: / and / ə /.

3) Indian English has one phoneme / ɒ / corresponding to RP / ɒ / and / ɔ: /.

4) / t, d / are sometimes retroflex in Indian English
[t̠, d̠]

5) / tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ / are articulated with tongue tip touch.

6) / v, w / are replaced by one phoneme / ʋ / realised as frictionless labio dental [ʋ] or weakly rounded [w].

7) / θ, ð / are replaced by plosives [t̪ʰ, d̪].

As there are limitations to our dissertation we can't

describe the phonetic differences. But we assert that whenever the speakers in our texts pronounce 'the' the quality of /ð/ is, /d_n/ or whenever they pronounce words like 'thing' we will transcribe it phonemically, but /θ/ is basically pronounced by our speakers as /t^h_n/ We are not going to highlight the basic differences between RP and Indian English, but we are going to highlight the use of weak forms by Indian speakers. So, it is certain that the Indian speakers tend to use /d_n, t^h_n/ or retroflex /ɸ, d_ɸ/ etc.

We are going to study the pronunciation of weak forms depending upon their phonetic environment. In this study we will highlight all the weak forms. In the list of weak forms (given by Gimson, G.D.O'Conner), there are articles, (a, an, the, some) pronouns (he, him, her, them, his, us), prepositions (to, for, from, at, of) conjunctions (as, but, and, than, that) and auxiliaries (am, is, are, was, were, be, do, does, must, will, shall, would, can, have, has, had) We are going to study all the weak forms, the phonetic environment, the pronunciations which go near to RP and the pronunciation which radically differs from RP.

For this dissertation, we have corpus-based data. We have selected 5 various kinds of texts. There are scripted speeches, unscripted speeches. We have also studied the varieties like dialogue as well as monologue. The texts selected are as follows.

- 1) T.V. NEWS - Scripted Speech.-S2B-020

- 2) Radio Talk- Scripted Speech.-S2B-029
- 3) A Lecture - Unscripted Speech.-NON -BC S2A - 034
- 4) Face to Face Conversation - dialogue SIA - 068
- 5) Telephonic Conversation.- dialogue, SIA-092

So there is a variety in the selected data.

Research Design

We have studied every speech quality very minutely highlighting the use of weak forms. We have located only the use of weak forms, and the strong forms.

For Examples 1) 'I am a lecturer'

2) 'I am working as a lecturer'

In sentence No-(1) 'am' is Main Verb, so it becomes strong and is pronounced as whereas in sentence No.(2) 'am' becomes a weak form as it is an auxiliary verb. We have given importance to such situations where weak forms are generally used.

We have studied the weak forms, the phonetic, situations, and pronunciations, the statistical measures of their pronunciations, the differences between the use of weak forms by various speakers, and some common features which we have found out in all the speakers.

Choice of Samples

As mentioned earlier, we have selected corpus based samples. There is variety in our samples. It is clear that samples belong to Educated Indian English (EIE) Five samples which are listed earlier have different variety. These samples are differentiated in two types A) 1) Monologue

- 2) Dialogue.
- B) 1) Scripted Monologue
- 2) Unscripted monologue.

Chapter-Wise Division

Our dissertation is distributed in following chapters.

Chapter No.I Some Important Segmental and Supra-Segmental Features of Indian English.
(With Special Reference to Weak Forms).

Chapter No.II Materials and Methods

Chapter No.III Description of Data: Quantitative, Qualitative Use, Statistics and Interpretation

Chapter No. IV Conclusion.

In Chapter - I Three important works of Bansal, Nihalani etal and Balasubramanian have been reviewed. Common features posited by these three have been noted and the differences mentioned. A brief review of supra-segmental features also have been taken.

In Chapter - II The methods and the materials used are described. American, British and Indian corpus have been discussed. For the dissertation we have corpus based data, 5 various texts and 7 speakers. We have studied varieties, like dialogue as well as monologue. The description of selected texts has been given.

In Chapter - III The Indian pronunciation of all the weak forms has been analysed one by one and we have shown how it deviates from R.P. All the texts and the pronunciations of all the speakers have been discussed in detail and finally some features of the use of weak forms have been given.

In Chapter - IV Different features of Indian pronunciations of weak forms have been summarised. The common features which we have found out in all the speakers have also described. A list of Indian variants in place of R.P. weak forms have been given.