CHAPTER - II

AIMS, MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

2.0   The review of literature on Spoken Indian English in Chapter I shows that most scholars believe that inspite of all the variety that one notices from one linguistic group to another, from one region to another, and even from one speaker to another, Indian English retains a fairly uniform pattern. They claim that several features are shared by all speakers of English in India irrespective of language group or region to which they belong. It is also claimed that it is this uniformity of pattern that distinguishes Indian English from other national varieties of English.

2.1   The aim of the present study is to verify some of the claims made by these sholars through an empirical study of the Indian pronunciation of certain words based on responses from a group of expert informants. It is also to update their findings. In other words to discover the extent of conformity to and deviation from the GIE or EIE as suggested by these scholars However, greater emphasis has been laid on the deviant pronunciation of Indian English which might create problems of intelligibility both at intranational and international levels.

In short our aim is to describe some features of Indian pronunciation in terms of segmental features and to highlight the aspects which give Indian English a distinct Indian flavour.

2,2   <u>Materials</u>:

In order to achieve the objectives stated above we invited forty six experts in the field through a questionnaire to supply the required information.   As our aim was to discover striking features of Indian pronunciation that dominate the day-to-day speech of Indians, the question was worded as follows:

'Kindly list some fifty common words which you think are

conspicuously mispronounced by Indians'

The wording of the statement suggests a value judgement, but it was done with a view to elicit deviant pronunciation of common words.

The experts represent different language groups and come from different regions. And therefore they are likely to reveal not only the regional features, but the general phonetic features of Indian English as such.

The experts were initially asked to supply fifty common words and to underline the deviant parts. We received some twenty eight responses from different experts (See Appendix II). We had planned to locate these words in the spoken materials of the Indian component of ICE (International Corpus of English) and determine which of them were "common" on the basis of their frequency of occurrence and range of coverage in different texts, and so on to describe their pronunciation. But as the Indian component of ICE was not ready for such an undertaking, we had to invite these experts to indicate the

pronunciation of these words by transcribing them for us. The experts were thus asked to transcribe those words phonemically and indicate the deviant parts by underlining them. We are happy to say that eleven experts responded in time. The present investigation is based on the transcriptions of the words supplied by these eleven experts.

2.3   Procedure:

The 429 words with transcription, received from the experts were arranged according to the number of syllables and in an alphabetical order, and their RP transcription provided so as to serve as a norm against which Indian variants were then compared.

The RP transcription is taken from <u>Longman Pronunciation Dictionary</u> (1990) by J.C. Wells. As any other pronouncing dictionary this dictionary gives one or more than one pronunciation of each word. But whereas in the earlier dictionaries the first transcription was taken to be the most common, in this dictionary the preferences are expressed in terms of percentages. The Longman's dictionary group conducted a preference poll in respect of words pronounced differently by British native speakers and the results of their poll have been recorded in terms of percentages of respondents' preferences. We have used the first transcription, that is, the most preferred pronunciation of British speakers for comparison.

Not only was the number 429 too large for a study such as this, but many of them did not appear to be 'common'. So we

thought of limiting the data further. For this we considered the number of occurrences of the words in the responses. We selected those words which were supplied by three or more informants. Finally we arrived at a list of 48 words which are described in Chapter III.

This study attempts to describe the phonological features of some words in Indian English and does not deal with their phonetic features. But as some informants have marked certain allophones, they have been noted in our study. To that extent it is more than just a phonological study of Indian English words.

2.4   The Title:

'INDIAN PRONUNCIATION OF SOME COMMON ENGLISH WORDS'[*]

In this self-explanatory title the only word that needs some explanation is 'common'. The commonness or uncommonness of words is generally determined by various factors such as frequency of occurrence, range of texts in which they occur, etc. As the building of the Indian Component of ICE is still underway and not yet ready for use, the burden of deciding which words are common was left to the experts as they were asked to supply common English words. In other words these words are common in the opinion of our expert informanants.

---

[*]   The present title of this dissertation is the result of enlightenment received from one of the experts.

2.5   Common Words:

The list of common words was arrived at by applying two criteria:

1. All the words which were supplied by <u>three</u> or more expert informants were considered common words -- the number of such words turned out to be <u>88</u>.

2. However, since many of these words had not been transcribed by any informant at all, they had to be left out.

Needless to say that the second criteria was dictated by convenience in the changed circumstances i.e. non-availability of the Indian Component of ICE.

The different words supplied by different expert-informants, the frequency of occurrence of each word in the lists of words supplied, and the number of experts who transcribed the word is given in Appendix IV   .

The final list of 48 words thus arrived at is given below:

Monosyllabic Words:

1.	bear
2.	beer
3.	comb
4.	hour
5.	film
6.	love
7.	poor

8.   school

9.   ship

10.   suit

11.   tier

Disyllabic Words:

12.   circuit

13.   colleague

14.   college

15.   content

16.   doctor

17.   excite

18.   flour

19.   flower

20.   genuine

21.   grammar

22.   hotel

23.   iron

24.   jackal

25.   language

26.   measure

27.   police

28.   ration

29.   sever

30   station

31.   student

32.   stupid

33.   very

34.   village

35.   woman

Trisyllabic Words:

36.   develop

37.   government

38.   national

39.   religion

40.   suggestion

Quadro syllabic Words:

41.   advertisement

42.   comparable

43.   economic

44.   photography

45.   psychology

46.   zoology

Pentasyllabic Words:

47.   examination

48.   opportunity