

## A STUDY OF PHONETIC VARIATION AMONG SARAIKI ESL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

Saraiki is an Indo-Aryan language spoken predominantly in the southern regions of Punjab, Pakistan. It has its own distinct linguistic features and is considered a separate language, although it shares similarities with Punjabi. Saraiki is written in both the Perso-Arabic and Devanagari scripts. This research aims at finding the phonetic variation among Saraiki ESL learners. This study analyses the issues that occur while uttering interdental fricatives and alveolar plosives. The shifting of 'th' at start or in the middle or at the end within voiced and voiceless interdental and shifting of /t/ phoneme and /d/ at start, in the middle or at the end of voiceless and voiced alveolars play a vital role in identifying the issues for the speakers having Saraiki as their native language. They speak different phonemes with a touch of their mother tongue which states that is interlanguage phenomenon. The present research is qualitative in nature where homogeneous sampling has been done on population of Saraiki ESL learners. This study compares the recorded data with RP (Received pronunciation) accent to check whether the Saraiki ESL follow up the same pattern or not. 15 participants having Saraiki as their native language were selected and allowed to utter certain interdental fricatives and alveolar plosives like 'th', /t/ and /d/ phonemes. They were chosen on the basis of homogeneous sampling techniques. It was found that they can utter certain phonemes when these sounds come in the start but it becomes problematic when these sounds come in the middle or at the end. They were able to pronounce the phonemes when they were placed at the start of any word no matter they were voiced or voiceless.

**Keywords:** Phonetic Variation, Saraiki ESL learners, Received Pronunciation

### INTRODUCTION

Saraiki language is a language of people of south Punjab and is spoken in province of Sindh and Baluchistan and many other areas in Pakistan. Saraiki, an Indo-Aryan language, is spoken primarily by the Saraiki people in the southern regions of Pakistan's Punjab Province. It is officially recognized as one of Pakistan's regional languages and has a considerable number of speakers. Saraiki-

speaking communities can also be found in parts of Sindh and Balochistan.

Phonetic variations:

As the name suggests that there exists a variation which can easily be said that there exists a difference which can be of pronunciation of words or speech sounds. This difference can be encountered when some groups of people are given some words and then check whether each of the person has uttered the

word with same sound or not. This difference will tell us that the people do not belong to same phonetic background and they have different phonetic background. This phonetic background depends largely upon the social variation, dialectal variation, idiolectal variation, regional variation, phonological and phonetic accommodation of the words. This difference may occur due to the phonemes which are the smallest unit of sounds and those are linked directly to the dialectal background of the speaker that how she or he pronounces words.

Place of articulation:

The place of articulation determines that which of the part of mouth is constricted when a certain word is pronounced. As we know that when a vowel is uttered, a vibration is occurred in the throat making them voiced. Also, about consonants there are many consonants which are voiced and some are voiceless. There are certain places of articulation within the mouth which are **bilabials** which involves movement of both the lips and then uttering a sound like *pat*, *bat* etc. **Labiodentals** are produced when upper teeth and lower lips meet and produce phonemes like /f/. **Dentals** are the sounds which are produced with the tip of the tongue when it touches the back of upper front teeth e.g *thin*. There is another term named as **interdentals** in which the sound is produced with the tongue tip when it touches the upper and lower teeth and interdentals are used for consonants (Sometimes) e.g *there*. **Alveolars** are those sounds which are produced with the tongue when it touches the hard bony part just after the upper front teeth i.e alveolar ridge and the sound produced are *top*, *dip*, *nut* etc. **Palatals** are those sounds which are produced when tongue touches the palate of the mouth e.g *chair*. **Velars** are those which are the sounds produced when the tongue touches the soft palate that is present behind the hard palate and the phonemes uttered are *plague* etc. At the end are **glottals** which donot make use of tongue for uttering the phoneme like /h/.

To get better at English, its important to focus on specific things. Learning how English vowels sound, especially the ones not in Saraiki, is key. Paying attention to certain consonant sounds like 'th', 'v', 'w' and 'z' helps a lot too. Understanding how stress and pitch work in English also makes talking more effective. Using certain methods can make learning easier. Doing exercises to practice sounds, listening to English speakers a lot, and asking for advice to get

better are good ideas. Doing these things over and over helps get used to how English sounds.

Manner of articulation:

As the place of articulating a word tells us about from where a word is uttered just in that way manner of articulating a word tells us about how a phoneme is uttered. **Stops** include stopping of air stream and then releasing it in an abrupt manner e.g *ten*. **Fricatives** are the produced when air faces some kind of friction while passing through the airstream e.g *fish*. **Affricates** are the manner of articulation which involves brief air blockage along with the obstructed release causing a friction e.g *cheap*. **Nasals** are those which are produced by lowered velum which and air flows out of the nose producing a sound e.g [*m*], [*n*] etc. **Liquids** are formed when tongue tip touches the middle of alveolar ridge and the air flows around the side of the tongue e.g *led*. **Glides** are the sounds which are produced with the tongue in motion (gliding) e.g *hello*.

Certainly, when individuals whose native language is Saraiki undertake the process of learning English as a second language, it becomes imperative to focus on specific phonetic elements, particularly interdentals and fricatives.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Phonetics plays a vital role in learning English language because it helps with the production of speech sounds and their transmission and perceiving. Moreover, phonetics makes it easier to identify and reconcile the different pronunciation errors. The intonation and stress patterns are identified. Therefore, in-depth analysis of Phonetic variation within the Saraiki (language that is widely being spoken by many areas within Pakistan) ESL learners is crucial in the fields of Phonetics and language pedagogy and it makes the reader clear about the issues and provides a way to the readers and learners in order to avoid those issues while teaching and learning. In this way, ESL learners from Saraiki background will be able to cope with the challenges that they might encounter.

#### RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Phonology and phonetics in learning English language has played an important role. The variations in the phonetics while learning English is the most prominent topic. Phonology and phonetics

has a vital role in understanding a language and then pronouncing it clearly by giving phonemic awareness. For many people in Pakistan having native language as Saraiki, the Saraiki ESL learners pronounce certain words or phrases in disparity manner. Moreover, no work has been done on the phonetic variation among Saraiki ESL learners upto now and that makes a gap to be filled in this research.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Since English and Saraiki both are different languages and are spoken in a different manner. This research aims to discover many phonetic variations among the Saraiki ESL learners. This research aims to study the issues and problems faced by Saraiki speakers when learning English language due to their already developed native accent and to check whether they follow the standard accent that is RP of English language while speaking.

#### 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- To analyse the pronunciation of interdental fricatives among ESL learners
- To analyse the pronunciation of alveolar plosives of Saraiki language
- To observe the effect of shifting 'th', /d/ and /t/ sounds on English pronunciation

#### 1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- Are Saraiki ESL learners able to pronounce English Interdental fricatives?
- Are Saraiki ESL learners able to pronounce English alveolar plosives?
- Does the placement of alveolar plosives and interdentals fricatives have an impact on learner's ability to produce it?

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation plays a fundamental role when it comes to learning English language. But an interesting thing to note is that Pronunciation is a very big issue of the learners who speak other languages as their mother tongue i.e the foreign

learners. The English language learners face a great difficulty in acquiring the pronunciation of English vowels. Because they have some other language as their mother tongue and it is very difficult for them to identify the correct pronunciation of many words of English language. Out of twenty vowels that exist in English language twelve are monophthongs and the remaining eight are diphthongs. Roach (1997) defined that "the sounds which are produced without any kind of obstruction and hindrance to the airflow are known as vowel sounds". Dulanthy & Garvey (2004) defines that vowels are those words which are produced with an unobstructed and smooth airflow through oral tract using different oral cavity shapes and the vowel qualities difference is also produced. When it comes to the matter of articulation of vowel sounds, basically the issue that resides is that the vowel sounds are hard to teach due to the sounds that lack precision when articulating with regard to articulation of place and manner. According to O'Grady (1996) that Our vocal tract is not designed to get narrowed down which is basically the hallmark of consonant phonemes and due to this reason the articulation of vowels is quite difficult and challenging. Diphthongs are another issue which produces problem in articulation of sounds for the learners of English (Baruch T.C., 1988). Diphthongs make language interesting by blending different vowel sounds in one go. Unlike regular vowel sounds, which stay the same, diphthongs are like a little journey in a single word. In English, diphthongs happen when a vowel sound mixes with a glide, smoothly going from one sound to another in one syllable. For example, in the word "coin", the 'oi' creates a diphthong as your tongue moves smoothly from the 'o' to the 'i' sound in just one part of the word. Diphthongs can be split into two types – closing and centering- depending on how the sounds move. Closing diphthongs go from a more open vowel to a closer one, while centering diphthongs glide towards a more middle-of-the-road vowel. English has lots of diphthongs, like 'ei' in "eight" or 'ou' in "house", making the way we talk sound unique. These special mixtures of vowel sounds bring a musical quality to how we speak, making each dialect sound a bit different. Learning about diphthongs helps people speak more clearly and smoothly. So, the next time you say words like

“loud” or “night”, think about the cool mix of vowel sounds that makes talking so interesting.

In English language and in pure vowels, position of jaws, lips and tongue does not alter while articulation but in diphthongs, a smooth glide from one position of sound to the other occurs. According to Crystal(1995), that the first part in English diphthong is mostly the much louder part and also the longer part than the second part of that diphthong. Alkhuli (1983) studied that basically the systems of sounds in English language puts an effect on the learning of pronunciation of vowels. This is the basic underlying problem which causes learning and teaching of pronunciation of English difficult and this happens due to the difference of sound systems native and the English language. This happens because the speech organs of non-native speakers are not habitual of producing these systems of sounds and when they are unable to produce these systems of sounds they choose to produce the closest sounds. Kharma & Hajjaj (1989), said that there are two problems in the articulation of vowel sounds 1). Many diphthongs that are used in English language are replaced by some other sounds the non-native speakers because of the interference of L1. 2). The distinctions that are present between various pairs of vowels. Bell (1995) defined that in the difference that is present between the native speaker and foreign language speaker is the basic issue that comes while learning pronunciation. Linguistics and researchers have connection with problems about the complexity of system of vowel sounds in English language and inconsistency of their pronunciation. Many linguists and researchers know the complexity of system of vowel sounds. Cruttendon (1994) states that because of their inconsistency due to the inconsistent nature of the vowel sounds they often create great problems for the learners of L2. for example the letter ‘O’ in different words like, hot, bosom, come, hold, women, represents the difference in vowel sounds as / b /, / ʊ /, / ʌ /, / əʊ / and / ɪ /. So, the beginners of English who have just started learning will face difficulty as they have not mastered the pronunciation of these words. Carter & Nunan (2001) said that the role of teachers is very significant in teaching pronunciation for this purpose they should be well aware of the phonology and orthography of the vowels and also they should let the students to predict the pronunciation of words on

their own by the spelling of the words. And the learners mispronounced the words just by looking at the spellings because in actual they don’t know the relationship of spellings with sounds. Swan & Smith (2001) identified the three problems of Indonesian learners of English language. These were the linguistic problems which were phonological aspect, social aspect and some problems that the learners face during the learning process. The aspects that create problems for the students is lack of knowledge in correctly pronouncing words comes under the phonological aspect. The second problem is that sounds does not exist in their mother tongue (Puspita, 2006). The spellings are very similar to the pronunciation that Singaporean language has. Basically, problem lies here when the spellings of the words does not match with the pronunciation of that particular word.

Zhao(1995) gave the consonant and vowel words list which included the errors of Chinese learning while learning English language for the very first time. Zhao thought that Chinese learners work with substitution of sounds which are not present in the phonological system of Mandarin Chinese. Chang (1987) declared the fact that Chinese learners often confuse / I / with / i : /. This happens because there is no distinction of these words in Mandarin Chinese. Chang drew experiment in the English diphthong /el/ pronunciation carried out by Chinese students. She reached to this result that Chinese learner face difficulty in pronouncing certain words of English and this is the basic problem faced by many Chinese learners. Teng (2002) said that there is a great possibility for Chinese learners of English language to face colossal difficulty during learning English as there is a counterpart in the Mandarin Chinese. Jenkins (2011) said that it is a reality that non-native speakers of English language face a colossal difficulty in pronouncing certain words like native speakers but at least the non-native speakers must try to pronounce words like the native speakers do. The pronunciation is comprehensible and understandable for both the native and non-native speakers. She said that there is another way that non-native speakers can do and that is they can learn some of the phonemes which are important in speaking English language because all of them are not important but some are important and only in this way they can be able to pronounce certain words correctly.

The literature review describes the remarkable distinction between the dialects and pronunciation of Saraiki by Saraiki ESL learners. This describes the language that is used in Central part of Pakistan i.e a regional language Saraiki. People of different areas speak this language with different dialects and accents. We basically observe the lexical variations among the dialects and accents of Saraiki language. The hub of Saraiki is the southern part of Pakistan where Saraiki culture is being observed. Province Punjab's southern part has a great community of Saraiki speakers. The main focus of the research is to find out the phonetic variation of Saraiki learners which learn English as their second language. This study is done through the quantitative methodology of research. The participants of the study which are chosen as sample of the study are male, female, educated and uneducated which the participants of the target regions area. The participants chosen are of primary school of the city Lahore which belong to Saraiki as a mother tongue are the targeted population. The data is collected the data by conducting an unstructured interview, which included both informal and formal interviews with the students. Different words were chosen to find the phonetic variation of the ESL learners. The result was presented to show the phonetic variation among Saraiki ESL learners.

As we all know that there exist many languages out of which similar accents or dialects may form a family and the language Saraiki far more different from its family which includes Urdu, Sindhi, and Punjabi. Atta (2020) said that with the advancement of implosive phonemes (specifically ج, ڳ, ڙ) and the retention of the historical aspiration are the only reasons that make Saraiki and Punjabi two separate languages. Saraiki is very much different from Punjabi and Urdu and is spoken in South of Punjab province. Grierson (1916) said that If we look into the languages of Pakistan, these languages are divided into two circles. These two circles are inner and outer circle. Grierson put Saraiki language with the name Lahnda which means that it has a language of the people who are living in the west of Punjab. Lahnda basically means the place where the sun sets. But, Grierson (1919) as the time passed by, he realized that there is no significant relationship between Saraiki language and Sindhi language as they do not prove to be the dialect of one another. So,

he stopped using Lahnda for the Saraiki speakers. But the two languages i.e. Saraiki and Sindhi also show morphological difference. These two languages do have a great grammatical difference among them. (Grierson 1919). A recent study done on it, Atta (2020) said that Saraiki is not a dialect of any other language but it is an independent language that is spoken with different accents. Saraiki is an Indo-Aryan language and it consists of many words that are loaned from Urdu language which is an independent language on its own like Saraiki language. These words are said to be as loanwords which are used in the Saraiki language. Saraiki basically consists of Indo-European lexis in it which makes it an independent language with loanwords. Saraiki language starts from right to left when it comes to write this language in a way that is more appropriate and it consists of implosive phonemes (specifically ج, ڳ, ڙ) which are not found in any other language i.e Urdu and Arabic other than Saraiki. The writing pattern of Saraiki is Perso-Arabic script type. There is a lot of work that has been done on Saraiki language and the grammar of the Saraiki language which is being recorded and described. There is also an existing study found that is related to Saraiki ESL learners and how they acquire English language when they have been speaking Saraiki since their childhood (Syed, 2013). Recent study that is subjected on three languages Hindko, Punjabi and Saraiki reveals an acoustic data is being presented by Hussain on the Saraiki stops in (Hussain, 2018). There are many other languages that are being spoken in the same region which includes Sindhi (Nihalani, 1995) and Hindi (Ohala, 1994) have their illustration at present and they can be compared with the other languages of the same region.

Basically, morphology and phonology plays a vital role in the formation of morphophonemic processes which are formed by interaction of phonemes and morphemes. Morphophonemic processes focus basically on the changes in the sounds occur when these are combined together to form words. Jusiah & Udoudom (2012) described the term 'morphophonemic' as a linguistic statement and this statement is made by the phonemic structures of morphemes and the effect of morphemes on the grammatical content of languages. So, in other words it can be said that morphophonemic basically

includes classification of phonological feature and their analysis which has a great impact on the articulation of these morphemes. Hyslop(2014) said that as we all know that phonology deals with the study of the sounds that make up the pronunciation and morphology deals with the study of morphemes which are the smaller unit and combine to form words and when these two morphological unit and phonological units combine together, they form morphophonology which will now deal with the changes in the sounds. These morphophonemic variations differ in different languages that are used in the world. The language of Bhutan i.e Kurtop belongs to the language family named as Tibeto-Burman Language and he also studied the morphophonemic variation in this language of Bhutan. (Hyslop, 2014). Hyslop (2014) said the language Kurtop has seven vowels and this language has thirty consonants present in its phonemic inventory. Furthermore, a small number of morphophonemic variation and fluctuation occurs in language Kurtop's verbal morphology. Many examples of suffixes are given like perfective –Shang and future/intentional –male, and these words do not have any effect on the form of the word. A study by Shah & Mandan (2016) gives briefing about morphophonemic nature of Sindhi language. This study tells us that like Saraiki language which is an Indo-Aryan Sindhi is also an Indo-Aryan family's language and it possess unique features. There are many features which make it a unique Indo-Aryan language and those features include the aspects of morphological, phonological and syntactic aspects. Due to these features, it is much more different from all other languages. The morphemic variation in Sindhi language is observed by the change in phoneme and due to the change in phoneme the whole syntactic property of the word gets changed. Shah & Mandan (2016) also gave specific features of nouns in Sindhi Language along with the number and gender also included case in it. It also tells about the classes that exist in the Sindhi language and these are the classes of nouns and also the Saraiki language which also belongs to the Indo-Aryan family has classes in nouns and the language of sindhi is much more different from its morpho-syntactic structure. Shah & Mandan (2016) declared eight classes of Sindhi which can be categorized as noun, pronoun,

verb, adjective, adverb, postposition, conjunction, and interjection.

According to the authors, in Saraiki, a noun is used as 'tekun', 'tuakun' without names and these are the pronouns used instead of You in English and this creates a phonological variation for the ESL learners to learn English. The vowel present at the end of the spoken word will determine the number and gender in a particular language. The rules that are used for changing of nouns from singular to plural are also described by many of the authors. In the language of Urdu, there are the words like 'Larka' (boy) that changes into Larkon (boys), Kursi (chair) which changes to Kursion (chairs), or Kamra (room) we can say can be changed into Kamron (rooms), these were some of the examples which are used in the case of forming plurals from the singular. There are some other words as Kitab (book) which change into Kitab parhna (book reading) and Khat (letter) that changes into khat likhna are used in a case in which a verb and a noun are playing the role of its object and from it a word can be formed. The literature of different languages shows that the morphophonemic contrast is different in different languages of the world. Thus, the literature of different languages tells us about the difference that occurs in the morphophonemic contrast of different languages. This study tells us that many of the phonetic variation are there which happens when the students of second language learners learn English language. this study explores the phonetic variation of ESL Saraiki learners the learners which learn English language and the phonetic variation occur due to the reason that they had been speaking Saraiki language since their childhood that is the Saraiki language is their mother tongue. It is far more difficult for them to have their pronunciation according to British or American accent as the Saraiki language speakers face phonetic variations.

This review explores the process of Saraiki speakers acquiring English as a second language, delving into the challenges and variations that arise during this transition. Saraiki, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in Pakistan, presents distinct phonetic features, notable in vowels and consonants, which influence the way speakers learn and pronounce English sounds. The transfer from Saraiki to English often

leads to variations, especially in sounds like /θ/ and /ð/.

In addition to consonant variations, the study considers the nuances in vowel sounds and intonation patterns among Saraiki learners of English. This broader perspective encompasses the rhythmic and pitch aspects of spoken English by individuals with a Saraiki background.

The investigation identifies factors contributing to phonetic variation, including socio-cultural influences, exposure to English, and individual learning aptitude. Language attitudes play a significant role, shaping how Saraiki speakers navigate the acquisition of accurate English pronunciation.

Moreover, the review underscores the importance of effective pedagogical approaches for Saraiki speakers learning English phonetics. The design of pronunciation exercises, feedback mechanisms, and targeted interventions are crucial aspects that language educators can optimize to enhance the phonetic proficiency of Saraiki learners.

**Data Collection:**

This research aims at comparing RP accent with the Saraiki ESL learners in a way to find the phonetic variation among those learners. There are many words which are not possible for Saraiki ESL learners to pronounce. Research was carried out and participants were selected. Participants who have Saraiki as their native language and who were learning English as a second language. A list of 100 words was selected having words which were *interdentals* and *alveolars* and given to the participants for pronouncing from that list. 15 participants having Saraiki as their native language were selected This was to check that some of the alveolars and interdentals sounds were quite impossible for the students to pronounce. All of them were divided into a group of 5 and were asked to read the words aloud. Their read alouds were recorded and listened to them in a redundant manner. Their overall progress and word bank is shared below.

**Word Bank:**

A word bank was designed having the interdentals (voiced and voiceless) and the alveolars i.e voiceless /t/ and voiced /d/.A word bank is given below:



<b>Then</b>	<b>This</b>	<b>That</b>	<b>Those</b>	<b>These</b>	<b>the</b>	<b>there</b>	<b>than</b>	<b>bother</b>	<b>Worthy</b>
<b>Mother</b>	Bathe	Breathe	Loathe	Thin	think	thought	thirsty	thankful	theory
<b>Bathtub</b>	Faithful	worthless	Month	Sting	fifth	warmth	teeth	wrath	smooth
<b>Clothes</b>	Frothy	Task	Time	Tell	troll	tickle	tick	ten	matter
<b>Rating</b>	Settle	Rattle	Rustle	Rust	hut	rat	art	lot	bought
<b>Cat</b>	Get	bouquet	Wet	Depot	set	apostle	let	chalet	Lick
<b>Wrestle</b>	Pestle	Christmas	Deal	Drink	ding	destiny	desire	doubt	Knot
<b>Lot</b>	Got	medium	Audit	Board	odd	hiding	sad	cuddle	Joint
<b>Right</b>	Hit	sandwich	Ride	Rode	adjust	adjoint	light	dead	death
<b>Brother</b>	Dust	Down	Dome	Tomb	cot	mad	cad	rust	Wrist

This word bank consists of different placements of phonemes with which the great difference among manner of articulation and places of articulation has seen. The participants were selected and asked them to pronounce these words from word bank.

Data Analysis and Discussion Analysis

As the IPA chart shows:

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 1993, corrected 1996)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

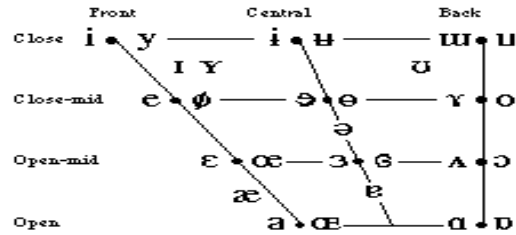
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill				r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap				ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
ʘ	ɓ	ʼ
ǀ	ɗ	ɰ
ǃ	ɟ	ɰ
ǂ	ɠ	ɰ
ǁ	ʄ	ɰ

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

Click on any part of this chart to see the symbols and hear the sounds

OTHER SYMBOLS

ʌ	Voiced labiodental fricative	ɸ	Voiced bilabial fricative
ʋ	Voiced labiodental approximant	ɰ	Voiced bilabial flap
ɰ	Voiced labiodental approximant	ɰ	Simultaneous ʃ and ʂ
ħ	Voiced epiglottal fricative		
ʕ	Voiced epiglottal fricative		Difficulties and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary
ʔ	Epiglottal plosive		

The chart above shows fricative interdentalals and plosive alveolars. We need to understand them in details.

Table Discussion:

The words from the word bank were given to the participants and the results were recorded. A table was designed which showed the outcomes of the participants and their way of uttering those sounds. The table below shows that:



Word Type	Voice/ Voiceless		Pre- Test		Post- Test	
			Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
Interdental	Voiced (ð)	Placement of TH				
		Start	✓		✓	
		Middle/End	✓		✓	
	Voicless (θ)	Placement				
		Start		✓		✓
		Middle/End		✓		✓
Alveolar	Voiced /d/	Placement				
		Start	✓		✓	
		Middle/End		✓		✓
	Voicless /t/	Placement				
		Start	✓		✓	
		Middle/End		✓		✓

The table has interdentalals and alveolars. The interdentalals are further divided into voiceless(θ) and voiced(ð) interdental fricatives.

**Voiced Interdental Fricatives:**

Students were given voiced interdentalals with placement of ‘th’ at different position like at the start, in the middle or at the end. It was seen that the students having Saraiki as their native language were able to pronounce the words that created vibration within their vocal cords and with the ‘th’ at the start very easily. Also, when ‘th’ were placed in the middle or at the end, they were quite able to pronounce them easily. They did not face any issue in pronouncing voiced interdental fricatives. They were tested two times. At first time, they were asked to pronounce words in the way they pronounce usually. In second attempt, they were taught the correct pronunciation and then asked to pronounce the given word with that. They were able to correctly pronounce both the times.

**Voiceless Interdental Fricatives:**

Students were then given voiceless interdentalals which were to be pronounced without any vocal cord vibration. It was observed that when they were given

words with the placement of ‘th’ within the start or in the middle or at the end, it caused them problem. They were unable to pronounce those words freely due to their native language which was prominent while the pronunciation of these words. For example: ‘theory’ in which ‘th’ is placed within the start and they were asked to pronounce. When majority of the students pronounced, they didn’t pronounce it as a ‘θ’ but as a ‘ð’ with vibration in the vocal cords. This practice was carried in two stages. At first stage, they were asked to pronounce without being instructed and they were unable to pronounce. At second stage, they were instructed how to pronounce those words but still they made sounds as voiced.

**Voiced Alveolars:**

Voiced alveolar is /d/ sound which is produced by vibration in the vocal cords. They were given words with different placements of /d/ like at the start, in the middle and at the end. This experiment was also carried out 2 times. Firstly, with the /d/ in the start, the participants were assessed without training. And they produced it and they pronounced it correctly. After being instructed they again pronounced it the same way as at first. Now the placement of /d/ changed and put into the middle or at the end, some

of the words were difficult for them and some were almost impossible for them to pronounce like handkerchief they would pronounce /d/ where the d is silent in it.

#### **Voiceless Alveolars:**

Voiceless alveolar is /t/ sound which is produced without vibrating vocal cords. The words with different placements of /t/ were given like at the start, in the middle and at the end. Same as all the experiments it was also divided into pre-test and post-test based of the placement of /t/ sound. It was seen that when the /t/ was placed at the start and untrained participants were allowed to pronounce, they pronounced them correctly. Also, when they were trained and allowed both times their way of pronunciation remained the same. But, when the placement of /t/ changed and put in the middle and end, they were unable to pronounce it correctly. Some of the words were difficult for them but some words were impossible to pronounce even after training e.g Christmas in which t is silent but they would pronounce [t]. also, /t/ at the end of hit is pronounced by vibration of vocal cords by Saraiki ESL learners.

This research was done in order to find the answers to certain question regarding pronunciation. The ESL learners having English as their native language were selected and they were tested over interdental (which are spoken with tip of tongue in within the upper and lower teeth) fricatives and alveolar (tip of tongue when touches alveolar ridge) plosives. They were given a word bank which included words that belong to interdentals (i.e., voiced and voiceless) and alveolars (voiced and voiceless). There were two tests that were conducted 1. When they were untrained(pre-test) 2. When they were trained(post-test). They were able to pronounce voiced interdentals (with placement of 'th' at start, middle and end) correctly. The important point to discuss here is that when in pre-test they pronounced words, it did not match with the RP and they were unable to pronounce with the RP accent. They spoke those words correctly but with a touch of their mother tongue in it. This is because of the **Theory of interlanguage** which states that the person has a set pattern of rules and vocabulary along with accent of his/her mother tongue. Interlanguage theory, conceived by linguist Larry Selinker in the 1970s,

offers a valuable framework for comprehending the progression of second language acquisition (SLA). This theory is particularly relevant for individuals, including those with Saraiki as their native language, who are undertaking the task of learning English as their second language (ESL). In this discussion, we will explore the foundations of interlanguage theory, its practical applications for Saraiki speakers, and the potential benefits it offers in bridging the linguistic gap during the learning process.

Interlanguage theory introduces the concept of an interim linguistic system, commonly referred to as "interlanguage," which learners construct as they move towards achieving proficiency in their second language. This dynamic system reflects continuous development and adaptation as learners engage with new linguistic input and refine their understanding of the target language. In summary, interlanguage theory serves as a valuable framework for Saraiki speakers learning English as their second language. By understanding the transitional nature of language development, addressing specific linguistic challenges, and incorporating cultural nuances, interlanguage theory helps fill the gap and guide individuals on their journey to becoming proficient English speakers. Moreover, they are unable to accept accent other than their native language. This theory accommodates these types of learners and says that they have their own accent and if they are allowed to learn English language which is nit their native language, they will learn it and will try to speak it but with a touch of their native language involved in it. Now, when they were tested over voiceless interdentals, they were unable to pronounce words correctly regardless of the placement of 'th' at start or in the middle or at the end. Here is the answer to the first question which says that Saraiki ESL learners are able to pronounce interdentals fricatives or not, so the answer is that they are able to pronounce voiced interdentals but are unable to pronounce voiceless interdentals. When they were exposed to the testing of alveolars which are also categorised into voiced/d/ and voiceless/t/, they were able to pronounce voiced alveolars with /d/ at the start but were unable to pronounce /d/ when it was placed within the middle and end of the word. The reason behind this was their set pattern of limited vocabulary unlike wide vocabulary of English language. Also, they speak words by making long

sounds of the words or by making unstressed syllables much more stressed. When voiceless alveolars /t/ was tested, the participants judged the placement of /t/ and then uttered the words. They pronounced /t/ sound correctly when it was at the start but were unable to pronounce words when they were in the middle or end. This happens because their tongue touches the alveolar for a long time and they put stressed over the voiceless words making them pronounced from vibration in the vocal cord. The answer to the second question of the research is that they are able to speak voiced and voiceless alveolars when they have /d/ and /t/ placed at the start but they are unable to pronounce when shifting occurs. This is the answer to the third question which says that does shifting impacts the pronunciation of interdental fricatives and alveolar plosives. Yes, shifting of 'th' and /d/ and /t/ in interdentals and alveolars in middle or at the end in all the cases except its placement in middle of voiced interdentals, all were pronounced wrongly or they were unable to pronounce certain words. They pronounced voiceless words as voiced with vibration in the neck.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

In the light of above pre-test and post-test, it was seen that there were certain words which the learners can pronounce correctly but not as the standard RP says that gives a standard accent to all of the people to pronounce different words. They pronounce those words according to their native language i.e Saraiki language. There are certain words which they cannot pronounce and this is because they have a set pattern of vocabulary inherited from their native language. They try to speak the way English speakers speak but they do not sound like matching with RP. They face issues when placement of phoneme within a word change. This makes them unable to learn English accent as the RP accent. Whenever they pronounce word no matter they pronounce it correctly or not, they speak having touch of their native language which is quite acceptable and approved through the theory of interlanguage which says that a person who learns language other than their native language, they have touch of their native language in it. Upon analyzing the results of both the pre-test and post-test, a significant pattern emerged in the pronunciation of words by learners, particularly those with Saraiki as their native language, who were

in the process of acquiring English as their second language. While some words were accurately pronounced, a distinct challenge arose when attempting to conform to the standard Received Pronunciation (RP) guidelines, a benchmark for accent consistency among English speakers. It is apparent that learners tended to pronounce words in accordance with the phonetic patterns of their native language, Saraiki. This preference showcased the influence of their linguistic background on their English pronunciation. Interestingly, learners demonstrated proficiency in pronouncing certain words, reflecting their ability to reproduce specific sounds accurately. However, difficulties surfaced when adapting to the standardized RP accent, which requires adherence to specific phonetic nuances distinct from those in Saraiki.

A notable hurdle was observed in the learners' efforts to pronounce words accurately when the placement of phonemes within a word shifted. This challenge in adapting to the phonetic intricacies of English, particularly in the context of RP guidelines, hindered their ability to replicate the standard accent. Regardless of correct pronunciation, the learners consistently infused a touch of their native language, Saraiki, into their spoken English, contributing to a unique linguistic signature that deviates from RP norms.

This phenomenon aligns with the principles of interlanguage theory, which suggests that individuals learning a second language inevitably incorporate traces of their native language into their linguistic development. For Saraiki speakers learning English, this implies that their interlanguage—the transitional linguistic system developed during the learning process—carries the imprint of Saraiki phonetic patterns and vocabulary.

It's essential to recognize that the learners' challenge in fully adopting the RP accent does not indicate a deficiency in their language acquisition efforts. Instead, it emphasizes the complexity of language learning, where native language influences play a crucial role in shaping the learners' evolving linguistic identity.

Furthermore, the learners' pronunciation, influenced by Saraiki phonetic patterns, is a natural and acceptable aspect of the language acquisition process. The infusion of their native language adds individuality to their English pronunciation,

reflecting the diversity of linguistic influences in the context of interlanguage development.

To support learners in refining their English accent, educators can employ targeted strategies that address the influence of the learners' native language. Customized pronunciation exercises, focusing on specific phonetic challenges posed by Saraiki, can assist learners in aligning their pronunciation more closely with RP standards. Additionally, fostering an inclusive learning environment that celebrates linguistic diversity can positively impact learners' confidence and motivation.

In conclusion, the observed influence of Saraiki phonetic patterns on English pronunciation among learners is a natural outcome rooted in the principles of interlanguage theory. While challenges exist in fully aligning with the RP accent, this linguistic journey is characterized by individuality and the richness of diverse linguistic influences. Acknowledging and embracing these aspects will contribute to a more holistic and effective approach to English language acquisition for Saraiki speakers.

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