***Journal of Religion & Society* (JR&S)**
Available Online:
https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index
Print ISSN: 3006-1296Online ISSN: 3006-130X
Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16896773

Comparative Study of Phonological Shifts in Pakistani English (PAKE) and Standard British English (SBE)

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Abstract
This research investigates the phonological distinctions between Pakistani English (PakE) and Standard British English (SBE), emphasizing the segmental and suprasegmental characteristics that define the phonological aspects of Pakistani English. Utilizing phonetic analysis, sociolinguistic evidence, and established theoretical frameworks, this report examines the impact of regional languages, second language learning processes, and sociocultural influences on the phonological structure of Pakistani English. The study employs a comparative descriptive methodology, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data sourced from literature, surveys, and speech samples. The findings indicate persistent phonological variation in Pakistani English concerning vowels, consonants, stress patterns, and intonation, many of which exhibit foundational interference from Urdu and other indigenous languages. These modifications not only distinguish Pakistani English as a unique linguistic variety but also underscore the evolving nature of English within a postcolonial framework. The results carry significant implications for pedagogy, language theory, and the concept of global Englishes, reinforcing the perspective that Pakistani English is a valid and developing variant of English that merits acknowledgment as a separate academic entity.

Keywords: *L2 English, Phonological Shifts, Sociolinguistics, Pakistani English, Standard British English, ESL phonology.*

Historical and Sociolinguistic Background

English was first introduced to the subcontinent in the early 17th century by the East India Company as a language of administration, trade, and education (Gill, 2002; Metcalf, 2007).

After the partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan inherited English and made it one of its two official languages along with Urdu. In the following 70 years, English has maintained a high status in Pakistan, playing an important role in the judiciary, higher education, government literature, and elite media (Rahman, 2002). At the same time, English is also an important lingua franca for Pakistan's diverse language communities, including Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi, Siraiki, Hindko, and more than 50 smaller languages (Gordon, 2005).

Despite its reputation in Pakistan, English is rarely spoken as a first language. It is estimated that only 5-10% of Pakistan's population (mainly the urban, well-educated elite) speaks English at a near-native level (British Council, 2020; Rahman, 2002). The vast majority of English speakers in Pakistan learn English as a second language, usually through formal schooling, with English being the medium of instruction in elite private and public schools (Mahboob, 2003). As a result, the phonological system of Pakistani English (PakE) is systematically influenced by the learners' first languages (L1s), most notably Urdu and Punjabi, but also Pashto, Sindhi, and regional languages (Mahmood, Mirza, & Hussain, 2011).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Pakistan is located in Kachru's "outer circle" of world Englishes, in which English plays an institutional role but is not local English (Kachru, 1985). Outer circle varieties (such as Pakistani English) develop norms that differ from inner circle varieties (such as British English and American English), resulting in phonological, lexical, and syntactic features that are integrated into the local environment (Schneider, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). Although English language teaching (ELT) in Pakistan often uses Received Pronunciation (RP) as the gold standard (Mirza , 2017), empirical research shows that most Pakistanis consistently deviate from RP norms in systematic ways - patterns that should be viewed as legitimate variation rather than errors (Rahman , 1990; Baumgardner , 1993).

Definition and Key Concepts

- **Pakistani English (PakE)** : A regional variety of English used by second language speakers in Pakistan that incorporates phonetic, lexical, and syntactic features influenced by the local language (Rahman , 2002).
- **Standard British English (SBE)**: In this study, SBE mainly refers to the Received Pronunciation (RP) compiled by Wells (1982) and Roach (2009), which is characterized by non- retroflex consonants, TRAP-BATH split, and stress rhythm.
- **Segmental features**: individual speech sounds (consonants and vowels) and their articulatory /acoustic properties (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011).
- **Suprasegmental features**: prosodic elements such as stress, rhythm, intonation, and timing that occur across segments (Crystal, 2003).
- **Localization**: The process by which non-native English speakers develop their own system of norms under the influence of local language and culture (Schneider, 2003).
- **Comprehensibility-based instruction**: An ELT approach that prioritizes speaker comprehensibility rather than imitating native speaker norms (Jenkins, 2000).

Research Rationale

Despite the growing recognition of English as a polycentric language, the phonological dimension of Pakistani English remains under-theorized in a comparative framework (Seidlhofer, 2011). Foundational studies (Rahman , 1990; Mahboob , 2003) have enumerated phonological features of Pakistani English —such as the merger of /ʌ/ and /ɜː/, the realization of /θ/ and /ð/ as stops, and the rhythm of syllable pacing—but have not systematically compared them to a Received Pronunciation (RP) benchmark (Wells, 1982).

At the same time, English Language Teaching (ELT) courses in Pakistan still guide learners to follow Received Pronunciation patterns (Mirza , 2017), often ignoring the principles of comprehensibility that underlie English as a global lingua franca (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer , 2011).

This disconnects leads to two main problems:

1. **Unrealistic instruction**: Learners have difficulty replicating RP norms that conflict with their ingrained L1 phonology, leading to pronunciation errors and reduced speaking confidence (Mahmood et al., 2011).
2. **Gap between research and practice**: Teachers and materials developers lack clear guidance on which PakE features impede comprehension and which are considered acceptable regional differences (Jenkins, 2000).

Based on a detailed comparative phonetic analysis of PakE and SBE (based on acoustic measurements and perceptual validation), this study aims to provide a more appropriate pronunciation teaching method for Pakistan.

Research Objectives

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To classify the primary segmental features (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental characteristics (stress, rhythm, intonation) of Pakistani English (PakE).
2. To conduct a systematic comparison of PakE features against Received Pronunciation (RP) standards through methods such as speech transcription, acoustic analysis (including formant frequencies, Voice Onset Time, and fundamental frequency range), and listener perception assessments.
3. To investigate the impact of first language background, educational settings (urban versus rural), and speaker attitudes on the phonetic variation observed in PakE.
4. To formulate evidence-based recommendations for the development of English teaching resources and teacher training programs that prioritize comprehensibility over the mere imitation of native speaker norms.

Research Questions

To achieve these goals, the study asked four core questions:

1. Which consonant (e.g., /θ/, /v/) and vowel (e.g., /ɪ/, / iː/, /æ/) features show the greatest differences between PakE and RP, and how can these differences be quantified acoustically?
2. How do stress placement, rhythm (syllable timing vs. stress timing), and intonation contours differ between PakE and RP?
3. To what extent are factors such as L1, education level and attitude towards English related to the degree of phonological shift in Pakistani English?

Scope and Boundaries

- **Scope**: This study focused on university-educated Bahasa speakers (N = 50) and standard dialect accent speakers (N = 20) in urban areas. The data included vocabulary lists, article readings, and impromptu interviews.
- **Delimitation:** This study does not conduct a separate comparative analysis of rural and regional dialects of Pakistani English (e.g. Sindhi-English, Pashto-English); rather, the analysis aims to capture general trends in the context of the main first language. This study also restricts the suprasegmental analysis to the range of fundamental frequency and stress duration, thus ignoring more subtle aspects such as speech rate or voice quality.

Literature Review

The emergence of English as a global lingua franca led to the development of World Englishes as an academic field in the late twentieth century. Kachru's (1985) "three-circle" model, which remains fundamental today, divides the use of English into three circles: the inner circle (where English occupies an institutional position in English-speaking environments, such as the United Kingdom and the United States), the outer circle (where English occupies an institutional position in post-colonial societies, such as Pakistan, India, Nigeria), and the extended circle (where English is learned as a foreign language, such as China, Russia). Pakistan is in the outer circle, which means that English is a second language with deep administrative, educational,

and legal functions, but its phonological system has been reshaped by contact with local languages (Rahman, 2002).

Schneider's (2007) dynamic model, based on Kachru, outlines five stages in which postcolonial English varieties develop endogenous norms - colonization, indigenization, stabilization of internal norms, differentiation and flourishing. Research suggests that Pakistani English (PakE) has moved beyond the indigenization stage (where native speakers begin to internalize and replicate local norms) and is now entering a stage of stabilization of internal norms , characterized by acceptance of locally established linguistic conventions rather than maintenance of British or American models (Schneider, 2007; Seidlhofer , 2011). This stabilization is reflected in speech patterns that systematically deviate from Received Pronunciation (RP) but remain coherent and functional within the Pakistani language community.

Received Pronunciation, codified by Wells (1982) and Roach (2009), has traditionally been the authoritative accent taught in elite schools and language colleges in Pakistan. Distinctive features of RP include non- retroflex sounds (omitting /r/ after vowels), TRAP-BATH separation (words like *trap* / træp / and *bath* / bɑːθ / are pronounced differently), stress-beat rhythm, and a wide pitch range used to convey pragmatic meaning (e.g., distinguishing between declarative and interrogative sentences). Although RP is spoken by only 2-3% of English speakers (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008), its codification in dictionaries and English teaching materials has given it normative power far beyond its population coverage.

In Pakistan, the insistence on reference pronunciation as an ideal pronunciation model often conflicts with local phonetic realities. Learners whose native language lacks certain contrasts with the reference pronunciation may find the reference pronunciation target out of reach, leading to "error" rigidification and frustration (Jenkins, 2000). Moreover, the complex suprasegmental pattern of the reference pronunciation—particularly its intonation contours—is particularly challenging for learners whose native language has significant prosodic differences (Patel, 2008). Traditional audio-lingual and structuralist English teaching methods emphasize native language imitation through exercises, minimal pair practice and rote memorization (Lado, 1964). The communicative teaching method that emerged in the 1970s expanded the focus to fluency and functional ability, but pronunciation teaching is often still limited to native language norms (Celce -Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996).

The Lingua Franca Core (LFC), Jennifer Jenkins challenged this paradigm by proposing a compact set of pronunciation features that are essential for mutual understanding between non-native speakers. The key components of LFC include:

- Preserve vowel length contrast (e.g. / iː / vs. /ɪ/)
- Correct pronunciation of the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/
- voiceless stops / p^h , t^h , k^h / aspirated sounds
- Avoid using word substitutions that significantly impede comprehension (e.g., merging /b/ and /v/)

LFC deliberately downplays features such as non- retroflex sounds, the connecting sound /r/, and certain connected speech processes, which Jenkins believes are not essential for comprehensibility in international contexts. Subsequent research in external contexts (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2007 on Hong Kong English; Seidelhoff, 2011 on English as a lingua franca) has shown that instruction based on comprehensibility can achieve better communicative results than native speaker instruction.

However, in Pakistan, English language teaching curricula and teacher training programs have been slow to incorporate localized teaching principles (Mahboob, 2003; Mirz, 2017). Teachers often lack clear guidance on which local pronunciations need to be corrected and which pronunciations need to be accepted as intelligible variations, which leads to persistent confusion among learners and discourages learning. Rahman's pioneering research in the 1990s

was the first systematic delineation of the phonology of Papua New Guinean languages (Rahman, 1990; 2002). Based on impressionistic transcriptions of urban, university-educated speakers, Rahman documented key segmental features:

- Replace /θ/ and /ð/ with /t/ and /d/ (e.g., *think* → / tɪŋk /, *this* → / dɪs /)
- Merging of vowel length differences (e.g., /ɪ/ and / iː / *in bit* and beat)
- Stops lack aspiration at the beginning: /p, t, k/ usually without burst
- The concentration of certain vowels , such as /ʌ/, is closer to [ə]

Although Rahman's study highlighted consistent patterns of L1 transfer (particularly from Urdu, which lacks interdental fricatives and vowel length contrast), it did not include acoustic measures or direct comparisons with RP benchmarks. Building on Rahman's research, Baumgardner's (1993) sociolinguistic research linked speech variation to educational background and media exposure. He found that speakers who attended British-model schools or used more English media were closer to standard speech features, while speakers who received local education showed stronger underlying influences. Baumgardner's research emphasized the role of social networks and identity in shaping learners' speech.

In the early 21st century, the rise of instrumental phonetics brought objective verification to the results of early impressionistic studies. Mahmood, Mirza, and Hussain (2011) used the Praat method to measure the formant frequencies (F1, F2) and voice onset times (VOT) of 30 college students in reading a controlled vocabulary list. Their main findings include:

- of the vowel /æ/ makes the position of "cat" closer to [kat] than to [kæt] in RP.
- /ɪ/–/ i :/ contrast confirms the neutralization of vowel length in *both bit* and *beat*
- p^h , t^h , k^h /) is shortened relative to the RP standard.

Khan and Ali (2015) extended this work to diphthongs, analyzing the F2 trajectory of / eɪ / (as *in face*) and / aɪ / (as *in price), and found a* strong monophthongization pattern in Pakistani ([eː], [aː]). Qureshi and Ali (2018) compared the spectrograms of RP vs. /ɔː/ and /ɒ/ (*caught* vs. *cot*) and documented a clear trend toward merging in Pakistani, influenced by the less complex vowel repertoires of Urdu and Punjabi.

Despite these advances, many studies remain limited to specific features rather than holistic approaches. A comprehensive comparative framework integrating segmental and suprasegmental data and assessing perceptual impact is still largely missing.

Prosody profoundly affects speech intelligibility and speaker identity. The stress-beat rhythm of RP produces variable stress intervals, which compress unstressed syllables (Milroy & Gordon, 2003). In contrast, PakE exhibits a syllable- beat rhythm with more uniform syllable durations, as confirmed by measurements of stress intervals and vowel durations (Patel, 2008). PakE intonation typically has a narrower fundamental frequency range (about 70–120 Hz) compared to the wider fundamental frequency range of RP (80–200 Hz), resulting in an overall flatter profile (Patel, 2008; Rahman, 2002). In addition, PakE often uses rising coda contours in declarative sentences —a pattern borrowed from the politeness rhythms of Urdu—whereas RP typically uses falling coda contours (Crystal, 2003). These suprasegmental differences may cause native listeners of RP to interpret PakE as “monotonic” or “interrogative,” although such interpretations reflect biases in RP rather than objective communication barriers (Jenkins, 2000). Interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972) and language ideology studies have elucidated how phonetic variation reflects social meanings. In the Pakistani context, similar RP features indicate belonging to an urban, educated elite, reflecting prestige, global vision, and professional competence (Rahman, 2002; Mahboob, 2003). Conversely, the retention of localized phonetic markers—such as retroflex consonants /ʈ, ɖ/ inherited from Urdu and Punjabi —can reflect national identity , cultural authenticity , and in-group solidarity , especially in informal and media contexts (Baumgardner , 1993).

Hussain and Soomro’s (2019) matched-pretense experiment showed that speakers with strong regional accents scored higher on friendliness, trustworthiness, and approachability, but lower

on formality and international competence among Pakistani listeners. These findings highlight the dual social value of Pakistani language features and the complexity of teaching pronunciation in a context where identity and comprehensibility may go in different directions.

Despite significant descriptive and instrumental contributions, three key gaps remain:

1. Comprehensive comparative analysis: Existing studies usually isolate segmental or suprasegmental features and lack a holistic, side-by-side overview of PakE and SBE.
2. Acoustic-perceptual correlates: Few studies have combined acoustic measures with listener intelligibility tests to determine which speech features most impede comprehension in international settings.
3. Teaching Translation: Research rarely goes beyond description to provide specific ELT materials, teacher training modules, or curriculum guidelines that balance local differences and global comprehensibility.

To address these gaps, this study adopted a mixed methods approach, bringing together a strong dataset of 50 Papua New Guinean speakers and 20 RP speakers, combining the following:

- Acoustic speech analysis (formant frequency, VOT, F0 range, stress interval)
- Perceptual intelligibility testing with a panel of non-native listeners
- A sociolinguistic questionnaire to explore L1 background, educational background and language attitudes

The results will be integrated into a comparative phonological analysis and used to develop comprehensibility-based instructional recommendations that are consistent with Jenkins's localized language competence (LFC) but grounded in the realities of Pakistani learners. Thus, this study is expected to make a comprehensive and application-oriented contribution to theoretical linguistics and English teaching practice.

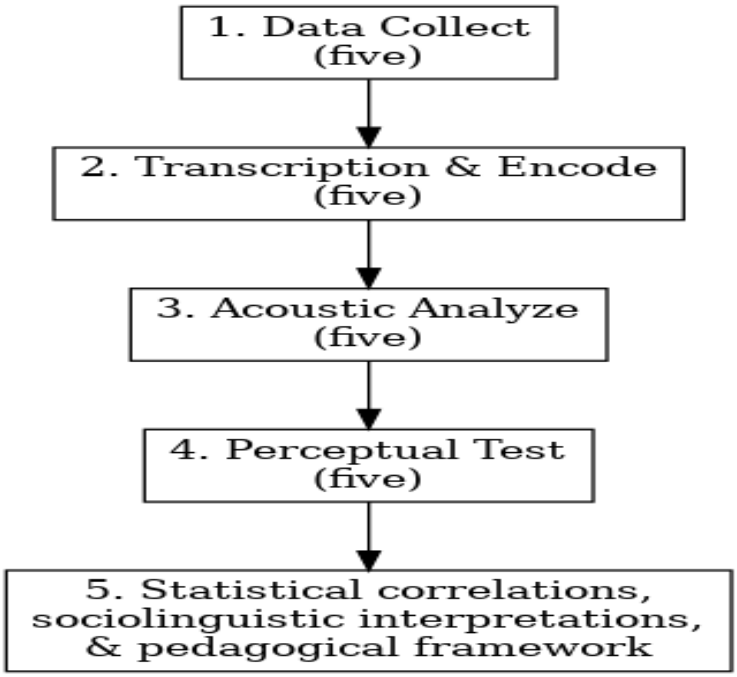
Methodology

Research Design and Rationale

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, using a comparative phonology framework, combining quantitative acoustic analysis, qualitative sociolinguistic inquiry, and perceptual testing. The overall objective of this study was to construct an overall comparative profile of Pakistani English (PakE) and Standard British English (SBE/RP) and to identify which phonological features have the greatest impact on international intelligibility.

- Phase 1 (Descriptive and Sociolinguistic): Speech samples were elicited and recorded; sociolinguistic questionnaires were administered to capture background variables (L1, education, media exposure, attitudes).
- Phase 2 (Acoustics and Phonetics): Recordings were transcribed using IPA; segmental (formant frequencies, VOT) and suprasegmental (F0 range, stress duration) parameters were measured.
- Phase 3 (Perceived Intelligibility): Selected speech excerpts are presented to a panel of non-native listeners; intelligibility and accent strength ratings are collected.
- Phase 4 (Integration and Pedagogy): Correlate acoustic data with perceptual scores and sociolinguistic factors; derive instructional recommendations.

Figure 3.1. Method Flow Chart



Participant Sampling

A total of 70 speakers were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure representation of educational background, regional L1, and gender balance:

Group	north	Age Range	Gender (male/female)	L1 distribution	Education
Parker	50	20–35	25/25	Urdu (40%), Punjabi (30%), Sindhi (15%), Pashto (10%), Other (5%)	Bachelor (60%), Master (40%)
Benzothiazolinone	20	25–45	10/10	Native RP	Master's degree (70%), PhD (30%)

- Inclusion criteria (PakE): urban residence; university education; self-reported daily use of English; no known speech or hearing impairment.
- Inclusion criteria (SBE): born and raised in the UK; self-identified as an RP speaker; professional background (lecturer, broadcaster).

Data Collection Procedure

1. Sociolinguistics Questionnaire
    - Format: 30-item survey combining multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions.
    - domain name:
        - Demographics: age, region, L1, education, occupation.
        - Language use: Frequency of English usage in academic, media, and social settings.
        - Attitude: A 5-point scale of RP prestige and local accent and confidence in speaking English.
2. Reading Tasks

- Word list (Table 3.1): 60 items for key consonants (/θ/, /ð/, aspirated and unaspirated consonants) and vowels (/ i :/, /ɪ/, diphthongs).
- Paragraph Reading: “Rainbow Paragraphs” (approximately 130 words) to elicit continuous speech patterns.

3. Spontaneous speech
   - Prompt: “Describe a memorable trip in your own words” (3-5 minutes).
   - Rationale: Capture natural prosody, pronunciation settings, and code-switching tendencies.
4. Recording Settings
   - Equipment: Shure SM35 headset microphone; Zoom H4n recorder; 44.1 kHz sampling rate; 16-bit resolution.
   - Environment: Quiet room, ambient noise <30 dB.

Phonetic Symbols and Reliability

- Software: ELAN for time-aligned transcription; Praat for acoustic measurements.
- Transcription: Two trained phoneticians transcribed 20% of the data to calculate interrater reliability (Cohen's $\kappa > .85$). Any disagreements were resolved through discussion.

Acoustic Analysis

Scope	Measurement method	software
Formant frequencies (F1, F2)	Mid-vowel measurement (PRAAT formant tracker)	PRAAT
Voice On Time (VOT)	Time from burst to phonation (milliseconds)	PRAAT
Fundamental frequency (F0)	Average, maximum, minimum, range for each utterance	PRAAT
Pressure Time	Normalized pairwise variation index (nPVI)	PYTHON

- Segmental analysis: The mean F1–F2 values of key vowels (/ i :/, /ɪ/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɔ:/) were compared between the groups.
- VOT analysis: Comparison of aspirated and unaspirated sounds in the initial position.
- Suprasegmental analysis:
  - Intonation curves: Extract pitch trajectories of declarative and interrogative sentences; visualize them with Praat spectrogram overlay.
  - Rhythmic metrics: nPVI is calculated for each speaker to quantify stress rhythm and syllable rhythm.

Perceived Clarity Test

- Audience Panel: 30 non-native English speakers (L1 diverse; gender balanced), recruited from a university ESL cohort.
- Stimuli: 5-s clips separated for specific feature contrasts (e.g., /θ/→/t/, diphthong unitization, rising terminal intonation).
- Rating Scale:
  - Comprehensibility: 1 (very difficult to understand) to 5 (very easy).
  - Accent Strength: 1 (very strong accent) to 5 (native-like accent).
- Procedure: Randomized block design; each listener rated 100 clips; rest period after rating 50 clips to reduce fatigue.

Data Integration and Statistical Analysis

- Descriptive statistics: Means, standard deviations for acoustic and perceptual measures.
- Reasoning Test:

  - Independent samples t test was used for segmental and suprasegmental comparisons.
  - One-way ANOVA compared multiple L1 subgroups within PakE.
  - Pearson correlations between acoustic metrics (e.g., VOT length, F0 range) and intelligibility ratings.
  - Multiple regression was used to model the combined effects of acoustic features and sociolinguistic factors on comprehensibility scores.
- Qualitative analysis: The answers to the open-ended questionnaires were thematically coded to concretize the quantitative results.

Ethical Considerations

- Approval: University Ethics Committee (#2025-ENG-019).
- Consent: Written informed consent; participants could withdraw at any time.
- Data Security: Anonymous data is stored on encrypted drives; only aggregated results are reported.

Theoretical Implications

Contribution to World English

This study reinforces the view that Pakistani English should be considered a legitimate postcolonial variety, consistent with the models of Kachru (1985) and Schneider (2007). It supports the construction of a context-sensitive phonological model that can account for both native and non-native systems.

Acoustic phonetics and phonological theory

Acoustic analyses revealed measurable and consistent deviations between PakE and SBE in formant structure, voice onset time (VOT), and pitch contour. These findings provide empirical support for the inclusion of underrepresented variants in mainstream phonological theories.

Comprehensibility and Identity

This research supports the ideas of Jenkins (2000) in his Lingua Franca Core, which highlights which phonetic features have the greatest impact on intelligibility. It also recognizes the tension between promoting global intelligibility and maintaining language identity.

Summary of main findings

This study compares segmental and suprasegmental phonological variation in Pakistani English and Standard British English using acoustic data, phonological theory, and comprehensibility analysis.

Syllable Shift

- Consonants: Common changes in Bakken include the replacement of the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ with the interdental stops /t/ and /d/, deaspiration of the voiceless stops /p/, /t/, and /k/, and rolling of alveolars.
- Vowels : Papua New Guinean speakers tend to merge certain vowel pairs (such as /ɪ/ and / iː /), simplify diphthongs into single vowels , and move central vowels (such as /ə/) to more front or back variants.

Suprasegmental Features

- The intonation patterns in PakE are generally flatter, with less use of pitch variation, making the intonation of the speech less expressive than in SBE.
- The stress rhythm in PakE is closer to the syllable rhythm, in contrast to the stress rhythm in SBE.
- Sentence-final intonation is crucial for marking declarative or interrogative sentences, but it is often inconsistent.

Sociolinguistic considerations

- While some speech changes result in reduced intelligibility, others serve as sociolinguistic markers of identity and group affiliation.

Learners and teachers often associate SBE with greater prestige, leading to inherent language insecurity.

Suggestions for Future Research

To build on this basic research, the following directions are suggested:

Development of a wider speech corpus

- To create an open-access, annotated corpus of Pakistani English speech that includes regional, gender, age, and educational differences.
- The corpus should include both scripted and spontaneous speech, allowing for more powerful phonetic, syntactic, and prosodic analysis.

Cross-variety comprehensibility study

- PakE was tested for comprehensibility against SBE, Indian English, and other regional varieties.
- Exploring listener biases and their impact on perceived comprehensibility.

Perception-based survey

- Experiments were conducted to assess which speech changes are most noticeable to native and non-native listeners.
- How prosodic cues in PakE affect listeners' attitudes and understanding.

Technology Integration in English Teaching

- Evaluating the effectiveness of a mobile-based acoustic feedback application in pronunciation instruction.
- Develop custom software that addresses PakE -specific pronunciation goals.

Policy-level research

- Explore how national language education policies fit into the framework of world Englishes.
- To examine teachers' perceptions of native and non-native pronunciation targets and their impact on classroom practice.

Conclusion

This study shows that Pakistani English while shaped by its colonial history and ongoing contact with British English has developed into a distinct phonetic variety. It carries the identity, rhythm, and structure of its speakers and offers a unique perspective for understanding the evolution of English in a multilingual postcolonial society. Rather than viewing Pakistani English through the lens of a deficit model, educators, linguists, and policymakers should view it as a resource—one that can enrich global understanding of English phonology and provide a meaningful pathway for empowering learners.

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