



## **Mother Tongue Influence on English Pronunciation: A Case study in College Students**

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**Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 13 (4)**

<https://jett.labosfor.com/>

Date of reception: 12 July 2022

Date of revision: 10 Aug 2022

Date of acceptance: 24 Aug 2022

**R.Shanmugasundaram,A.Noble Jebakumar (2022). Mother Tongue Influence on English Pronunciation: A Case study in College Students *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*,Vol. 13(4). 312-316.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Mother tongue interference can affect students' English speaking skill especially in pronouncing the words intrinsically. Considering Tamil language is the dominant mother language used by students at College level, the students as EFL learners often use their mother tongue in daily communication and at campus, and College students pronounce English words in a different way. This study investigated the forms of Tamil language interfering students in pronouncing English words, and how they were interfered. This was a descriptive study in the field of English pronunciation elaborated in a qualitative way. Recorded interviews and pronunciation testing were the main techniques of collecting data. Interview guide, validated pronunciation test, and document analysis were the instruments. In conclusion, the interference was positive since Tamil language's phonemic sounds have some similarities to those of English, so this condition does not potentially change the meanings of English words.

**Keywords:** Mother language, Interference, English pronunciation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

India is a developing country where teaching of English has become a real test right from the start of the history of English language teaching in India till date. Although language is the spine of civilisations and customs across the planet, but still, everyone in our country is melancholic on the worsening condition of English teaching in schools and colleges. English as a second or third language is inadequately developed in most of the Colleges particularly in d The paradox is that even after spending 10-12 crucial years of their life learning English language from Class I to Class 12, most of the students stay tongue-tied, and the same condition of being functionally illiterate learners in English is conceded on to the colleges. Furthermore, Indian educational institutions always expect good results in the examination and teachers are always in between two things.

Indian English represents one of the most prominent new types of English language (Mesthrie and Bhatt, 2011). For a majority of its 125 million speakers, English is a second language, developed at school and throughout higher education. For more than 200 thousand, which is quite a small number in India, English is the first language as per the data collected for the 2001 Census of India figures. The articulation and pronunciation of English of Indians varies as per the educational medium of instruction, level, and region, so that one can evidently speak of its different types such as Hindi English or Tamil English. English as the medium education as well as higher education has helped in the reduction, the variation to the extent that a particular style as a variety has emerged as an acceptable set across the subcontinent, which of late has gained the name General Indian English (GIE). This paper is to illustrate how Native language interfere in Second Language Acquisition. It also aims at helping the students to identify their phonetical issues while speaking in English and solving it.

### **The use of mother tongue**

The function of mother tongue in second language acquirement has been the topic of much dispute and controversy. There are a number of different views and methods when it comes to teaching English all through the history and tries to discover the function of mother tongue in unfamiliar or foreign or second language teaching. In the absence of a native speaker, developing a teaching environment, with the use of the audio and video recordings becomes essential.

### **Phonetics issues in the world**

Everywhere in the world, there are a great number of people with a strong wish to study and converse in English with accurate pronunciation. Even in India, there are a large number of people involved in the subject; among them are the students of English language in Indian classrooms. However, there are lots of barriers that hold

back them from speaking with good English pronunciation. Many studies have established that the errors committed by the speakers of other languages are something more systematic rather than just random

### Phonetic Chart

This phonetic chart use symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This symbols are considered to be practical for learn pronunciation. The symbols on the following chart taken from English Club (2019) symbolize the 44 sounds used in English Language of the British speech (Received Pronunciation or RP, an educated pronunciation linked with but not elite to South-East England)..

	monophthongs				diphthongs		<b>Phonemic Chart</b> voiced unvoiced	
	i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ		
VOWELS	sheep	ship	good	shoot	here	wait		
	e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ	
	bed	teacher	bird	door	tourist	boy	show	
	æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ	
	cat	up	far	on	hair	my	cow	
CONSONANTS	p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
	pea	boat	tea	dog	cheese	June	car	go
	f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
	fly	video	think	this	see	zoo	shall	television
	m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j
	man	now	sing	hat	love	red	wet	yes

The 44 phonemes of Received Pronunciation based on the popular Adrian Underhill layout. adapted by EnglishClub.com

Figure 1: Sounds used in English Language of the British (RP)

### RESEARCH METHOD

Two groups of college students are to be selected for the study. One group will be comprised of students from rural background and from vernacular medium. The other group will be comprised of students from urban or semi-urban backgrounds. Through interview and observation, their phonotactic issues are to be identified first and the common errors that the Tamil learners commit in general are to be incorporated. Necessary training will be given through the module developed for them to come out of the influences and constraints. The subjects of this research are 15 students of English students who use the Tamil Language in their daily life, the highest amount of local language used in college-level in Thoothukudi, Tenkasi and Tirunelveli India.

### Research Finding and Discussions

In India, English language is pronounced, like any non-native speaker's country, with a lot of influence of the mother tongue as one tries to speak. In this way, if a Tamil speaking beginner speaks English, he pronounces English just as the method with which he speaks Tamil with the Tamil variation. Again, and again the learners have complexity to articulate English sounds appropriately devoid of making any distinction.

For example, it would be difficult to make a clear distinction between the following words for the beginners of Tamil language:

Principle - Principal

Lost - Last

Cot - Cart

God - Guard

One - won

Adopt - adapt

### Errors Related to Vowels

It is known that vowels of English are twenty-four in number, together with the eight of the diphthongs, the five long vowels and the seven short vowels. It is said that most of the errors while pronunciation is made due to the mother tongue Interference in the sound systems and due to the misapprehension of spelling. One of the

common errors made is substituting /e/ into /i/. This occurs owing to the related patterns in English sound system. Since English is a foreign language, trainers are not paying notice to articulate accurately. Additionally, /i/ and /e/ are not contrast at these surroundings and not making difference in connotation, though it is not flawlessly pronounced.

**Table 1**

Word	Incorrect	Correct
Express	/ekspres/	/ikspres/

**Substituting a vowel to another vowel**

From time to time one vowel is misunderstood for another vowel. This is because of the bewilderment between two vowels patterns and the slight variations to which people are not generally aware of or conscious of. So, two vowels are perplexed and interchanged. The students especially from rural area almost never take special care about these slight variations because they are not aware of the meaning or function of dissimilarity which is caused by these substitutions of sounds.

**Table 2**

Word	Incorrect	Correct
mineral	/meneral/	/mineral/

**Substituting other vowels in the place of diphthongs**

One of the difficulties that a Tamil learner has while learning English is the use of diphthongs. Diphthongs are sounds formed by the amalgamation of two vowels in a particular syllable, in which the sound begins as a single vowel and moves towards one more. Error in diphthongs occurs because of the lack of acquaintance on diphthongs. The students are not trained to aim to accomplish correct articulation since it is an unfamiliar language. It is not possible to utter accurately unless the requirement for it is stressed. Experts point out that an articulation mistake could be due to a move from the native language; a resemblance with something properly learned in the second language; a wild supposition, imprecision in identification of the right construction; or correctness and communication skill. Almost the majority of the English learners come across alike problems in English articulation.

**Table 3**

Word	Incorrect	Correct
hello	/hallo/	/heloo/

**CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Similar to correcting grammar errors, correcting articulation should be completed at the most primitive stage. Innumerable strategies can be functional to do the same as per the plans of a teacher. The most ordinary and rationally effectual one being where, the instructor copies properly distinct words for the students which they attempt to imitate. At the same time, by doing so, the instructor focuses on other features of spoken language as well, for example in discussions, errors on the particular teaching elements are also corrected, as per se words and phrases hold back clarity. Other errors may be ignored at that period.

**Correction of errors by word drilling**

Paulston and Bruder (1976) propose the following strategies for the improvement of errors:

1. Correction of the errors must be done and at given word drilling phase regularly.
2. Correcting the mistakes by asking the students to copy the teacher's articulation.
3. When it comes to conversational exchanges, correcting the errors needs to rely on particular teaching points and all those items that get in the way with comprehensibility, and ignore other mistakes.
4. Rectification of mistakes must be made cautiously without dropping motivation and self-image of the grown-up learners.

Thus, a systematic study of the phonetic errors committed by the students has been carried out and grouped to formulate a methodical technique to correct the errors. The developments of the students have been explicitly established through a pre-test and post-test analysis.

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