THE IMPACT OF BANGLA REGIONAL DIALECT ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH AT TERTIARY LEVEL

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The aim is to reveal the effects of Bangla regional dialects on English pronunciation at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.

Methodology: This research paper is conducted by quantitative data analysis where the independent variable is Regional Dialect and the dependent variable is English Pronunciation. The instruments used here are flashcards with 5 problematic phonemes by using an audiovisual recording. Analysis has been done with the help of MS Excel 2013. 18 students from 6 major divisions of Bangladesh have been selected to have more concrete results to find the specific quandaries of regional dialects of Bangladesh. Their pronunciation has been video recorded and transcribed for further analysis by the researchers to achieve the results.

Results: The results reveal that the tertiary level students of the Bangla medium of Bangladesh have various drawbacks in their pronunciation and this study aims to investigate the troubles followed by recommendations to improve. It is not studied before in more concrete form using statistical packages.

Implication: The ELT practitioners of Bangladesh can find new solutions to the distinct problems identified in this research paper because of the influence of regional dialects of various divisions and they can incorporate the rectified idea in the field of ELT curriculum for the further development.

Novelty/Originality: This work has been done by using audiovisual equipment for the collection of Data and the result has been interpreted by the researchers in a new dimensional way with the help of descriptive statistics. The problems identified here are distinct from previous work by incorporating comparative study among all the regional dialects of 6 divisions in Bangladesh. The results have been measured by MS Excel 2013 which answers more explicitly by inculcating accuracy and error count of their pronunciation where it has been revealed that specific regional dialects actually possess a powerful influence upon their English pronunciation of some learners from particular divisions.

Keywords: Standard Pronunciation, Regional Dialect (RD), English Pronunciation, Tertiary Level, Intra-lingual Factor, Phonotactical Verities.

INTRODUCTION

This research has been done in the context of choosing tertiary-level learners of 6 regional dialects in Bangladesh in order to measure the impact of regional dialect (RD) in the arena of English pronunciation of tertiary-level learners of Bangladesh. As Bangladesh is a monolingual country, they do not have the complexities of multilingualism and English has a status of foreign language here. In spite of having fewer complexities, regional dialects create problems in English pronunciation. Being a monolingual country, students are reluctant to use English in almost all the contexts of their everyday life. Especially the new generation students are very fond of their regional dialects and they are using these in various types of social media for daily communication which causes problems in their English pronunciation. Students from rural backgrounds are much fonder of their regional dialects. They face difficulties in pronunciation of English after admitting into universities much more than the students of urban areas because unlearning the influence of RD is harder than newly learning Standard English phonemes. This research will deal with their difficulties in pronouncing English phonemes because of the momentous influence of RD.

The term ‘standard’ in spoken and written English is indeed very difficult to define and regional dialects and accent variation do not fit into a national mould of this ‘standard’. As we have varieties of dialects in use in our country, the influence is strong in an EFL class at the tertiary level. Hoque (2009) also mentioned that “Though it is not mandatory to have native-like fluency, it is an art to be able to speak in English as well in standard as possible”. Bangladeshi EFL learners constantly struggle with the pronunciation and understanding the speech of native speakers of English. Hence, it influences their learning at a tertiary level due to the baffling varieties of English pronunciation that have been influenced by regional accents. As English has become a language of today’s global population, the focus shifted from its native speakers to the global community. Thus, it seems reasonable/logical to take into account and identify the dialectal problems of Bengali EFL
learners’ encounters after studying it for long 8-10 years. The researchers considered and interpreted the facts based on their collected data and observations from the randomly selected participants. After analyzing the facts, the researchers provided some suggestions regarding the challenges with possible solutions to help learners develop the skills with their L1 interference.

Sociolinguistics defines dialects as varieties of the same language with differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, associated with particular geographic boundaries or social groups/classes (Ronald, 2010). There lies a difference between early childhood acquisition and late learner acquisition which can be identified through their L1 accent (Flege et al., 1999). In most cases, the problem lies in the pronunciation of individual sounds and intonation patterns in L2.

The second language theories reveal that various needs of second language learners are important to achieve that expertise in the second language (Ellis, 1985). Therefore, some other factors as proper input and different learning mechanisms are also significant in the learning of L2. The most used criterion is mutual intelligibility i.e. how they try to identify the varieties in terms of differentiating dialects and language where the speakers of two different dialects of the same language understand one another but the speakers of the two different languages cannot. However, attitude, beliefs and enough practice are crucial factors to consider in this regard. Since Bangla has varieties of dialects, this is often a barrier along with the accent to teach and learn English in the classroom. Hence, both EFL learners and teachers experience pronunciation problems in Bangladesh. Their dialectic differences influence on the articulation of speech organs. This is because they are not taught phonetic features at school and college levels and mother tongue (L1) interference becomes prominent in L2 learning in the class.

Syntax, semantics, phonology, and morphology affect the nature and the time period for L2 acquisition, (Birdsong, 1999). Research reveals that many people, especially pupils in primary schools are greatly affected by their first language (henceforth L1) when it comes to speaking and writing of the English language (Njoroge, 2000). The way in which people speak a given foreign language is affected by their accent; therefore, it makes it difficult to clearly understand what an individual is saying, which creates a big problem for the language teachers. The reasons for these effects are the influence of different dialects from various communities that bring about the issue of accent (Hahne and Friederici, 2001).

Significance of the study

This study aims to unveil the challenging areas of the English pronunciation of tertiary-level learners of Bangladesh which will open the ways to gain the standard pronunciation. It will help the learners, teachers, linguists, academicians and authorities by showing the way of eliminating the influence of dialectical influence. This research is completely based on the data from 18 learners which will demonstrate the critical problems of English pronunciation because of the influence of regional dialects. Through the result of the study, the teachers and learners can take proper initiatives to overcome the barriers of dialectal influence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the impact of different Bangla regional dialects in English pronunciation among the students of the tertiary level.
2. To discover the serious problematic areas in English pronunciation because of the influence of the mother tongue.
3. To reveal the interconnection among the regional accents this creates problems in pronunciation.
4. To help tertiary learners overcome pronunciation difficulties which are produced due to inter-lingual factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language varies from region to region with regional frequencies including sounds and vocabularies which have been documented by several researchers throughout. Language has changed its meaning through the use of different types and groups of people on the basis of regional vocabulary and sound. Hence, variables in children's language experience and the use of different dialects are the most crucial concepts in learning EFL/ESL. Hence the discussion can be started by defining dialect.

Vocabulary along with sound pattern and utterance with individual characteristics of grammar is the basis of characteristics of various types of languages throughout the world. The Bangla dialects which people use are mutually intelligible with neighboring dialects, although they sometimes lack mutual intelligibility with Standard Bengali and would not be understood by a native speaker of Standard Bengali. Hence, on the basis of individual social groups and geographical boundaries, we differentiate dialects and for regional and social types we focus on the background of a speaker. However, the usage of a
language within a wide territory with unique linguistic features helps us identify a regional dialect of that particular language. (Wardhaugh, 2006), (Holmes, 2001).

Standard and non-standard dialects refer to the language varieties spoken in certain communities. A standard language is when we use that in written form, whereas a non-standard variety doesn’t get support from institutions. However, after a certain period of time, a dialect may get social prestige and become a standard variety if used with a particular accent. (Richards et al., 1985). They mentioned that dialects have different styles according to its word, grammar or accent and hence, it sometimes gets the language status in a country. Haugen has pointed out that both the terms “language and dialect are difficult to define. Ordinary people use these terms quite freely in speech, for them a dialect is certainly no more than a local non prestigious a real language. He also pointed out that language is used to refer either to a single linguistic norm or to a group of related norms, and dialect is used to refer to one of the norms” (Wardhaugh, 2010).

While preparing textbooks the experts mostly consider the standard variety (Cheshire, 2005) and often ignore speakers of non-standard variety (Rosenberg, 1989)(Cheshire, 2007). It results in a mismatch between the varieties used in schools and colleges to go through the textbooks and those used at home. Hence, our preference depends on social status and official acceptance of the variety of a language which hinders learning and affects the overall education. This also creates a dilemma on using a particular variety, mostly which is the standard one while teaching in the classroom as we have learners from both the varieties. (Fasold, 1971). The following points are to be noted in this regard:

1) Standardization and Standard English

When a language gets systematized through different ways it is referred to as ‘Standardization’. Throughout this process, several things as vocabulary, phonological features, and grammar develop which also includes other aspects to accomplish that language. After this accomplishment, it can be learned in the classroom to serve a purpose. Sometimes, it may add a special value to a speaker and the variety itself can gain both social prestige and cultural value. (Wardhaugh, 2010).

Trudgill (1999) mentioned that “Standard English is that variety of English which is usually used in print, and which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the language”. This high variety is normally used in newspapers, taught in an educational institution that is usually used by literate/elite class. The difference between the varieties can be referred to as formal and colloquial languages where the latter is considered to have a negative implication. (Wardhaugh, 2010).

The standard variety of English varies geographically and covers a variety of dialects which is officially the language of the dictionary used in written language but not used in speaking. Speech communities use a more flexible variety which is an informal standard. In the context of education, it is important to remember that vernacular dialect is not inaccurate as it does not represent a language deficiency. People who speak/use vernacular dialect don’t represent that their understanding is weak and it’s not a barrier for them to develop cognitively. Although learners are always motivated to develop competency in a particular standard variety of a language, their vernacular dialects represent their social identity and linguistic expertise.

2) The standard of pronunciation

Due to geographical and cultural variations, the pronunciation of a particular language may vary every six miles (Varshney, 1985) and pronunciation between two speakers may vary due to social status and education. This may vary from country to country and region to region. “There are marked and distinct within the phonetic features associated with English spoken in the English-speaking nations such as the U.K, the U.S.A, Canada, and Australia. Even within the U.K, there are variations between England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern” (Varshney, 1985).

3) The status of English around the world

Jenkins (2009) has discussed the spread of English in the world through three individual groups of users as:

The number of native language speakers (ENL) throughout the world is thought 350 million. Foreign language (EFL) learners try to learn English to deal with English speakers, although the purpose and number of the users are a topic of great controversy even today. It is assumed to be around 1 billion. Another group that was once colonized by the English refers to those countries where English is widely used as an ESL for several purposes.

Kachru (1986) has divided the English speaking communities into three categories based on the nation, ethnicity, and color of the English-speaking people. The people who use English as a Native Language (ENL) are the Americans, British West Indians and South Africans people. The group who learn and use English as a Second Language (ESL) are people from South or Southeast Asia and Africa who get into it after the mother tongue. There is also the last group who learns and uses English as a Foreign Language (EFL) only for specific purposes as science, technology, tourism, commerce etc. as Iran and Japan.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Solely quantitative data analysis has been adopted by the researchers. Data has been collected from primary sources only through audiovisual recording and it has been analyzed using MS Excel 2013. Here the dependent variable is the English pronunciation of 5 problematic sounds from 6 divisions and the independent variable is a regional dialect of 6 divisions of Bangladesh. Data had been collected from March 02 to April 30, 2019.

Research Nature

This research is explorative in nature to find out the challenges and issues related to the influence of regional dialects in the English pronunciation of tertiary level students through descriptive analysis and visual representation of graphs.

Participants

18 students (tertiary level) from 6 divisions have been selected purposively to record the influence of the regional dialects for the findings of the research. They are instructed to pronounce a set of words to identify the crisis in English pronunciation in front of a video camera which has been recorded for further analysis.

Instruments

The video recorder has been used to maintain and process the primary data for the research. A set of words has been chosen for the flashcard to identify the problematic sounds of English pronunciation. MS Excel 13 has been used to analyze the data.

Results and Data Analysis

6 basic divisions have been selected and 18 students’ audio-visual clips have been recorded. The 6 main regions are as follows:

1. Barisal
2. Chittagong
3. Noakhali
4. Rajshahi
5. Rangpur
6. Sylhet

The problematic sounds are selected for their pronunciation are:

1. /z/ Example: Zoo
2. /ʃ/ Example: Shame
3. /ʒ/ Example: Pleasure
4. /tʃ/ Example: Church
5. /dʒ/ Example: Bridge

The proper IPA transcription of those set of words is:

| Sl | Words | IPA     |
|----|-------|---------|
| 1  | zoo   | /zuː/   |
| 2  | shame | /ʃeɪm/  |
| 3  | pleasure | /pleɪzə/ |
| 4  | church | /tʃərʃ/ |
| 5  | bridge | /brɪdʒ/ |

18 students were chosen purposively from 6 divisions and 6 divisions were chosen purposefully to fulfill the aim of the study. Rajshahi, Rangpur had been selected from the northern part of Bangladesh. Sylhet had been chosen from the eastern belt whereas Barisal and Chittagong had been selected from the southern part. Noakhali has been picked from the southeastern belt of Bangladesh as it possesses a unique variation in the phonotactic segment of pronunciation. The pronunciation of those above-mentioned sounds on those selected words of the students from different regions are provided below:
Table 2: Transcription of the pronunciation of 3 students from Chittagong Division

| Sl | Division | Words | Correct IPA | Transcription of S1’s pronunciation | Transcription of S2’s pronunciation | Transcription of S3’s pronunciation |
|----|----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | Chottogram | Zoo | /zu:/ | /zu:/ | /zu:/ |
|    |          | Shame | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ |
|    |          | pleasure | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ |
|    |          | Church | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ |
|    |          | Bridge | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ |

Table 3: Transcription of the pronunciation of 3 students from Noakhali Division

| Sl | Division | Words | Correct IPA | Transcription of S4’s pronunciation | Transcription of S5’s pronunciation | Transcription of S6’s pronunciation |
|----|----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2  | Noakhali | Zoo | /zu:/ | /zu:/ | /zu:/ |
|    |          | Shame | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ |
|    |          | pleasure | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ |
|    |          | Church | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ |
|    |          | Bridge | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ |

Table 4: Transcription of the pronunciation of 3 students from Sylhet Division

| Sl | Division | Words | Correct IPA | Transcription of S7’s pronunciation | Transcription of S8’s pronunciation | Transcription of S9’s pronunciation |
|----|----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3  | Sylhet | Zoo | /zu:/ | /zu:/ | /zu:/ | /zu:/ |
|    |          | Shame | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ |
|    |          | pleasure | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ |
|    |          | Church | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ |
|    |          | Bridge | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ |

Table 5: Transcription of the pronunciation of 3 students from Barisal Division

| Sl | Division | Words | Correct IPA | Transcription of S10’s pronunciation | Transcription of S11’s pronunciation | Transcription of S12’s pronunciation |
|----|----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 4  | Barisal | Zoo | /zu:/ | /zu:/ | /zu:/ | /zu:/ |
|    |          | Shame | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ |
|    |          | pleasure | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ |
|    |          | Church | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ |
|    |          | Bridge | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ |

Table 6: Transcription of the pronunciation of 3 students from the Rajshahi Division

| Sl | Division | Words | Correct IPA | Transcription of S13’s pronunciation | Transcription of S14’s pronunciation | Transcription of S15’s pronunciation |
|----|----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 5  | Rajshahi | Zoo | /zu:/ | /ju:/ | /ju:/ | /ju:/ |
|    |          | Shame | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ |
|    |          | pleasure | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ | /pləˈzɜːr/ |
|    |          | Church | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ | /ˈʃɜːrŋ/ |
|    |          | Bridge | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ | /ˈbrɪdʒ/ |

Table 7: Transcription of the pronunciation of 3 students from Rangpur Division

| Sl | Division | Words | Correct IPA | Transcription of S16’s pronunciation | Transcription of S17’s pronunciation | Transcription of S18’s pronunciation |
|----|----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6  | Rangpur | Zoo | /zu:/ | /ju:/ | /ju:/ | /ju:/ |
|    |          | shame | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ | /ʃem/ |
Descriptive Statistics

The Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviation of the Accuracy unit and Error Unit of the total students of 6 divisions are:

| Descriptive Statistics | Accuracy Count | Error Count |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Mean                   | 1.666667       | 3.333333    |
| Median                 | 1              | 1           |
| Mode                   | 1              | 4           |
| SD                     | 1.526879       | 1.526879    |

This table shows that Error count is much higher than the Accuracy count among the total students of 6 divisions. The mean of the Accuracy unit is 1.6 whereas the mean of Error unit is 3.3 out of 5 problematic words of the 18 students among 6 divisions in Bangladesh. The Median is as same as in both accuracy and error unit whereas mode in error unit is higher than the accuracy unit. Standard Deviation is equivalent in both the units. So it proves that the IV, regional dialect has a significant influence on the DV English pronunciation from the holistic data analysis.

| Analysis | Chottogram | Noakhali | Sylhet | Barisal | Rajshahi | Rangpur |
|----------|------------|----------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| Mean     | 1          | 2.333333 | 2.33333 | 2       | 1        | 1.33333 |
| SD       | 0.816497   | 1.699673 | 2.054805 | 1.414214 | 1.414214 | 0.471405 |
| Maximum  | 2          | 4        | 5      | 4       | 3        | 2       |
| Minimum  | 1          | 0        | 0      | 1       | 0        | 1       |

From this above-mentioned table and bar graph, a comparative ratio of Mean, Standard Deviation, Maximum and Minimum number of Accuracy unit among the 6 divisions have been observed. It shows that the learners of Noakhali and Sylhet have the highest accuracy ratio which is only 2.3 out of 5. But this accuracy ratio of 2.3 realistically shows the poor performance of the learners because of the vital influence of RD of those divisions. The mean accuracy of Barisal is 2 which is in the second position among these six divisions signifies its mediocre position about the exerting influence of RD. The students of Rangpur (1.3), Chittagong (1) and Rajshahi (1) are in the third position to have far more impact of RD upon their English pronunciation.
pronunciation. So it can be claimed by saying that RD has a powerful influence in the field of English pronunciation of the tertiary level learners of Bangladesh. The standard deviation is the highest in the Sylhet division whereas Noakhali, Rajshahi and Barisal are almost in the same position. The SD of Chittagong division is too less which is a good sign for them. The maximum number of accurate units of sound is found in the Chittagong, Noakhali, Sylhet and Rajshahi and the minimum number is found in the Noakhali, Barisal and Rangpur. Students of Sylhet possess the correct pronunciation in all the 5 phonemes whereas Chittagong is in the middle position.

Table 10: Comparative study of Error among 6 divisions (individually)

| Analysis | Chottogram | Noakhali | Sylhet | Barisal | Rajshahi | Rangpur |
|----------|------------|----------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| Mean     | 4          | 2.666667 | 2.666667 | 3       | 4        | 1.333333 |
| SD       | 0.816497   | 1.699673 | 2.054805 | 1.414214 | 1.414214 | 0.471405 |
| Maximum  | 5          | 5        | 5       | 4       | 5        | 2       |
| Minimum  | 3          | 1        | 0       | 1       | 2        | 1       |

Figure 2: Graphical representation of the data on Error unit among 6 divisions (individually)

From this table and the bar graph on Error unit, a comparative study of the Mean, Standard Deviation, Maximum and Minimum number of Errors among the students of 6 divisions has been recorded with proper clarification. The mean of Error unit took the highest position in the Chittagong and Rajshahi Division which shows its immense influence of RD in their pronunciation. Barisal (3), Sylhet (2.6) and Noakhali (2.6) are in the second position as they are carrying almost the same mean in the field of Error count. Rangpur is in the final position by having the least mean of error count 1.3. The standard deviation of Sylhet is in the highest distance (2.6 points) which signifies their contrastive results of achieving the highest accuracy and highest error unit too. The learners of Noakhali (1.6), Barisal (1.4) and Rajshahi (1.4) possess approximately the same points in the field of standard deviation. The maximum number of errors has been conducted by the students of Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Noakhali (5). The minimum amount of error has been done by Sylhet (0), Noakhali (1), Barisal (1) and Rangpur (1). Students of Chittagong and Rajshahi belt has done error by achieving points 3 and 2 respectively.

Further phonotactic discussion on the basis of Table number 9 and 10 (on the essence of accuracy and error count):

If we look at the structures of the 6 regional dialects, we can get an overview of the mistakes done by the students of various regions. Because each regional dialect has individual phonotactical, lexical and syntactical features. We attain pronunciation differences among 6 regional dialects in those five problematic sounds.

Students of Chittagong face the difficulties in pronouncing /z/ as /y/, /ʃ/ as /ʧ/, /ʒ/ as /z/, /ʧ/ as /s/ or /ch/, /dʒ/ as /l/. In table 9, it has been that maximum numbers of accurate words are produced by 2 students.

The phonotactical structure of Noakhali is different from other regional dialects and the students have done mistakes in uttering another sound along with those five delinquent sounds. According to table 9, three of the students pronounced the
sound /zl/ correctly as /zl/. They phonate /ʃ/ correctly as /ʃ/ more correctly. Contradictorily they provide short vowel in lieu of diphthong in the word /ʃem/ as /fem/. But they pronounced /zu:/ as /zːl/. They have done mistakes when they enunciate /pleʒə:/ as /flezə/ or /fləizə/. Phonologically they utter /p/ as /f/ along with the error in the difficult sound /ʒ/ as /z/. From the above table, two of them pronounced /ʃʒː/ as /ʃʃː/ and one of them utter /ʃʒː/ as /ʃʃː/. Two of them utter /brɪdʒ/ as /brɪdʒ/ with 100% correct pronunciation but one of them phonate as /brɪz/. Inhabitants of Sylhet also possess completely different patterns of phonotactical, lexical and syntactical differences. They face most of the problems in pronouncing in another sound rather than the problematic sounds. But three of them articulate the five problematic sounds correctly according to table 9. It means that their production of accurate units is higher than the students of other divisions. Only one of them utter /zːu:/ as /zhu/ and /brɪdʒ/ as /vɜːdʒ/. Students of Barisal mainly face problems in pronouncing /ʃ/ as /ʃ/ and /dʒ/ as /ʃ/. Rather than these tricky sounds, they did rare mistakes. Their productions of accurate phonemes are in the middle position. They did not achieve the highest or the lowest position in the field of accuracy, they are in a mediocre position by achieving 1.4 SD in the filled with accuracy. Students of Rajshahi mostly did mistakes in uttering /ʃ/ as /ʃ/ and /dʒ/ as /ʃ/ because of the phonotactical structure of their dialect. Rather than these, they have done very little mistakes in another phoneme. Their maximum number of accuracy is 3 and the maximum number of error units is 5. So the error is prevailing here than accuracy. Students of Rangpur mainly had done inaccuracy in phonating the sounds /zl/, /dʒl/, /ʃl/ as /ʃl/. They blend these three sounds together. Their maximum number of accuracy is 2 and the maximum number of error unit is 2. So they are in the middle position for producing the correct unit of sounds.

So from the above analysis and the result from the accuracy table 9 and error table 10, it has been discerned that the students of Sylhet and Noakhali have achieved more accuracy points whereas the students of Barisal were in the second position. Students of Rajshahi, Rangpur and Chittagang were in the last position to utter accurate phonemes because of their distinctive phonotactical features. Chittagong, Barisal, Rajshahi and Rangpur committed errors in those five problematic sounds along with few mistakes in other phonemes of the words from the flashcard (which was not counted as problematic sounds). But the Noakhali and Sylhet regional dialects had errors in /zl/, /p/, /dʒ/, /ba/ because of their different phonotactical structure and they had little errors in the five fixed phonemes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

After the above discussion and analysis, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Students should learn the IPA phonemes and understand the difference between Bangla and English.
2. They should provide more focus on spelling rather than ignoring the influence of regional dialect.
3. Students get annoyed to go to teachers for asking correct pronunciation. So they can use various apps and both online and offline dictionaries to learn and check the correct pronunciation.
4. As unlearning is harder than learning, students should start learning the correct pronunciation from their primary levels. So the teachers of primary levels should be qualified and trained enough to teach students correct pronunciation without the influence of regional dialect.
5. As listening and speaking skills are inseparable skills, students should have the exposure to more standard listening which would help them to develop correct pronunciation.
6. Students should identify the problems of their own regional dialects and try to correct themselves.
7. Students should be familiar with different tones and accents so that they can understand any conversation easily which is often ignored in an ELT classroom.
FURTHER SCOPES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main challenge of the research was to get students’ consent for the recording for measuring the influence of regional dialect on their English speaking. Another limitation of the study was that only 6 divisions are chosen among 8 divisions from Bangladesh and only 18 students were the samples from those 6 divisions. From each division, 3 students were selected by the researchers purposively. It can be conducted in the broader areas with more tertiary level students in the future. The other limitation of the study was that to analyze the pronunciation of 18 students, the researcher did not consider their stress and intonation. So there is a scope to continue the study in the future in a much more subtle way considering the stress and intonation of the students. Other set of phonemes can be chosen as a further research area. Another limitation was not to record any opinion from the teachers which can inculcate with different perspectives to the study. Further research can be conducted by incorporating teachers’ points of view for measuring the impact of RD in a larger context.

CONCLUSION

Though pronouncing regional dialects sometimes become a sensitive issue in the perspective of the feeling mixed with love and respect for each regional dialect, students should phonate Standard English as English is a lingua franca all over the world. No debate should be presented in support of the influence of regional dialect for speaking English. Students should be motivated and encouraged to pronounce correctly from their primary level by providing qualified teachers. So, teachers, ELT professionals/organizations and governments should come forward to provide qualified, trained teachers with a better environment for letting students listen and speak correct English. Overall, teachers’ own pronunciation, motivation, encouragement and students’ active participation can overcome the difficulties faced by the influence of regional dialects. The findings of the research paper will contribute to overcoming all the adversities in the field of the appropriate pronunciation of EFL students in Bangladesh.

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