

## **Problems in Using English Speech Sounds by Bangladeshi School Students: Lack of knowledge or Lack of Prioritization?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper is mainly a survey based researched paper which focuses on the problems that the Bangladeshi students faces in case of pronouncing and using English speech sounds. Therefore to investigate the problems and to find out the barriers on the way of following a particular standard of pronunciations, that is mainly the British standard pronunciation, the researcher conducted the survey on a random number of students selected from a particular governmental school of Dhaka. The candidates who belong to different classes and sections were asked to read out a passage in English which was later transcribed by following the British standard pronunciation (RP style) to find out its differences with that of the students' pronunciation. Later the obtained data was analyzed with help of some secondary data (literatures) to investigate the main reasons behind such a difference. It was therefore found that our students have pronunciation problems not because they lack knowledge in the scientific study of English speech sounds but because English speaking or pronunciation as a discipline has always been neglected within our context. That is to say, English has always been taught traditionally within our classroom contexts where reading and writing were the prime focus apart from listening or speaking. The paper therefore concluded with some necessary recommendations to help the students to overcome and to cope up with the discussed problem.

**Keywords:** speech sounds, pronunciation, context, transcription, Bangladeshi student

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### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introducing Phonetics and Phonology**

Teaching and learning English as a second language is not an old practice in our country. The importance of learning English has become important slowly with time in order to cope up with new technologies. Therefore today it is used mainly for international trades, businesses, official purposes and most importantly in educational sectors. This popularity of using English has made it a compulsory subject in our schools as well. Hence, today learning English is equally prioritized like other subjects for a school going child; especially learning to read and write. This is again because people of our country usually get the scope to read and write English more than to listen and speak in it. Hence teaching English has always been practiced by the grammar translation method where the speaking has never gained importance. Similarly, teaching accurate or standard pronunciation has always been neglected in this process as well, especially in schools. However, students need to use the language to communicate and therefore needs a proper idea of how to pronounce the words; more precisely the sounds (phonemes). Otherwise they will not be able to function with the language in real and authentic situations; at least they need it if they have future plans to study abroad. Nevertheless, since they do not feel the urge to interact directly in the language so they never come to know about how a speech sound is produced, how they are described, how the sounds convey different meanings or the description of system of sounds of English. That is to say, they lack the knowledge of how to use sounds to speak English in the standard way. In other words, they are not being taught about the description, mechanism and perception of speech sounds which is called phonetics and also they are not aware of the system and pattern of sounds occurring in a language which is phonology (Ladefoged, 2000, p. 23).

This very issue interested the researcher to do a survey on some students of a governmental school of our country. Therefore the survey was conducted to investigate the fact that to what extent the English pronunciation skills are being prioritized within this school. The survey was based on the recordings of some students which was transcribed and analyzed to point out its differences with the standard British pronunciation and to find out some of the basic problems which is impeding the Bangladeshi students to acquire natives or near native accents.

### **1.2 Research Statement**

To analyze some of the common problems that our students faces while using English speech sounds (problems with diphthongs, trip thongs, use of aspirations, generalizing English phonemes with their native ll phonemes, wrong pronunciation of sounds pronounced according to their spellings etc.)

### **1.3 Research Purpose**

The purpose was to investigate why and to what extent the students can or cannot speak English with standard British or American pronunciation.

### **1.1 Research Central Questions**

- 1) What are the main barriers for our students in the way of acquisition of English speech sounds?
- 2) Why are they having problems? Is this because the Bangla phonology is very different from that of English? Or is it because the pronunciation has little or no importance since the students do not need English mainly for communication in our country?

### **1.2 Research Scopes**

These types of analyses are important for upgrading our student's spoken English; so that they can cope up with different real life communication activities and authentic situations where interactions are needed and where they will have the necessity to use English fluently to function in it.

### **1.3 Research Limitations**

One of the prominent limitations of this survey based paper is that the research has been carried out within one particular school and within a few students. Therefore the results obtained from this survey cannot be made generalized.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Defining Phonemes, Phonetics and Phonology**

According to Barman (2009), Phonemics is the scientific study of phonemes, the basic units of speech sound. Phonemes, as the smallest sound units in a language, are capable of conveying a distinct meaning. When two sounds can be used to differentiate words, they can be said to belong to different phonemes (p. 19). In other words, Phonemes come to

be the symbolic representation of sounds, interacting both with phonetics and phonology (Barman, 2009, p. 20). According to Ladefoged (2000), "Learning phonetics means simply learning to use phonetic transcription" (p.23). That is "phonetic transcription is no more than a useful tool that phoneticians use in the description of speech"(p. 23). On the other hand, "Phonology is the description of the systems and patterns of sounds that occur in language" (p.23).

### **2.2 Differences between Phonetics and Phonology**

According to Cohn (1993), "Phonetics is the study of the physical properties of sounds used in human speech: their production, their acoustics and their perception. Phonology is the study of how speech sounds pattern together. Yet there is also an implicit derivational relationship between the two: a phonological representation indicates the abstract, linguistic characteristics of sounds; the phonetic representation is the physical output or realization of that phonological representation, what the speaker actually produces or the hearer perceives" (p. 44).

### **2.3 Challenges in way to teach Pronunciation and Aspects of Phonetics**

According to Barman (2010), "Every language has its own phonemic system, which holds unique as well as common features. A language shares some phonemes with other languages, but no two languages have the same phonemic inventory" (p. 19). Barman (2010), explained that although there are many aspects of similarities of the phonemic systems of English and Bangla yet there is much dissimilarity into the phonemes of the two languages along with relevant phonetic and phonological characteristics which makes the students learn English as a second language challenging (p. 20).

In 1926, Sparkman discussed the challenges we usually face: "Must we teach beginning students the complicated laws of phonetics, demand that they recognize stops, nasals, fricatives, voiced and voiceless consonants? Certainly not. Such knowledge would only hinder their progress and could be of no positive value to

them in any capacity. What they need is to learn how to pronounce the new language. But how can a teacher guide them over these difficulties unless he knows the science of phonetics very thoroughly? The slogan should be: phonetics for the teacher, but only a practical application of phonetic laws for the students (p.232).

#### **2.4 Studying the Science of Phonetics or Learning Practical Application**

According to Sparkman (1926), "A good pronunciation of any language is similar to being well dressed; it is the outward semblance of culture and refinement in matters of speech. Without a good pronunciation one can never be accepted by foreign people" (p. 227). That means pronunciation matters a lot where knowing how to use phonetics is important. Sparkman put it clear in this statement, "Students should not study the science of phonetics, but must have the benefit of the practical application of all phonetic laws which must be well known by the teacher. That is, pronunciation must be mechanically presented to students, and it should be a preliminary to the actual study of the language" (p. 235).

However, as said by Kriedler (1972), "The teaching of English to speakers of other languages has, in recent years, rightly given emphasis to the student's mastery of the sound system of the language" (p. 3). He added that second language learners need to be provided, in their English courses, with instruction and guided practice in pronouncing written English words-in translating graphic symbols into sound (p.3). Kriedler also said, "Do ESL students get such instruction and such practice? Probably not, for two very good reasons. We don't teach the elementary student about English orthography because we really don't understand the nature of spelling system and how it works. The second reason is that English spelling has been typically denounced as irregular and chaotic." (p. 3).

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Method of Data Collection**

The main objective was to analyze some of the common problems which students of our country face with English speech sounds and therefore to find out the reasons why they cannot overcome this problem. Hence a small survey was done on fifteen students; all from the same school but of different classes. This is because the researcher wanted to see the differences in their pronunciation as they progress to higher classes. A small reading passage was prepared for the students to read out. This passage actually contained some problematic phonemes which are difficult to pronounce for many of our students. The candidates were therefore asked to read out the passage in a loud and clear voice so that the researcher could

record it. It was not mentioned that the researcher was going to test their ability to use speech sounds properly. This was concealed for the sake of authentication of the survey; otherwise they would have become conscious of their pronunciation which eventually could produce artificial results. After recording their speech, the researcher listened to it carefully in order to transcribe it exactly the way they uttered the sounds. Later a comparison was made among the candidates' recorded pronunciation and the ideal version of the transcription of the passage. This was done to find out their area of difficulties regarding the pronunciation of some particular speech sounds.

### **3.2 Sampling and Participants Details**

The survey was done in Mohammadpur Preparatory Higher Secondary school. The survey was done in both boys and girls sections of English version. To avoid the gender and age issue, the survey was carried out in this particular way. For example, the researcher went into any of the sections of a specific class randomly and asked if anyone was interested to read out a few lines in English. When there were any interested students, they volunteered themselves and if not, the researcher chose some of them.

Another fact about the survey is, it was conducted within a class range of four to ten. This is because surveying students who are in preschools or in the kindergartens will not be good candidates since they have just started studying English as one of their subjects. Besides, surveying students of college could have also given non authentic results since the main focus was on the pre-intermediate level students.

### **3.4 Survey Data (The Passage Used For Recording)**

The passage given to the candidates to read out was on 'A Lawyer's Responsibility'. The students told their names, the grades they are studying is and the name of their school and then read the following passage out:

*"A lawyer is a person who must be responsible towards his works. He must be honest enough to make good judgments and give justice to his clients. He must not misuse his authority; usually for selfish motives."*

### **3.5 Targeted English Phonemes:**

From the above passage, the phonemic areas that the researcher chose to analyze from the candidates' speech sounds are the diphthongs ( eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ, aʊ, əʊ, ɪə, eə,ʊə), the triphthongs (eɪə, aɪə, ɔɪə, aʊə, əʊə), the use of aspiration ([p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], [k<sup>h</sup>]), the pronunciation of words without using /r/ in particular words according

to British standard accent, the differences in length of long vowels (i:, a:, ɔ:, ɜ:, u:) and short vowels (ɪ, e, ʊ, æ, ɒ, ʌ) and use of schwa, the mixed use of fricatives, affricates and approximants (use of /j/ in case of /j/, /z/ or /dʒ/ in case of /ʒ/), the replacement of Bangla consonants with that of English (/ʃ/ and /θ/ with that of /v/) the pronunciation of words according to their spellings, the misuse of stress in words, and lastly the missing features of rapid speech of native speakers (assimilation, elision etc.).

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1 Transcriptions of the Recorded Data**

The recorded data of the fifteen students has been used for transcribing their speech sounds through audio clips. The purpose of this was to identify some of the problematic areas of English phonemes. This in fact helped to find the challenges that our school students faces from the beginning of learning English; the challenges which always keep them away from acquiring a standard British accent.

### **4.2 Analysis of the Problematic Phonemes and its Reasons**

#### Aspirations:

The release of /p/, /t/ and /k/ is followed by audible plosion- that is a burst of noise. There is then, in the post-release phase, a period during which air escapes through the vocal folds, making a sound like /h/. This is aspiration (Roach, 2009, p. 27).

#### Problematic Area:

None of the candidates produced the words ‘person’, ‘towards’ and ‘clients’, with any aspiration.

#### Reasons:

The first and the common reason is that the Bengalis do not pronounce words with aspirations at the beginning. For example, we do not say the Bangla word ‘tumi’ as /tʰumi/ but we say it the way we write it.

However, the researcher think there is another interesting reason for avoidance of aspiration by our students. We have separate phonemes like ‘খ’ (kho), ‘থ’ (tho) and ‘ফ’ (pho) in Bangla. These phonemes resemble the English aspirated sounds [p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], [k<sup>h</sup>]. It is therefore not simple for young learners to identify the dissimilarities strictly between the two languages. So they tends to avoid aspiration since they think there is a difference between the / t<sup>h</sup>/ and /t/ sound and therefore pronouncing /t/ as / t<sup>h</sup>/ could actually be incorrect and will create a difference in the meaning of the word; which is not true. The researcher also think



that students believe that the /t/ sound should be produced as /t<sup>h</sup>/ whenever there is an 'h' phoneme after the 't' in a word. For example, they might have said /tə wə:dz/ as /t<sup>h</sup>ə wə:dz/ if the spelling was 'towards' rather than 'towards'.

#### Diphthongs:

Diphthongs are sounds which consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another. The diphthong is that the first part is much longer and stronger than the second part. As it glides to second vowel, the loudness of the sound also decreases (Roach, 2009, p.17).

#### Problematic

#### Areas:

From the above given transcription, it can be seen that almost all the students had problem pronouncing the words 'make', 'usually' and 'motives'. Most of them were pronouncing /meɪk/ as /mek/, /ju:ʒʊəli/ as /u:dʒeli/ and /məʊtɪvz/ as /mɔtɪvs/.

#### Reasons:

The students were leaving out the second /ɪ/ sound of 'make', the /ʊ/ of 'usually' and the first sound /ə/ of 'motives'. Since a diphthong consists of more than one vowel, so one of them is often being left out or less frequently pronounced. This is because it's easy for human to pronounce one vowel other than focusing on two at a time. Besides, in native accent also, the loudness of the second vowel is comparatively less.

#### Triphthongs:

The most complex English sounds of the vowel type are triphthongs. They are difficult to pronounce and to recognize. A triphthong is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third (Roach, 2009, p.18).

#### Problematic Areas:

All the students had problem with 'lawyer' since they could not pronounce a single of the three vowels correctly. Most of them pronounced /ləɪə/ as /ləjɑ:r/ and few of them pronounced it as /ləer/. However, most of them could say the first two vowels of 'clients'. The same thing happened with few of the young candidates who pronounced /klaɪənts/ as /klaɪnts/ but the older candidates pronounced it as /klaɪnts/.

#### Reasons:

The students faced a similar problem like the one they had with pronouncing diphthongs; especially in pronouncing 'clients'. Here, they left out the last schwa of the word; this is something quite normal in our context since very few teachers could pronounce the word with the 'schwa' sound in it. Moreover, it is the weakest vowel in English. Nevertheless, the problem with the word 'lawyer' is a bit different. Here, the students took the pronunciation after the root word 'law'.



At first, they pronounced ‘law’ as /lɒ/ and then they added an ‘er’ with the word, making it /lɒer/. However, some of them could pronounce the /j/ sound as /ɪ/ (/lɒɪ/) and therefore had some similarity with the middle of the three vowels.

The mixed use of Fricatives, Affricates and Approximants:

Fricatives are consonants with the characteristic that air escapes through a narrow passage and makes a hissing sound while Affricates are complex consonants beginning as plosives and ending as fricatives (Roach, 2009, p. 39). On the other hand, Approximant as a type of consonant is rather difficult to describe (Roach, 2009, p. 49).

Problematic Areas:

The students were using /ju:ʒʊəlɪ/ either as / i:u:dʒelɪ/ or / ju: zʊlɪ/. The students were having problems with /z/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/. They were also having problem with /j/ sound in the word ‘usually’ (mentioned above) and also with the word /lɒɪ/ as they were pronouncing it as /lɒja:r/; using the approximant /j/ instead of /ɪ/.

Reasons:

The students had good reasons for pronouncing ‘usually’ /ju:ʒʊəlɪ/ with /dʒ/. This is because in Bangla, the /z/ or /ʒ/ fricatives are missing. We have only ‘জ’ (borgio jo) which equivalents to /dʒ/ sound in English. So students were using the phoneme with which they were familiar. However, some of them know the difference between the phoneme [J] and [Z] in English alphabets; but none of them used it with /ʒ/.

Another problem was with the use of /j/ in case of /ɪ/ (as in ‘lawyer’) and use of /i:/ in case of /j/ (as in ‘usually’). One is the approximant /j/ (also known as semi vowel), and the other two are short and long vowels. Students used the /j/ sound after /lɒ/ since there was a ‘y’ in the spelling (lawyer). So they pronounced it from the back of their mouth as they do in case of ‘yes’ /jes/. Again, some of them were saying ‘usually’ with /i:/ instead of /j/. The main reason is that the two sounds are very similar. One is to be pronounced from the front and one from the back of the mouth. I think these mistakes are very much tolerable for young users of English. Only the natives can clearly make a difference between the two.

The pronunciation of words without using /r/:

In standard British accent the use of /r/ is somehow complicated. The /r/ occurs within and after vowels and not at the end of a word. It should be pronounced when it is at the beginning of a word but not when they are before consonants. These are problems which foreign learners usually face with it (Roach, 2009, p. 50).

Problematic Areas:

The students like many other foreign learners used /r/ sound in words like 'person', 'lawyer', 'towards', 'works', 'for'.

Reasons:

The reasons are simple; they pronounced it since there is a /r/ in the spelling of the words. Again, we are pronouncing all the other English consonants whenever they occur in the spelling. Therefore it is difficult to logically explain why we will not pronounce /r/ in particular cases. Besides, we pronounce all the /r/ sound in Bangla, regardless of its position within a word. For example, we will pronounce the three /r/ sounds ('র', 'ড়' and 'ঢ়') occurring in any position (initial, middle or final) of a Bangla word. That is to say, in the Bangla words 'Rani', 'Anarosh' or 'Amar' we will pronounce the /r/ sound clearly. Therefore students might think that it is correct to pronounce the /r/ whenever it is in the English spelling; however it is contrastive with the British accent.

The replacement of Bangla consonants with that of English:

English phonemes are different from that of Bangla. To many foreign learners they might appear similar but yet one cannot be used in place of another.

Problematic Areas:

Some of my young candidates were pronouncing 'motives' /məʊtɪvz/ as /mɔtɪbs/ or /mɔtɪbhs/.

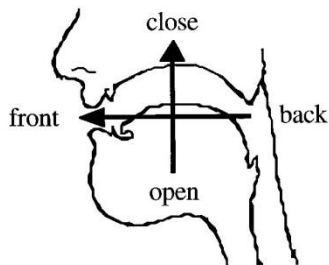
Reasons:

The reason is that there is no /v/ sound in Bangla. The sound /v/ is not even an aspirated version of /b/ (that is /b<sup>h</sup>/). So the students were actually generalizing the /v/ sound with that of Bangla /ব/ 'bo' or with /ভ/ 'bho'. Besides, the place of articulation of /v/ is labiodental while /b/ is bilabial. Not only is this, but the manner of articulation of /v/ is fricative whereas that of /b/ is plosive. Only the state of glottis remains the same for both the cases.

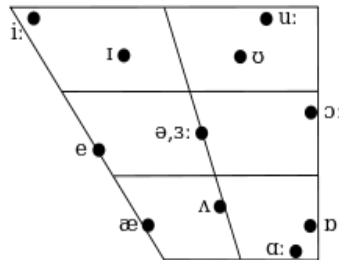
The differences in length of long and short vowels and Schwa:

English has a large number of vowels; the short vowels are only relatively short. The vowels can have different lengths in different contexts. The symbols for short vowels are (ɪ, e, ʊ, æ, ɒ, ʌ) (Roach, 2009, p. 13). Again, there are vowels which tend to be longer than the short ones in similar contexts. These vowels are presented with two dots after their respective symbol (i:, e:, ε:, a:, ɔ:, o:, u:). They are different not only in length but in quality as well (Roach, 2009, p. 16). The ways they are produced from the front, central, close and back positions of the mouth also determines their features.

The following diagrams show how they are different:



The position of articulation



Short and Long vowels

[Source:

[https://www.google.com.bd/?gws\\_rd=cr#q=english+phonemes+vowel+chart](https://www.google.com.bd/?gws_rd=cr#q=english+phonemes+vowel+chart)

The Schwa /ə/ is the most frequently occurring vowel in English which is associated with weak syllables. It is not articulated with much energy (Roach, 2009, p.65).

#### Problematic Areas:

The students pronounced /pɜ:sən/ as /pʌrsən/, /hu:/ as /hu/, /bi:/ as /bɪ/, /tu:/ as /tu/, /hi:/ as /hɪ/, /fɔ:/ as /fɒr/ etc. Besides they did not pronounce the 'schwa' sound in the following words and uttered them as /pɑ:rsən/, /tu:wordz/, /dʒʌdʒments/ etc.

#### Reasons:

In slow listening of their speech sounds, I found out that most of the candidates pronounced all the vowels shortly as we do in Bangla (Bangla do not have long vowels separately). They could not lengthen the long vowels to bring a difference with that of the short ones; this is actually not needed in our context.

Again, the schwa (weakest vowel in English) got omitted by them in many words. For example, the Schwa in /pɜ:sən/ has not been pronounced and instead of that, the vowel /ɒ/ had been used in respect to its spelling. Again, the schwa has been replaced by /u/ in towards and in the word /dʒʌdʒments/, the sound /e/ has been used according to the way it spells. In fact, the sound is so weak that it often gets deleted even by the native speakers. Therefore many of the language teachers of our schools might be doing the same deletion as well.

#### The misuse of stress in words:

English has stress-timed syllables; that is some of the words are stressed while some are unstressed. The production of stress is generally believed to depend on the speaker using more muscular energy than is used for unstressed syllables (Roach, 2009, p. 73).

#### Problematic Area:

The candidates used strong vowels which put stress in syllables of words where less stress is needed. For example, use of /pa:rsən/ in case of /pɜ:sən/, /tu:wɜrdz/ in case of /tə wɜ:dz/ and /rɪspɒnsɪbəl/ in case of /rɪspɒnsəbəl/. Again their use of short vowels decreased the stress in the following words; they used /hu:/ as /hu/, /tu:/ as /tu/, /hi:/ as /hɪ/, /fɔ:/ as /fɒr/, /wɜ:ks/ as /wɜrks/, /ɔ:θɒrəti/ as /θɒrəti/.

Reasons:

The students were uttering all the words with almost same level of muscular energy; that is they were producing all the syllables with same amount of stress. They did not actually produce them with different stresses. This is because in Bangla, all the words are produced with stress; therefore they applied the same rule for these English words. The stress marks on the following words is supposed be like this: /pɜ:sən/, tə wɜ:dz/ and /rɪspɒnsəbəl/. Nevertheless, the candidates maintain the same level of stress for all the syllables.

Again, as they shortened the long vowel sounds; the words like /hu:/ became /hu/, /fɔ:/ became /fɒr/, /wɜ:ks/ became /wɜrks/, /ɔ:θɒrəti/ became /θɒrəti/. In these words, the stress is always on the first syllables, however, it became unstressed.

The pronunciation of words according to their spellings:

As mentioned before, English spellings are quite confusing in the sense that they are not pronounced the way they sounds. That is “because of the notoriously confusing nature of English spelling, it is particularly important to learn to think of English pronunciation in terms of phonemes rather than letters of the alphabet” (Roach, 2009, p. 2).

Problematic

Areas:

The students were pronouncing ‘enough’ as /enʌf/, ‘motives’ as /mɒtɪvs/, /‘lawyer’ as /lɔjə:r/, ‘person’ as /pɜrsən/, ‘usually’ as /i:u:dʒəli/.

Reasons:

It can be seen that the first syllable of ‘enough’, ‘motives’, ‘lawyer’ has been pronounced the way they are spelled. This is because it is difficult for students to understand the nature of the English spellings; especially whose 11 has words which are pronounced the way it is written; e.g. Bangla. The confusing nature of English spelling is not only problematic for our students but for many second language learners.

The missing features of rapid speech of native speakers:

Every language has its native speakers who talks in a different way than those of foreign users. The English native speakers also bring changes while talking quickly; and therefore sound different than when they talk slowly. The two most common changes they bring about in rapid speeches are: Assimilation and Elision.

“In cases, we find a phoneme realized differently as a result of being near some other phoneme belonging to a neighboring word we call this difference an instance of assimilation”(Roach, 2009, p. 110). “The nature of Elision may be stated quite simply: under certain circumstances sounds disappear” (Roach, 2009, p. 113).

Problematic Areas:

The students while uttering the sentence, pronounced it the way it was written. For example, they said /hɪ mʌst bɪ ʊnɪst ɪnʌf tu meɪk gud dʒʌdʒmənts ænd grɪv dʒʌstɪs/.

Reasons:

We, the Bengalis also tend to make elision and assimilation in Bangla rapid speech. For example: in rapid speech we often say ‘chotda’, ‘bodda’ instead of ‘choto dada’ and ‘boro dada’. Similarly, the above English sentence would be something like this, /hɪ mʌs bɪ ʊnɪst ɪnʌf tə meɪg gud dʒʌdʒmənts ən grɪv dʒʌstɪs/. That means, the /t/ of ‘must’ should be omitted, /u/ of ‘to’ will have been replaced with a /ə/, ‘meɪk gud’ should have become ‘meɪg gud’, the /t/ of ‘judgments’ must have been omitted and the ‘and’ would have been pronounced as /ən/. Nevertheless the students did not make any such expected changes in the sentence.

### 4.3 Discussions

After analyzing the data, it can be said that the students have lots of problems with English sounds and its pronunciation. In fact, they have not got enough exposure to authentic English texts (video clips, movies, recordings) etc. in their learning process. However, some of the problems can be overcome if they try but some problems might not be solved very easily. For example, the problems with diphthongs and triphthongs might take time. This is because in Diphthongs, only one vowel remains visible in the spelling of the words. For example: in the word ‘poor’, the first of the two vowels is clearly noticeable from the spelling. Students usually pronounce it as /puɹ/ or sometimes /pu:r/. They do so by considering the presence of double ‘oo’ in the spelling. They will have confusion in understanding if they heard somebody pronouncing it as /puəɹ/ since the /ə/ is not visible in the spelling. The same goes with triphthongs; in fact it is even harder. The word ‘layer’ is pronounced as /leɪə/ whereas learners pronounce it as /leɪr/ or /leɪ:r/. They do it by taking the /le/ from the root word ‘lay’ and then adding an /r/ or /a:r/ according to the spelling /er/. They remain unaware of the fact that there are actually three vowels in it. Again, the problem with use of the sound /z/ can be resolved. If students are taught that there is a letter ‘Z’ in English alphabets which sounds different from /dʒ/ (it is missing in the Bangla alphabet), they can learn it during early school life. No matter, the use of /z/ might take them a lot of

time since it is a sound between the sounds /dʒ/ and /z/. The problem of replacing the Bangla sounds /ব/ or /ভ/ with /v/ can also be solved by applying similar techniques.

However, problems like mixed use of /i:/ and /j/, not using /r/ in particular cases, not using aspirations due to generalization with some Bangla phonemes, the use of stress in all words where some should not be stressed, not using assimilation and elision in rapid speeches like native speakers etc. might not be very easy to solve.

Therefore the researchers think that most of the above mentioned problems might be overcome if and only the students could not have tried to pronounce the words according to its spellings; because English spellings are quite misleading. For example if the word 'make' was spelled as 'meik'; then the students could have easily got it. This is because the pronunciation would have been similar to its spelling.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 What the Researcher learned from the Survey**

Something that the researcher learned from this survey is that the students have many difficulties with English pronunciation yet the truth is that their problems are always tolerated in our context. This is because the importance of English in our context is limited to reading and writing only. The teachers are teaching these two language elements with immense care however they are overlooking the listening and speaking skills. Actually they are teaching the pronunciations in their own ways which the students are learning through imitation.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

The purpose was to examine the causes for which our students cannot speak English according to standard British accent; the reasons are those that have just been mentioned in the last paragraph. To overcome these problems, students do not need a practical knowledge about the science of phonetics; rather they just need to know how to use it appropriately. Following are some recommendations:

- a) The teachers should try to incorporate bits of listening activities into the English classrooms.
- b) The acquiring of proper pronunciation should be emphasized like the other two skills (reading and writing).
- c) There can be exams where the student's use of speech sounds of different English words can be tested.
- d) The students must get enough scope to learn accurate pronunciation from the very beginning of their school life.

- e) Young learners should get enough exposure to English animated movies, videos, interesting commercials, and English cartoons to enhance their use of English speech sounds.

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