

2 Phonetics and Phonology

Indian English (IE) is best identified through its phonological features yet, paradoxically, the variation in the phonology is widespread. There is a standard variety of IE both in terms of phonology and syntax. It is essential, however, to maintain a distinction between the grammar and accent.

This chapter will deal with the standard accent and touch upon variation as well. Accent in Indian speech is marked by regional variation. Standard accent is usually devoid of regional markers but it is still identifiable as Indian by virtue of some pan-Indian features. There is also an intermediate accent that is more Indian than the standard, as a consequence of the extent to which the regional features appear in it.

Teachers of IE pronunciation have usually imposed an unattainable standard from the purely pedagogical point of view – Received Pronunciation (RP), which is the standard British accent from southern Britain. This has happened in spite of the fact that the British who came to India were from different parts of Britain. There were the Irish and Scots as well in colonial India. Many of the English themselves were not speakers of standard RP. Since English is taught as a second language in India, the issue of a standard for teaching has vexed and continues to vex classrooms. As early as 1800, an advertisement by William Carey from Serampore offering to teach English with particular attention to correct pronunciation appeared (Sinha 1978: 23–4).

Since a standard variety is usually taught in the second and foreign language classroom, RP has somehow become the standard of pronunciation to aspire to, at least from the point of view of educators. But, as stated earlier, this has never been achieved. True, there are schools, particularly convent schools that continue to place a great emphasis on correct pronunciation. In this process of attempting to acquire and impart RP, a variety of English has grown in the country that approximates RP yet has some distinctive features that mark it as Indian. This has de facto become the standard of pronunciation and is advocated by

most educationists as the more appropriate norm for Indians. This variety has been labelled Educated Indian Pronunciation (Gokak 1964, Parasher 1991, Nihalani et al. 2005). CIEFL (1972) monograph on IE uses the term 'generalised IE' which is advocated for pedagogical purposes.¹ Chaudhary (1996) also addresses the issue of a teaching norm and suggests a globally usable and intelligible model rather than RP.

There are some differences in the descriptions in the texts mentioned above and the several others that deal with the Indian accent. An acquired variety modelled on RP is that of the newsreaders of All India Radio ('News on All India Radio' 2006). The variety that is described in this work, and one that is called the standard here, is close to but does not precisely match All India Radio newsreaders' speech. It is not the generalised IE that is mentioned above either. Generalised IE is the variety of speech that has more Indian features and is the second variety of the three types mentioned above.

Curiously, this standard cuts across the country and is usually free of regional features that mark the speech of most Indians. Whether the speaker is from Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras or Hyderabad, this is a speech variety that is Indian but of a higher status than other varieties. As can be seen, it is a variety belonging to urban places but this does not mean that all those who grow up in these places speak it or that others do not. Public schools and other elite schools, many of which are located in non-urban areas, seem to impart this variety.

In what follows, the features of this variety will be described. Since this is the variety that most Indians aspire to acquire, this variety will be considered to be the standard IE variety.² Those who speak the standard variety have a clear edge over those who do not and are more likely to get jobs; this is borne out very clearly in placement interviews on campuses. The vast majority of Indians do not speak this standard variety. Their accents tend to be regional in nature. The speech of Indians can be classified on the basis of the four geographical regions and further regions within them. Speech tends to be marked by elements from the native language or the most influential language in the repertoire of the speaker. Although the native language has some influence on accent, schooling and peer groups influence accent much more.

A cline of proficiency exists for IE as may be expected for a second language. This proficiency is at the level of grammar. Similarly, a cline of pronunciation exists that sets the standard variety at one end and the markedly regional varieties at the other end. The proficiency level in grammar and usage and the standard variety of pronunciation do not match in most cases. Fluent and proficient users of English often do not have a standard accent. In fact this is true of the vast majority of profi-

cient users of English. The reverse – that of standard pronunciation but a lower level of proficiency in grammar and usage – is rare though not unheard of.

IE must be viewed more in terms of a set of features that may manifest themselves in the speech of individuals rather than as a constant. Individual variation is quite considerable in IE. The extent to which Indian features of pronunciation will occur in the speech of an individual varies from person to person. What follows therefore are, by and large, tendencies rather than absolutes.³

2.1 Consonant sounds

Consonants are described using three main criteria: place of articulation, that is, the point in the oral cavity where two organs come into contact with each other; manner of articulation, that is the way in which the air stream is closed and released; and voicing, that is whether the vocal cords vibrate or not.

2.1.1 /r/

Standard IE Pronunciation (SIEP) is non-rhotic, in which feature it matches RP. That is, the letter *r* in words like *card*, *park*, *smart*, *heart*, *bird*, *earth*, *purse*, where it occurs before consonant sounds, is not articulated. Also, it remains silent when it occurs in word-final positions as in *car*, *player*, *singer*, *sir* etc. Creative use of language is a part of advertisements and English is also used similarly. Non-rhoticity is made use of in this furniture advertisement, ‘So fa, so good’, and in this comment about the Congress President Sonia Gandhi, some years ago when she nearly became the Prime Minister, ‘Sonia . . . and yet so far’ (D’souza 2001: 153). An /r/-less accent is a prestige marker in India as Agnihotri and Sahgal (1985) and Sahgal and Agnihotri (1988) note.

Not pronouncing /r/ in the contexts specified above tends to be transferred to Indian names and words when one is speaking in English. *Uttar* (‘north’, ‘reply’) is an Indian (Hindi) word in which the final /r/ should be pronounced; still, it is not uncommon to hear *This is from Uttar Pradesh* where the /r/ is not pronounced as /ʊʈʈa prade:ʃ/, since the entire sentence is in English. Other examples of names are *Sharma* /ʃɜ:mə/ instead of /ʃarma:/ and *Verma* /vɜ:mə/ instead of /varma:/. However, in AIR news Uttar Pradesh with /r/ pronounced, perhaps consciously, is usual. Thus, the phonology of IE tends to be maintained in units larger than the word and the same speaker would pronounce the same word differently in another language.

Accompanying this is the linking /r/, which surfaces in SIEP. That is, when words that end with the letter *r* are followed by words beginning with a vowel sound, the *r* is articulated as in: *The car [r] is here*, *The player [r] indicates his displeasure*. The final /r/ in the words *here* and *displeasure* in these two sentences is not pronounced.

The corresponding intrusive /r/, which is a feature of RP, is absent in IE. There is no /r/ articulation in phrases like *India and China*, *the idea of it*, which in RP may have a /r/ between *India* and *and* and between *idea* and *of*. Even the suggestion of such a pronunciation will seem ridiculous to Indians.

The influence of spelling on IE speech is quite well known. One early work is by Krishnamurti (1978). The absence of intrusive /r/ could be attributed to this fact. However, it is not possible to reduce all aspects of IE to spelling. The fact that SIEP is non-rhotic is proof of that.

Most non-standard varieties of IE are rhotic – that is, *r* is articulated in all the above contexts. There are those whose speech would be somewhere in the middle of the cline but they may still have non-rhotic speech.

There are several descriptions of the realisations of /r/ in IE. It has been called a post-alveolar frictionless continuant or an alveolar flap by Bansal (1976).

2.1.2 /v/ and /w/ or /v/

Of the other distinctions that exist in RP, the difference between /v/ and /w/ is often absent in the speech of many IE speakers. But the distinction is maintained in SIEP. In articulating /v/, the front teeth touch the lower lip and the sound is a fricative, that is, air is released with audible friction. /w/ is articulated with rounded lips without contact. However, the amount of friction that /v/ carries in RP is greater than the friction in IE, even in the standard variety. The tendency however is to articulate another sound here without friction and, in fact, to replace it with the labio-dental approximant /v/ which occurs in many Indian languages.

Non-standard varieties of IE do not maintain this spelling–pronunciation correspondence that prevails in English. Both /v/ and /w/ tend to be neutralised to the approximant mentioned above. Thus, the advertisement for a recent Hindi film that says ‘villager, visionary, winner’ is obviously meant to be alliterative. And the spelling error in a student answer script, ‘They are playing wolly ball’, is clearly due to just having heard the word and never having seen it in writing. The average Indian pronunciation does not provide clues as to the spelling, in this case.

2.1.3 /θ/ and /ð/ or /t̪, t̪h/, /d̪/

It takes a lot of training and practice for Indians to master the fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ of English. The sound /θ/ is sometimes articulated in SIEP but /ð/ is almost completely missing. These dental fricatives are replaced by Indian dental plosives /t̪/ or /t̪h/ and /d̪/. The first sound in words like *through*, *thing*, *third* is the voiceless dental plosive. It is a sound for which the tongue touches the back of the teeth and cuts off air completely and the air is released suddenly. The dental sound is present in Indian languages and therefore it is easier in terms of articulation for speakers to replace the fricative. Since most of the words in which this sound is expected are written with *th*, aspiration of the plosive is heard. Indian languages barring Tamil have aspirated and unaspirated plosives. Usually, the aspirated version is heard in words like *things*, *thought* and *think*. This sound is determined by the spelling of the word; thus words like *Thames* and *Thomas*, which in native varieties of English have /t/ in the initial position, are articulated as /t̪h/ in IE.

The degree of aspiration is greater in the speech of those with an Indo-Aryan language background. And in the south, since Tamil does not have aspiration at all, Tamil speakers do not use /t̪h/. They systematically have /t̪/ in the same words.

The voiced counterpart /d̪/ of /t̪/ is heard in words like *these*, *those*, *though* and others. That is, the difference between /t̪/ and /d̪/ lies only in the fact that the vocal cords vibrate in the articulation of the latter sound. In spite of the fact that Indian languages do have an aspirated voiced plosive /d̪h/, for some reason, this has not got transferred to their English.

2.1.4 /t/ and /d/ or /t̪/ and /d̪/

IE has been considered to be retroflex in the articulation of the first sounds in words like *today*, *tomorrow*, *terrific* and *demand*. That is, the tongue is said to curl backwards for these sounds and hit the hard palate. However, this is not universally correct. SIEP has alveolar sounds – that is, sounds in the articulation of which the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge. The use of retroflexion is not necessarily uniform for the voiced and the voiceless sounds. While the voiceless /t/ is more frequent, it is the voiced /d̪/ that betrays an Indian background. Khan (1989), in her study of variation among educated speakers of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, in north India, notes that there is variation in the speech of an individual depending on a number of factors including age, gender, social class, schooling and the context of the speech act. More formal

situations bring on the alveolar sounds and the less formal bring on the retroflex sounds. Non-standard IE consistently uses the retroflex sounds.

2.1.5 *The other consonants*

Many of the consonants in IE match RP sounds. The other IE plosives are /p, b, k, g/. These symbols represent the initial sounds in the words *pin*, *bin*, *kin*, *gain* respectively. The affricates /tʃ, dʒ/ are also among the consonants of IE. These are sounds for which there is complete closure and slow release of air. Examples are the initial sounds in the following words *church*, *gin*. The fricatives are /f, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/. Examples for /f, s, z, ʃ, h/ are the initial sounds in the words *fin*, *sin*, *zebra*, *shy*, *hurry*. /ʒ/ is the initial sound in *genre* and the medial consonant in *measure*. All of these are prevalent in SIEP. Although CIEFL (1972) claims that /ʒ/ is problematic in generalised IE, it is definitely a consonant that exists in SIEP.

The nasal sounds are /m, n, ŋ/ in IE. These are perceived in the words *meet* (the initial sound), *neat* (the initial sound) and *sing* (the penultimate sound in IE, see 2.3.1). The lateral /l/ appears in IE as the initial sound in the words *luck*, *less*.

There are however, some regional variations which arise as a result of the features of the first languages of the speakers, which influence their English. So, some of the sounds described above tend to be replaced with local sounds close to them in articulation. All of these are non-standard. Some speakers with a Gujarati or Marathi background are likely to say /f/ as /ph/. For speakers with a Bengali, Oriya and Assamese background, /w, v/ are problematic because labio-dental sounds are in general difficult. They replace these sounds with /bh/. Bengali speakers also have a further problem distinguishing /s/ and /ʃ/. So do some Hindi speakers, from places like Bihar. These speakers tend to use either /s/ or /ʃ/ consistently in all contexts. /ʒ/ is unpronounceable for Kashmiris who replace it with /dʒ/. /h/ is generally unproblematic across the country. The letter *b* is pronounced as /hɛtʃ/. The nasal /n/ of other varieties is articulated as a retroflex sound by some South Indians. Thus *money* has /ŋ/.

As can be seen, it is not always that English sounds are replaced by regional equivalents. /ʒ/ is absent in Indian languages but has been acquired by most. On the other hand, /θ/ and /ð/ are also absent in Indian languages and are absent even in SIEP.

2.1.6 *Non-contrastive sounds*

Aspiration is contrastive in Indian languages, barring Tamil. So, /pal/ 'moment' is different from /phal/ 'fruit' in Hindi. This makes /p/ and

/ph/ contrastive sounds or phonemes. On the other hand, in RP, aspiration occurs in specific contexts. Since the context is determined, it becomes obligatory. [ph, th, kh] are the only aspirated sounds in English. And these occur in the initial position of stressed syllables. Thus [p] in *pin, upon, suppose* is aspirated, whereas [p] in *spin, capers* is not aspirated. This makes [p] and [ph] non-contrastive in English. That is, even if one did not (deliberately) aspirate /p/ in words like *pin, upon*, the words would not be considered to be different words. They are still the same word.

In IE, aspiration does not work the way it does in RP. It is non-contrastive but not entirely predictable. Where aspiration does occur, it is the result of spelling. But, as seen above, spelling does not induce aspiration of /d/. This is not a difference between voiced and voiceless sounds either because /g/, which is a voiced sound, does show aspiration. Thus, *ghost* and *ghostly* have an initial aspirated sound [gh]. In some words like *John*, even though the *b* is not immediately after *j*, aspiration is heard as [dʒh]. Influence of spelling is nevertheless seen when *b* occurs in the spelling. The tendency is to make the sound an aspirated sound. In SIEP sometimes words with *wb-* are aspirated – *why* /vhai/ or /whai/.

Again, spelling influences the articulation of the first sound in words like *change, challenge*, which tend to be aspirated. Wiltshire and Harnsberger (2006) note an interesting point in their data about aspiration in Tamil English. It is in this variety that aspiration is heard in the initial plosives, precisely because it is non-contrastive. Yet, the voicing contrast which is also absent in Tamil is acquired by Tamil speakers of English and sounds like /p/ and /b/ are not confused.

Another non-contrastive distinction known in RP is the difference between [l] and [ɫ], known as clear l and dark l respectively. Clear l occurs in most contexts but dark l occurs when it is followed by a consonant or by a pause in words such as *milk, bulb, feel*. Dark l is completely absent in IE, including the standard variety and clear l is used in all contexts.

In non-standard IE, what might appear is the retroflex /ɭ/ in south Indian speech in words like *colour, play*. The deeper south one goes, the greater the degree of retroflexion of /ɭ/. Retroflex /ɭ/ is absent in SIEP. Again although, /l/ and /ɭ/ are contrastive in Indian (Dravidian) languages, they are not contrastive in IE. Similarly, /n/ and /ɳ/ are contrastive in most Indian languages, yet they are not contrastive in IE.

Further, Tamil and Malayalam have a rule of voicing a plosive when it is between vowels or when it follows a nasal. This phenomenon tends to be transferred to the English speech of such speakers. A restaurant that had a special food festival attracted customers with the advertisement ‘Simbly [sɪmbɫɪ] South’ in which ‘simbly’ is meant to be ‘simply’.

In Dravidian languages, /j/ and /w/ are optional in the word-initial position. Their occurrence is determined by the quality of the initial vowel that occurs in the word. Thus, if a word begins with a front vowel (see 2.2 on vowels), /j/ can be inserted optionally – /idi/ and /jidi/, ‘this’, are the same word in Telugu. Similarly, if the first vowel is a back vowel, /w/ is optional – /okaɽi/ and /wokaɽi/, ‘one’, are synonymous and are the same word. In the speech of many Dravidians, this phenomenon is transferred to English. Thus, *only* becomes /wonli/ and it is perfectly normal to hear /jes/ for *s* and /es/ for *yes*, and *yearned leave* for *earned leave*. SIEP does not carry this feature.

Thus the consonants of SIEP are:

1.

Plosives:	p, b, t/t̄, d/d̄, ʈ/ʈ̄, ɖ, k, g
Fricatives:	f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h
Affricates:	tʃ, dʒ
Nasals:	m, n, ŋ
Lateral:	l
Approximants:	ʋ, r
Semi-vowels:	j, w

2.2 Vowel sounds

Vowels are described based on three main criteria: the part of the tongue that is used in articulation (which is described as front, central or back); the height to which it is raised (high or close, half-close, half-open and low or open); and the degree of lip rounding. Vowels are of two kinds – pure vowels and diphthongs. Pure vowels are either long or short. These vowels have only one quality throughout the articulation. Diphthongs are vowel sounds that glide from one quality to another. There are usually two identifiable sounds in a diphthong.

2.2.1 The short vowels

The short vowels in SIEP are more or less the same as those in RP, with one exception. The distinction that exists between the truly central vowel /ə/ and the lower central vowel /ʌ/ is sometimes neutralised in SIEP or the two vowels are used as free variants (Bansal 1978).

The short vowels in IE are thus /ɪ, ɛ, æ, ɒ, ʊ, ʌ, ə/, although the last two may be neutralised. Examples of words in which short vowels occur are: /ɪ/, the first vowel in the words *sit, bitter, skin*; /ɛ/, *red, better*; /æ/, *cat, battle*; /ɒ/, *bot, cot*; /ʊ/, *put, pull*; /ʌ/, *butter, putty*; /ə/, *appear, allow*.

In non-standard varieties, the two sounds /ʌ/ and /ə/ are neutralised. Sometimes, another sound /a/ which is more open than the English central sound is heard in place of /ʌ/.

In non-standard English pronunciation, /ɒ/ is not articulated; in its place, the vowel used is usually /a/, so *bot* is /hat/. This is particularly true of south Indian Tamil, Kannada and Telugu speech. Malayalam speakers tend to use a long or a short /o/ in words like *Jobn*, which can approximate *Joan*.

2.2.2 The long vowels

The long vowels are /i:, e:, a:, ɔ:, u:, ɜ:/. While RP has five long vowels, SIEP has seven. Words that have /i:/ are *seat, beat*; /a:/ appears in *card, master*; /u:/ is heard in *boot, pool*.

The most important difference between RP and SIEP lies in the long vowels /e:/ and /o:/. These do not exist in RP which has diphthongs instead. These diphthongs are rarely articulated in SIEP. /e:/ is heard in words like *day, may, play*. And /o:/ is heard in words like *no, go, groan*. In some contexts, generally in word-final positions as in *today*, these vowels are shortened to /e/ and /o/ respectively. There is a qualitative difference between the short /ɛ/ and the shortened /e/. The former is a bit lower in articulation. Similarly, there is a qualitative difference between short /ɪ, ʊ/ and the long /i:, u:/. The short vowels are a little lower and more central than the long vowels.

The other difference lies in the quality of the back vowel in words like *bought, daughter* which are /bɔ:t/ and /dɔ:tə/ respectively. While the RP sound is higher, the Indian sound tends to be merely a longer version of /ɒ/. Only those who are specially trained articulate /ɔ:/ and this sound is sometimes heard in the speech of All India Radio newsreaders. In non-standard accents, the equivalent is /a:/.

The long vowel /ɜ:/ occurs in words like *bird, curd, dearth*. It appears in SIEP which is non-rhotic. When the accent is rhotic, the words are articulated as /bɑrd, kɑrd, dɑrt/ or /bærd, kærd, dært/.

2.2.3 Diphthongs

There are six diphthongs in SIEP. Thus we have /ɪə/ as in *here, peer, beer*; /ʊə/ as in *poor, tour, cure*; /eə/ as in *fair, pair, bare*; /aɪ/ as in *night, right*,

gripe, /ɔɪ/ as in *boil*, *toy*, *coin*, and /aʊ/ as in *cow*, *town*, *growl*. It is in non-standard IE that variation from these sounds is heard. The tendency in non-standard IE is to convert diphthongs other than /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ to long vowels as *beer* /bi:r/, *poor* /pu:r/, *tour* /tu:r/, *fair*, *fare* /fe:r/, *pear* /pe:r/. Those who do not articulate /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ do not do so in the diphthongs either. Thus *boil* is /ba:ɪ/ and *coin* is /ka:ɪn/.

The vowels of IE are as follows:

2.

Short vowels:	/ɪ, ɛ, æ, ʌ, ə, ɒ, ʊ/
Long vowels:	/i:, e:, ɜ:, a:, ɔ:, o:, u:/
Diphthongs:	/aɪ, ɔɪ, aʊ, ɪə, ʊə, eə/

2.3 Other aspects of segments

2.3.1 Spelling pronunciation

The influence of spelling is apparent in the pronunciation of certain sounds as we saw above. Some further patterns can also be observed. In words that have *ng* in the spelling, both letters are articulated irrespective of the position in the word: *finger* /fɪŋgə/, *sing* /sɪŋg/, *singer* /sɪŋgə/, *singing* /sɪŋŋɪŋg/ etc. In this respect, SIEP is different from RP – in the latter, only /ŋ/ is articulated word finally but not /g/ as /sɪŋ/. Words that are derived from these such as *singer* and *singing* also have a silent *g* in RP. Very few SIEP speakers are likely to have the kind of articulation that RP has. Words like *climb* and *dumb* also have the final /b/ articulated. /b/ is articulated in *plumber* and *plumbing*.

Another strong influence of spelling is seen in geminate articulation of consonants. In words such as *summer* /sʌmmə/, *happy* /hæppɪ/, *killing* /kɪllɪŋg/, *bitter* /bɪttə/ or /bɪttə/, double articulation of the medial consonants is evident. This is also true of words that have two separate letters that could stand for the same sound such as *lucky*. Krishnamurti (1978) maintains that this double articulation is evident only where there is a short vowel on either side in disyllabic words. If a long vowel precedes the double consonant, then it is not articulated as a double consonant due to a pan-Indian length alternation rule between vowels and consonants. One may say that in words like *usually*, *questionnaire*, *beginning*, *command* double articulation of *ll*, *nn* and *mm* is absent either because the word is not disyllabic or because the preceding or following vowel is long. All the words barring *command* are polysyllabic. The word *command*

although disyllabic, has a long vowel /a:/ after *mm*. Hence it does not show geminate articulation. Moreover, when there is a prefix in the word, invariably there is double articulation – *unnatural* /nn/, *irresponsible* /rr/, *illegal* /ll/, *immobile* /mm/ and so on. In words like *immensely* double articulation is heard. Further, emphasis and exaggeration bring on double articulation – in *You will be utterly miserable*, *utterly* can have /tt/ in emphatic speech.

Other influences are seen in words such as *judge* in which all the consonants may be articulated as /dʒəddʒ/ and *edgy* would be /eddʒɪ/.

Another aspect related to spelling also prevails. Since a number of English words are merely heard (often mispronounced) and are not seen in printed form by a multitude of Indians, it is not uncommon to see misspellings in signs across the country. Some examples are *will* for *wheel*, *rasberry* for *raspberry* etc. This is true of educated Indians as well; students have such spellings as *wholistic*, *vocal chords*, *auxillary* etc.

2.3.2 Some specific words

Unlike with consonants, spelling is often no indicator of the quality of vowel to be used. Length can be a problem – *truth* is articulated by some as /truːθ/ and *stove* is either /stɔ:v/ or /stau/ depending on the speaker. The latter is more of a non-standard pronunciation. In non-standard pronunciation, *mundane* is /mʊnde:n/, *nasty* /næsti/ etc. Thus, *pears* is articulated as /pɪərs/, *prefer* as /prefə/.

At times though, spelling seems to have a deep influence as in the word *performance* which is /perfa:rmens/ in the speech of some speakers. When the pronunciation is rhotic, very often the preceding vowel is short – *purpose* is /pərpəs/, *surplus* is /sərləs/.

In the pronunciation of individual words one does not see an exact replacement of the Indian vowel for the RP vowel; thus *bored* is /bɔ:d/, not /bʊ:d/, *store* is usually /stɔ:/ and *four* usually /fɔ:/. And, *cot*, *caught*, *court* are distinguished like this – /kɔt/, /kɔ:t/ and /kɔ:t/. The words *spot* and *sport* are /spɔt/ and /spɔ:t/ respectively. In non-standard IE varieties, *r* is articulated – /bɔ:rd/. The distinction between words that sometimes occurs in RP is lost in all varieties of IE – *mourn* and *moan* are both pronounced as /mɔ:n/.

Sometimes, even if the spelling is an indicator, some pronunciations are established, probably due to analogy – *food* is /fʊd/, like *wood* /vʊd/ in non-standard IE, and *soot* is /su:t/ in SIEP.

A semi-vowel is often inserted in words like *India* /ɪndɪjə/ and *our* /ʌwə/. Some examples of IE pronunciation of some words are given below:

3.

serious	/si:rɪəs/
furious	/fju:rɪəs/
hero	/hi:rɔ:/
zero	/zi:rɔ:/

2.3.3 Morphophonology

There is a great deal of predictability in the way in which suffixes are articulated. The plural suffix is invariably /s/ or /ɛs/ in speech:

4.

cats	/kæts/
dogs	/dɒgs/
keys	/ki:s/
trains	/tre:ns/
horses	/hɔ:sɛs/

The plural marker is realised in RP as [əz] or [ɪz] when the final consonant of the word to which it attaches is one of the following: / tʃ, dʒ, s, z, ʃ, ʒ/. In IE, however, it is [ɛs] in these contexts. Sometimes it could be [ɛz]. Occasionally, one might hear [əz]. Also, when voiced consonants other than those in the above list occur word finally, the plural is often realised as [s] in IE and occasionally as [z].

Similarly, the past tense marker is always /d/ or /ɛd/ depending on the word to which it attaches:

5.

played	/ple:d/
trapped	/træpd/
trained	/tre:nd/
climbed	/klaɪmbd/
posted	/pɔ:stɛd/

In this respect, IE is different from RP which has [əd] or [ɪd] when the final consonant is /t/ or /d/. And, when the final consonant is a voice-

less sound other than /t/, in RP the past tense marker is realised as [t]. In IE, when the final consonant is /t/ or /d/, the past tense marker is [ɛd]. Occasionally [əd] is used. And in all other contexts, /d/ is used.

Other suffixes have full vowels:

6.

hopeless /ho:pləs/

happiness /hæpɪnəs/

2.3.4 Simplification of consonant clusters

Consonant clusters tend to be problematic for many Indian speakers. There are several different ways in which the clusters are simplified across the country. The commonest way is to delete some consonants. For instance, a word like *texts* is pronounced as /tɛks/. Similarly *acts* tends to be /æks/. This is seen in SIEP as well. Khan (1991) in her study of one variety of IE (Uttar Pradesh, north India) shows that /t/ or /d/ in a word-final cluster is deleted when it is followed in a sentence by a consonant. So the final consonants in words like *fast*, *missed* are deleted particularly when followed by other consonants.

In SIEP and non-standard varieties, there are no syllabic consonants in words like *castle*, *bottle*, *cycle*, *button*, *cotton*. A vowel /ə/ or /ɪ/ is inserted before the last consonant. However, in SIEP word-final cluster *lm* is not a problem in words like *film*. In non-standard IE it is usually /fɪləm/.

Most of the other ways of simplifying consonant clusters are features of non-standard varieties. Words like *station* become /tɛ:sən/. This word in particular has been assimilated into south Indian languages and this is the pronunciation in local languages. In the Hindi-Punjabi areas, a vowel is inserted either before or within the consonant cluster: *school* is /tsku:l/ or /səku:l/.

2.4 Suprasegmental features

2.4.1 Stress

Just as there is unpredictability in the pronunciation of individual words and segments, stress, which is the relative prominence with which a syllable is uttered, also tends to be unpredictable. By and large, in SIEP, it may not be incorrect to say that each word is learnt separately for its stress. If words such as *exam*'*nation*, *con*'*dition* have stress on the penultimate syllable, the logic is not carried to *a*'*bolition* and *pre*'*monition* in

which words the Indian tendency is to stress the ante-penultimate syllable.

There are several works on IE stress focussing on specific regional varieties of IE, such as Vijayakrishnan (1978), Sethi (1980), Sadanandan (1981), Shuja (1995), Das (2001) and so on. But all these works focus on only one aspect or one region. Moreover, several of these works admit that there is a great deal of variation even within a variety, so much so that generalisation is often difficult.

Chaudhary (1989) is among the works that attempt to give a pan-Indian account of stress in IE. More recently, Gargesh (2004) also has given some principles for IE stress and Wiltshire and Moon (2003) have attempted to identify the acoustic correlates of stress in IE. One factor that emerges from most of these works is that stress placement in IE is dependent on the weight of the syllable. That is, a syllable is said to be light if it contains just one short vowel. The number of consonants that precede the vowel is immaterial to the weight of the syllable – CV is the form taken by a light syllable. A heavy syllable is one in which there is a long vowel or a vowel along with a consonant – V: or VC. An extra heavy syllable is one in which there is either a long vowel followed by at least one consonant or a short vowel followed by at least two consonants – V:C or VCC.

A simplified version of the rules given by Gargesh (2004) is as follows: stress falls on the first syllable of a bisyllabic word unless the second syllable is extra heavy. Thus the stress in the following words is explained: 'taboo, 'mistake, 'monsoon, 'concrete. In trisyllabic words, the stress is also on the first syllable unless the second syllable is heavy, in which case the second syllable takes the stress. Thus the following stress pattern emerges: mo'desty, cha'racter, mi'nister, 'terrific and so on. Gargesh's rules do not account for several variations that prevail in IE. These rules cannot explain why some Indians have the following stresses in the same words: ta'boo, mis'take, 'modesty, 'character, 'minister, ter'rific.

The second factor that emerges particularly from Chaudhary's (1989) work is that there are differences in stress placement between the Indian Englishes of the Indo-Aryan group of speakers and the Dravidian group of speakers. These differences are somewhat systematic. Syllable weight plays an equally important role in both language groups. However, the manner in which a word is syllabified varies between the two groups. Thus syllabification makes a difference to stress placement. The different syllable structures assigned take care of the initial stress in 'minister of Dravidian speakers who would syllabify the word as mi.ni.ster whereas the Indo-Aryan group perceives it as mi.nis.ter. Chaudhary's is a more comprehensive account of word stress in IE.

However, it still leaves some questions. For instance, there is no apparent explanation for why some speakers stress the second syllable in *de'velop*, *con'sider*, *e'licit* and so on.

The variation in stress in the speech of an individual or within a group may perhaps be ascribed to the following – the default stress pattern of IE speakers is the kind described by Chaudhary (1989), which is based on their specific language background. When confronted with a new word, speakers of IE fall back on the stress pattern of their native languages. When their speech deviates from their own patterns and conforms to RP, it is the result of being taught the words separately or of having acquired a different stress pattern from their sources, which could very well be Indian. Prabhakar Babu (1971a, 1971b) notes in a small experiment that there is about seventy percent agreement in the stress patterns of the words between IE and RP.

So, if a Dravidian speaker pronounces *de'velop* with stress on the second syllable, it is a specially acquired characteristic. Chaudhary (1989) in fact takes the view that some features of the native phonology of English have been retained in IE. Most speakers of SIEP make an effort to acquire the stress patterns of RP or these are entrenched sufficiently in their education system for them to have acquired them unconsciously. In non-standard IE, however, these special patterns are absent and the speech is true to the stress patterns of their own language. What remains to be seen is the extent to which conformity to RP stress patterns may be attributed to natural stress patterns of the speakers' native language and to special acquisition. It may be almost impossible to establish this unless developmental studies of children are undertaken.

As a direct consequence of the general tendency, abbreviations are stressed on the first syllable even in SIEP, not the last as in native varieties. There are no inputs in India with stress on the last syllable in these cases.

7.

IE	native Englishes
'TV	T'V
'BBC	BB'C
'ECG	EC'G

Similarly, compound stress is also on the first item rather than the second in all cases:

8.

'loud speaker
'bad-tempered

'headquarters
 'three-wheeler
 'typewriter
 'car-ferry

(words from Roach 2000: 235)

The distinction in stress that exists in RP between noun or adjective on the one hand and verb on the other in some words is often absent in IE.

9.	
N/A	V
'insult	in'sult
'abstract	abs'tract
'import	im'port
'conduct	con'duct

It may exist sporadically in some sets of words in SIEP but usually the grammatical difference is not brought out by stress in non-standard IE. Thus the IE forms tend to be consistent as below:

10.
N/A/V
'insult
'abstract
'import
'conduct

Again the tendency is to stress the first syllable but an occasional word like *con'duct*, when used as a verb, may be stressed on the second syllable. Words with *-teen* are stressed on the first syllable in IE:

11.
'thirteen
'fifteen
'seventeen

If word stress is unpredictable, sentence stress is even more so. In contrast to RP, IE tends to have stress on many words in a sentence. A sentence like *Ramesh will come late to the party as usual* tends to have stress on all the content words.

There is a tendency in IE to stress the initial pronoun in the following sentences:

12.

- (a) 'He is saying that two is too much.
- (b) 'She took leave for two years.
- (c) 'They asked for it.

News channels have speakers who stress words like *will* which is very different from RP in which, unless there is a contrast being indicated, *will* will not be stressed. So, *The Prime Minister 'will fly to Moscow tomorrow* is often said with stress on *will* even though it is a purely routine piece of information.

Stewart (2003) observes that a trend of stressing unimportant words is emerging in American English. He notes this of newsreaders of American radio and television channels who say *This 'is the CBC*. Also, breaking up of sentences in unexpected places conveys the wrong or ambiguous meaning. He suggests that this trend is spreading to British English and also to speech not of the media. One of his arguments is that this may be due to the fact that newsreaders do not have the entire script in front of them and read fragments at a time so, to be safe, stress more words than necessary. IE has always been this way and there is no evidence to claim that this is the result of modern influence on modern IE. This may be true of Indian media but the speech of Indians has tended towards stressing unimportant words and pausing between unrelated phrases.

The difference between content words (those that carry the main meaning in a sentence) and function words (those that are important for the grammaticality of a sentence) is not maintained in pronunciation in IE. SIEP is close to RP with regard to stress in sentences to the extent that content words and words with emphasis or contrast are stressed.

The crucial difference between RP and IE lies in the relatively fewer weak forms in the latter. That is, function words between stressed content words tend to be reduced in articulation in RP. This is the result of the rhythm of RP. Since IE does not have the same rhythm as RP, the reduction apparent in RP is not seen to the same degree in IE, including SIEP. For example, *of* is fully articulated in such sentences as *I am afraid of death*. Moreover, the /v/ seen in RP is again absent in IE – it is always /ɒf/. However, it is not as if weak forms are always absent. The word *and* is often reduced to /ən/. The phrase *bread and butter* has a reduced *and*.

2.4.2 *Rhythm and intonation*

Rhythm in native varieties of English is said to be stress-timed, which means that the time taken to move from one stressed syllable in a sentence to the next is approximately the same. This is irrespective of the number of intervening syllables. IE rhythm has been said to be derived from the rhythm of Indian languages which is supposed to be syllable-timed – that is, the time taken to utter each syllable is the same.

The statement often made that IE stress is syllable-timed (for instance, by Gargesh 2004) is not verified completely. As Roach (2000: 138) points out, the difference between stress-timed and syllable-timed languages is not so clear. The implication of syllable-timed rhythm suggested for IE is that there are no weak syllables or weak forms, which is certainly not the case. There is in fact a case for maintaining that IE rhythm is not syllable-timed. Prabhakar Babu (1971a, 1971b), in an experiment done to establish this, found that IE rhythm is neither stress-timed nor syllable-timed. Considering the manner in which stress operates in IE, which is sensitive to the weight of the syllable, and the observation that length is a correlate of stress, syllable-timed rhythm is a matter for research in IE. Further, the existence of weak forms in connected speech demonstrates quite clearly that IE rhythm cannot be syllable-timed.

In the example given by Gargesh (2004) of the sentence ‘I am thinking of you’, it is claimed that all the words are stressed and therefore each syllable gets prominence. However, SIEP users will definitely reduce *I am* to *I'm*.

Although very little work has been done on IE intonation, some facts are clear. When asked to judge the meaning(s) conveyed by sentences that carry the falling intonation, the rising intonation and the fall-rise, hearers uniformly identify the following meanings: the falling intonation indicates statements; the rising intonation indicates questions; and the fall-rise indicates incompleteness or reservation.

In general in IE, greater use of the falling and the rising intonation patterns is seen. Normal statements are said with a falling intonation.

13.

(a) This is my \book

or

(b) This is \my book.

14. This is very \funny.

As noted earlier there is a tendency to stress pronouns. And, even if there is no particular contrast involved, the likelihood of *my* being stressed and thereby taking the falling tune is high.

Most *wb*-questions are said with a falling intonation. Culturally, India is quite hierarchy minded and also generally polite to strangers. Therefore, with subordinates, the use of the falling intonation is common and, with newcomers, the use of the rising intonation. *Wb*-questions, when put to strangers, have a rising intonation.

15.

- (a) What's your ↗name?
- (b) Where do you ↗live?

The same questions put to one's social inferiors will have a falling intonation. Teachers would put the same questions to students as:

16.

- (a) What's your ↘name?
- (b) Where do you ↘live?

Yes-no questions are said with a rise and so are statements that are used as questions:

17.

- (a) Are you ↗Nirmala?
- (b) You are ↗waiting?

Non-standard pronunciation uses these patterns rather differently. Many announcements, especially at airports and railway stations tend to end with a rise, often giving the hearer a sense that something more is coming. Such statements as the following end with a rise.

- 18. The train will arrive on platform number ↗four.

Shuja (1995) notes for Urdu-English that the use of the falling, rising and the falling-rising tunes are more common than other more complex tunes. This is true of most varieties of IE. One hears the falling tone most of all and then the rising tone. This is borne out in the intonation of the informants in Prabhakar Babu's (1971a)

experiment as well. There are more falling and rising tunes than the fall-rise.

Wiltshire and Harnsberger (2006) note that there is considerable difference in the use of pitch-accent between two groups of speakers – Tamil speakers (belonging to the Dravidian language family) and Gujarati speakers (belonging to the Indo-Aryan language family). The preference of the Tamil speakers is to use a fall and that of the Gujarati speakers is to use a rise. There is an overall tendency to use pitch changes on several words in an utterance also.

IE prosody is further complicated by the fact that pauses do not always occur at sense groups. They tend to occur rather randomly. Such pauses as indicated below are common:

19. Train number// 2734 from Secunderabad to// Tirupati will arrive on// platform number one.

Or a recorded message of a telephone service is likely to be:

20. The phone you are trying to reach// is busy. Please// try again later.

As a result of such pauses for which generalisations are difficult, the intonation pattern or pitch change is also difficult to establish. This aspect of IE requires further investigation.

2.4.3 Other aspects of connected speech

Some phonological features of connected speech in IE are that emphasis, exaggeration and surprise are expressed through lengthening – both of consonants and vowels. Retroflex tends to become prominent when one is emotional.

- 21.
- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| (a) I had so much fun. | [extra long /o:/ in <i>so</i>] |
| (b) Series of stories. | [extra long /i:/ in <i>series</i>] |
| (c) Great poetry. | [extra long /e:/ in <i>great</i>] |
| (d) It was the happiest day of my life. | [extra long /p/ in <i>happiest</i>] |
| (e) It was killing. | [extra long /l/ in <i>killing</i>] |

These are all quite common in non-standard speech and are sometimes heard in SIEP as well.

SIEP has the /ə/ /ɪ/ distinction before consonants and vowels with *the*.

22.

- (a) His is the [d̥ə] best work.
- (b) The [d̥ɪ] easy-chair is comfortable.

This distinction may not always apply in non-standard IE. It tends to be universally /d̥ɪ/ or /d̥ə/ depending on the speaker.

2.5 Variation in individual speakers

As stated at the outset, a standard accent in an individual is not a constant or a perfect set of all the sounds identified as standard. An /r/-less accent may be accompanied by a retroflex plosive in the speech of an individual. That is, a feature or two that are identified as non-standard may occur in otherwise standard speech. The most important feature that seems to mark a standard accent is an /r/-less accent. A rhotic Indian accent is not a standard accent.

That IE must be placed on a cline by way of accents is explicitly or implicitly stated in many works. Notable in this regard are the works of Agnihotri and Sahgal (1985) and Sahgal and Agnihotri (1988), who organise their informants into three groups based on the type of education and schools attended. The more elite schools evidently impart an elite accent consciously. In addition to a general accent that an individual has, the context also can change the accent. Thus what are identified as non-standard above would surface in the speech of a speaker of SIEP if the situation is one of informality or if the other interlocutor speaks a non-standard variety. A non-rhotic accent can and does become a rhotic accent if one is talking to a shopkeeper whose accent is non-standard and rhotic. So also with retroflexion and other vowel sounds. Taking a few features of IE, Sahgal and Agnihotri (1988) examine the variation that exists according to the style of speech – reading and casual. The use of retroflex sounds and /r/ articulation increases in the casual speech of speakers.

These studies emphasise the social dimension of IE accents. The complexity of IE pronunciation is such that one account simply cannot take care of all the varieties that exist, as is the case for the English speech of any country.

In the preceding sections, we noted that there are regional variations. However, an aspect that warrants further investigation is the hypothesis

proposed by Thundy (1976) that the IE accent is the result of various influences from Britain. He draws parallels between some IE segmental features and the features of different British accents. Many of the first speakers and teachers of English in India, as stated earlier, were not those who spoke RP but were from different strata and from across the British Isles. Therefore, some of the features of IE listed above may be remnants of those British accents to which Indians once had access.

Notes

1. The audio cassettes produced by the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) (now called the English and Foreign Languages University) which are used for teaching purposes are modelled on RP.
2. Although classes on pronunciation are derided, most classes and courses on pronunciation are well attended, even if they are not too successful. Language learning theories do show that changing one's accent in adulthood is difficult.
3. As Wiltshire (2005) rightly points out, most of the work on IE has focused on speakers with language backgrounds that are either Indo-Aryan or Dravidian. Hers is a descriptive account of the English of speakers with a Tibeto-Burman language background. These features appear to be different from the varieties of IE we are considering.