Chapter-2

Comparative Study of

Vowel Systems
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2.1 Description of Vowel:

In the previous chapter, an effort was made to outline the core features involved in the study of English and Gujarati phonological systems. Having suggested that both English and Gujarati phonological systems have their own significant characteristics, it would be most appropriate now to study the English and Gujarati vowel systems from the comparative point of view. Generally speaking, no phonological inventory can claim to be more than a statement regarding a point in the temporal continuum of the history of the language where only at that point the dynamicity is made static. Yet every research linguist tends to make ambitious claims. The description of vowel sounds, especially by means of the written letters, has always been considerably difficult. Vowel was defined earlier by a Gujarati phonologist as the sound that can be produced without taking the help of any other sounds.¹ R.K.Bansal defines the vowel thus:

“In the production of vowels the air from the lungs comes out in a continuous stream through the mouth, and the vocal cords vibrate to produce ‘voice’. There is no closure of the air passage and no narrowing that would cause friction”²

Cruttenden elaborates saying that certain position and gross movements of the tongue can be felt, if the vowel is pronounced with awareness. For instance, when most of the vowel sounds are pronounced,
the tip of the tongue lies behind the lower teeth. In comparing two such vowels /i:/ (key) and /α:/ (car), it is felt that, the front of the tongue is the part which is mainly raised, whereas in the case of the latter, such raising is accomplished by the back part of the tongue. Therefore, it can be stated in articulatory terms that some vowel sounds require the raising of the front of the tongue, while others are articulated with a typical ‘hump’ at the back; and these statements can be confirmed by means of x-ray photography. But the actual point and degree of rising is more difficult to judge.3

The best-known discussion of the vowel – consonant distinction is by Pike (1943: 66-79). He suggests that we should use new terms: sounds that do not obstruct the airflow (traditionally called ‘vowels’) should be called ‘vocoid’, and sounds that do obstruct the airflow (traditionally called ‘consonants’) should be called ‘contoids’.4 This leaves the terms “vowel” and “consonant” for use in labeling phonological elements according to their distribution and their role in syllable structure. It suggests vowels are usually vocoid and consonants are usually contoid. This is not always the case: for example, j in ‘yet’ and w in ‘wet’ are (phonetically) vocoid but function (phonologically) as consonants. O’Connor and Trim (1953) minutely describe the distributional differences between vowels and consonants while a brief discussion is found in Cruttenden (1994) in English. On the other hand, in Gujarati, Pandit, Dave, Modi, Babu Suthar and Mistry outlined the vowels and consonants with different shades. The classification of vowels has a large literature: Ladefoged, Jones and Abercrombie in English and Dr. Kantilal Vyas, Bharati Modi, Yogendra Vyas in Gujarati did good work. The Handbook
of the International Phonetic Association (1999: Section 2.6) explains the IPA's principles of vowel classification.\(^5\) For the accurate way of classifying vowels, ‘cardinal vowels' system has been adopted by philologists. These cardinal vowels are a standard reference system, and people being trained in phonetics at an advanced level have to learn them accurately and recognize them correctly. If you learn the cardinal vowels, you are not learning to make English sounds, but you are learning about the range of vowels that the human vocal apparatus can make, and also learning a useful way of describing, classifying and comparing vowels.

The cardinal vowel system was invented and developed by Daniel Jones who was Professor of Phonetics at University College London from 1921 to 1947. The system was first used in print in the first edition of Jones's English Pronouncing Dictionary. The following figure helps to understand the place and the manner of the articulation of the cardinal vowels explicitly.

![Cardinal vowels diagram]

The philologists have therefore described three ways to arrive at accuracy during the articulation of vowel sounds:
1) The position of the soft palate is raised for oral vowels and lowered for nasalized vowels
2) The kind of aperture formed by lips - degrees of spreading or rounding
3) The part of tongue which is raised and the degree of its rising

2.2 British R. P.:

British Received Pronunciation (British R. P.) has in all 20 vowels; 12 distinctive pure vowels or monophthongs and 8 diphthongs or gliding vowels.

They are:

2.2.1 Pure Vowels:

1) /i:/ as in reach
2) /ɪ/ as in win
3) /e/ as in pen
4) /æ/ as in bat
5) /ʌ/ as in luck
6) /ɑː:/ as in last
7) /ɒ/ as in box
8) /ɔː:/ as in purse
9) /ə/ as in banana
10) /oː/ as in all
11) /u/ as in book
12) /uː/ as in zoo
Diphthongs:

1) /eɪ/ as in late
2) /aɪ/ as in white
3) /ɔɪ/ as in boy
4) /əu/ as in close
5) /au/ as in now
6) /ɪə/ as in really
7) /eə/ as in hair
8) /uə/ as in poor

2.3 General Indian English:

Corresponding to the twenty-vowel system of British R.P., General Indian English stated by R. K. Bansal has a system of 11 pure vowels and 6 vowel glides (diphthongs).\(^6\) They are:

2.3.1 Pure Vowels

1) /i:/ as in these
2) /ɪ/ as in bit
3) /e:/ as in gate
4) /ɛ/ as in bed
5) /æ/ as in bad
6) /a:/ as in card
7) /ɒ/ as in hot, all, horse
8) / o:/ as in home
    / o:/ as in force

9) / u / as in book

10) / u:/ as in rule
    / u:/ as in tube

11) / ɵ / as in bird
    / ɵ / as in bus
    / ɵ / as in account

Vowel Glides:

1) / aɪ / as in bite

2) / ɔɪ / as in boil

3) / au / as in house

4) / ɪɵ / as in cheer

5) / ee / as in air

6) / uɵ / as in poor

2.3.2 Major differences between the vowel systems of British R. P. and Indian English:

The major differences between the vowel systems of British R. P. and Indian English are stated by Dr. R. K. Bansal as follows:  

i. Indian English has only one phoneme / ə / corresponding to British R.P. / ʌ /, / ɔ: / and / ə /.
ii. Indian English has one phoneme /ɒ/ corresponding to British R.P. /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/.

iii. Indian English has monophthongs /e:/ and /o:/ in place of British R.P. diphthongs /ei/ and /æu/.

iv. The qualities of some of the Indian English vowels are different from those in British R.P.

v. The distribution of vowels in Indian English sometimes differs from that in British R.P. For example, in British R.P generally a weak vowel /ə/, /ɪ/ or /u/ is used in an unaccented syllable. This is not the case in Indian English, where the tendency is to see the vowel indicated by the spelling.

2.4 Gujarati Vowel System:

The preceding paragraphs state the distinctions between the vowel systems of British R.P. and General Indian English. Keeping these features in mind the vowel system of Gujarati phonology is stated here. Gujarati phonology as such does not have any serious and thorough consideration on standardization. In fact, every philologist has given different views on this issue. However, it has been commonly accepted that Gujarati phonology has eight (8) pure vowels and six (6) diphthongs. The eight pure vowels are as follows: /æ/, /ɑ/, /ɪ/, /u/, /e/, /æ/, /o/, /ɔ/. The six diphthongs are as follows: /ai/, /oi/, /au/, /ui/, /ei/, /əu/.

The table given below shows the description of vowels in Gujarati phonology that has been given by Jayant Kothari: (note that the table contains only six vowels) 8
Dr. Bharati Modi specifically mentions that there are two belts or say dialects in Gujarat: tight phonation dialect area and another of murmured dialect area. The area of Bhavnagar and Rajkot and from Ahmedabad to Baroda and up to South Gujarat produces eight vowels while area of south Gujarat nearing to Mumbai and of Jamnagar(Halar) produces six vowels.⁹

![Diagram showing divisions of vowel areas](image)

(Figure of approximate divisions of six/eight vowel areas)

Similarly, Babu Suthar has clearly identified eight vowels in his latest Gujarati-English Learner’s Dictionary as follows:¹⁰
Front Vowels of English and Gujarati:

The preceding discussion of English and Gujarati vowel systems indicate certain clear distinctions at the very first glance. British R. P. contains four front vowels: /i:, ɪ, e, æ/ while Gujarati phonology accepts, most commonly, four vowels: /i, e, ɛ, a/. Some philologists accept only two front vowels: /i, ɛ/. /ɛ/ is not accepted by these scholars while /a/ is articulated at the back position. Such controversies will be discussed in detail at a later stage. An attempt shall now be made to study and describe each vowel from a comparative perspective:

2.5.1 /i/

British R.P. consists of two varieties of the cardinal vowel: /i:/ and /ɪ/. They have been described as:

/i:/

“The front of the tongue is raised to a height slightly below and behind the front close position; the lips are spread; the tongue is tense, with the side rims making a firm contact with the upper molars.”11
/ɪ/:

“The short R.P. vowel /ɪ/ is pronounced with a part of the tongue nearer to center than to front, raised just above the close-mid position; the lips are loosely spread; the tongue is lax (compared with the tension for /i:/), with the side rims making a light contact with the upper molars.”

![Diagram of vowel articulation]

The following figure shows the exact articulation of both the vowels:

Gujarati phonology has only one phoneme /i/ against British R. P. /i:/ and /ɪ/. It is also observed in the dissertation of M. Phil (by the researcher) from the studying the recorded speeches of the representative speakers of the five different cities of Saurashtra that people of Saurashtra tend to produce the vowel /i/ instead of British R.P vowel /i:/ and /ɪ/. i.e. they do not distinguish between long /i:/ and short /ɪ/ even in their speeches. For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Word</th>
<th>Pronounced According to British R.P.</th>
<th>Pronounced by people of Saurashtra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reach</td>
<td>/riːf/</td>
<td>/riːf/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win</td>
<td>/wɪn/</td>
<td>/vɪn/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Gujarati phonology, /i/ is produced with the back part of the tongue raised towards the upper molars. The lips are loosely (slightly) spread; without having more movement that is found in pronouncing British R.P. /i:/.

Moreover, this /i/ is not in the close and front position like the British R.P. /i:/ and not even near the center like the short British R.P. /ɪ/ but it is in between; front and center (slightly near to front) and close and half close position.

This, of course does not mean that the people of Gujarat cannot produce /i:/ . They do articulate it but only when they speak specifically and intentionally. In their habits, vowel /i:/ remains absent and only /i/ as described above, is pronounced in most cases.

2.5.2 [e] and [æ]:

These are the most discussed vowels in the area of phonology. British R.P. possesses two varieties of the second and third vowels: /e/ and /æ/. Cruttendon describes them in Gimson’s Pronunciations of English as follows:
/e/:

“For the short R.P. /e/, the front of the tongue is raised between the close-mid and open-mid positions; the lips are loosely spread and are slightly wider apart than for /ɪ/; the tongue may have more tension than in the case of /ɪ/, the side rims making a light contact with the upper molars”\(^{13}\)

/æ/:

“The mouth is slightly more open than for /e/; the front of the tongue is raised to a position midway between open and mid-open, with the side rims making a contact with back upper molars; the lips are neutrally open.”\(^{14}\)

The following figure shows the articulation of both the vowels explicitly.

![Figure showing articulation of /e/ and /æ/](image)

(British R.P. /e/ and /æ/)

According to Bansal General Indian English contains three variations of the second cardinal vowel i.e. vowels like /eː/, /æ/ and /ɛ/. They differ from British R.P. /e/ and /æ/. Indian English /eː/, /æ/ and /ɛ/ are described respectively as follows:
/ e:/:

“In Indian English this vowel is a monophthong / e:/ - a centralized front, nearly half-close vowel. In British R.P. it is a diphthong / eɪ/, beginning slightly below the half-close position and moving towards R.P. The lips are spread.\textsuperscript{15}

/ æ /:

“The quality of this vowel in Indian English is more open than in British R.P. In either case, the front of the tongue is raised to a position between half-close and half-open. The lips are loosely spread.”\textsuperscript{16}

/ ɛ /:

“For this vowel the front of the tongue is slight below the half open position and lips are in the neutral position”\textsuperscript{17}

In this context, Gujarati phonology also describes / e / and / ɛ /. Only / e / is produced and used, while the vowel / ɛ / is mostly avoided in pronunciation.

In Gujarati phonology, Jayant Kothari accepts vowels like / e / and / æ / as the lower front vowels. They are described as similar as in British R.P., even though the people of Gujarat tend to pronounce only one vowel / e / in their daily English as well as Gujarati speech habits. R. Turner observes that before palatal consonants / e / is normally shifted to / æ /. Prabodh Pandit has described / e / and / æ / as middle phonemes.\textsuperscript{18} Babu Sutar and Bharati Modi prefer / e / as close-mid vowel and / ɛ / as the open-mid vowel.
For this vowel / e /, the front of tongue is raised towards the upper molars and takes position between half close and half open position, though comparatively near to half close position. Lips are loosely spread.

The back vowel / æ / or say / ɛ /, though accepted and found in Gujarati phonological books, mostly remains absent in speech. In the study, it is observed that in daily Gujarati speeches of people of Saurashtra / æ / is not normally heard. Only in conferences and workshops of scholars, / æ / may sometimes be used with proper consciousness. For example in the following recorded words Saurashtrians do not pronounce / e / and / æ / with distinction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Word</th>
<th>Pronounced According to British R.P.</th>
<th>Pronounced by Saurashtrians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pen</td>
<td>/ pen /</td>
<td>/ pen /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bat</td>
<td>/ bæt /</td>
<td>/ bet /</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6 Central Vowels:

Here British R. P. gives three distinctive phonemes in comparison to the one phoneme in Gujarati phonology (upholding the centre position). In British R.P. /ə/, /ɔː/ and /ʌ/ are separate phonemes while Indian English has only one phoneme /ə/, realized as [ə] and [ʌ], the two being used indiscriminately. They are described respectively as:

/ʌ/:

“The short R.P. /ʌ/ is articulated with a considerable separation of the jaws and with the lips neutrally open; the center of the tongue (or a part slightly in advance of center) is raised just above the fully open position, no contact being made between the tongue and the upper molars.”

/ɔː/:

“R.P. /ɔː/ is articulated with the center of the tongue raised between close mid and open-mid, no firm contact being made between the tongue and upper molars: the lips are neutrally spread.”

/ə/:

“/ə/ has a very high frequency of occurrence in unaccented syllables. Its quality is that of a central vowel with neutral lip position, having in non-final positions a tongue-raising between open-mid and close-mid.”
Similarly, it has been observed that Gujarati phonology accepts only one phoneme /ə/ instead of /æ/, /ʌ/ and /ɜː/. The vowel /ʌ/ is mostly pronounced in accented syllables, while Gujaratis are not habituated to give that much accent on any syllable.

British R.P. /ɜː/ is shifted to /ər/ by them as it also happens in General Indian English. Dr. Bhayani has considered /ə/ as the weakest vowel of Gujarati phonology. It is studied that Saurashtra is do not have this habit of making the pronunciation of /r/ silent, if it is not followed by a vowel. They do pronounce /r/ and the length of /ɜː/ is naturally shortened. Therefore, the production of the phoneme /ɜː/ is mostly not heard. /ə/ is articulated in Gujarati phonology as in the following figure.
For example in the following recorded words, Saurashtrians do not pronounce /
∧ /, / ә: / and / ә / with distinction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Word</th>
<th>Pronounced According to British R.P.</th>
<th>Pronounced by Saurashtrians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>/ l∧k /</td>
<td>/ lәk /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purse</td>
<td>/p3:s /</td>
<td>/ pәrs /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About</td>
<td>/ әbaut /</td>
<td>/ әbaut /</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/ ә / is a central vowel with neutral lip position in Gujarati phonology.

2.7 Back Vowels:

In comparison to four cardinal vowels in the back position: [α, ɔ, ɔ, u], British R. P. has five back-vowels /α:, ɔ, ɔ:, u, u:/ while Gujarati phonology contains three back vowels / a, ɔ, u /. A detailed discussion of every vowel is described as follows:
2.7.1 [ə]:

The phoneme /ə/ is described in British R.P. as a long vowel:

/ə/:

"/ə/ articulated with a considerable separation of the jaws and the lips neutrally open; a part of the tongue between the center and the back is in the fully open position, no contact being made between the rims of the tongue and the upper molars."\textsuperscript{23}

Corresponding to this one, the quality of the vowel in Indian English is somewhat centralized compared to the R.P. vowel, which is back and fully open. It is symbolized as /a:/\textsuperscript{24}

The phoneme /a:/ is not produced as long as in Gujarati phonology. The jaws do not open so wide as in British R.P. i.e., Gujarati /a/ is comparatively a shorter vowel than British R.P.. In British R.P., it is a long vowel and centralized as it is in Indian English and the lips are neutrally open.
Jayant Kothari places /a/ as the center lower-vowel, while Babu Suthar has articulated this vowel as a front-open. For example in the following recorded words Saurashtra’s do not pronounce /a:/ and /a:/ but /a/ with a distinctive clarity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Word</th>
<th>Pronounced According to British R.P.</th>
<th>Pronounced by Saurashtra’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last</td>
<td>/lɑːst/</td>
<td>/last/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7.2 [ɔ] and [o]:

In comparison to the cardinal vowels six and seven, British R.P produces /ɔ/ and /ɔ:/ distinctively. /ɔ/ and /ɔ:/ are separately described in British R.P. as:

/ɔ/:

“This vowel is articulated with wide open jaws and slight, open lip-rounding; the back of the tongue is in the fully
open position, no contact being made between the tongue and the upper molars.\textsuperscript{25}

/ o: /

“This relatively long RP vowel is articulated with medium lip-rounding; the back of the tongue is raised between the open mid and close-mid positions, no contact being made between the tongue and the upper molars.”\textsuperscript{26}

The difference of their articulation is depicted in the following figure:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure.png}
\end{center}

( British R. P. vowel / o / and / o: /)

They are also separately accepted in Gujarati phonology as / o / and / o / by Babu Suthar (see table on page no.10), while Jayant Kothari accepts only one phoneme as / o / (see table on page no. 09). Suthar articulates / o / as the back- open mid vowel. Kothari describes this vowel as the back- lower. It would also be wrong to say that there is no distinction at all between / o / and / o: / in the English speech habits of the people of Saurashtra. Nevertheless, it is observed that differences have been noticed in a few cases. Without being conscious, they do not produce both the vowels
distinctly. In routine course they produce /ɔ:/ with /o/ or with /ɔr/. Again, the distinction between /ɔ/ and /ɔ:/ is not observed in Indian English: [ɔ:], /ɔr/ or /ɔr/ is often being used in place of /ɔ:/.

Thus, for Gujarati phonology /ɔ/ is a back vowel, slightly raised as in Indian English and the lips are rounded. The length is short corresponding o the vowel /ɔ:/ /ɔ:. It is articulated as in the following figure:

(Gujarati phonology vowel /ɔ/)

For example in the following recorded words Saurashtrians do not pronounce /a/ and /ɔ:/ with distinction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The</th>
<th>Pronounced</th>
<th>Pronounced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>According to British R.P.</td>
<td>by Saurashtrians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td>/boks/</td>
<td>/boks/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>/ɔːl/</td>
<td>/ɔl/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.7.3 /u/

/u/ and /u:/ are articulated separately in British R.P. and also in Indian English. Nevertheless, such distinctions cannot be found in Gujarati phonology. They produce only /u/ and even replace /u:/ by /u:/.

British R.P. describes /u/ and /u:/ as follows:

/u/:

“The short R.P. vowel /u/ is pronounced with a part of the tongue nearer to center than to back raised just above the close-mid position; it has, therefore, a symmetrical back relationship with the front vowel /i/; the tongue is laxly held (compared with the tenser /u:/), no firm contact being made between the tongue and the upper molars. The lips are closely but loosely rounded.”

/u:/:

“RP long /u:/ is a close back vowel, but the tongue-raising is relaxed from the closest position and is somewhat centralized from true back; its relationship with /u/ is similar to that between /i:/ and /i/, the articulation of /u:/ being tense compared with that of /u/ though no firm contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The lips tend to be closely rounded.”

(British R.P. vowel /u/ and /u:/)
Gujarati phonology produces only one phoneme /u/ that is articulated nearer to the close position but not like British R. P. /u:/ . It is placed as the back vowel as /i/ is placed at the front. It is produced at the back part. No firm contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The lips are closely but loosely rounded and not tense as it is in British R.P. /u:/ . The following figure shows its clear placement.

For example in the following recorded words the people of Saurashtra do not pronounce /u/ and /u:/ with distinction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Word</th>
<th>Pronounced According to British R.P.</th>
<th>Pronounced by Saurashtrians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>/buk/</td>
<td>/buk/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo</td>
<td>/zu:/</td>
<td>/zu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8 Diphthongs

Diphthongs are vowel glides within a syllable. In the British R.P. during articulation of the diphthongs, much of the length and stress is given to the first element. One of the most common pronunciation mistakes that result in a learner of English having a “foreign” accent is the production of pure vowels where a diphthong should be pronounced. British R.P has eight diphthongs. R. K. Bansal accepts six diphthongs in his book Spoken English in India. Kantilal Vyas accepts six diphthongs in Gujarati phonology. Though six diphthongs are mentioned in Gujarati phonology, they are not habituated to pronounce most of them in their speech. They do produce the first vowel clearly but when they glide from the first to the second one, the tongue slips from these vowels to semi-vowels like / ј / or / w / or change the diphthongs to the monophthongs.

2.8.1 /ı/ Ended Diphthongs:

There are three /ı/ ended diphthongs - /eı/, /aı/, and /ɔı/ in British R.P. They are described respectively as follows:

/ eı /:

“The glide begins from slightly below the close-mid front position and moves in the direction of R.P. /ı/, there being a slight closing movement of the lower jaw; the lips are spread.”

30
/æɪ/: 

“The glide of RP /æɪ/ begins at a point slightly behind the front open position, i.e.[ ə ], and moves in the direction of the position associated with RP /ɪ/, although the tongue is not usually raised to a level closer than [ ɐ ] the glide is much more extensive than that of /eɪ/, the closing movement of the lower jaw being obvious. ... The lips change from a neutral to a loosely spread position.”

(British R.P. diphthong /æɪ/)
"For R.P. /ɔɪ/, the tongue glide begins at a point between the open-mid and open back position and moves in the direction of /ɪ/. ...the tongue movement extends from back to centralized front, but the range of closing in the glide is not as great as for /ɑɪ/; the jaw movement, though considerable, may not, therefore, be as marked as in the case of /ɑɪ/. The lips are open rounded for the first element, changing to neutral for the second."\(^{32}\)

(British R.P. diphthong /ɔɪ/)

These three /ɪ/ ended British R.P. diphthongs are not properly produced in Gujarati phonology. Instead of /eɪ/, /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/, they are pronounced as /ej/, /aj/ and /ɔj/. This happens because they are not habituated to pronounce diphthongs [/eɪ/, /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/] mostly even when they speak colloquial Gujarati. In Gujarati speech, they also replace the second vowel with a semi-vowel. The second vowel of the diphthongs /ɪ/ cannot be produced properly by them. Again as in the diphthong the first vowel is always a longer one and the second one is shorter, the shorter vowel /i/ is here shifted to the semi vowel /j/. This shift is observed in almost all the
recorded speeches of the people of Saurashtra. For instance, in the table given below the words ‘Late’, ‘White’ and ‘boy’ demonstrate the difference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Word</th>
<th>Pronounced According to British R.P.</th>
<th>Pronounced by Saurashtraans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
<td>/ lejt /</td>
<td>/ lejt /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>/ wajt /</td>
<td>/ wajt /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>/ bøj /</td>
<td>/ bøj /</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.8.2 /u/ Ended Diphthongs:

There are two /u/ ended diphthongs in British R.P. /au/ and /әu/; while in Indian English, monophthong /o:/ is used in the place of the diphthong /әu/.

These two diphthongs have been described as follows:

/au/:

“The glide of R. P. /au/ begins at a point between the back and front open positions, slightly more fronted than the position for R.P. /ә:/ and moves in the direction of /u/ and the lips change from a neutrally open to a weakly rounded position.”

(British R.P. diphthong /au/)
/ eu /:

“Close-mid and open-mid, and moves in the direction of R.P. / u /, there being a slight closing movement of the lower jaw; the lips are neutral for the glide of R.P. / eu / begins at a central position, between the first element, but has a tendency to round on the second element.”³⁵

(British R.P. diphthong / eu /)

In Gujarati phonology, the diphthong / eu / is not pronounced properly. Instead of / eu /, they pronounce / o / but not / o: / as it is mentioned in Indian English. As for instance, the word ‘close’ should be pronounced / klæuz / according to British R.P. It is pronounced as / kloːz / or may be in certain cases as / kloːz /.

Another diphthong / au / is clearly mentioned and pronounced in Gujarati phonology, when it occurs in the middle of the word. If it occurs at the final position, the second vowel / u / is shifted to semi-vowel / v /. Therefore, instead of / au /, they pronounce / av /, when it occurs in the final position. In the following table, the recorded words of the people of Saurashtra make it clear:
The word | Pronounced According to British R.P. | Pronounced by Saurashtrians
---|---|---
Now | / nau / | / nəu /
about | / əbaut / | / əbaut /

### 2.8.3 / ə / ending diphthongs:

/ ə / ending diphthongs / ɪə /, / ɛə / and / ʊə / are in British R.P. and also in Indian English with one change in diphthongs where / ɛə / is articulated as / əə /. They are described as follows:

/ ɪə/:

“The glide of RP / ɪə / begins with a tongue position approximately the same as that used for / ɪ /, i.e. close-mid and centralized from front, and moves in the direction of the more open variety of / ə /... the lips are neutral throughout, with a slight movement from spread to open.”

(British R.P. diphthong / ɪə /)
"The glide of RP / əɛ / begins in the open-mid front position and moves in the direction of the more open variety of / ə / ...The lips are neutrally open throughout."\(^37\)

(British R.P. diphthong / əɛ /)

"RP / əu / glides from a tongue position similar to that used for / u / towards the more open type of / ə /... The lips are weakly rounded at the beginning of the glide, becoming neutrally spread as the glide progresses."\(^38\)

(British R.P. diphthong / əu /)
These three diphthongs /ɪə/, /ɛə/ and /uə/ are shortened and turned into monophthongs in Gujarati phonology. Furthermore, the /ɪə/ diphthong is in most cases shifted to /ɪj/; the second vowel /ə/ of the diphthongs is replaced by the semi-vowel /j/. Therefore, the diphthong /ɪə/ is not produced (pronounced) properly by them.

It is observed that in the most of the cases the diphthong /ɛə/ is made short and turned into a monophthong. The second vowel /ə/ of the diphthong is not at all pronounced, so there remains only the vowel /ɛ/.

Further with regard to the British R.P. diphthong /uə/, it is observed that in a number of speeches, the diphthong can be heard properly. But in very few cases it is also seen that some speakers of Saurashtra make it shorter and pronounce only the monophthong /u/.

It is also observed earlier in this dissertation that the vowel /ə/ known as schwa is the shortest and the weakest vowel in Gujarati phonology (Harivallabh Bhayani). That is why as a second vowel /ə/ of the diphthong may not be produced or it can also be assumed that this weak vowel is neglected during daily speech habits in these three /ə/ ended diphthongs.
The following table clarifies the matter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Word</th>
<th>Pronounced According to British R.P.</th>
<th>Pronounced by people of Saurashtra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Really</td>
<td>/ rәәl /</td>
<td>/ rәәl /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>/ h еә /</td>
<td>/ her /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>/ reәl /</td>
<td>/ reәl /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>/ puә /</td>
<td>/ puә /</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.9 Triphthongs:

The most complex sounds of the vowel type are the triphthongs. They are found and produced in English frequently. No doubt they can be rather difficult to pronounce, and even difficult to recognize. A triphthong is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption. For example, a careful pronunciation of the word ‘hour’ begins with a vowel quality similar to / ә:/ that goes on to a glide towards the back close rounded area ( for which the special symbol is used / ә / ), and then ends with a mid-central vowel (schwa, / ә /). / aәә / is the symbol to represent the way ‘hour’ is pronounced, but Peter Roach says that this is not always an accurate representation of the pronunciation. 39

The triphthongs can be looked on as being composed of the five closing diphthongs described in the last section, with / ә / added on the end. They are as follows: 40
1. /ei/ + /e/ = /eiə/
2. /ai/ + /e/ = /aiə/
3. /iɛ/ + /e/ = /iɛə/
4. /εø/ + /e/ = /εøə/
5. /αo/ + /e/ = /αoə/

No philologist up to now in Gujarati phonology has noted the production of the triphthong. The people of Gujarat are not habituated to produce long vowels. That is to say, there is no system of triphthongs in Gujarati phonology. This is the case not only in Gujarati phonology but also in even all other foreign speakers find the same problem. Peter Roach notes here:

“The principal cause of difficulty for the foreign learner is that in present-day English the extent of the vowel movement is very small, except in very careful pronunciation. Because of this, the middle of the three vowel qualities of the triphthong (that is, the /ɪ / or /u /) part can hardly be heard and the resulting sound is difficult to distinguish from some of the diphthongs and long vowels. To add to the difficulty, there is also the problem of whether a triphthong is felt to contain one or two syllables.”

Words such as ‘fire’ /faɪə/ or ‘hour’ /auə/ are probably felt by most English speakers to consist of only one syllable, whereas ‘player’ /pleɪə/ or ‘slower’ /slɛə/ are more likely to be heard as two syllables. In this context,
the people of Gujarat are also not habituated to make / r / silent if not followed by vowel. That is why the triphthong is not produced in Gujarati phonology.

Briefly speaking, Gujarati phonology produces six monophthongs, two diphthongs and no triphthongs in comparison to twelve monophthongs, eight diphthongs and five triphthongs of British R.P. As a whole, it can be said that the people of Gujarat are not habituated to produce the long vowels.
References:


7. Ibid, p.17


10. Suthar, B. *Gujarati – English Learners’ Dictionary*: Second Draft, (Philadelphia: A Nirman Foundation Project, Department of South Asia Studies, University of Pennsylvania) p. 8

12. Ibid, p. 99
13. Ibid, p. 101
14. Ibid, p. 103
17. Ibid, p. 25
21. Ibid, p. 116
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23. Ibid, p. 106
26. Ibid, p. 114
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30. Ibid, p. 120
31. Ibid, p. 122
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35. Ibid, p. 125
36. Ibid, p. 131
37. Ibid, p. 133
38. Ibid, p. 134
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41. Ibid, p. 18