Introduction
INTRODUCTION

AIM AND SCOPE

The present study aims at designing a course in Phonetics and Spoken English for ELT students in Indian Universities. The main objective is to design a comprehensive course in Phonetics and Spoken English which can take care of the Indian students specific problems in learning General and English Phonetics and Spoken English. It is therefore proposed to offer appropriate solutions by providing these students with specific information about the basic concepts of General Phonetics, English Phonetics and Spoken English. Useful diagrams and exercises are used to enhance clarity and avoid confusions. It is hoped that ELT students will find this course profusely meaningful.

Various works and researches have been carried out by several researchers, but no systematic and detailed study of the Phonetics and Spoken English has yet been attempted and a study of the problems faced by ELT students, while learning General and English Phonetics and Spoken English, has so far been completely neglected. Previous studies on Phonetics and Spoken English reveal that both the aspects were dealt with individually in those studies. The present study tries to combine these two aspects with General Phonetics because these aspects are
interrelated. Earlier some studies were undertaken in this field by English and American theorists but Indian learners find it difficulties to comprehend most of the studies because they come to the English classroom with a background of different Indian languages as their mother tongue. Hence, this work is a rather simplified version without any change in the concepts. The purpose is to help the Indian learners grasp the basic notions, theories and principles offered by native English speaking writers of General/English Phonetics and Spoken English text-books. At this point, the question arises: why do Indian learners need to learn English Phonetics or Spoken English.

Today English is the only language which is spoken all over the world and in India it is used as a second language. Its main function is communication. It is also used as the associate official language of the Union, as a link language among educated people, when they don’t share a common Indian language or when they find English more suitable for their purpose and as the language of administration and higher education. Students, seeking employment after graduation, often find themselves unable to make their presence felt and succeed in times of cut-throat competition because of their poor communication skills. Therefore, this course is designed to serve those students who want to improve their pronunciation and English speech. This
course will definitely help these learners improve their speaking skill which is required for their future career along with their present academic life.

**METHOD AND APPROACH ADOPTED**

Any utterance can be approached from a general phonetic or a phonological point of view. The general phonetic approach identifies and describes the elements of an utterance in relation to general human phonetic resources without any reference to a particular language. The phonological approach, on the other hand, brings out the "pattern forming capabilities of the elements of utterance as used in a particular language, rather than place them in relation to general human phonetic resources". Phonetics and phonology complement each other as the one deals with 'form' and analyses sounds as physical entities without knowing to which language they belong while the other deals with 'function' and describes these sounds in terms of similarities and dissimilarities which are functional in a particular language, i.e. relevant for the purpose of communication.

Most of the phonological approaches are based on phonemics. But the approach adopted in the present study for the phonological analysis is phonemic and phonetic. The minimal distinctive sound units are segmental phonemes. These phonemes
can be analysed by phonemic approach. In English there are some of the fine/minute distinctions which can be analysed phonetically. Several of suprasegmental features of prosodic analysis - e.g., aspiration, retroflexion, valorisation, etc. are analysed as belonging to segments rather than higher units. However, stress, rhythm and intonation are treated as prosodic or suprasegmental rather than phonemic entities and thus stress, rhythm and intonation are analysed as units higher than segments.

The idea behind choosing these approaches is that only phonemic analysis is not sufficient to analyse English sound system. Phonemic analysis can analyse only the basic phoneme segments. But it left the fine distinctions which can only be analysed with the help of phonetic approach.

Descriptive approach is used for the present study. Everything is described in a systematic manner. No new hypothesis has been made, only the existing theories and materials have been described. The researcher only concentrates on the existing syllabi followed in Indian Universities. The researcher studied the syllabi of English language courses of various universities and institutes in India to find out that ELT courses at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels. She
discovered that M.A. (ELT) and B.A. (Communicative English) main courses are available only at Aligarh Muslim University so far. M.A. (ELT) is also a two year full time course offered by H.M. Patel Institute of English Training and Research, Vallabh Vidya Nagar, Gujarat. Other universities have ELT courses as optional subjects at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

MODEL SELECTED

Received Pronunciation of England (R.P.) is chosen as a reference point in this study for various reasons. It is highly sophisticated, widely understood all over the world, vastly discussed and adequately described, well documented and a neutral accentless form of English. Abercrombie calls R.P. a non-regional and accentless form of ‘Standard English’ within England, which he defines as “that kind of English which is the official language of the entire English speaking world, and is also the language of all educated English speaking people”. Standard descriptions, dictionaries and teaching materials of R.P. are easily available.

SOURCES

Materials are extracted from the following sources:


PLAN OF STUDY

The investigation of the study is divided into three parts and organised under the following chapters:

Chapter 1 deals with definitions.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the production of speech sounds. How the speech sounds are produced and what are the important organs of speech. The organs of speech, and their speech functions, can be described under three systems: the respiratory system, the phonatory system and the articulatory system. Chapter 3 deals with the analysis of speech sounds. Speech sounds can be analysed with the help of syllable. Syllable is the concept of a unit at a higher level than that of the sound segment. It can be divided with the help of vowel and consonant and after the division of syllable the structure would be CVC. Chapter 4 describes segmentation of General Phonetics. This chapter describes place and manner of articulation and naming of vowels and consonants. Chapter 5 describes structure and system. Phonology is the study of sounds and patterns in a particular language. Each language uses only a limited number of speech sounds that human beings can produce. These sounds are then organized into characteristic patterns. They are grouped into significant sound units which are arranged in structures
and systems. Chapter 6 deals with voice quality and voice dynamics. Non-segmental components of the medium fall into two groups, one of them, consisting of the components which contribute to the general quality of the components, is voice quality. The other consisting of components which arise out of the way the voice is handled is voice dynamics. Chapter 7 deals with the notation. Notation describes International Phonetic symbols, transcription and non-segmental symbols. Chapter 8 is assimilation. Assimilation is defined as the process of replacing a sound by another sound under the influence of a third sound which is near to it in the word or sentence. It is of two kinds, (i) Historical assimilation, (2) Juxtapositional or contextual assimilation. Chapter 9 describes and classifies English speech sounds. This chapter gives the full description and classification of English speech sounds with allophonic variants. Chapter 10 explains the word stress and connected speech. It describes accent, prominence, word stress pattern, elision, Intonation, quality, quantity, neutralisation of weak forms, liaison and juncture. Chapter 11 suggests some measures to improve their proficiency in English at national and international level. Part III is designed to provide some exercises for practice. These exercises will be very meaningful and useful for those students who want to improve their pronunciation and English speech. It is hoped
that this study would be profusely beneficial for the students of ELT. The materials and methods for learning English the teachers and students of English in Indian colleges and universities offered in the thesis will be immensely useful for the English teachers, students, course designers, research scholars and language institutes. If used in the desired manner, these materials will definitely improve the spoken English with fluency, mutual intelligibility and social acceptability with normal appropriacy at the national and international levels. The aim is to improve the communication ability of these learners in India which will hopefully be achieved by proper use of the materials provided in the thesis in the suggested manner.