SOME ASPECTS OF THE PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF ENGLISH SPOKEN BY SCHOOL-AGE INDIANS IN HONG KONG

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ABSTRACT

Most Indian youngsters born in Hong Kong are multilingual, being able to speak Cantonese, English and maybe an Indian language (depending on the place of origin of their parents). It is believed that they do have their own variety of spoken English with some unique phonological features. This study aims at providing a linguistic description of the English as spoken by some school-age Indians in Hong Kong (HKInE). An assumption has been made of the vowels, consonants and syllable inventory in order to facilitate analysis of the language being described. The phonological processes of HKInE are analysed using phonological rules and underlying representations. The approach adopted is based on Mohanan (1992) who described a non-native variety of English on its own terms without making reference to any native variety.

Eight school-age Indians who were born in Hong Kong were chosen for this study. The speech of the informants was collected through various activities such as discussions and free talks. Various phonological processes were then analysed and quantitative data were shown.

The analysis reveals that there are unique phonological features in HKInE and these could be explained on its own terms, using data internal to this variety. However, this study is purely on linguistic description and
conclusion could not be made on how HKInE is acquired and to what extent it has been influenced by other languages.
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