

Effect of secondary language learning and dialectical variations on Marathi language in Kokan region

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Abstract: This paper talks about some of the disappearing consonants in Marathi language. Marathi is a mother tongue of people of Maharashtra, but it is said that at every 12 km its accent changes in addition to that dialect also changes according to the geographic diversity. Dialect and accent doesn't have any effect on the basic framework of the consonants that means number of consonants remain the same. It is observed that because of the secondary languages being taught starting from the school level or because of the incorrect pronunciation taught or listened at the primary schooling, today's generation of students fail to pronounce typical consonants in Marathi even though their mother tongue is Marathi. Local language *Malvani* also shows a considerable effect. This work focuses at six consonants ($/p^h/$, $/f/$, $/n/$, $/\eta/$ $/\zeta/$ & $/j/$). This effect of failing to pronounce some consonants is not found in old generation who has not known any other secondary language. The difference between correct and wrong pronunciation was revealed by the spectrograms obtained using *Praat software*.

Keywords: Spectrogram, Bilabial aspirated plosive, labiodentals fricative, dental nasal, retroflex nasal, post alveolar fricative, retroflex fricative, Marathi consonants.

Introduction

Marathi is an indo-Aryan language spoken prominently by people of Maharashtra, Goa in India. The use of Marathi as an independent language is documented by to more than 2000 years [3]. Marathi belongs to class of languages that descend from *MaharashtriPrakrut* and *Apabhhransa*[4]. Language scholars distinguished 42 dialects of spoken Marathi that arrives primarily due to accent, placement and pronunciation. These dialects include *Zadiboli* (spoken in far eastern maharashtra), *Varhadi* (spoken prominently in western vidarbha), *Konkani* (spoken in entire coastal region), *Malvani* (spoken in southern coastal region which is near to Goa border), *Ahirani* (spoken in Khandesh i.e. north western Maharashtra) etc [5]. As every language is unique we are supposed to preserve its uniqueness.

As we also know communication is an important tool to spread and receive the information. Likewise, to preserve the originality of any language is also important as it is going to be carried forward from generations to generations. So it is the responsibility of every language speaker to maintain the originality of that language, by doing so we will definitely make our contribution to maintain the diversity of Indian languages. It will depend on how correctly any language or how the grammar of that language is taught at primary schooling. The study which we presented here is how the secondary language learning or lack of knowledge of grammar or the dialectical variations of the local language has affected the pronunciation of the phonemes of primary language which are slightly differ in place of articulation and in manner of articulation from the phonemes of secondary language. Sample data sets were collected from the students who have received education in Marathi as primary language and English as secondary language and from the people of age 75-80 years who are not studied any secondary languages. All these people have their local language *Malvani*.

Sample Data collection

As stated earlier sample data was collected from the students who have studied Marathi as their primary language and English as their secondary language (sample set I). Another set of data is collected from the old people of age between 75-80 years who have done their primary schooling only and are not acquainted with any secondary languages (sample set II). The words that are selected listed in table 2 containing the consonants which are to be analyzed that are listed in Table 1. Consonant $/p^h/$ (voiceless bilabial aspirated plosive) which is found in Marathi has an analog sound in English i.e. consonant $/f/$ (voiceless labiodentals fricative), which has slight difference in place and manner of articulation. Consonant $/n/$ is found in both languages as voiced dental nasal. Consonant $/\eta/$ is found in Marathi as a voiced retroflex nasal sound. Likewise sound $/j/$ is also found in both the languages as voiceless alveolar fricative. Consonant $/\zeta/$ is a unique sound in

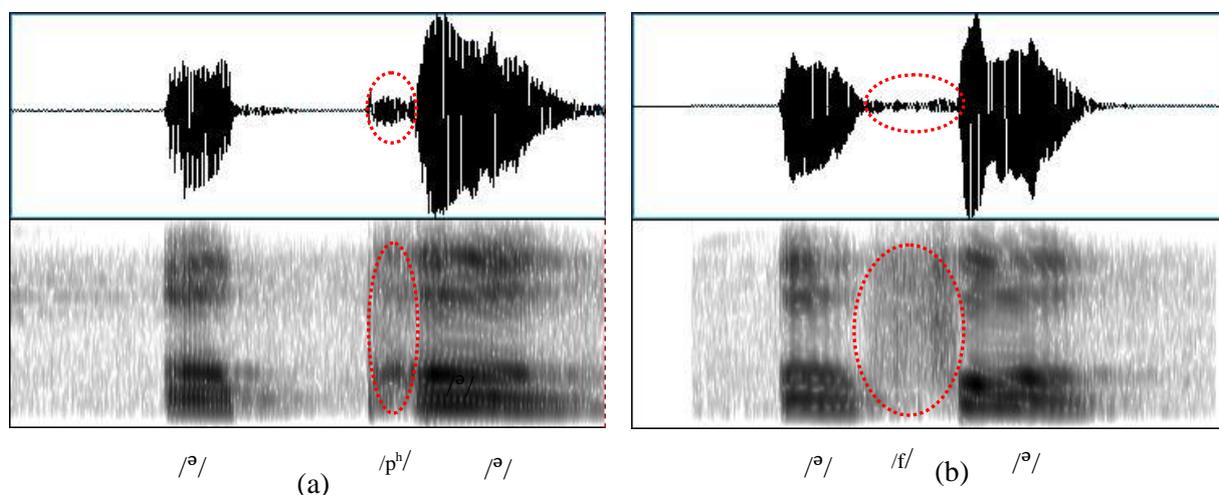
Marathi language as voiceless retroflex fricative. 20 students are selected as sample set I and 20 old age people in the range of 75 to 80 years of age are selected as sample set II. They are asked to utter the words listed in table 1, each word for three times. The data was recorded in digital sound recorder of make SONY in laboratory condition. Spectrograms obtained from Praat, of the sample sets and of standard pronunciation by PSM who has certification of the phonology and phonetics in addition to that has the voice laboratory experience of state voice analysis laboratory were analyzed.

Consonants selected	Place and manner of articulation in Marathi	Place and manner of articulation in English
/p ^h /	Voiceless bilabial aspirated plosive (ओष्ठ्य महाप्राण कठोर) ^[1]	Not found
/f/	Not found	Voiceless Labiodentals fricative ^[2]
/ŋ/	Voiced Retroflex nasal (मूर्धन्य अनुनासिक) ^[1]	Not found
/n/	Voiced Dental nasal (दन्त्यअनुनासिक) ^[1]	Voiced alveolar nasal ^[2]
/ʃ/	Voiceless post alveolar fricative (उष्मे घर्षक तालव्य) ^[1]	Voiceless Alveolar fricative ^[2]
/ʂ/	Voiceless Retroflex fricative (उष्मे घर्षक मूर्धन्य) ^[1]	Not found

Table 1: showing the selected consonants for the study

Phenomenological characteristics of spectrograms

The standard spectrograms of the consonants under study are given in fig. 1. If we consider consonant /p^h/, notable sudden release of airstream can be seen in fig 1(a). Consonant /f/ as it is a fricative, turbulent airflow is seen in fig.1(b). Sound /n/ has parallel F2 and F3 formants (fig.1(c)) and /ŋ/ shows the narrowing of F2 and F3 at the starting (fig. 1 (d)). Similarly consonant /ʃ/ has a turbulent air flow which could be observed in fig. 1 (e) in addition to that formants F2 and F3 are parallel to each other. But in case of retroflex /ʂ/ narrowing of these formants is observed (fig. 1 (f)). Considering these differences we could easily differentiate sound /p^h/ from /f/, sound /n/ from /ŋ/ and sound /ʃ/ from /ʂ/.



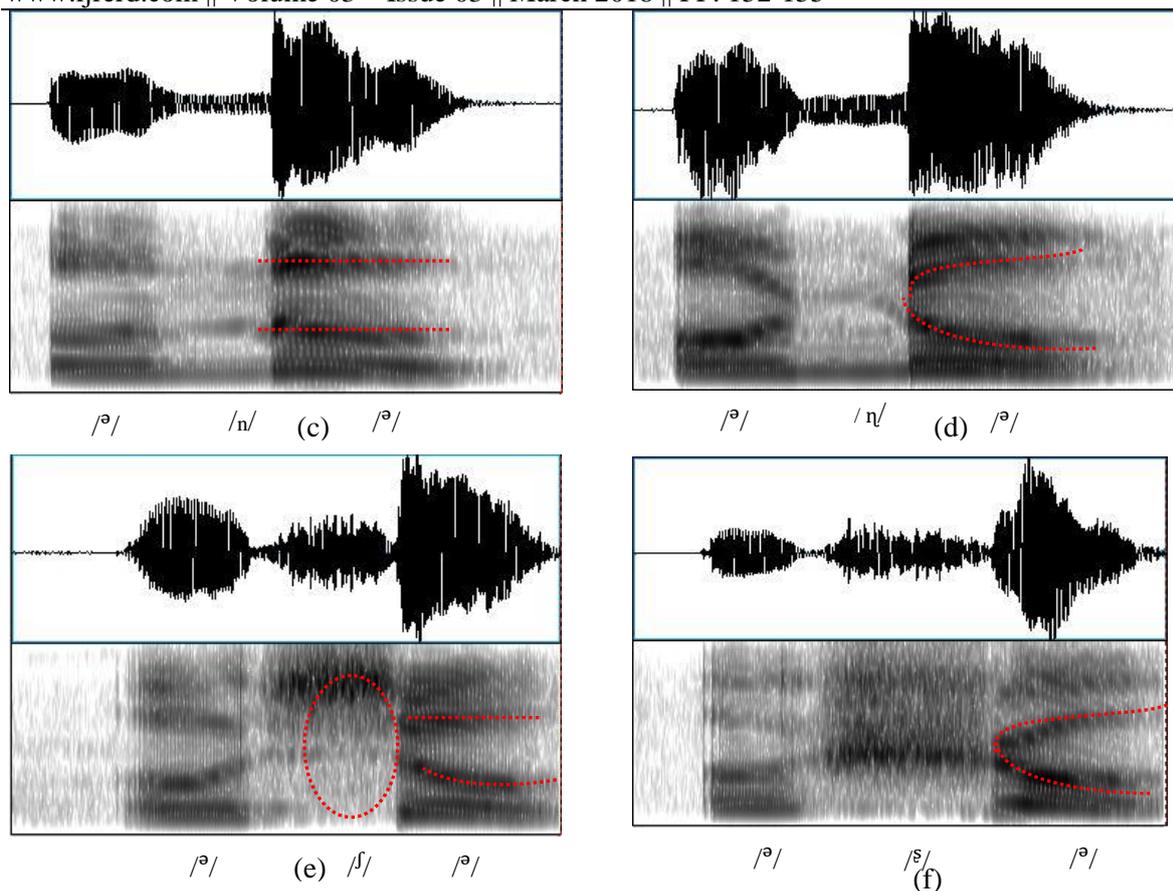


Figure 1: Standard Spectrograms of selected consonants

Results

Table 2 shows the result of the experiment carried out. Everybody said the words /ʃa|a/ and /nak/correctly according to the place and manner of articulation as required. The word /p^hə|ə/ is a Marathi word for fruits. The sound /p^h/ has to be pronounced as the voiceless bilabial aspirated plosive. Figure 2 shows the comparison of correctly and wrongly pronounced word /p^hə|. Only 3 out of 20 of sample set I have pronounced it correctly as the bilabial, 17 out of 20 failed to say it in right manner. They pronounced consonant /p^h/ as labiodentals consonant /f/. This shows the influence of the English consonant /f/ on native language speakers. But /f/ in word /fo:n/ which a proper English word, was said correctly by 18 of sample set I. Then for the word /paŋi/, only 9 students were able to attempt it correctly. This is mostly because of dialectal variations in Marathi language that fail to distinguish between /ŋ/ and /n/ i.e.local language *Malvani* doesn't have sound /ŋ/. Nobody could attempt the sound /ʒ/correctly this also can be the effect of dialectal variations or because of secondary language being English or because of the wrongly taught pronunciation in the school.

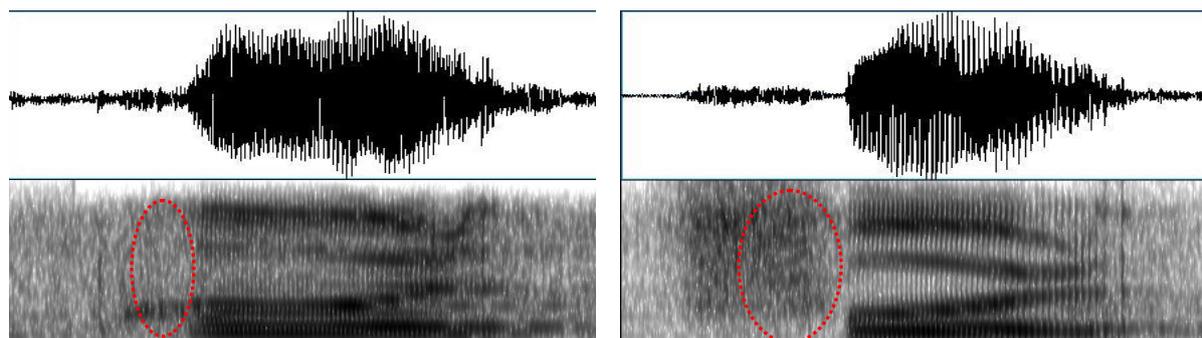


Figure 2: Comparison between standard and incorrectly pronounced /p^hə|

If we look at the results obtained from the sample set II, it is clear that the people who have not studied any other secondary languages cannot differentiate between bilabial /p^h/ and labiodentals /f/. They only know the sound /p^h/ which is used in Marathi. That is the reason only 2 among them could say the English word (which has labiodentals /f/) correctly. Twelve old people were succeeded to pronounce /ŋ/ in /paŋi/.

Phonetic transcription of words	No. of students attempted correctly	No. of old people attempted correctly
/p ^h ə/ - <i>fala</i> -(fruits)	3	19
/fo:n/-phone	18	2
/paŋi/- <i>pani</i> -(water)	9	12
/ja a/- <i>shala</i> - (school)	20	20
/nak/- <i>nak</i> - (nose)	20	20
/ʃəʈkon/ - <i>shatkon</i> -(hexagon)	0	13

Table 2: showing the results of the experiments carried out

Eight of them failed, that can be attributed to the dialectical difference between Marathi and their local language. 13 of 20 old people said sound /ʃ/ correctly in the word /ʃəʈkon/. The percentage of saying consonant /ʃ/ correctly is greater in sample set II than I. That may be because they could differentiate between /f/ and /ʃ/. It also shows there is no influence of English and it also shows they were taught Marathi grammar correctly.

Conclusion

The study shows inability of speakers to distinguish between the variants /p^h/, /f/ and /n/, /ŋ/ and /ʃ/, /ʒ/. This can be attributed partially to lack of proper teaching or to the effect secondary languages like English or to the dialectical variations.

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