



Research Paper

## Mother Tongue Influence of Malayalam in the English Loan Words Used In Malayalam

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**ABSTRACT:** There are many English loan words in Malayalam like office, oil etc. When we compare the pronunciation of such words in Malayalam and the real pronunciation according to British English we can see a drastic change and this puts light on the Mother Tongue Influence of Malayalam in such English loan words.

**KEYWORDS :** mother tongue influence, English loan words in Malayalam, MTI, phonetics

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### I. INTRODUCTION

English is a universal language of high prestige and a lot of time and energy is spent in teaching it as a second language in Indian schools. The mother-tongue influence is the influence of one's mother tongue on one's pronunciation of English. The speech habits in the mother tongue influence the way we speak, which results in several 'regional' varieties of spoken English depending on the speakers' mother tongue. In Indian languages words are spoken as they are written which gives rise to mother tongue influence to a great extent. In this paper entitled MOTHER TONGUE INFLUENCE OF MALAYALAM IN THE ENGLISH LOAN WORDS USED IN MALAYALAM, the English loan words of Malayalam are being studied on, on the basis of the pronunciation. There are many English loan words in Malayalam like office, oil etc. When we compare the pronunciation of such words in Malayalam and the real pronunciation according to British English we can see a drastic change and this puts light on the Mother Tongue Influence of Malayalam in such English loan words.

Malayalam, the official language of Kerala, is categorized as a South Dravidian language. The differences of Malayalam sounds from English Received Pronunciation that Dr. V. Syamala presents in her book, English Phonetics and Structure are as follows: Of the twelve pure vowels in RP only 7 have phonetically similar analogues in Malayalam. They are /ʌ/, /ɑ:/, /ɪ/, /i:/, /ʊ/, /u:/ and /e/. There are eight diphthongs in English Received Pronunciation (RP), whereas Malayalam has only two, /aɪ/ and /aʊ/. Among consonants, RP nasals /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/, affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ and the fricatives /s/, /h/ and the plosives /p/, /b/, /k/ and /g/ have analogues in Malayalam. Malayalam has retroflex sounds which do not occur in RP. The aspirated stops or plosives are phonemes in Malayalam, while in RP they are allophones. Malayalam has six nasal phonemes while RP has only three. Malayalam has dental plosives while RP has dental fricatives. Malayalam has no affricate phonemes; the nearest equivalents to RP palato-alveolar affricates are the palatal stops /c/ and /j/. (Syamala, 75)

A hundred loan words are taken for the study. Of these fifty words are taken from P.M. Joseph's Malayalathile Parkiya Padangal. P.M. Joseph studied the loan words from English to Malayalam and categorized it into six categories. (Joseph, 447-470) The first category is Administrative level: parliament, assembly, secretary, collector, police, village officer, clerk, revenue and peon of which only the word revenue is correctly pronounced. Second category is Economic level: commission, discount, toll, market, shop, cheque, dollar, note, bank and share of which only discount and cheque are rightly pronounced. The third category is Measurement: litre, ton, kilogram and meter of which only ton is correctly pronounced. Building or Infrastructure is the fourth category: chimney, drainage, balcony, shed, hall, electricity, pipe of which only balcony, shed and pipe are correctly pronounced. Fifth category is Dress Codes: underwear, pants, shirt, collar, tie, coat, pocket, nicker, blouse, jacket and petticoat of which only tie and coat are correctly pronounced. Sixth category is Educational: school, college, university, examination, semester and books of which only school and books are correctly pronounced.

The remaining fifty words taken for the study are common recurrent words of English we use as loan words in Malayalam : class, chalk, bench, pen, pencil, leader, rubber, desk, bread, coffee, current, car, driver, conductor, paper, cinema, film, daddy, papa, mummy, uncle, aunty, father, mother, brother, sister, cousin, go,

watch, war ,kangaroo, tortoise, office, oil, auto rickshaw, bus, madam, sir, cucumber, potato, letter, mister, hello, application, fees, globe, earth, water, tea, curtain, plug and cough. Of these only nine are correctly pronounced: fees, tea, class, chalk, bench, pen, desk, bread and aunty. So of these hundred words taken for study only twenty are correctly pronounced and the remaining eighty are wrongly pronounced due to the influence of the mother tongue, Malayalam.

English is an 'unphonetic language'. Indian languages has one letter in writing stands for one sound in speech and this arises the tendency to read a word based on its spelling. But in English there is no one to one correspondence between letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Upon contrasting and studying the pronunciation of the English loan words in Malayalam and British English thirty-five findings are made which are discussed in the following paragraphs. Fifty additional words are added to the respective findings. So in total One hundred fifty words are used in the findings.

Since in Malayalam, like other Indian languages the pronunciation is purely based on spellings, the silent /r/ is often pronounced as a result of Mother tongue influence. Examples are parliament, market, earth, shirt, heart, underwear, university, tortoise and March. The correct pronunciation of these words are /pɑ:ləmənt/ , /mɑ:kɪt/ , /ɜ:θ/ , /ʃɜ:t/ , /hɑ:t/ , /ʌndəweə/ , /ju:nɪvɜ:səti/ , /tɔ:təs/ and /mɑ:tʃ/ but due to the mother tongue influence Keralites pronounce it as /pɑ:rlement/ , /mɑ:rket/ , /erθ/ , /ʃert/ , /hɑ:rt/ , /ʌndərweər/ , /ju:nɪvɜ:rsəti/ , /tɔ:rtɔ:s/ and /mɑ:rtʃ/.

/ə/ is constantly replaced by the Malayalam sound  $\text{അ}$ , here represented by /a/. Such words are assembly, collector, commission, dollar and papa. The correct pronunciation of these words are /əsembli/ , /kəlektə/ , /kəmiʃn/ , /dɒlə/ , /pəpɑ:/ and due to mother tongue influence it is pronounced as /asembli/ , /kalektə/ , /kamiʃan/ , /dɒlar/ , /papa:/.

The sound /ɑ:/ is used instead of /æ/ in words like madam, application, bank, pants, jacket, daddy, van, kilogram and ant. The correct pronunciation of these words are /mædəm/ , /æplikeɪʃn/ , /bæŋk/ , /pænts/ , /dʒækɪt/ , /dædi/ , /væn/ , /kɪləgræm/ and /ænt/ whereas it is pronounced as /mɑ:dəm/ , /ɑ:plikeɪʃn/ , /bɑ:ŋk/ , /pɑ:nts/ , /dʒɑ:ket/ , /dɑ:di/ , /vɑ:n/ , /kɪləgrɑ:m/ and /ɑ:nt/.

The sound /ɔ:/ is often used for /ɒ/ in words like office, clock, dollar, collar, pocket, college, coffee, hot , officer, shop and cottage. The correct pronunciation of these words are /ɒfɪs/ , /klɒk/ , /dɒlə/ , /kɒlə/ , /pɒkɪt/ , /kɒlɪdʒ/ , /kɒfi/ , /hɒt/ , /ɒfɪsə/ , /ʃɒp/ and /kɒtɪdʒ/ but due to the mother tongue influence it is often pronounced as /ɔ:fɪs/ , /klɔ:k/ , /dɔ:lə/ , /kɔ:lə/ , /pɔ:ket/ , /kɔ:leɪdʒ/ , /kɔ:fi/ , /hɔ:t/ , /ɔ:fɪsə/ , /ʃɔ:p/ and /kɔ:teɪdʒ/.

The sound /ɑ:/ is used in the place of /ɒ/ as we see in the words like water, watch, what and wash , the correct pronunciation of which is /wɔ:tə/ , /wɒtʃ/ , /wɒt/ and /wɒʃ/ which is instead pronounced as /wɑ:ter/ , /wɑ:tʃ/ , /wɑ:t/ and /wɑ:f/.

It is also noticed that /eɪ/ is used instead of /ɪ/ as we see in words like village, drainage, college and cottage. These words are correctly pronounced as /vɪlɪdʒ/ , /dreɪnɪdʒ/ , /kɒlɪdʒ/ and /kɒtɪdʒ/ but due to the mother tongue influence it is pronounced as /vɪleɪdʒ/ , /dreɪneɪdʒ/ , /kɒleɪdʒ/ and /kɒteɪdʒ/. The sound /ɒ/ is very often used instead of /əʊ/ which is seen in words like hello, zero, globe, potato, open, toll, note, auto and petticoat. These words are rightly pronounced as /hələʊ/ , /zɪərəʊ/ , /gləʊb/ , /pəteɪtəʊ/ , /əʊpən/ , /təʊl/ , /nəʊt/ , /'ɔ:təʊ/ and /petɪkəʊt/. And due to mother tongue influence it is pronounced as /hələʊ/ , /zɪrəʊ/ , /gləʊb/ , /pətətəʊ/ , /əʊpən/ , /təʊl/ , /nəʊt/ , /ɔ:təʊ/ and /petɪkəʊt/.

In the word clerk we see that the sound /ɜ:/ is used instead of /ɑ:/. The correct pronunciation of the word clerk is /kla:k/ but often pronounced as /klɜ:rk/. Often it is seen that /e/ is used in place of /ɪ/ in words like market, electricity, pocket, jacket and examination which is correctly pronounced as /mɑ:kɪt/ , /ɪlektɹɪsɪtɪ/ , /pɒkɪt/ , /dʒækɪt/ and /ɪgzæmɪneɪʃən/ and wrongly pronounced as /mɑ:rket/ , /elektɹɪsɪtɪ/ , /pɒket/ , /dʒækɪt/ and /egzæmɪneɪʃən/. The sound /ɑ:/ is used instead of /ɔ:/ as in words like hall, war and wall which is correctly pronounced as /hɔ:l/ , /wɔ:/ and /wɔ:l/ which is wrongly pronounced as /hɑ:l/ , /wɑ:r/ and /wɑ:l/ due to mother tongue influence. Due to mother tongue influence silent /h/ is pronounced as seen in words like honesty, hour and honour , the correct pronunciation of which is /ɒnɪsti/ , /aʊə/ and /ɒnə/ whereas it is pronounced as /hɒnɪsti/ , /hɑ:ər/ and /hɒnər/.

In words ending with s , especially in plurals /s/ is used instead of /z/ due to mother tongue influence , in words like blouse and bags. The correct pronunciation is /blaʊz/ and /bægz/ but it is pronounced as /blaʊs/ and /bægs/. And it is seen that /e/ is used for /ə/ in words like semester, current, sugar, secretary. It is pronounced correctly as /səməstə/ , /kʌrənt/ , /ʃʊgə/ and /sekɹətɹɪ/ and as a result of mother tongue influence it is pronounced as /seməstə/ , /kʌrənt/ , /ʃʊgər/ and /sekɹetɹɪ/. The sound /c/ is used for /ə/ in words like pencil and cinema, pronounced rightly as /pensəl/ and /sɪnəmə/ and pronounced as /pensɪl/ and /sɪnɪmə/ due to mother tongue influence. /ɑ/ is used instead of /ə/ in words like conductor and kangaroo. These words are pronounced correctly as /kəndʌktə/ and /kæŋgəru:/ and as a result of mother tongue influence it is pronounced as /kandʌktə/ and /kæŋgaru:/. /ɜ:/ Is used instead of /eɪ/ in words like paper and gate, rightly pronounced as /peɪpə/ and /geɪt/.

Due to MTI these words are pronounced as /pɜ:pə/ and /gɜ:t/. Double consonants as /m/ in words like mummy and tummy are doubly pronounced due to MTI.

The sound /a/ is used instead of /ʌ/ in words like uncle, cousin, wonder, love, umbrella and club which is accurately pronounced as /ʌŋkl/, /kʌzən/, /wʌndə/, /lʌv/, /ʌmbrelə/ and /klʌb/ and wrongly pronounced as /aŋkl/, /kʌzɪn/, /wʌndə/, /lʌv/, /ʌmbrelə/ and /klʌb/ (a represents  $\text{അ}$ ) which also takes the place of /æ/ in words like kangaroo and yap the actual pronunciation of which is /kæŋgəru:/ and /jæp/. /ə/ is used instead of /ʌ/ in words like bus and plug pronounced rightly as /bʌs/ and /plʌg/. /a:/ is instead of /æ/ in words like madam, wham, clash, January and alphabet rightly pronounced as /mædəm/, /wæm/, /klæʃ/, /dʒænjʊəri/ and /ælfəbet/. As a result MTI it is pronounced as /ma:dəm/, /wa:m/, /kla:ʃ/, /dʒa:njuəri/ and /a:lfəbet/. /ɒ/ is used for /ə/ in words like potato, oven, tomato, comfort, dove the actual pronunciation of which is /pətetəʊ/, /ʌvən/, /təmə:təʊ/ and /kʌmfət/ which is but pronounced as /pɒtətəʊ/, /ɒvən/, /təmə:təʊ/ and /kʌmfɒt/.

The sound /a/ , which represents Malayalam sound  $\text{അ}$ , is used instead of /ɒ/ in words like cough, consonant, contemplate, concept, concert and wallet , the correct pronunciation of which is /kɒf/, /kɒnsənənt/, /kɒntəmpleɪt/, /kɒnsept/, /kɒnsət/ and /wɒlɪt/ which, due to MTI is pronounced as /kaf/, /kansənənt/, /kantəmpleɪt/, /kansept/, /kansət/ and /walɪt/. /ɔ:/ is used for /ə/ in the word police rightly pronounced as /pəli:s/. /aɪ/ is used for /ɪ/ in the word divorce. /ɔ:/ is used for /əʊ/ in words like cope, go and no. /aʊ/ is used instead of /ʌ/ in pronunciation and love.

/k/ is pronounced in words like knife, knee, knit, knight and knot which is supposed to be silent. The sounds /t/ and /d/ found at the end of words like get, set, sit, read and bed is pronounced as /tʌ/ and /dʌ/. The sound /ɪə/ is used for /eə/ in words like pear and tear. /ʌ/ is used instead of /ɜ:/ in the word further. /ɪ/ is used instead of /ə/ in the word cement. /ɜ:/ is used instead of /eɪ/ in the word nation. /ɔ:ɪ/ is used instead of /ɔɪ/ in oil and ointment.

Going across these observations made, it is clear that as every letter is in one to one correspondence with the sound in Indian languages, people in India read it accordingly. They go with the spellings and pronounce as it is spelled. Malayalam, the language of Kerala is dealt with to demonstrate this pronunciation difference. Thus English is an unphonetic language and one must not study the pronunciation by going according to the spellings of the words. Often these types of wrong pronunciation is acquired from school days. Phonetics is nowadays taught from school level in many of the reputed schools and that is the right way. If students learn to differentiate sounds at a younger age and learn to read phonetics, it will help them to learn the right pronunciation of words at the right age. Therefore, phonetics must be compulsorily taught from school level, not just in reputed institutions but in every schools so that the study of English language will have a good foundation.

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