

Shahabullah*

Ghani Rahman†

Arshad Ali Khan‡

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Syllabification of English Words by Pashto Speakers

Abstract:

Syllabification of words plays a vital role in learning native like pronunciation. The present study tried to explore the syllabification of English words by Pashto speakers. The study aimed to put light on the problematic areas for Pashto speakers in terms of syllabification of English words. The data was collected from twenty undergraduate students and analyzed with reliable scientific tools. The analyzed data proved that English words having triphthongs were problematic for Pashto speakers. In addition to it, words having syllabic consonants were also problematic for Pashto speakers. Furthermore, words containing 'x' in spelling also proved to be problematic for Pashto speakers. English words having the syllable structure CVC.VC were incorrectly syllabified CV.CVC. Pashto speakers faced problems in the identification of syllable boundaries in words where consonant clusters are used. The study recommends that Pashto speakers need proper training for learning correct syllabification of English words.

Key Words:

English Words, Syllabification, Pashto Speakers

Introduction

Syllabification is the process by which phonological or phonetic fragments are assigned to their particular positions in the syllabic structure (Treiman & Zukowski, 1990). The process by which words are divided into different constituents, on the basis of pronunciation is called syllabification. Syllabification is an analytical procedure of grouping or dividing syllables into their components. It is the ability to divide words into syllables, i.e. a letter or group of letters which form a pronunciation unit. According to Goldsmith (1990), syllabification is the process of association of a linear string of segments with a syllable structure. Syllabification of words is one of the most important aspects of language learning especially in a foreign/second language context. However, no special attention is given to this aspect of language in research.

English Syllable Templates

According to Cox et al. (2009), English language has got eighteen syllable templates which are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Syllable templates of English Language

Syllable Templates of English Language				
V	CV	CCV	CCCV	VC
VCC	VCCC	CVC	CVCC	CVCCC
CVCCC	CCVC	CCVCC	CCVCC	CCVCCC
CCCVC	CCCVC	CCCVC	CCCVC	CCCVC

The above templates are used to identify syllable boundaries in English words. These templates are sometimes wrongly use by second language learners to syllabify English words. For example, the English word 'extra' is a disyllabic word which contains VC and CCCV syllable templates and is divided into syllables as /ek/ and /strə/ but most of the second language learners of English syllabify the word as /eks/ and /trə/. The syllable templates

*Lecturer, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, KP, Paksitan.

†Assistant Professor, Department of English, Hazara University Mansehra, KP, Pakistan. Email: ghani.rahman@hu.edu.pk / ghani_saba@yahoo.com

‡Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics and Communications, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

VC.CCCV are changed into VCC.CCV when the word 'extra' is syllabified by second language learners of English.

Statement of the Problem

Pashto speakers use English in their daily life for various purposes along with its being taught as a compulsory subject at different levels. Pashto speakers while learning English (belonging to a different language family from Pashto) have problems in learning correct English pronunciation. Correct pronunciation is very important for understanding and conveying message across in the target language. Second language learners of English (Pashto speakers particularly) have problems in learning phonological system. These problems are particularly apparent in syllabification of English words. Pashto speakers face problems in syllabification of English words due to the phonological differences in both the languages. So far, no research has been conducted on the topic of syllabification of English words by Pashto Speakers. There is a significant gap in research on the topic. The present study was designed to fill this gap by finding out the problems in syllabification of English words.

Aims and Objectives

The following are the main objectives of the study.

1. To pinpoint the difference between syllabifications of English words by Pashto speakers and syllabification of English words by English native speakers.
2. To find out the types of problems which are faced by Pashto speakers in the syllabification of English words.

Literature Review

English words go through certain changes especially syllabic changes when used by non-native speakers. These changes take place due to the variation in the phonological rules and principles between L2 and L1. Epenthesis of English words takes place when pronounced by non-native speakers. L1 imposes its own rules and restrictions in the formation of syllable (Ahmad, Anwar & Iqbal, 2017). L1 and L2 may have different templatic systems. English has as many as seventeen templates whereas Urdu has only six (Ranjha & Khan, 2014). Iranian native speakers of Persian learning English as a foreign language face problems in pronunciation of some consonant clusters of English. The leading factor responsible for pronunciation complications of Iranian learners is the differences between syllable structure of English and Persian (Fatemi, Sobhani, & Abolhassani, 2012).

There are strong effects of syllable universals on the frequency through which L2 learners modify syllables. These effects also influence the order in which the L2 learners acquire some syllable types. It is found in the study that L2 learners are not facing problems in the production of CV syllable and they are producing it independent of language transfer. Learners acquire shorter margins first and then longer margins and hence they modify longer margins more regularly than the shorter margins of the syllable (Carlisle, 2001). Whenever the Kurdish EFL learners faced difficult structure of CCs in a syllable or word, they employed a vocalic epenthesis as a repair strategy. The leading cause to this process is the phonotactics of Kurdish language as it does not allow many of English CCs in the coda. Lack of sufficient exposure to the target language is also acknowledged as a responsible factor for the same problem. The learners try to simplify the complex syllable structure of second language through epenthesis or deletion strategies and the researcher found it true in case of Kurdish EFL learners (Keshavarz, 2017). Persian learners' of English re-syllabify the syllable initial clusters through epenthesis, and avoid deletion. The re-syllabification of English words is not random but it is been influenced by some rules which are governing the process. One syllable was re-syllabified into two (two consonant clusters), three (two/three consonant clusters) or even four syllables (three consonant clusters). This is said to have happened due to the non-existence of such consonant clusters syllable-initially and hence,

negative transfer from Persian. This result is consistent cross-linguistically with the results found in a study where the English words borrowed into Urdu have been analyzed (Usman, Ali & Masood, 2004) and some segments were deleted by the learners in very few cases ([Jabbari & Samavarchi, 2011](#)).

Research Methodology

The design selected for the present study was experimental. The reason behind experimental design is to base the study on more reliable and scientific bases. The population of the present study was all undergraduate level students having Pashto as their L1 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A representative sample from the target population (Pashto speakers) was selected consisting of twenty participants through convenience sampling technique. The participants were selected from ten districts, two from each district representing almost all the major areas of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province where Pashto language is spoken as a first language. All these participants had almost the same English background in their academic career. All these participants were undergraduates having studied English as a subject throughout their academic career. The eighteen syllable structures of English syllable were considered problematic for Pashto speakers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The participants were given a printed sheet containing words with target syllable templates/structures in three different positions. These were the word initial, medial position and final positions. The students were instructed to pronounce the words containing target syllable structure. The pronunciation was recorded with the help of a high quality audio voice recorder. The microphone used for recording could record the sounds having a frequency ranging from 40 Hz to 20 KHz. The recording was done in a quiet room having no external noise in order to clearly record the sounds without any disturbance. The recordings one done, were heard later with high quality speakers for data collection and analysis. The percentage of correct and incorrect responses confirmed the nature of the problematic templates in syllable in English words. This procedure helped us in accepting or rejecting our hypotheses about these problematic English syllable templates. The specification of these templates helped us in figuring out the problems in syllabification of English words.

The Syllabification of English Words with different V and C Combinations

The following table shows the data for the syllabification so English words by Pashto speakers having different vowels and consonants combinations.

Table 2. Results of English words with different V and C Combination in Syllable

Vowel and/or Consonant combination	Words	Transcription	Native Like Syllabification	Non-Native Syllabification
V	About	/əˈbaʊt/	20	00
V	Innocent	/ˈɪn.ə.snt/	04	16
V	Inspire	/ɪn.ˈspaɪ.ə(r)/	03	17
CV	Television	/te.li.vɪ.zn/	20	00
CV	Company	/ˈkʌm.pə.ni/	10	10
CV	Baby	/bæ.bi/	20	00
CCV	Program	/ˈprəʊ.græm/	13	7
CCV	Exporter	/ek.ˈspɔː.tə(r)/	7	13
CCV	Display	/diˈs.pleɪ/	20	00
CCCV	Stripy	/ˈstraɪ.pɪ/	20	00
CCCV	Instrument	/ˈɪn.strə.mənt/	20	00
CCCV	Extra	/ˈek.strə/	15	05
VC	Establish	/ɪs.tæb.lɪʃ/	20	00
VC	Talented	/ˈtæl.ən.tɪd/	00	20

VC	Cabin	/ˈkæb.ɪn/	00	20
VCC	Inkwell	/ˈɪŋk.wel/	20	00
VCC	Talent	/ˈtæl.ənt/	00	20
CVC	Factory	/ˈfæk.tri/	20	00
CVC	Establish	/ɪˈs.tæb.lɪʃ/	20	00
CVC	Structural	/ˈstrʌk.tʃə.rəl/	07	13
CVCC	Texture	/ˈtek.s.tʃə(r)/	16	04
CVCC	Exactly	/ɪg.zækt.lɪ/	17	03
CVCC	Remix	/ˈri:.mɪks/	20	00
CCVC	Spectacle	/ˈspek.tə.kl/	20	00
CCVC	Description	/dɪˈs.krɪp.ʃn/	20	00
CCVC	Export	/ɪk.ˈspɔ:t/	09	11
CCVCC	Sportsmen	/ˈspɔ:ts.mən/	13	07
CCVCC	Expect	/ɪk.ˈspekt/	14	06
CCCVC	Splinter	/ˈsplɪn.tə(r)/	20	00
CCCVC	Instructor	/ɪn.ˈstrʌk.tə(r)/	20	00
CCCVC	Extreme	/ek.stri:m/	09	11
CCCVCC	Abstract	/ˈæb.strækt/	11	09

Some English words have the syllable in the form of Vowel only. The above table shows that Pashto speakers have no problem with initial V syllable in English words. All of the participants syllabified it like native speakers of English at the word initial position. At word medial position, four participants syllabified the medial V syllable exactly like native speakers of English while sixteen participants syllabified it as CV. At word final position, only three participants were good to syllabify the final V syllable in English word like native speakers, whereas seventeen of the participants failed to syllabify it like native speakers. Similarly, at word initial position, Pashto speakers have no problem in the syllabification of initial CV syllable in English words. All the twenty participants syllabified it like native speakers of English at the word initial position. At word medial position, ten participants syllabified the medial CV syllable like native speakers of English while ten participants deleted the nucleus of the target syllable and linked the consonant of the target syllable with the coda of the previous syllable and made two syllable word from three syllable word which became CVCC.CV. At word final position, all the participants syllabified the target syllable like native speakers of English. No problem was observed in the syllabification of English word containing CV syllable at final position.

Thirteen of the participants syllabified English word containing CCV syllable at initial position like native speakers of English. Whereas seven of the participants syllabified it unlike native speakers of English. Seven of the participants syllabified English word having CCV syllable at medial position exact like native speakers of English while thirteen participants failed to syllabify it like native speakers. At word final position, all the participants syllabified the English words having the target syllable like native speakers of English. No problem was observed there in the syllabification of English word containing CCV syllable at final position but all of the participants' syllabified English words containing the target syllable template CCCV at initial position, medial position and final position like native speakers. No problem was found there in the syllabification of the target words having CCCV syllable at initial, medial and final positions. Whereas at the word final position, fifteen of the participants syllabified the target word like native speakers of English while five of the participants failed to do so. All the participant syllabified the target words containing the syllable VC like native speakers of English though there were problems in the pronunciation of the target words. All the twenty participants syllabified English words containing the target syllable VC at medial and final position unlike native speakers of English. There was no problem found in the syllabification of English word having VC syllable at initial position but all the participants found it difficult to syllabify English words containing VC syllable at medial and final position and they syllabified them unlike native speakers of English. At word initial position, all the

participant syllabified the English word containing the target syllable VCC like native speakers of English. At word final position, all the participants syllabified the target English word unlike native speakers of English.

At word initial position and medial position, all the participant syllabified the target words containing CVC syllable at initial position and medial position like native speakers of English. While at word final position, seven of the participants syllabified the target word like native speakers of English and no problem was found there in their syllabification of the target word whereas thirteen of the participants syllabified the target word containing the target syllable CVC at final position unlike native speakers of English. At word initial position, sixteen of the participant syllabified English word containing the target syllable CVCC like native speakers of English while four of the participants syllabified it unlike native speakers of English. At word medial position, seventeen of the participants syllabified the target word containing the syllable CVCC like native speakers of English while three of the participants syllabified the target word having the syllable CVCC unlike native speakers of English. All the participants syllabified the target English word having syllable CVCC like native speakers of English at word final position and no problem was found there in their syllabification. At word initial and medial position, all the participant syllabified English words having the target syllable CCVC like native speakers of English. There was no problem found in the syllabification of the target words at word initial and medial position. At word final position, nine of the participants syllabified the target word like native speakers of English whereas eleven of the participants syllabified the target word by adding the first consonant of the target syllable to the coda of the preceding syllable. At word initial position, thirteen of the participants syllabified the target word containing syllable CCVCC like native speakers of English while seven participants failed to syllabify it like native speakers of English. The target syllable CCVCC was not found at medial position in English words. Fourteen of the participants syllabified the target English word having syllable CCVCC at final position like native speakers of English whereas six of the participants syllabified the target English word having syllable CCVCC unlike native speakers of English.

At word initial and medial position, all the participant syllabified English words having the target syllable CCCVC like native speakers of English. There was no issue in their syllabification. In word final position, nine of the participants syllabified the English word having the target syllable CCCVC like native speakers of English where eleven of the participants failed to syllabify the word having the target syllable like native speakers of English. At word final position, eleven of the participants syllabified English word having the target syllable CCCVCC like native speakers of English where nine of the participants failed to syllabify it like native speakers of English.

Syllabification of English Mono and Disyllabic Words by Pashto Speakers

Eighteen different syllabic templates in English monosyllabic words were investigated and there was no issue found out in their syllabification except for the word “Film” which contained CVCC and five of the participants inserted schwa sound /ə/ between the coda consonants and divided the target monosyllabic word into two syllables /fɪ.ləm/. The following table shows the syllabification of twelve English disyllabic words by Pashto speakers.

Table 3. Syllabification of English Disyllabic words by Pashto Speakers of English

No	Template	Words	Transcription	No. of Correct Syllabification	No. of Incorrect Syllabification	Total
1	V	About	/ə.baʊt/	20	00	20
2	CV	Teacher	/ti:.tʃə(r)/	20	00	20
3	CCV	Program	/prəʊ.græm/	13	7	20
4	CCCVC	Extra	/ek.strə/	15	05	20
5	VC	Cabin	/kæb.ɪn/	00	20	20
6	VCC	Talent	/'tæl.ənt/	00	20	20

7	CVC	Describe	/dɪs.kraɪb/	20	00	20
8	CVCC	Texture	/teks.tʃə(r)/	16	04	20
9	CCVC	Spectral	/spek.trəl/	20	00	20
10	CCVCC	Expect	/ɪk.spekt/	14	06	20
11	CCCVC	Splinter	/splɪn.tə(r)/	20	00	20
12	CCCVCC	Abstract	/'æb.strækt/	20	00	20
Total				178	62	240

Among two hundred and forty occurrences of twelve disyllabic words, one hundred and seventy eight were found like native speakers of English while sixty two were found unlike native speakers of English. The above table shows that Pashto speakers have no great problem in the syllabification of disyllabic words containing V.CVC, CV.CV(c), CVC.CCVC, CCVC.CCVC, CCCVC.CV(c) and VC.CCCVCC syllable templates. Whereas they had problems in the syllabification of English disyllabic words which contain CCV, CCCV, VC, VCC, CVCC, and CCVCC templates.

For the CCV templates, seven of the participants syllabified it non-native like by the insertion of schwa [ə] sound in the onset consonant cluster of the first syllable and made the word tri-syllabic. Five of the participants failed to syllabify the word having VC.CCCV syllable template correctly by adding the initial onset consonant [s] of the second syllable to the coda of the first syllable and made it /eks.trə/. Interestingly, all the twenty participants failed to syllabify the words for VC and VCC templates. Four of the participants failed to syllabify the template CVCC. The syllable boundary in the target word was unlike the syllable boundary in the word “extra” /ek.strə/ as the syllable boundary in the word “extra” is between [k] and [s]. In both the words, the sound [k] is followed by [s]. In “extra” the sound [s] is the part of the onset of the second syllable as it follows the MOP and the consonant cluster /str/ is one of the possible three consonant clusters in English while in the word “texture” [s] is the part of the coda of the preceding syllable because English language does not allow /stʃ/ cluster in the onset of a syllable. The word “expect” /ɪk.spekt/ for CCVCC template was incorrectly syllabified by six participants. The problem in the syllabification of the target word was found in the syllable boundary either after [k] or [s].

Syllabification of English Tri-Syllabic words by Pashto Speakers

The following table shows the syllabification of nine English trisyllabic words by Pashto speakers.

Table 4. Syllabification of English tri-Syllabic words by Pashto Speakers

No	Template	Words	Transcription	No. of Correct Syllabification	No. of Incorrect Syllabification	Total
1	V	Innocent	/ɪn.ə.snt/	04	16	20
2	CV	Structural	/strʌk.tʃə.rəl/	07	13	20
3	CCV	Exporter	/ek.spɔ:.tə(r)/	07	13	20
4	CCCV	Instrument	/ɪn.strə.mənt/	20	00	20
5	VC	Talented	/tæl.ən.tɪd/	00	20	20
6	CVC	Establish	/ɪs.tæb.lɪʃ/	20	00	20
7	CVCC	Contextual	/kən.teks.tʃʊəl/	20	00	20
8	CCVC	Description	/dɪs.krɪp.ʃn/	20	00	20
9	CCCVC	instructor	/ɪn.strʌk.tə(r)/	20	00	20
Total				118	62	180

The above table shows that among one hundred and eighty occurrence of nine tri-syllabic words of English, one hundred and eighteen were found like native speakers of English while sixty two occurrences were

not like native speakers of English. Pashto speakers have no problem in the syllabification of English tri-syllabic words containing CCCV, CVC, CVCC, CCVC, and CCCVC templates. They have problems in the syllabification of English words having V, CV, CCV, and VC templates. The CV template was found out problematic for thirteen participants by deleting [ə] sound in the medial syllable and made it disyllabic /strʌk.tʃrəl/. Similarly, unlike rules of syllabification that when a consonant sound comes between two short vowels, it is divided into syllables after the consonant, the participants put it after the first vowel and making /tæ . lən . tɪd/ from /tæl . ən . tɪd/.

Syllabification of English Words Having Different Syllable Structures

The native speakers of L1 try to syllabify L2 words according to their L1 phonology. There may not be any problem in identification of the nucleus in a syllable but it is much more difficult to identify intervocalic consonants in a syllable to place them in the coda position of the preceding syllable or in the onset position of the following syllable. The following table shows the syllabification of the most common and frequently used words of English by Pashto speakers of KP.

Table 5. Syllabification of English words by Pashto speakers of English

No	Syllables Structure	Words	Transcription	No. of Correct Syllabification	No. of Incorrect Syllabification	Total
1	CV.V(c)	Sire	/saɪ.ə(r)/	03	17	20
2	V.CV	Even	/i:v.n/	00	20	20
3	VC.V	any	/en.i/	00	20	20
4	CV.CV	Baby	/beɪ.bɪ/	20	00	20
5	VC.CV	Action	/æk.ʃn/	00	20	20
6	CV.VC	Diet	/daɪ.ət/	03	17	20
7	VC.CVCC	Invest	/ɪn.vest/	20	00	20
8	CVC.VC	Limit	/lɪm.ɪt/	00	20	20
9	VC.CVC	Incase	/ɪn.keɪs/	20	00	20
10	CV.CVC	Viral	/vaɪ.rəl/	20	00	20
11	CV.CCV	Betray	/bɪ.treɪ/	02	18	20
12	CCV.CV	Treaty	/tri:ti/	20	00	20
13	CVC.CVC	Fulfil	/fʊl.fil/	20	00	20
14	CCV.CVC	Process	/prəʊ.ses/	20	00	20
15	CCCV.CV	Strata	/strɑ:tə/	20	00	20
16	CV.CCVC	Between	/bi.twi:n/	02	18	20
17	CCVC.CV	Stepney	/step.ni/	20	00	20
18	VC.CCVC	Instead	/ɪn.sted/	20	00	20
19	CV.CVCC	Myself	/maɪ.self/	20	00	20
20	CV.CCVC	Respect	/rɪ.spekt/	02	18	20
21	VC.CCVC	Expect	/ek.spekt/	01	19	20
22	CVC.VCC	Balance	/bæl.əns/	00	20	20
23	V.CVC.CV	Essential	/ɪ.sen.ʃl/	00	20	20
24	CV.CV.CVC	Material	/mə.tɪə.rɪəl/	20	00	20
25	CVC.VC.CV	Rapidly	/ræp.ɪd.li/	00	20	20
26	VC.CCV.CV	External	/ɪk.stɜ:nl/	00	20	20
27	VC.CCV.CVC	Impressive	/ɪm.pre.sɪv/	20	00	20
28	VC.CV.CVCC	Accident	/æk.sɪ.dənt/	20	00	20
29	CCV.CV.VC	Museum	/mju:zi:əm/	03	17	20

30	CV.CCV.CV.CV	Community	/kə.mju:.nə.ti/	02	18	20
31	VC.CV.CV.CVC	Incorporate	/ɪn.kə:.pə.reɪt/	20	00	20
	Total			318	302	620

The above table contains thirty one most common English words. Among these thirty one English words, Pashto speakers have no problems in the syllable templates of CV.CV, VC.CVCC, VC.CVC, CV.CVC, CCV.CV, CVC.CVC, CCV.CVC, CCCV.CV, CCVC.CV, VC.CCVC, CV.CVCC, CV.CV.CVC, VC.CCV.CVC, VC.CV.CVCC and VC.CV.CV.CVC. The syllable templates CV.V(c), V.CV, VC.V, VC.CV, CV.VC, CVC.VC, CV.CCV, CV.CCVC, CV.CCVCC, VC.CCVCC, CVC.VCC, V.CVC.CV, CVC.VC.CV, VC.CCV.CV, CCV.CV.VC, CCV.CVC.CV, and CV.CCV.CV.CV were problematic for Pashto speakers as they sometime inserted or deleted a sound in a syllable and sometime they shifted sounds from one syllable to another. The division of words having ‘x’ letter either after [k] or [s] according to the structure of the syllables in words was very difficult for Pashto speakers and pronounced the word “expect” /ek.spekt/ like /eks.pekt/ copying wrongly the same structure of the word like “texture” /teks.tʃə(r)/.

Insertion of /j/ and /ə/

Pashto speakers sometime inserted the phoneme [j] in words like in word /dar . jət/ for “diet” /dar.ət/ and mju . zi: . jəm/ for “museum” /mju.zi:.əm/. Similarly, English words with syllabic consonant like “even” /i:.vn/ are pronounced /i:.vən/ changing the template V.CV into V.CVC.

Changing of CVC.VC into CV.CVC

When a single consonant sound comes between two short vowels as in the word “limit”/ lɪmɪt/ CVCVC, the word is divided after the consonant sound. So the word “limit” /lɪmɪt/ is divided as / lɪm / and / ɪ t /. Pashto speakers fail to syllabify these words as they syllabify them before the consonant sound. The word / lɪmɪt / is divided / lɪ / and / mɪt/ by all the twenty participants.

Syllabification of Intervocalic Consonants

In English syllable, the intervocalic sounds are added to the onset of the following syllable in order to follow the MOP. For instance, the word “respect” is syllabified /rɪ.spekt/ as /sp/ is possible two consonant onset cluster in English. Eighteen Pashto speakers syllabified it /rɪs.pekt/ incorrectly. The [m] in the word “community” /kə.mju:.nə.ti/ was geminated by Pashto speakers to pronounce it /kəm . mju: . nə . ti/ to make it resemble like gemination in Pashto.

Discussion

The results indicate that the Pashto speakers had problems in the correct syllabification of English words. The main reason for these problems is the phonological difference in syllabification of words in Pashto and English languages. Because of these phonological differences, the Pashto speakers learning English syllables have syllabified some of the English words incorrectly. For example, in English words the sound /j/ is inserted incorrectly because of no triphthongs in Pashto syllables. Similarly, words having syllabic consonants too were incorrectly syllabified by changing the structure of syllables by inserting /ə/ sound. They have syllabified the English words with VCV inside them against the rules of syllabification in English as they divided all those words having VCV inside them by shifting the coda consonant of the preceding syllable to the onset of the following syllable. Pashto speakers also have problems in the syllabification of words having ‘x’ in the spelling as it is divided according to SSP and MOP by ignoring possible consonant clusters in English. They kept /k/ in the coda of the preceding syllable while shifting /s/ sound to the onset of the following syllable. Pashto speakers also have problems in the identification of syllable boundary in the words where they find two or more intervocalic sounds. The results of the present study revealed native like, Pashto syllable like and other types

of syllabification of English words by Pashto speakers. The main reason behind the incorrect or non-native syllabification of Pashto speakers learning English is unfamiliarity with the syllable of English language. Pashto speakers learning English combine orthographic combination of letters with syllable, so they syllabify these English words unlike native speakers of English. Another possible major reason could also be the influence of the mother tongue.

Conclusion

The present study was concerned with the syllabification of English words by Pashto speakers. The study hypothesized that Pashto speakers have problems in the syllabification of English words. The study found no issue in the syllabification of most of the monosyllabic words. Similarly, Pashto speakers had no problem in the syllabification of some of the disyllabic words, while some of the disyllabic words were significantly problematic for them. Likewise, Pashto speakers had no problem in the syllabification of some of the English tri-syllabic words, while they had significant problems in the syllabification of some of the English tri-syllabic words. The syllabification of the most common and frequently used words of English having different template structures from the template structures of disyllabic and tri-syllabic words were also found out problematic for Pashto speakers. The results suggested that Pashto speakers had no problem with the words having syllables in the form of the short vowel V. English words having syllable template CV had no problem for Pashto speakers except its occurrence at medial position. Similarly, CCV template, on the other hand, is only problematic at medial position significantly and at initial position to less significant extent. No problem was found there in the syllabification of the target words having CCCV syllable template. The least problematic template was CVC for Pashto speakers. Similarly, CVCC template was also not problematic for Pashto speakers like CCVC template which was not problematic. The most problematic template for Pashto speakers was the template VC. Similarly, VCC and CCCVCC templates were significantly problematic for Pashto speakers. While, the CCVCC and CCCVC templates were found less problematic for Pashto speakers.

Pashto speakers have problems in the syllabification of words having 'x' in the spelling. They, sometimes, divide words having 'x' after /k/ sound and sometimes after /s/ sound. Pashto speakers of English do not know about the syllable boundaries in English words having 'x' in the spelling. Other problems that Pashto speakers face in the syllabification of words are in the division of words into syllables having VCV inside them, and both the Vs are short vowels as they made CV.CVCC from CVC.VCC. They also insert /j/ and /ə/ sounds in some syllables. The insertion of /j/ sound most of the times takes place in words having triphthongs while the insertion of /ə/ takes place before the syllabic consonants. Pashto speakers also have problems in the division of intervocalic sounds. Pashto speakers have problems in attaching intervocalic consonants to the preceding syllable coda and had greater problems in the syllabification of such English words. They added the final consonant sound of the preceding syllable's coda to the target syllable onset. Similarly, attachment of intervocalic consonants to the following syllable onset was problematic; as a result, they had problems in the syllabification of such English words. Lastly, the results also suggest that Pashto speakers change the structures of some syllables like they changed the words having syllables CVC.VC into CV.CVC syllable structures.

The results of the present study reveal that Pashto speakers learning English have significant problems in syllabification of the selected English words. The main reason behind the incorrect or non-native syllabification of Pashto speakers learning English is unfamiliarity with the syllable of English language. Pashto speakers learning English confuse orthographic combination of letters with syllable, so they syllabify these English words unlike native speakers of English. Another major cause is also the influence of the mother tongue. The findings of the present study as whole suggest that Pashto speakers do not know the rules and regulations of syllabification in English but intuitively syllabify these words because the students had no training in phonetics and phonology (syllables training especially) of English language. All of these non-native speakers used their intuition in syllabifying these selected English words. It is not possible to have the same set of syllables in all languages. When one tries to syllabify the words of other languages, he intuitively falls back

upon his first language in the syllabification of words of other languages. They have not been taught about syllable and syllabification of the target language. Native like syllabification of English words is very important in learning English language. It requires conscious effort on the part of the second language learners. Correct syllabification of second language is commonly possible through comparison, imitation and practice. If second language learners are not properly trained in phonetics and phonology of the target language, they will not be able to differentiate between their first language syllables and syllables of second language. The syllabification of the words, especially English words should not be learnt or taught from their orthographical representation. English sounds and letters do not have one to one correspondence to each other and most of the times students generalize the orthographic representations to sound representations. The incorrect syllabification of selected words verifies the fact that the learners should be given particular attention to those syllables which are problematic for them. Furthermore, proper practice is required to learners in terms of such syllables in order to bring their syllabification to native like and to avoid non-native syllabification of English words and consequently misunderstanding or miscommunication.

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