# THE PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF NON-STIGMATIZED

# ACCENT OF KENYAN ENGLISH.

BY

RAGUTU, M.J.
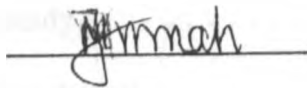
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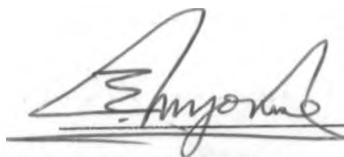
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# DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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MAURICE J. RAGUTU.

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.
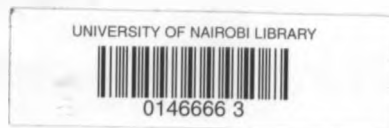
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

# DEDICATION.

In memory of my late mother

MARGARET AUMA.

## Abstract:

Kenya is a multi-lingual country which has over forty ethnic languages and about one hundred dialects of those languages. English is used as a second language but also serves as the official language and the medium of instruction from upper primary schools upto the tertiary levels of education.

The phonological features of Non-stigmatized accent of Kenyan English is the topic of the dissertation. It therefore discusses both the phonetic and phonological features of one variety of pronunciation that educated native Kenyan speakers of English normally use. This variety of accent is herein called the Standard Accent of Kenyan English (SAKE). It is posited in the study as the ideal model for learning and using English in Kenya and that after it has been recognised and developed, it should supersede the RP as the declared model for teaching and using English in Kenya.

The thesis for the contention is drawn from Bright & McGregor (1978:178): *not in bibl*
"Sooner or later all countries that use English as a first or second language develop (their) varieties of accent. The United States did so long ago with the result that Americans model themselves on (educated) Americans and not on any British-English speakers. The same is true of New Zealanders and Australians. According to Peter Stevens, the same thing has happened in West Africa."

Let us then see what the whole work contains. Chapter One constitutes the background to the study. The language and its accents are introduced and the problem, hypothesis and the reasons for the study are stated. Literature review follows and the method of compiling the work explained. Chapter Two Discusses the major accents in use by the native Kenyan speakers of

English that one may recognise in the country. Chapter Three then zeros in on the SAKE accent, illustrating both its segmental and supra-segmental features. Chapter Four summarises the main issues and draws a conclusion.

# List of Phonetic Symbols and Signs

Source: Gimson (1980:viii-ix)

a     Cardinal Vowel no. 4 (approximately as in French *patte*); used for first element of Eng. diphthong [aɪ]

æ     front vowel between open and half-open (Eng. vowel in *cat*)

ɑ     Cardinal Vowel no. 5 (approximately as in French *pas*); used for first element of Eng. diphthong [aʊ], and for Eng. [ɑ:] in *car*

ɒ     open rounded Cardinal Vowel no. 5 (Eng. vowel in *dog*)

b     voiced bilabial plosive (Eng. *b* in *labour*)

ɓ     voiced ingressive bilabial plosive

β     voiced bilabial fricative

c     voiceless palatal plosive

ç     voiceless palatal fricative

ɔ     Cardinal Vowel no. 6 (approximately as in German *Sonne*); used for Eng. [ɔ:] in *saw*, and first element of diphthong [ɔɪ]

d     voiced alveolar plosive (Eng. *d* in *lady*)

ɗ     voiced ingressive alveolar plosive

ð     voiced dental fricative (Eng. *th* in *other*)

e     Cardinal Vowel no. 2 (approximately as in French *thé*); used for Eng. [e] in *bed*, and first element of diphthong [eɪ]

ə     unrounded central vowel (Eng. initial and final vowels in *another*)

ɚ     retroflexed central vowel (American *er* in *water*)

ɛ     Cardinal Vowel no. 3 (approximately as in French *père*); used for first element of diphthong [ɛə]

ɜ     unrounded central vowel (Eng. vowel in *bird*)

f     voiceless labio-dental fricative (Eng. *f* in *four*)

ɟ     voiced palatal plosive

g     voiced velar plosive (Eng. *g* in *eager*)

ɠ     voiced ingressive velar plosive

h     voiceless glottal fricative (Eng. *h* in *house*)

ɦ     voiced glottal fricative (sometimes Eng. *h* in *behind*)

i     Cardinal Vowel no. 1 (approximately as in French *si*); used for Eng. [i:] in *see*

ɨ     unrounded central close vowel

ɪ     centralized unrounded half-close vowel (Eng. vowel in *sit*)

j     palatal unrounded semi-vowel (Eng. *y* in *you*)

ɾ     linguo-alveolar tap (sometimes *r* in Eng. *very*)
k     voiceless velar plosive (Eng. *c* in *car*)
l     voiced alveolar lateral continuant (Eng. *l* in *lay*)
ɬ     voiced alveolar lateral continuant with velarization (Eng. *ll* in *ill*)
ɫ     voiceless alveolar lateral fricative (Welsh *ll*)
m     voiced bilabial nasal (Eng. *m* in *me*)
ɱ     voiced labio-dental nasal (Eng. *m* in *comfort*)
ɯ     unrounded Cardinal Vowel no. 8
n     voiced alveolar nasal (Eng. *n* in *no*)
ŋ     voiced velar nasal (Eng. *ng* in *sing*)
ɲ     voiced palatal nasal (French *gn* in *vigne*)
o     Cardinal Vowel no. 7 (approximately as in French *eau*)
ø     rounded Cardinal Vowel no. 2 (approximately as in French *peu*)
œ     open rounded Cardinal Vowel no. 3 (approximately as in French *peur*)
θ     voiceless dental fricative (Eng. *th* in *thing*)
p     voiceless bilabial plosive (Eng. *p* in *pea*)
r     linguo-alveolar roll (Scottish, Italian *r*); also used for Eng. *r* in *red*
ɹ     voiced post-alveolar frictionless continuant (Eng. *r* in *red*)
ɻ     voiced retroflex frictionless continuant
ʀ     voiced uvular roll
ʁ     voiced uvular fricative or frictionless continuant
s     voiceless alveolar fricative (Eng. *s* in *see*)
ʃ     voiceless palato-alveolar fricative (Eng. *sh* in *she*)
t     voiceless alveolar plosive (Eng. *t* in *tea*)
ʇ     voiceless alveolar click
u     Cardinal Vowel no. 8 (approximately as in French *doux*); used for Eng [u:] in *do*
ʉ     central rounded close vowel
ʊ     centralized rounded half-close vowel (Eng. *u* in *put*)
v     voiced labio-dental fricative (Eng. *v* in *ever*)
ʌ     unrounded Cardinal Vowel no. 6; used for Engl. vowel in *cup*
ʋ     labio-dental frictionless continuant
w     labio-velar semi-vowel (Eng. *w* in *we*)
ʍ     voiceless labio-velar fricative (sometimes Eng. *wh* in *why*)
x     voiceless velar fricative (Scottish *ch* in *loch*)
y     rounded Cardinal Vowel no. 1 (approximately as in French *du*)
ʎ     voiced palatal lateral continuant (Italian *gl* in *egli*)
ɣ     unrounded Cardinal Vowel no. 7
ɤ     voiced velar fricative
z     voiced alveolar fricative (Eng. *z* in *lazy*)
ʒ     voiced palato-alveolar fricative (Eng. *s* in *measure*)
ɸ     voiceless bilabial fricative
ʖ     voiceless alveolar lateral click
ʔ     glottal plosive (stop)

**1:0    Background to the study.**

**1.1    The Language and its Accent:**

This dissertation attempts to discuss the features of the variety of pronunciation that characterises the speech-habits of educated speakers of English who are native Kenyans. The term "accent" as used here refers to a variety of pronunciation that may be noticed in the speech of an individual or members of a given speech community. It differs from a "dialect" in that the latter term also covers syntactic, lexical and semantic features of a language. It also differs from primary stress of the prosodic features because the later is a narrower term that is the property of intonation.

English is a major international language of the world today. It is used in many countries or regions either as a Native, Second or Foreign language. Statistics show that by 1978 it was being used by over four hundred million (400,000,000) people as a first language throughout the world. Hence when a language is used by so many people who spread over such a wide geographical expanse, it naturally diverges into numerous accents and dialects. The factors that bring about such accent variations can be broadly categorized as social, psychological and physiological. However, for the purpose of this study, focus will be laid only on social and geographical factors which initiate changes in accents. Consequently, various accents like the Received Pronunciation (R.P), Standard American English (SAE), Indian English, West African English, etc have emerged.

The majority of Kenyan speakers of English are multilingual. This means that apart from English, the native Kenyans also speak Swahili and their mother tongue. These three levels of

languages are arranged according to the inhabitants' social, geographical and educational positions. First is the international English, which is used by the educated elite who live in the country's towns and big cities. Then there is the supra-national language, Swahili, which is used by the average citizens who work and live in the urban and semi-urban areas. Last in the scale are the indigenous languages called mother tongues which are used by the majority of peasants and the uneducated who live in the rural areas. At the individual level, one may find the following combinations: Mother Tongue alone (MT); Swahili alone (S); Mother Tongue with Swahili (MTS); Mother Tongue with English (MTE); Mother Tongue, English and Swahili (MTES); or English with Swahili (ES). MTES is the commonest combination.

English is therefore used as a second language although it enjoys the status of being the official language of the country. What is more, the spread and quality of English that is spoken by about 20% of Kenyans who are fluent in the languages varies with geographical, social and economic factors. According to Okombo (1989) 28.8% of the Kikuyu speak English, as do 25.2% of the Embu: 23.4 % of the Akamba; 20% of the Luo; and 19.3% of the Gusii and Luhya, severally. Hence education, position and one's ethnic background normally affect the speaker's quality of English in general and pronunciation in particular.

The Standard Accent of Kenyan English (SAKE) is posited in this study as the idealized type of pronunciation that is non-stigmatized. In the continuum of the RP native-like accents, it falls midway between the local stigmatized accents and the RP, being closer to the latter. It seems to have no native speakers in the country since it has to be learnt either through practice or exposure, or both channels. SAKE does not expose the speakers' Mother Tongue interference features and is usually associated with the educated or elitist native Kenyan speakers of English.

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SAKE is the attainable model during the teaching of English pronunciation in secondary schools but is mostly propagated in good national schools where the learners' ambitious efforts to attain the RP normally land them at the SAKE level of performance. Thus SAKE is assumed to be spoken by the products of good high schools and other higher institutions of learning, besides the workers whose occupation require that they attain a good mastery of English pronunciation. Such workers include local newsbroadcasters, air-hostesses, phoneticians and phonologists, teachers of English, and senior public administrators. The phonological features of the accent will be discussed in detail in chapters Two and Three.

## 1.2    The Research Problem:

Most of the native Kenyan speakers of English, including the Ministry of Education officials, assume that it is obligatory for all speakers of English, wherever they may be, to attain the RP. Yet they are aware of the difficulty of that arduous task and often confess to having fallen short of the expectation. They are therefore, oblivious to the recent findings of sociologists that the appropriate·language or accent to any members of a given speech community is the type that is used by the educated members of that speech community.

This work is thus an exploratory study that seeks to determine whether, by the end of their fourth-form course of English lessons where speech work takes only a total of thirty minutes per week, the Kenyan school leavers should be expected to have attained the RP model of pronunciation. The Ministry of Education prescribes the RP as the model despite the fact that the students learn English in order to use it in Kenyan linguistic context and are, furthermore, taught English by their compatriots who are at best SAKE speakers.

Consequently, the study is an attempt to arbitrate in the debate that rages between the

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officials of the Ministry of Education on one hand, and the local sociolinguists, phonologists and teachers of English pronunciation on the other, over the appropriate accent or model of pronunciation that should be adopted in teaching English in Kenyan schools and other institutions.

1:3    The Research Objectives:

The main intention of this work is to give a synchronic account of the phonetic and phonological features of what should constitute the Standard Accent of Kenyan English (SAKE). The features are examined from a sociolinguistic point of view using the theory of functionalism as a descriptive tool. Hence there are three main objectives in the study. They can be specifically stated as follows:

(1)    To identify both phonetic and phonological features of the non-stigmatized accent of Kenyan English called SAKE.

(2)    To describe both the segmental and supra-segmental features of the SAKE.

(3)    To discuss the appropriacy of SAKE to Kenyan speakers of English.

1:4    The Hypothesis:

Since the communicative function of any language or its accent is to attempt to relate the type of language used by the members of speech community to the culture and society whose needs it serves, the main hypothesis in this study is that native Kenyans do not need to attain the RP model of pronunciation because they do not operate in an RP linguistic context. This is mainly because it is almost impossible to drill a speech community out of its established language habits.

Language is both an individual and a social phenomenon. At an individual level, it

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manifests itself only in the habits of each individual speaker. At the same time, it is intimately connected with the society through its function which is primarily that of communicating messages from any given individual to one or more other members of his speech community. Thus language forms the major link between the individual and the society, and makes it possible for him to live at the same time as an individual personality complete in himself, and as fully functioning member of his social group.

## 1:5  The Rationale:

Native speakers of a given language react differently to a perfect accent from a foreign speaker of their language. While the Arabs, the French and the Russians encourage native-like accents of their languages from foreigners, the English and the Japanese do not encourage it. Loveday (1982:25) rightly observes that a foreigner who is fluent in Japanese will be shunned since his act provides overt evidence of large-scale, long-lasting and extremely serious invasion of their socio-linguistic territorial interests. Likewise, the English take it as a parody. Their reaction to a too perfect accent from a foreigner has been described as that of a host who sees an invited guest making free with his possessions.

Thus adopting the RP as the model of learning pronunciation and using English in an ESL environment like Kenya is both a luxury and inappropriate. This is because, firstly, the accent is stigmatized as it amounts to aping the speech habits of the native RP speakers and, secondly, if we consider the multi-lingual environment that prevails in Kenya, coupled with the paucity of the resources for teaching and learning of English pronunciation that the country faces, it is not justifiable to set the RP as the model of pronunciation in Kenya.

Furthermore, modern trends in sociolinguistics thoughts and ESL teaching programmes

no longer require a foreign learner of a language to aim at being native-like: acceptability of the pronunciation by the educated speakers and the mutual intelligibility across the board are the two basic requirements for oral communication these days.

Last but not least, this is also an area of applied linguistics in which no systematic study has been conducted as yet. Hence the study on Kenyan English in general and the phonological features of SAKE in particular should provide the basis on which future researchers can build and hence develop their works.

1:6    Scope and Limitations:

The overall scope of the study covers quite a large area. It spans across the areas of phonetics, phonology, sociolinguistics and ELT programmes. However, an analysis of both the phonetic and phonological features which characterize the speech habits of educated speakers of English who are native Kenyans is the main concern. But since it is not easy to analyse one accent or dialect of any language in isolation, the discussion naturally spills over to three other varieties of pronunciation -the RP, the Standard American English, and the local stigmatized accents of English. Such a comparison puts SAKE in a proper perspective.

The phonetic and phonemic features of SAKE both at the segmental and supra-segmental levels of analysis are investigated in the work. Hence an attempt is made to describe and compare the phonemes, stress and intonation patterns of SAKE with those of the RP. The study does not, however, proceed to examine the features of connected speech like juncture, assimilation, coalescence, metathesis, deletion and vowel weakening or reduction since these processes do not apply to SAKE. All the discussion is conducted within the theoretical framework of Functionalism.

Pertinent sociolingusitic issues are also discussed in the work. This occurs when the appropriacy of the variety of language used is examined, together with its communicative function to the members of the society that use it. Hence fluency of utterances is preferred to purism and an argument advanced that paying too much attention to pronunciation details by an ESL learner often affects his fluency in oral communication since it entails his straining to articulate the unfamiliar and problematic RP sounds. Hence SAKE is presented as more appropriate because it enables Kenyan speakers to communicate their social, regional and physiological peculiarities of pronunciation without straining.

1:7    Theoretical Framework:

As has been already indicated above, the study aims at analysing the structure and function of SAKE and comparing its features with those of the RP. Hence the appropriate theoretical framework adopted in the work is that of Functionalism.

Functionalism, as used in this work, should be seen as a particular movement within domain of structuralism that regards the main function of a language to be that of communication. This is unlike in Anthropology and Sociology where the two terms (Functionalism and Structionalism) refer to contrasting theories or methods of analysis.

In Functionalism, therefore, a language is primarily seen as an instrument which, apart from communicating meaningful messages, also enables the members of its speech community to establish contact and enter into relations with one another. Thus functional contrasts of language like Distinctive function, Demarcative function and Expressive function are discussed. Let us see what these functions are.

When the function of a phonetic element is classified as distinctive or oppositional, it

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normally serves to identify, at one point of the spoken chain, one sound as opposed to all the other sounds which could have occurred in that environment if the meaning has been different. Thus the word / / is identified as such by its three successive phonemes, each of which plays its part by the fact that it is distinct from all the other phonemes which could have occurred in that context.

Supra-segmental features like stress, tone and juncture often convey a demarcative function in particular language systems. This means that they do not serve to distinguish one form from another on the substitutional dimension of contrast, but rather reinforce the phonological cohesion of forms and thus helps to identify them syntagmatically as units by marking the boundary between one form and another in the chain of speech. Such a contribution, according to Martinet (1964:53) helps the hearer in analysing the utterance into its successive units.

Expressive function serves to inform the hearer about the state of mind of the speaker without recourse to the scheme of double articulation -it conveys to the hearer an indication of the speaker's feelings and/or attitude. This happens because every language appears to put a rich set of phonological resources at the disposal of its users for the expression of feelings. Thus in French, Martinet (op.cit.) says a lengthening and exaggeration of [p] in "impossible" as occurs in the phrase "cet enfant impossible" may be interpreted as an indication of irritation.

We attempt to advance an argument in this work that the phonological structure, apart from the syntactic and semantic components of the language, are determined by the functions that they perform in the societies in which the members of its speech community operate.

1:8    The Literature Review:

This is an exploratory study which seeks to break new grounds in Linguistic investigation. As such, there is scarcity of works of literature that are pertinent to the topic under review. To the best of my knowledge, no systematic study has been done specifically on the phonological features of SAKE. The few works that are available in the market dwell on English dialects and accents in general, with hardly anything on the Kenyan variety of English.

One local linguist, however, has done good pioneering work in the area. Prof. Okombo has done commendable work in analyzing the features of Kenyan English in various academic fora, especially in the British Council Proceedings of 1986. He pursued the notion further in his correspondence lecture notes to external undergraduate students of the University of Nairobi. The compilation is a series of lecture notes titled <u>STUDY OF ENGLISH</u> (Volumes 1 and 2).

Okombo's works, however differ both in scope and methodology from approach adopted in this study because the works attempt to cover all the dimensions of Kenyan English-syntactic and semantic, besides phonological. Moreover, the works are not based on the theory of Functionalism which is the theoretical basis that is adopted in the present study.

Ragutu (1991) also discussed some relevant materials in his unpublished M.Ed dissertation submitted at the University of Manchester, U.K. <u>TACKLING PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES THROUGH THE AURAL-ORAL SKILLS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI</u> devotes a chapter to the discussion of current trends in the teaching of pronunciation and recommends that the Educated Accent of English (EKAE) be adopted as the model for Kenyans schools. However, dissertation takes a pedagogic approach to the study of pronunciation and hence does not look at the subject of accents in detail.

In a wider context, Trudgill has also done appreciable work on the topic of English

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accents and dialects. Two of his and his associate's works titled International English: A Guide to Varieties of Standard English, and English Accents and Dialects have been useful in the compilation of this work. They are through works of literature which, however, only concentrate on the accents and dialects of the British English and hence exclude other areas where English is used either as a second or foreign language.

Whiteley (1974) edited a detailed account of the language situation in Kenya. The text Language in Kenya not only examines the use of English in the country in the early 70's, but also that of other indigenous languages of Africans and even Asians. I found this book too general and ambitious for the topic of this study.

On the theoretical level, Kachru, Postal and Martinet have been invaluable for the work.

1:9    Methodology:

Since this study is exploratory and there is a scarcity of works of literature to consult for materials, some form of field work findings will, however, be augmented with Library research listening to both the radio and TV programmes in English, and intuition since the author also regards himself as a speaker of SAKE.

The data collection method will mainly involve inter-acting with the speakers of both SAKE and the RP besides SAE and the stigmatized accents, and listening to their pronunciation. Participant-observation method will also be employed whereby I will hold discussions with university lecturers, post-graduate students, undergraduate students, phoneticians and phonologists, lecturers in Linguistics, teachers of English in secondary schools, newsbroadcasters and students from high-cost secondary schools. Thus the interviewees will be chosen from diverse groups in a stratified sampling method. They will be adult speakers of English who are

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drawn from both sexes and based in both urban and rural areas. In all cases, the interviewees will be involved in unrehearsed, spontaneous talk that is based on topical issues.

The author has also had some residence in the U.K. The one and a half years of study and inter-action with the native RP speakers in England thus exposed him to the most of the phonological features of the RP and the other accents that are discussed in this study. Listening to the KBC radio services in English and watching both the KBC and KTN television programmes have also been invaluable in the compilation of this work.

## 2:0   Varieties of English pronunciation:

In chapter one, the background information about the contents, scope and method to be employed in this study were laid out. In this chapter, we attempt to explore the different accents of the International English that an inter-actant in Kenya may recognise as he or she communicates with different speakers from various social and geographical backgrounds. Thus the phonetic and phonological features of the RP will be discussed in some detail as will be those of other accents of English including American Accent and SAKE. But we shall start with some introductory discussion of the process of pronunciation.

## 2:1   The Process of Pronunciation:

The term "pronunciation" generally refers to the way in which speech sounds are perceived and produced through the manipulation of the main organs that make up the speech mechanism. Such a definition incorporates both auditory and articulatory phonetics as the starting point in our study of pronunciation in this section. The latter branch of phonetics examines the nature and functions of articulators, which are large and complex set of muscles that can produce changes in the shape of the vocal tract.

As Gimson(1980:9) aptly puts it, any manifestation of the language by means of oral communication is a result of highly complicated series of events. He indicates that the first stage is psychological because the formulation of the concept takes place in the brain at a linguistic level. The second stage is physiological because the nervous system transmits the message to the organs of speech which have the capacity to produce a particular pattern of sound. The third stage is acoustic since the movements of the organs of speech create disturbances in the air-

stream so as to give shape to the type of sound being produced. A full list of articulators include the larynx, the pharynx, the velum, the hard palate, the alveolar ridge, the tongue, the teeth, the nose and the lips. It is not, however, the purpose of this study to go into a detailed account of each of these articulators.

It then follows that the human utterances are largely shaped by the physiological limitations imposed by the capacity of the lungs and by the contracting muscles which control their action. This is because man uses, for the production of speech sounds, the organs whose primary physiological functions are not supposed to be vocal communication. such organs are situated in the respiratory tract and include the lungs, from which the expelled air provides the source of energy for vocal activity. Then there are the muscles in the chest which produce the flow of air that is needed for the speech sounds, while the muscles in the larynx produce many different modifications in the flow of air from the chest, through the vocal tract to either the mouth or the nostrils in order to complete the process of pronunciation.

Although any adult speaker has a physiological capacity to articulate all the speech sounds which occur in any given natural language, the principles of least effort and ease of articulation often operate to minimize articulatory expendable among non-native speakers of a language. This is because some sounds require less efforts to articulate than others.

Both the process and product of pronunciation are also affected by what Hall (1964:66) calls "the basis of articulation". This can be described as the speakers' habits of holding the entire mechanism with which they articulate their speech sounds. The habits differ from one language to another and are at the root of what constitutes one's accent in speaking a language.

The basis of articulation mainly involves the overall position in which the organs of

speech are positioned when one is not talking. Such a position serves as a point of departures when one begins to talk. The basis of articulation also involves the way in which the speakers tense the muscles of their throats or nod their heads while stressing sounds, and the manner and rate in which they make the transition from one second to the next. For the native-speakers of English, especially the RP native-speakers, Hall (op cit.) cites that the normal position for the tongue in repose is the centre of the mouth and somewhat raised, more or less in the position of the schwa /ə/. But since that sound does not exist both in the indigenous Kenyan languages and SAKE, the basis of articulation must be different from that of the RP, and hence the differences in the two accents.

## 2:2    The Received Pronunciation (RP):

Let us then proceed to the discussion of the different types of English accents. The RP is the accent of the British English that has been selected, standardized, codified, accepted and hence serves the elaboration of function. What is more, it has been most fully described and is usually taught to foreigners who learn English.

The term "Received" simply means "being accepted as proper at the Royal court". The received accent started gaining ascendancy five centuries ago when a notion that one kind of pronunciation of English was socially preferable to others began to emerge. Thus one regional accent began to acquire social prestige vis-a-vis other British accents. Let us then see how it gained such ascendancy.

The RP is the accent of South East England, especially that of the London region. It acquired prominence because of London's political, commercial and social status, besides the presence of the court there. Thus the early phonetician John Hart (1956) notes that "it is in the

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court and London that the flower of the English tongue is used....." This speech of the Court which was phonetically largely that of the London area, soon increasingly acquired a prestige value and, in, time, lost some of the local characteristics of the London regional accent. It was finally fixed as the accent of the ruling class through the conformist influence of the public schools of the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, the dissemination of the RP as a class pronunciation throughout Britain caused it to be recognised as characteristic not so much of a region as of a social stratum.. With the spread of education, the situation arose in which an educated man might not belong to the upper class and might retain his regional speech habits. On the other hand, individuals who were eager for social advancement felt obliged to modify their accents in the direction of the social standard which the RP had now become. An accent had thus become a marker of position in the society.

One point, however, should be borne in mind at this juncture. The rise of the RP to its present prestigious position was a result of social judgement rather than of any official decision as to what accents are "correct" or wrong. It has hence become more widely known and accepted both in Britain and worldwide through the advent of the radio. Gimson (op. cit) observes that the BBC radio and television services formerly recommended this form of pronunciation for its newscasters and announcers because it was the type that was most widely understood and consequently excited the least prejudice of a regional kind.

Among the RP speakers themselves, three sub-divisions can be recognized. The first sub-group is called the conservative form and is mainly used by the older generation and members of the elitist professions or social groups. There is secondly, the General Form which is in

common use and typified by the pronunciation that is adopted by the BBC services. Then there is the Advanced Form which is mainly used by young people of exclusive social groups, mostly of upper classes and other professional circles. It is generally noted that this Advanced Form, although often adjudged "affected" other RP speakers, indicates the way in which the accent is developing and may be adopted in future as the General RP. However, for the purpose of this study, it is the general Form that should be assumed whenever reference is made to the RP.

In terms of its phonetic inventory, the RP is generally taken to be composed of twenty vowels and twenty-four consonants. The breakdown of the pure vowels include [i:,I ,e ,æ,3:,ə ,ʌa:,ɒ ,ɔ ,ʊ ,u:] while the diphthongs include [ɪə,eə,eɪaɪ ɔɪ əʊ , ]. According to Roach (1983:22), there are also five triphthongs in the RP. They are [ , , , , ]. Examples words of the above vowels can be given as follows:

(a)   Pure Vowels:

    /i:/ beat, mean

    /I / pin, fish

    /e / yes, men

    /æ/ bat, gas

    /3:/ bird, purse

    /ə/ occur, another

    /ʌ/ some, rush

    /a:/ card, half

    /ɒ/ pot, gone

    /ɔ/ torn, horse

    /ʊ/ — woman, look

    /uː/ — food, hoot

(b) Diphthongs:

    /ɪə/ beard, fierce.

    /eə/ aired, scarce.

    /ʊə/ moored, tour.

    /eɪ/ pain, face.

    /aɪ/ tide, nice.

    /ɔɪ/ void, voice

    /əʊ/ home, most

    /aʊ/ loud, house

(c) Triphthongs:

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/ʊ/ put, pull

/u:/ food, soon

/eɪə/
/ / layer, player

/aɪə/
/ / liar , fire

/ɔɪə/
/ / loyal, royal

/əʊə/
/ / lower, mower

/aʊə/
/ / power, hour

The RP inventory of the consonants, on the other hand, contains six stops, nine fricatives, two affricates, three nasals, one lateral and three approximants. The inventories of the above phonemes can be depicted in the diagrams shown on the next page.

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| | Front | Central | Back |
|---|---|---|---|
| | i: ɪ | 3: | u: ʊ |
| | e | ə | ɔ: ɒ |
| | æ ɑ | ʌ | ɑ: a: ɹ |

\* The pure vowels of the RP

_Mann_

| | Bilabial | Labio Dental | Dental | Alveolar | Post-Alveolar | Palatal | Velar | Glottal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stops | pb | | | td | | | kg | ʔ |
| Fricatives | | fv | θð | sz | ʃʒ | | x ɣ | h |
| Affricates | | | | | tʃ dʒ č | | | |
| Nasals | m | | | n | | ɲ | ŋ | |
| Lateral | | | | l | | | | |
| Approximant | w | | | | r | j | | |

\* English consonant phonemes.

2:3 The Standard American Accent:

The other major international accent which exerts influence on the pronunciation patterns of Kenyans is the American accent which is technically called Standard American English

(SAE). Its influence in the country has mainly been propagated by the numerous books published in America, American music, the American film industry and, lately, by the CNN television service. And there is the Voice of America international radio service and numerous American citizens in the country who always inter-act with Kenyans in their day-to-day activities. Furthermore, there are many American teachers in our schools and colleges while some local Kenyans have had their education and long residence in the States. In fact, it is generally believed that Kenyans inter-act more with the Americans than the British on the local scene. Thus SAE is distinct in Kenya and is what constitutes an "(foreign) accent of English " to many local Kenyans.

The US has so many regional dialects of English which compete for prominence that no regional accent has ascended to the heights of the RP in British English. However, Fronkin and Rodman (1978:259) indicate that SAE is the accent of the American English which most Americans almost speak, and that divergences from it are labelled "Philadelphia dialect", "Chicago dialect", "Black English", etc. But it is generally conceded that SAE is an idealisation which no one has ever defined precisely.

Although American syntax, spelling and lexis have considerable influence in Kenyan literature, SAE does not have the same influence in pronunciation. This may be attributed to the fact that SAE is just a variant of the RP which the local institutions officially propagate. Since the consonants of the two international accents are more or less similar, we should hence examine the differences in the vowel inventories of the accents. Ladefoged (1982:28) represents them like this:

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| SAE: | RP | Example words: |
|------|------|----------------|
| /i / | /i:/ | heed |
| /aj/ | /a:/ | hard |
| /a/ | /ɒ/ | hod |
| /ʊ/ | / ʊ/ | hood |
| /u/ | /u:/ | who'd |
| /ʌ/ /ə/ | /ə/ | herd |
| /ə/ | /ʌ/ | Hudd |
| /ɪ/ | /ɪ:/ | here |
| /ɛ/ | /ɛ/ | hair |
| /ʌ/ | /aʊ/ | hired |

## 2:4    The Stigmatized Kenyan Accents of English:

In general terms, we may categorise any kind of pronunciation that deviates from the "normal" form as stigmatized. The problem, however, is on how to decide on the normal pronunciation within a given speech community. Usually it is the "Educated" speakers of a given language or its variety that are looked to for guidance. Hence, in Kenyan context, it is the SAKE speakers that may pass judgement on some forms of pronunciation as "normal", "deviant" or "affected".

The word "stigma" means a mark of shame or discredit in common parlance. It may also mean an identifying mark or characteristic. When applied to a speakers' accent of English. it refers to  a deviant form of pronunciation which is affected by the phonological features of the speakers mother tongue. According to Okombo (op. cit) Kenyans generally tend to react more

sharply to deviations that can be attributed to the speaker's ethnic language. Thus such utterances which are based on the influence of an ethnic language are usually ridiculed in a fairly open manner and hence branded stigmatized.

It has already been indicated in chapter one that Kenya is a multi-lingual country and hence most of her citizens are trilinguals. What is more, the country has over forty local languages, each of which is composed of several accents and dialects. On average, most of these indigenous languages have between two and four dialects but an extreme case occurs in the Luhya language which is said to have eighteen dialects.

The received wisdom in sociolinguistics indicates that most of the ESL learners' pronunciation of a second or foreign language is often influenced by a few linguistic and social factors among which the most important one seems to be mother tongue interference. This factor plays such a significant role in the teaching and learning of a new language that the ethnic origins of most ESL speakers can be easily detected through their pronunciation. Thus when one listens to a foreigner speaking English, he or she may detect Indian, Arabic, African, French, German or Spanish accents. Hence on the local scene, the Luo, Kikuyu, Kamba, Luhya or Kalenjin accents of English can be easily recognised by their fellow Kenyans. Whereas linguists do not wholly condemn the exposure of one's origin in his accent, the issue may become so stigmatized that intelligibility is affected.

The majority of the local languages are of Bantu origin, with Hamitic and Nilo-Hamitic descendants being very few. In terms of their phonetic inventories, consonants present fewer peculiarities than vowels when compared with the RP phonemes.

In general, fricatives pose the main source of problems among the consonants in the

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indigenous languages. The three sibilants /ʃ/, /s/ and /z/ are absent in the consonantal inventory of most of the indigenous languages while /ß/, /ɲ/ and /f/, which are not found in the RP, exist in them. Other features are peculiar to specific languages: among them the Kikuyu, a community which lives in central Kenya, the consonant /f/ is often <u>confused</u> with /v/, /r/ with /l/, /ɵ/ with /ð/, and /ts/ with /s/. Among the Isukha group of the Luhya community, /k/ is confused with /g/, /t/ with /d/, and /s/ with /ts/. Among the Wanga, another Luhya community living in Kakamega district, /p/ is confused with /b/, /ɵ/ with /ts/ and /ɵ/ with /ð/. Further confusions arise between /ʃ/ and /s/ among the Luo , /v/ and /w/ among the local Indians, /s/ and /z/ among the Kamba, who also insert an initial /h/ in words that begin with vowels, e.g "harm" for "arm"; or "hair" for "air".

There is also the problem of prenasalition of voiced stops /b,d,g/ in the stigmatized accents of Kenyan English. In the majority of Bantu-related languages, nasals always precede voiced stops in all environments, but most commonly in initial and medial word positions. Thus the nasals /m/, /n/, /ŋ/ or /ɲ/ would normally precede /b/, /d/ and /g/, respectively. This often leads to a difficulty in hearing and pronouncing words like "adder" vs "under", "widow" vs "window"; etc.

Let us then proceed to examine the vowel inventory. The vowels of most indigenous local languages is not very different from those of the SAKE speakers that is illustrated in the next section of this chapter. Thus while the RP has twelve pure vowels, eight diphthongs and five triphthongs, the majority of the local languages have five vowels of [i, e, a, o, u], with the notable exception of Kikuyu and Luo languages. Although systematic studies on the phonology of two languages have not been conducted exhaustively, the Kikuyu vowel inventory is said to

comprise seven vowels which can be represented as [i ,e ,e ,a ,ɔ ,o ,u ]. On the other hand, Odhiambo (1981:24) indicates that Dholuo contains nine pure vowels which can be represented as [i ,I ,ɛ ,a ,ɔ , o, ʊ, u], It thus appears that no indigenous language in Kenya has [Ʊ,ʌ,ə,ɒ,ɜ ]. This is why the articulation of vowels pose more problems to the speakers of the stigmatized accents of Kenyan English than that of consonants.

## 2:5    THE STANDARD ACCENT OF KENYAN ENGLISH (SAKE):

The acronym SAKE was introduced in chapter one and  expressed in its full form as the "Standard Accent of Kenyan English". It was also posited as the educated or cultivated accent of Kenyan English which is stigma-free. What needs to be clarified at this juncture is the implication of the term "standard".

Although different authors define the term differently in order to suit their contexts and lines of argumentation, Fromklin and Rodman (1978:259) while describing the Standard American English (SAE), contend that the word "standard" means an idealization which is hard to attain. They continue to assert that nobody speaks standard accent and that  even if someone were to speak it somewhere, nobody would recognise it partly because no authoritative analysis of it has been done. Although such an observation seems grossly exaggerated when applied to SAKE, it cannot be fully dismissed. Hence the most that we can do in this section is to present a theoretical approximation of the phonological features of SAKE.

From the available literature, it is evident that linguists often contend that all accents and dialects of a given language are equal. This is why , they argue, before a single standard language or accent has risen in any country or among any given members of a speech community, all the local accents and dialects are taken to be of equal social standing. Hall

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(1964:359-60) appropriately cites that in the early middle ages, the speech varieties of North Eastern England and Southern England were all equally acceptable in Britain, and each person spoke and wrote in his own accent and dialect. The same phenomenon occurred in France, Spain and Italy. But in these cases, as soon as the accent or dialect of any particular region or social group begins to acquire a special prestige, then the speakers of other accents begin to feel inferiority complex concerning their erstwhile normal accent: it now becomes stigmatized.

In most cases, the written language tends to be more highly standardized than the speech of those who use it. Hence Lyons (1981:277) indicates that the existence of an acceptable standard for the written language should serve as a model of propriety and correctness for the speech literate in any society in which the masterly of the written language brings prestige or the possibility of social advancement. Thus on the local scene, we can say that textbooks on phonetics, phonology and socio-linguistics are the authorities that set standards on which the acceptable pronunciation should be based. Then the radio, the television, the cinema and the pronunciation of the educated speakers of the accent augment the textbooks.

The SAKE is similar to the RP but not identical to it, It is less elaborate and sophisticated than the RP and thus has fewer phonemes in its inventory. However, it is understood by all Kenyans who are literate in English and is highly intelligible to an international audience of English speakers including native RP speakers. It is stigma free and ought to be spoken by all local newsbrodcasters, phoneticians, phonologists, teachers of English in secondary schools and higher institutions of learning, students from good national schools, beach boys and senior administrators.

Among the SAKE speakers themselves, two categories can be recognised. These are the

common SAKE speakers and the Advanced SAKE speakers. Speakers of the common SAKE include teachers of English in secondary schools, public administrators, middle-class workers who attained tertiary education and some students from the posh national schools in the urban centres. They comprise about 1% of the Kenyan population. Advanced Form of SAKE is spoken by extremely few Kenyans who have had long residence abroad in the countries where English is used as a Native Language. These speakers have also attained very high levels of education both locally and abroad. They number in hundreds and can be found among good newsbroadcasters, University lecturers, phonologists and air-hostesses. For the purpose of this study, however, it is common SAKE that is assumed whenever reference is made to the accent. Its approximate phonetics and phonological features are discussed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER THREE

<u>3:0</u>    <u>The segmental and supra-segmental features of sake</u>

This chapter is, in essence, a continuation of the discussion on accents that was begun in chapter two. But whereas chapter two examined all the major accents of English that one may recognise in Kenya and concluded by providing only a theoretical basis for defining SAKE, we shall henceforth concentrate on the practical aspects of both the segmental and supra-segmental features of SAKE. Let us hence begin with a discussion of the distinctive features of the segments and prosodies.

## 3.1    <u>THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE PHONEMES</u>

In any Functional approach to the study of phonetics and phonology, the phonemic theory of Trubertzkoy and his fellow Prague Scholars is usually adopted. The key notion of this school of phonology posits that phonemes, though still accepted as the minimal segments of language systems, are not their minimal elements. That phonemes are rather seen as bundles of simultaneous distinctive features. Hence the term "distinctive" refers to that part of functional contrast in language systems which has to do with distinguishing one sound from another.

The Prague scholars proceeded to specify several other types of contrast like bilateral, multi-lateral, proportional, isolated, e.t.c. Although it is not within the scope of this study to go into the details of such contrasts, let us briefly see what they mean. In a bilateral opposition, the sum of the phonetic features that are common to both members of the opposition is peculiar to the two members only. Thus /b/ and /p/ are the only "oral bilabial stops" and hence stand in a bilateral opposition. In a multi-lateral opposition, the phonologists cite the case of the three stops recognizable as /p/ /b/ and /pʰ/. Thus their common properties are still "oral bilabial stops" but

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since /pʰ/ and /b/ do not stand in a bilateral opposition, /b/ and /p/ can be described as " oral unaspirated labial stops". In a proportional opposition, the relationship between its members is identical with the relationship between the members of another opposition or several other oppositions of the same system. For example, the opposition between /p/ and /b/ is proportional because the relationship between its members is identical with the relationship between /t/ and /d/ and between /k/ and /g/. In an isolated opposition, no other segments stand in the same relationship as the two opposition members.

Let us then continue to see what the term "features" means. It usually refers to an entity which can be treated as the value of a variable on a particular dimension; it is a phonetic property that can be used to classify sounds. Hence some of the features that are required to classify English segments include voice, place and manner of Articulation for consonants on the one hand; and Tongue Position, Backness and Lip-position for vowels on the other. These features may be either binary or multi-valued, depending on whether two or more values for contrast are employed. A detailed account of the distinctive segmental features of SAKE now follows.

## 3.2    THE DISTINCTIVE VOWELS OF SAKE

A vowel is generally defined as a voiced sound in which the air has a free passage through the mouth, and does not produce any audible friction. Vowels lie at the centre of syllables in supra-segmental phonology and hence their crucial role in the pronunciation of words. Even at segmental level of analysis, the vowels pose more problems to SAKE speakers than consonants and hence we should begin with an analysis of their features.

It was stated in chapter two that the RP has twelve pure vowels, eight diphthongs and

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five triphthongs. The SAKE, on the other hand, can be posited as having only six pure vowels and seven diphthongs. The latter accent is also believed to have triphthongs since, in the event of triphthongs sequences, the semi-vowel /w/ replaces the /ʊ/ to break the sequence. Secondly, there is no schwa /ə / which all the RP triphthongs end in, in SAKE. Consequently, the triphthong which breaks the triphthong sequence.

Let us begin with the pure vowels of SAKE. These can be expressed as [ i, e, ɛ, a, o, u]. We shall classify them on the bases of tongue-height, backness and lip-rounding. Each of the vowels is described in relation to the cardinal vowels of the IPA as a reference point. — Called the cardinal vowels.

[i] is a close and front vowel. It does not occur in the RP but is similar to the cardinal vowel No. 1. In its production, the tongue tip is raised high and moved to the front of the mouth. The lips are spread and the mouth slightly open. In SAKE, this vowel neutralizes the contrast between the /iː/ and /I/ of the RP in all environments. It thus occurs in such words as "read", "weak", "peace", "mean", ladies", e.t.c in SAKE.

[e] is a half-close, front vowel that lies between the cardinals 2 and 3. In production, the lips are unrounded / spread slightly and the mouth open slightly. It neutralizes the contrast between /e/ and /ɛ/ and hence occurs in such words as "bet", "men", "yes", "dead", "many", e.t.c in SAKE.

[a] is a front and open vowel which is similar to the cardinal No. 4. It does not exist in the RP as a pure vowel but used for the first element of the RP glide /aɪ/. In SAKE, it neutralises the contrast between /ə /, /æ/, and /ʌ/ and hence occurs in such words as "acute", "hut", "man", "sat", "land", e.t.c.

ɒ ɑ
[ɑ] is back, open vowel which is similar to the cardinal No. 5. It does not exist in the RP as pure vowel. In its production, the mouth is wide open while the lips are rounded. This

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/mɪʌl/

iː F→
iː → e
hɪd

vowel neutralizes the contrast between /a:/ and /ɜ:/ of the RP and occurs in such words as "car", "dark", "word", "lard", card", e.t.c in SAKE.

[o] is a back, half-close vowel which is similar to cardinal No. 7. In its production, the lips are slightly rounded. It does not exist in the RP inventory as a pure vowel but is approximate to the French vowel which occurs in the word "ecau". In SAKE, it neutralizes the contrast between /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ and thus occurs in such words as "tall", "form", "don", cough", born", e.t.c.

[u] is a back, close vowel that is similar to cardinal No.8. In its production, the lips are slightly rounded. It neutralizes the contrast between the /uː/ and /ʊ/ of the RP and hence occurs in such word as "food", "soon", loose", "good", "fool", e.t.c in SAKE.

Having discussed the pure vowels which are peculiar to SAKE, let us now proceed to the diphthongs of the accent. As has been indicated above, there are eight distinct diphthongs in the RP. Roach (op.cit) categorises them as either centring or closing. The centring ones glide towards the centre of the cardinal vowel trapezium while the closing ones glide towards the top opposite corners of the trapezium. The centring diphthongs end in Schwa /ə/ and include / , , /. The closing diphthongs either end in /ɪ/ or /ʊ/ and thus include /eɪ,aɪ,ɔɪ,əʊ,aʊ /.

In SAKE, there appears to be seven diphthongs but only one of them, /aɪ/, corresponds to those of the RP. The rest are different because both the /ə/ and /ʊ/ that compose them do not occur in SAKE. In fact, /əʊ/ is pronounced like the pure vowel / o / in SAKE while /aʊ/ becomes /aʊ/. A comparison of the diphthong inventories of the two accents would look like this:



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| RP | SAKE | Example words |
|---|---|---|
| /ɪə/ | /ɪə/ | "peer" |
| /ɛə/ | /ɛə/ | "pair" |
| /ʊə/ | /ʊə/ | "poor" |
| /eɪ/ | /eɪ/ | "take" |
| /aɪ/ | /aɪ/ | "pie" |
| /ɔɪ/ | /ɔɪ/ | "coy" |
| /əʊ/ | /ʊ/ ? | "so", "both" |
| /aʊ/ | /aʊ/ | "cow", "house" |

## 3.3   THE DISTINCTIVE CONSONANTS OF SAKE

A consonant is generally defined as a sound in which the air from the lungs is not allowed to pass out through the mouth without something interrupting it. In terms of its consonantal inventory, it was stated in previous chapter that SAKE does not differ much from the RP. The only major differences were said to be noticed in the voice palato-alveolar fricative /ʒ/ which is rare even in the pronunciation of Advanced SAKE speakers. Other peculiarities occur in the realisations of the orthographic "s", besides /w/, /l/ and /r/. We shall discuss their distinctive features by adopting the feature matrix for consonants which was given in section 3.1 above.

Okombo (op.cit) rightly observes among SAKE speakers, there is a near-complete mastery of the RP inventory of consonants. But, as has been stated above, the consonant which has the lowest frequency of occurrence is the voiced palato-alveolar /ʒ/ which is found in such

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words as "measure", "garage" and "azure" in the RP. The general tendency in SAKE is either to replace the phoneme with its voiceless counterpart /ʃ/ found in the word "fish", or the voiced alveolar affricate /ʤ/ that occurs at the beginning and end of the word "judge". Usually, the former replaces the /ʒ/ where orthography has /s/ or /z/ while the latter replaces it where orthography has /g/. In fact, this consonant is new in the RP inventory, having been borrowed from French in this century. *which?*

Besides the above consonantal peculiarity, there are a few more which are worth discussing. The voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ seems to retain its orthographic quality in SAKE in all environments even if it is preceded by a vowel sound. Thus all the following pairs of words are pronounced using ~~the words are pronounced using~~ the orthographic /s/ in SAKE, thereby causing ~~confusing~~ *Confusion* in understanding their meaning, "dicease" vs "disease", "passing" vs "parsing", "peace" vs "peas", "ice" vs "eye", "loose" vs "lose" e.t.c. Such words are minimal pairs in the RP, but homonyms in SAKE. Consequently, where /z/ occurs either before or after a vowel in the RP, it will be pronounced as the voiceless /s/ in sake, e.g. "is", "busy", "his", "houses" e.t.c.

✗ The SAKE speakers do not articulate the allophonic variants of the consonants [p], [t], [k] or [l]. An allophone is a different phonetic realisation of a phoneme. In the RP, there is a difference in the articulation of the three voiceless stops depending on the environment in which they occur. Thus the fortis series /p,t,k/, when they occur in an initial position in an accented syllable, are usually accompanied by aspiration since the articulation requires a voiceless interval consisting of strongly expelled breath between the release of the plosive and the onset of a following vowel e.g [pʰin, 'tʰin, kʰin]. And the two [l] sounds in the word "hill" and show a

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variation of a different kind. The first [l] is "clear" while the last [l] is dark "dark". This means

that the first [l] has a front vowel resonance while the final [ɫ] has a back vowel resonance. In

SAKE, however, the lateral liquid [l] tends to have a clear quality in all word-positions while

the voiceless stops are ̬not̬ aspirated when they occur word-initially.

The realisation of the voiced labio-velar approximant /w/ is another peculiarity of SAKE

speaker. This approximant is articulated as if it is the voiceless labio-velar fricative /ʍ/ when

it occurs in words like "why" ,"what", "when", e.t.c. Thus the SAKE speakers usually

pronounce the three words as /hwaɪ/, /hwen/, /hwot/, e.t.c.

Another difference is heard in the realisation of the post-alveolar frictionless approximate

/r/. Whereas the phoneme is an approximat̲e /ɹ/ ̬at̬ in the RP, it is pronounced like a trill in

SAKE. It is produced when the tip of the tongue vibrates against the roof of the mouth.

Secondly, while the linking /r/ is pronounced like in the RP when the phoneme occurs in word-

final position where it links with a following word which begins with a vowel, this linking /r/

is not articulated in SAKE. Neither does one recognise the intrusive /r/, which occurs in the RP,

among SAKE speakers. Hence such pronunciations like / lɔːr and ɔdɹ / or /drɑːmar an mjuːzik / for

" law and order" and drama and music", respectively, do not have the intrusive "r" in SAKE.

Those are the major consonantal peculiarities of SAKE. It will be observed that the

peculiarities that pertain to allophonic features do not bring about confusion in communication

since the speaker will sound foreign but still intelligible. Thus the peculiarities of aspiration,

neutralisation or fortis-lenis variations do not lead to communication breakdown which the errors

in phonemic features may lead to. Let us now proceed to the discussion of the supra-segmental

feature of SAKE, although the presentations are limited by the pancity of literature in the area.

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THE SUPRA-SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF SAKE

The supra-segmental features are those that occur in larger linguistic units than the phoneme. They are often seen as properties of whole words, phrases, sentences and longer stretches of discourse like paragraphs and passages. The most common supra-segmental features in any natural language include stress, rhythm and intonation. These three types of patterning, according to strang (op. cit) are very closely linked in English although they are not wholly interdependent; none of them can be explained without reference to others. In this study, however, the discussion of supra-segmental features will be confined to stress and intonation patterns in individual words and longer utterances.

### 3.4.1 THE STRESS PATTERNS OF SAKE

Let us begin with a discussion of stress. Strang (1968:61) aptly defines stress as the intensity of an utterance. She views it as a characteristic that is derived from the relative force of the chest-pulse underlying syllables and proceeds to posit that its presence in utterances is manifested by the modification of the trial acoustic wave of resonant sounds not by any one isolable feature of wave.

The production of stress is generally believed to depend on the speaker using more muscular energy than is used for unstressed syllables. This is because, as it appears from experimental studies, the muscles used for expelling the air from the lungs become more active, thereby producing higher sub-glottal pressure in the production of stressed syllables. Hence in stressing a syllable, one may change the pitch contour by raising it, make the syllable louder or make it longer.

A stress may be either phonetic or phonemic. Phonemic stress usually serves to change

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the meanings of words e.g from nouns to verbs. For example, in the RP there is a difference in meaning when stress is placed on the second syllables of the words "contract", "survey", "permit" e.t.c and when it is placed on the first syllables of the same words e.g contract, survey, permit e.t.c. In the former case, the words are used as verbs whereas in the latter case they are used as nouns. Further to this contrastive function, stress may also be used to show emphasis, especially on individual words that the speaker wishes to focus attention on. Thirdly, stress may serve as a marker of word-division. Hall (op. cit) indicates that in a language like Hungarian, each time one hears a heavy stress, he or she automatically knows that a new word has begun. In Latin, on the other hand, when one hears a heavy stress, they learn that the end of the word was going to fall on the next or the second-next syllable.

If stress is phonemic in a language, there must at least be two contrasting levels in that language usually, three levels of phonemic stress within a word or longer utterances are recognised in particular languages. They are often described as the tonic strong stress, the non-tonic strong stress, and the unstressed syllables. The first two types are normally simplified as primary stress and secondary stress, respectively. The third type can be regarded as showing the absence of any recognisable amount of prominence.

Stress placement on syllables varies from one language to another and from one accent of a language to another. In French, for example, the tonic strong stress usually falls on the last syllable of the word. In Polish, it falls on the penultimate syllable whereas in Czech it usually falls on the first syllable. In the RP, however, the placement of stress varies with individual words although there are certain rules which govern this placement. According to Roach (op. cit). Generally phonologists posit that stress placement in the RP depends on the following

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factors:

(a)     Whether the word is morphologically simple or whether it is complex as a result of either one or more affixes, or of being a compound word.

(b)     The grammatical category to which the word belongs e.g verbs, noun, adjective, e.t.c.

(c)     The number of syllables in the word. ✓

(d)     The phonological structure of these syllables. ✓

What emerges from four factors above is that in the RP, single syllable words are often pronounced with a tonic strong stress. In the two-syllable words, either the first or the second syllable is stressed. In the case of verbs, if it ends with more than one ~~consonant~~ vowel, then the second syllable is stressed e.g / əgríː / . But if the final syllable contains a short vowel and one or no final consonant, then the first syllable is stressed e.g /ˈentə, ˈiːkwəl , ɛquɑl /. Two syllable simple adjectives are also stressed according to the same rule.

Three syllable words present a more complicated picture in the RP stress patterns. In verbs, if the last syllable contains a short vowel and ends with not more than one consonant, that syllable will be unstressed, and stress will be placed on the penultimate syllable e.g /

, mɪˈmaʊzə / . But if the final syllable contains a long vowel or a diphthong or ends with more than one consonant, then that final consonant will be stressed. e.g / entəˈteɪn

/. As a for nouns, if the final syllable contains a short ●vowel or /əʊ/, it is unstressed; if the syllable preceding this final  syllable contains a long vowel or diphthong or if it ends with more than one consonant, then that middle syllable will be stressed e.g / dɪˈzɑːstə /.

Let us now concentrate on the stress placement in SAKE. Here, one discovers that this phenomenon is reinforced by the fact that the accent is syllable-timed·language or accent,
arbitrary. This is
In a syllable-timed

according to Ladefoged (1982:204) all the syllables that constitute the word, rather than only stressed syllables, tend to recur at regular intervals of time. But in stress-timed languages or accents, there is a tendency for stresses to recur at regular intervals. Thus while in the RP the heavy beats which characterize stress follow one another at equal intervals of time regardless of the number of the unstressed or lightly stressed intervening syllables, in SAKE all syllables appear to command equal prominence. This affects juncture, which is faster in the RP and slower in SAKE. Juncture is the relationship between one sound and the sounds that immediately precede and follow it.

The tendency in SAKE is to put stress on the first syllable on the one-two-or three-syllabled words, and to place it on the last syllable on poly-syllabic words. Obviously this is an arbitrary decision and often leads to a difference between the stress patterns of the accent *in SAKE* and those of the RP . Let us look at a few examples from the two accents.

| Word | RP | SAKE |
|------|-----|------|
| (1) address | /ədˈɾɛs/ | /ˈadres/ |
| (2) tea | /ˈtiː/ | /ˈti/ |
| (3) machine | /məˈʃiːn/ | /ˈmaʃin/ |
| (4) semester | /sɪˈmɛstə/ | /ˈsɛmestə/ |
| (5) december | /dɪˈsɛmbə/ | /ˈdisembə/ |
| (6) inside | /ɪnˈsaɪd/ | /ˈinsaid/ |
| (7) educated | /ˈɛdjəkɛɪtɪd/ | /edʒuketed/ |
| (8) cigarette | /sɪɡəˈɾɛt/ | /ˈsiɡaret/ |

Thus the stress falls on the first syllable in SAKE in most cases.

Okombo (op. cit) further observes that another conspicuous difference between the RP and SAKE in word-stress occurs in the pronunciation of words that are composed of more than two syllables and in which the last syllable is spelt as "-ate" e.g "educate", "reiterate", "congratulate" e.t.c He aptly observes that whereas the RP stress pattern places the tonic strong stress on the penultimate syllable in such words, SAKE speakers usually place it on the last syllable.

In general, one can conclude that SAKE speakers stress pattern is only predictable when he or she is circulating a one-syllabled word. Beyond such phonologically simple words, it is difficult to predict where the stress will fall, though the tendency is towards placing it on the first syllable of words. A corollary to this phenomenon is the absence of weak forms in a connected speech. Thus every sound is assumed to retain its citation form in all environments in SAKE. Consequently, phonological processes like assimilation, elision, linking or metathesis are rare in SAKE.

### 3.4.2 THE INTONATION PATTERNS OF SAKE

Let us then conclude the chapter with an examination of the intonation patterns of SAKE. Intonation is usually equated with the pitch contour utterance. It refers to the rise and fall in the pitch level in an utterance the tune. The pitch thus produced depends on how fast the vocal cords vibrate the faster they vibrate, the higher the pitch. The part of an utterance over which a particular tone group, and intonation is considered to be only those changes that characterize a tone as a whole.

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\* Phonologists often concentrate on the pattern of intonation which constitutes a linguistic system and thus has a communication function within a particular speech community. This is because intonation may either have linguistic or non-linguistic denotations. And to a non-native speaker of any language or its accent, intonation normally entails a greater learning task than the individual consonants and vowels themselves, and an intonation error may be more detrimental to understanding the speaker than a segmental feature error. This is because an inappropriate intonation succeed in conveying a meaning that is different from the one that is intended by the speaker. For example, the word "yes" when said in a high tone indicates enthusiasm.

Intonation patterns vary from language to language, and accent to accent. In the RP five different tunes can be recognized. They are level tune, the Falling tune, the Rising tune, the Fall-Rise, and the Rise-Fall. In the level tune, (-) the voice remains on a steady note during the utterances. In the falling tune (ˋ), the voice falls during the last stressed syllable and nay following weak syllables. The falling feature continues over all the remaining syllables in the tone-group, e.g.

He couldn't be   seen        It was raining
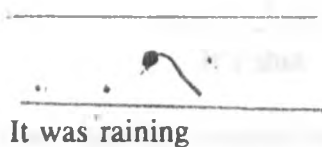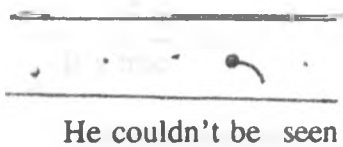
The falling glide may start from the highest of the voice and fall to the lowest pitch or from a mid pitch to the lowest pitch or even with variations of starting point according to the intonation context. This glide is most perceptible when it takes place on a syllable containing a long vowel,

a diphthong or a voiced continuant.

In the falling glide, may start from the highest pitch of the voice and fall to the lowest pitch, or from a mid pitch to the lowest pitch or even with variations of starting point according to the intonation context. This glide is most perceptible when it takes place on a syllable containing a long vowel, a diphthong or a voiced continuant.

In the Rising tune (/), the voice rises during the last stressed syllable and any following weak syllables. The rising nucleus may extend from low to mid, mid to high, or with other variations of starting and end points between low and high, e.g.
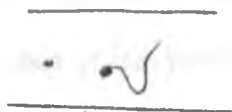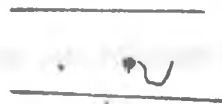
Can you see?                         He is ,not,ill

In the Falling-Rising tune (ᴠ), the voice first falls during the last stressed syllable but rises again during the last stressed syllable and any following weak syllables, e.g

It's true                              It's shut

In the Rising-Falling tune (ᴧ), the voice first rises during the last stressed syllable but falls again during the last stressed syllable and any following weak syllables, e.g

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It was raining                        He wasn't alone

Let us now proceed to look at the functions of intonation patterns. It has been observed that intonation changes are the most efficient means of highlighting to a listener the parts of an utterance on which the speaker wishes to concentrate attention. Hence a pitch change is especially significant as a are for signalling the word or words which carry the primary stress. Furthermore, intonation is used as a means for distinguishing different types of a sentence, e.g a statement from a question. For example, the same sequence of words may with a falling *be interpreted as a statement or, with a rising intonation,* intonation as a question. For example, the same sequence of words may with a falling intonation be interpreted as a statement or, with a rising intonation, as a question. Moreover, a listener may also derive from a speaker's intonation some information about the latter's attitude or personality.

The RP is an intonation accent which may use the pitch syntactically to change a sentence from a statement to a question. The changing pitch of the whole sentence is also important for contrasting meaning. The RP, therefore, has a rather elaborate intonation system which, however, is much reduced in SAKE. In the latter accent, there is the absence of the rising tune at the end of the Yes-No questions. Okombo (op. cit) indicates that for the recognition of such questions, Kenyans rely more on the word-order than on the intonation pattern. Thus the pitch used for the corresponding statements, except for the evenly expanded tonal register in questions.

Although Okombo (op. cit) indicates that the intonation patterns of SAKE are similar to those of Swahili, this is not absolutely so. Research findings indicate that the similarity is minimal and may only be confined to the influence of the RP intonation patterns on Swahili as

they were taught and drilled to local students years in primary and secondary schools in a deliberate attempt to eliminate the influence of local languages on English intonation. Otherwise the assumed similarity may be disproved by the contention that not many SAKE speakers are fluent Swahili speakers who may be affected by the phonological features of the language. The best that one can say is that the intonation patterns of SAKE are a poor imitation of those of the RP.

## 4:0    Summary, recommendation and conclusion.

### 4:1    Summary:

It has been stated several times in the foregoing parts of this work that the study is an attempt to establish that a variety of English pronunciation that is called SAKE exists and is actually in common use among the educated or cultivated speakers of English who are native Kenyans. Both the phonetic and phonological features of the accent have been described a contrastive analysis between it and the RP features made. The two accents are close in terms of their inventory of consonants, but far in their inventory of vowels and yet farther in the supra-segmental features, especially in intonation patterns.

The discussion has indicated that there are four major different accents that one may recognise in Kenya. They are the RP, the SAE, the STAKE, and SAKE. In terms of their spread or predominance in Kenya, the stigmatized accents (STAKE) take the lead, followed by SAKE, then the RP and lastly, SAE.

The analysis of the accents has been given a socio-linguistic approach and we have been advanced an argument that only SAKE is appropriate for the Kenyan linguistic context and that all the three other accents are socially and regionally inappropriate among the local members of speech community. Thus, apart from SAKE, all the three other accents are stigmatized when used by native Kenyans in their day-to-day inter-actions with their countrymen.

On the theoretical framework, we have found that one appropriacy of a theory depends largely on the researcher's agenda. Functionalism has served well as a descriptive tool in this work. It has both the descriptive and explanatory power and has captured all the major

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phenomena in the study. Thus researchers should disable themselves of the notion that it is only the latest theory in any academic discipline that can capture all the phenomena in that particular discipline.

## 4:2    Recommendations:

Three major issues have consequently arisen from the observations summarised above. One is that evidence has been provided in this study to establish that although the RP is the declared model of pronunciation that native Kenyans are supposed to attain, sociological and physical factors mitigate against the attainment of this ambitious goal and the result has been that the accent that is in actual use among the educated native speakers of English in Kenya is not the RP but SAKE. Hence it would be more reasonable if the Ministry of Education officials realised this discrepancy and recognised the existence of SAKE and the emerging notion of Kenyan English. The RP should then be recommended as the luxury of the ambitious learners of English who may have special reasons for striving to attain it.

Let us not split hairs over the efficacy of SAKE. Sociologists usually maintain that all the natural languages of the world exist in different accents and dialects, yet there is no linguistic justification in alleging that any accent is better than the other. However, as Wilkins (1972:135) accurately puts it, it is only a social judgement which leads people to conclude that one variety of the language is the appropriate one for a given speech community. The appropriate variety is invariably the one in use among the educated speakers of the speech community who provide the model to be adopted by the other speakers.

It should then be realised that the recognition and development of any language or its accent should begin with the development of the relevant materials for use in its propagation.

Hence the Ministry of Education officials and language planners should, first and foremost, embark on and encourage the development of the materials that will promote the accent. The starting point in this direction should be to sensitize the public announcers in our audio-visual mass media, especially the newsbroadcasters and other workers in the national radio and TV stations to be more conscious of their pronunciations. Just as the BBC has been the main propagator of the RP accent, we expect both the KBC and KTN radio [7] and television English services to do no less. Metro FM, CAPITAL FM, BBC 93.7, METRO · EAST FM Radio Citizen & Family Radio FM + S.W.A. F.M

It is unfortunate that up to now, the announcers on the local radio and TV stations are not given any training at all on the appropriancy of pronunciation, [1] let alone phonetics and phonology. The consequence of this has been that we have not only heard stigmatized pronunciations from various announcers, but also misleading variant forms of pronunciation which should not arise at all. A case in point is the name of the Australian leader "Lange" who visited Kenya in 1991. The different pronunciations of that name that were articulated by various local newscasters simply baffled many radio and television listeners.

The local linguists and teachers of English should form a strong force to champion the notion not only of SAKE but also of Kenyan English in general. It is incumbent on the local phoneticians, phonologists, sociologists and teachers of English to provide the model of pronunciation and influence the type of English to be taught in schools which, actually, should reflect the type that is used outside the English classroom. They should write books and journals on the subject, develop audio-visual materials and thus pursue the notion further. Hence the local linguists and English Language specialists must do to the country what their counterparts in Swahili have done and are still doing to promote Swahili.

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## 4:3    Conclusion:

In conclusion, I would like to assert that it should not be the objective of the Kenyan educational system to produce school-leavers who speak ~~labido~~ [luh-dih-dah] like public schoolboys of England. Hence SAKE is the accent that the Kenyan learners and users of English actually speak and hear outside their English pronunciation classrooms; alongside the stigmatized accents. SAKE is the accent of the Educated speakers of English who are native Kenyans, the local broadcasters, linguists and teachers of English themselves, assuming that their pronunciation does not degenerate to the stigmatized types.

Secondly, it has been observed that the Englishmen do not approve of ESL or EFL users of English who have attained a native-like accent. To them, this amounts to a large-scale spying and intrusion into their preserve. Looked at in another way, it would be unusual to hear an Englishman speaking Dholuo with an impeccable Trans-Yala accent: he would most probably be suspected of being a spy.

Thirdly, it is evident that the propagation of SAKE rests mainly in the hands of both our local linguists and young students in most of the posh [Kenyan with] schools in the urban centres, especially in Nairobi. Although the scope of this study does not include Nursery and Primary school pupils, it has been observed that our urban educational system is moulding SAKE speakers right from Nursery schools. When one speaks English to such pupils, it is not easy to detect their ethnic origins from their pronunciations. This is an indication that they have joined "bona fide" SAKE speakers.

Finally, it should by now be dear [clear] to the reader that we are not advocating the banning of RP as a model of pronunciation overnight. We argue that in the meantime, the RP should be

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maintained as the officially prescribed model, but with the expectation that Kenyan speakers of English will obviously attain the SAKE proficiency. Thus what is advocated is that SAKE be recognised as the attainable model of pronunciation for Kenyans who learn and use English outside the native RP-speakers environment. Then after sufficient materials have been developed in SAKE, then the issue of the official model could be revisited.

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