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The Pronunciation of British /r/ Phoneme: On Some Articulation Confusions for Non-native Majors and Teachers Translators and Interpreters¹

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Abstract

British English /r/phoneme has got a long and complicated history. In the course of time, the British /r/ changed from trilled-r to silent-r in the course of time. That is why, the articulation and pronunciation of British English /r/ is a very challenging skill for many non-native learners of English. That is why the /r/ phoneme is called a tricky sound to learn. There are biological impediments as well as social impacts and mother tongue interference cases in its pronunciation. For example, ankyloglossia, also called tongue-tied, comes up as a biological impediment. Similarly, rhotacism is accepted as a speech impediment that is defined by the lack of ability, or difficulty in, pronouncing the /r/ phoneme. On the other hand, mother tongue interference is the commonest cause of imperfect articulation of the /r/ phoneme in English. If the target language and mother tongue do not come from the same language family, mother tongue interference becomes in escapable. Interpreters and translators who have such deficits as mother tongue interferences, rhotacism, and ankyloglossia cannot perform their profession properly.

Keywords: Rhotic/non-rhotic; flap; tap; rhotacism; ankyloglossia

İngiliz /r/ Sesbiriminin Sesletimi: Anadili İngilizce Olmayan İngilizce Öğretmenliği Öğrencileri ve Öğretmen Mütercim Tercümanların Sesletim Karışıklıkları Üzerine Bir Çalışma

Özet

İngiliz İngilizcesinin /r/ sesbiriminin sesletiminin uzun ve karışık bir hikâyesi vardır. Zaman içinde, İngiliz /r/ sesbirimi, titreşimli /r/ sesbirimi sesletiminden, okunmaz /r/ sesletimine kadar değiştiği görülür. Bu neden, bu sesbirimin, anadili İngilizce olmayan öğrenciler için zorlayıcı bir beceri olduğu bilinir. İşte bu nedenle, İngiliz /r/ sesbiriminin, öğrenilmesinin zor bir ses olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Bu zorluğun, kassal nedenler, sosyal ve anadilden işe karışmalarla oluşan engeller taşıdığı görülür. Örneğin, dil bağı (ankyloglossia), dil bağlanması olarak da bilinir, biyolojik bir engel olarak karşımıza çıkar. Aynı biçimde, /r/ sesbirimini sesletememe de konuşma kaslarını kullanıp kullanmama durumuna bağlı bir oluşumdur. Bunlardan başka, anadilden işe karışmalar en çok görülen engellerdendir. Anadil ve hedef dil, aynı dil ailesinde gelmez ise, anadilden işe karışmalar kaçınılmaz olur. Bu tür sesletim hataları olan mütercim tercümanlar mesleklerini düzgün bir sesletimle yapamazlar.

Anahtar Sözcükler: /r/ sesletimli; /r/ sesletimsiz; çarpmalı ses; vurmali ses; dil bağı

1 This study is an extended version of the oral presentation presented at the FSMVU Eğitimde Mükemmeliyet Araştırmaları Kongresi (EMAK-2022) on December 16, 2022.

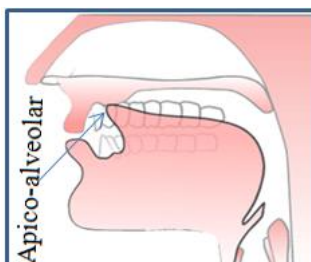
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1. INTRODUCTION

The pronunciation of the phoneme /r/ in the English language has many variations of different dialects. English accents around the world are frequently characterized as either rhotic or non-rhotic. The unit of measurement in this respect is the phonemic value of the /r/ phoneme. Today, /r/ is a key to understand different English accents. It is a high frequency sound, meaning that it occurs more often in the English language than many other sounds. In terms of statistical analysis of phoneme count, relative frequency of /r/ phoneme according to Hayden (1950, p. 220) is “7,10%”. Again, the relative frequency /r/ phoneme was measured as “6.94%” (<https://cmloegcmluin.wordpress.com/2012/11/10/>). By nature the /r/ phoneme is a potential rhotacism causer. The interpreters with rhotacism speech disorder will have difficulty time in doing simultaneous translation. For this reason, in this study, a general historical development the tricky /r/phoneme is handled to help the interpreters and translators understand the special status of it.

In today’s English, /r/ phoneme is non-rhotic, which means that this phoneme is not pronounced in certain environments of the vocabulary items. It must be borne in mind that in connected speech, if the second element of a phrase begins with a vowel, the unread /r/ comes back. In other words, /r/ addition into the phrase happens in between two words, where the first word ends in a vowel sound and the second word begins in a vowel sound (Uffmann, 2007; Ostalski, 2007; Sóskuthy, 2009). This reoccurrence of /r/ in connected speech is also called intrusive-r or linking-r (Wells, 1970: 241; Gick, 1999: 31-32; Hartmann & Zerbian, 2009: 136; Hock, 2009; Trudgill & Gordon, 2006: 236; Hannisdal, 2010; Szabo, 2014: 49; Fish, 2018; Barras, 2019.).

By definition, the /r/ phoneme is called the “alveolar approximant,” which means that you put your tongue near the roof of your mouth and voice out. It is defined by the position of your tongue. It is an approximant, which is a sound made by making a narrow space in your mouth through which air flows through the oral cavity. In this case, there is a narrow space between your tongue and the top of your mouth through which the air stream coming from the lungs travels within this narrow space: that is why the sound articulated in this position is called an approximant. So, this sound is made by forcing air into the limited passage of a space between the tongue and the ceiling of the mouth and causing the tongue to vibrate.



Current English/r/: the tip of your tongue is put to the right behind the little ridge behind of the teeth, but it does not touch any part of the mouth while the vocal cords vibrate for its production. This means that /r/ is a voiced alveolar approximant consonant.

The /r/ phoneme can be difficult for kids to master because it is not visible on the mouth. With no visual cues to help them, they have to rely on their ability to take verbal cues from the parents, brothers of sisters, relatives, and schoolmates. As it is very complex phoneme, it is one of the last sounds that children learn to articulate. So, /r/ phoneme takes time and patience to learn. While the age of mastery varies, the /r/ sound is typically learned by 6-7 years old.

2. OLD ENGLISH (449-1066)

Historical development of the English /r/ has a complicated history. Today’s English is an amalgamation of Celtic, Roman, Angle, Saxon, Jute, Frisian, Viking, and French languages. Here is its stages of development:

2.1. Celtic Period

The first inhabitants of in England are the Celts. The first inhabitants of England were Celts. It was the Celtic people who inhabited most of Britain before the Anglo-Saxon invasion. Albion was the earliest-known name for the island of Britain. It was used by ancient Greek geographers from the 4th century BC and even earlier, who distinguished “Albion” from Ierne (Ireland) and from smaller members of the British Isles. The Ancient Britons were those ancient inhabitants of the island of Great Britain who spoke the Celtic Common Brittonic language, which diversified into a group of related Celtic languages such as Welsh, Cornish, Pictish, Cumbric and Breton. The Britons lived all over the island of Great Britain and on the surrounding islands and archipelagos. The first language spoken in England was Celtic. At the end of the “great European migration

period” (6. cent. AD), the Celts were pushed all the way to the British Isles, where the Celtic languages survived until the present day. In Britain, the Celtic languages survive to the present in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland” (Gelderen, 2014, p. 2). So, Celtic happens to be the first Indo-European language to be spoken in England, and it is still spoken by a considerable number of people. Celtic /r/ was a rolled or trilled /r/.

2.2. Scottish English

Scots is recognized as an indigenous language of Scotland, a regional or minority language of Europe. The term Scottish English is used as an umbrella term for all the varieties of English that can be found in Scotland and Shetland Islands. Scottish English (Scottish Gaelic) is the set of varieties of the English language spoken in Scotland. Scottish English has mostly the same vocabulary and grammar as English spoken elsewhere, but with distinctly Scottish pronunciation. Many people in Scotland speak both Scots and English in their daily lives, often changing between them during a single conversation or sentence. “Irish English and Scottish English are varieties of English influenced by the Celtic languages.” (Gelderen, 2014, p. 2). Apparently, Scottish English and Scots both derive from Anglo-Saxon Old English and exist on a language continuum. When Scotland joined the United Kingdom in 1707, the status and future of Scots was threatened as English (with the standard British accent known as received pronunciation (RP) became the language of status and government. Today, Scottish /r/ a rhotic /r/ and is a voiced alveolar tap, indicated as /ɾ/ by the IPA system.

2.3. Welsh language

In Wales, there is a native Welsh language. As opposed to this there is a Welsh English. Once again, Welsh English is mostly non-rhotic; however, variable rhoticity can be found especially in accents of northern varieties influenced by Welsh (Coupland and Richard, 1990a). As claimed that Welsh was the language of the barbarous past (Penhallurick, 2004). It is mostly common that /r/ is not pronounced in English spoken in Wales, as according to Wells ‘Welsh English is from a historical point of view very largely the English imposed by schoolteachers’ (1982, p. 380). With the increasing popularity of English, Welsh began to decline, developing negative connotations.

The Cardiff accent, also known as Cardiff English, is the regional accent of English, which is a variety of Welsh English. It is spoken in and around the city of Cardiff, and is somewhat distinctive in Wales, compared with other Welsh accents. In Cardiff English, /r/ is generally realized as a post-alveolar approximant (Collins and Mees, 1990). But in the broadest accents, especially when placed in an intervocalic position, /r/ is uttered as a strong alveolar tap /ɾ/. Through the ‘Anglicization’ process, the Welsh language and population were assimilated the culture and ideology of their English neighbors. Most Welsh accents pronounce /r/ as an alveolar tap [ɾ] (a ‘tapped r’), similar to Scottish English. The /r/ phoneme is pronounced the same in English, but it is tapped.

3. ROMAN PERIOD (55 B.C-410 A.D.)

Julius Caesar's first landing on the shoreline of England took place in 55 and 54 BC (Gelderen, 2014, p. 10). But it was almost century before the Romans totally conquered Britain in AD 43. The main goal of Romans was to make their empire as big and powerful as possible. In addition, they were also seeking natural resources, such as precious metals (iron, lead, copper, silver, and gold), slaves, and farmland. The Romans needed these natural resources to support their growing empire and army. Londinium, also known as Roman London, was the capital of Roman Britain during most of the period of Roman rule. It was originally a settlement established on the current site of the City of London around AD 47–50. Romans called Scotland ‘Caledonia’, and the people were known as the ‘Caledonians’. Caledonia was made up of Celtic tribes, collectively known as Britons.

After the departure of Romans in AD 410, the Celts of the south were attacked by tribes from the north. The Celts were left helpless. In their desperation, Celts of the 5th century sought help from abroad. They turned to the Germanic tribes of the North Sea coast. The date which Bede gives for the first arrivals is 449.

Romans ruled over the land of England. The Roman Empire reigned in much of Europe until 476 A. D. “Latin was a rhotic language whose-r was either an alveolar trill [r], like Spanish or Italian double /r/, or maybe an alveolar flap [ɾ], with a tap of the tongue against the upper gums.” Demirezen, 2012, p. 2661). Thus, the trill /r/ articulation of /r/ phoneme was not difficult of the people of Roman times of England from 43 BC up until 410 A.D. The Romans in England did ‘roll’ or ‘trill’ their /r/ phonemes. British Latin was spoken as a native language in Roman Britain and that at least some of the dramatic changes that the Brittonic languages underwent around

the 6th century were due to Latin-speakers switching language to Celtic (Miller, 2012). Possibly Latin speakers moved away from encroaching Germanic-speaking settlers (Schrijver, 2014).

It seems likely that Latin was the language of most of the townspeople; the administration and the ruling class; the military; and, following the no place for reconsideration, or revocation, except through revolution of Christianity, the church. However, British Celtic probably remained the language of the peasantry, which was the bulk of the population; the rural elite was probably bilingual (Sawyer, 1988, p. 74). However, at the most extreme, it has been suggested that Latin became the prevalent language of lowland Britain in which case the story of Celtic language death in what is now England begins with its extensive displacement by Latin (Schrijver, 2002; Schrijver, 2007). Once again, most sources describe the trill /r/ as the primary pronunciation of Classical Latin /r/. An alveolar tap (or flap) [r] was likely a possible allophone of singleton (non-geminate) /r/ in some cases, especially in word-medial intervocalic position.

3.1. Germanic Tribes: Angles, Saxons, Frisians, and Jutes

The history of the English language really started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th A.D. century. The withdrawal of the Romans from England in the early 5th century left a political vacuum. The Germanic settlers called Angles, Saxons, Frisians, and Jutes entered Britain around 420 AD. They settled primarily in southern and eastern Britain at first and quickly established control over modern-day England. In 449 AD, for the first arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, Saxons and Jutes, each of whom came from different parts of Germany and Denmark. Jutes were from the Jutland peninsula (present-day mainland Denmark).

The Angles came from Angeln, which is a small district in northern Germany. In addition, The Angles were called so because many of them came from a piece of land called the “Angulum” in the time 450s A.D. They settled in the East of England, in the area which is called England even nowadays. So, the Angles came from the historical area of Angeln and Angulum in north east Schleswig Holstein. It was this tribe which gave England its name: Old English ‘Englaland’, meaning ‘land of the Angles’ because the Angles were dominant in that period. The Saxons came from lower Saxony, were from what is now called Saxony. The Frisians migrated to England from the North Sea coast islands. Once again, their language of Angles was called "Englisc" from which the words "England" and "English" are derived.

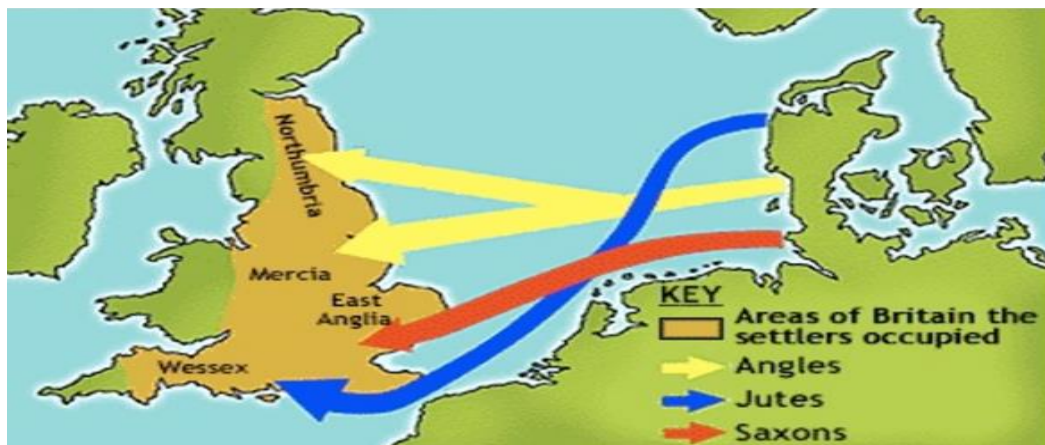


Fig. 2. The invasion of England by Germanic tribes
(<https://www.liceomalpighi.it/didattica/amarzocchi/downloads/3%29%20History>)



Fig. 3. The invasion of England by Germanic tribes
(<https://view.genial.ly/6028fb47fe22cc0d53be9248/presentation-the-england-history>)

The Germanic tribes quickly pressed the indigenous Celtic tribes into the West of England, Wales and Cornwall. Moreover, some of these Celtic tribes crossed the Channel in the 5th and 6th centuries to Brittany and thus are responsible for a Celtic language (Breton) being spoken in France to this day.

3.2. The Christianization of England

“In the 6th century, the conversion to Christianity introduced Latin words... since many missionaries came from Ireland (Gelderens, 2014, p. 10). The English tribes were formally Christianized in 597. Pope Gregory I sent Augustine with a group of missionaries and they Augustine arrived in England. Augustine was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 601. He established Canterbury, as mentioned in Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, the center of British bishops before his death in 604. By the end of the 7th century, most of Germanic speaking peoples of England like Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians, and England had become Christians by the help of Irish and Scottish monks.



Fig. 4. Southern Great Britain in AD 600 after the Anglo-Saxon settlement, showing England's division into multiple petty kingdoms (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_people)

By the 7th century, English language was a combination of Celtic, Roman, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisian languages. The dialects of Old English like Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish are more or less co-terminus with the already established regional kingdoms. The various Germanic tribes brought their own dialects which were then continued in England. Thus we have a Northumbrian dialect (Anglian in origin), a Kentish dialect (Jutish in origin), etc. The question as to what degree of cohesion already existed between the Germanic dialects when they were still spoken on the continent is unclear. Towards the end of the Old English

period the dialectal conglomeration became complicated by the fact that the West Saxon dialect achieved prominence as an inter-dialectal means of communication.

Apparently, in the Old English Times, the /r/ is a separate phoneme. Since all consonants are articulated in that time period, it is said to be articulated as today. “Old English /r/ was probably the same as the Old Norse /r/. As to its exact pronunciation, we can't really know but we're pretty sure it was something like a trilled [r] or tapped [r]. We don't really know the exact sound in Old Norse either but we're almost certain it was a trilled [r] as that's the most common initial reflex of the sound in all Scandinavian languages, as well as the intervocalic, preconsonantal, postconsonantal and final reflex of the sound in Icelandic.” (<https://linguistics.stackexchange.com/questions/8712/how-did-one-pronounce-an-r-in-old-english>)

Apparently, in different regions there were some variants such as /r/ was possibly pronounced like a trill (like Spanish /r/, or as a flap) or General American today. Once Again, Old English /r/ was probably the same as the Old Norse /r/. Trilled /r/ is still common in Scotland and parts of Ireland today. The natives of what's now England spoke a dialect of a Celtic language, similar to modern Gaelic, that's called “Brittonic. Historically speaking, all varieties of English were at one point rhotic. /r/ was possibly pronounced like a trill (like sometimes in Spanish, or by some Scottish English speakers), or as a flap (like a trill, but only once - like by some Irish speakers, or in most cases in Spanish), or similarly to how it is pronounced in Southern British English or General American today. The first pronunciation dictionary of German by Theodore Siebs in 1898, described the sound as an alveolar trill /r/, and not a uvular trill or fricative, like the Proto-Germanic /r/ (<https://prabook.com/web/theodor.siebs/1845420>). It was definitely an alveolar trill /r/ (or flap [r]) at the syllable onset, as in, in prevocalic positions.

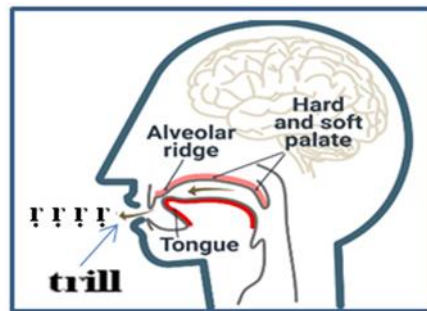


Fig. 5. The articulation of /r/ in Old English

(<https://www.supercocoapp.com/post/how-to-roll-your-rs/>)

<https://cmloegcmluin.wordpress.com/2012/11/10/relative-frequencies-of-english-phonemes/>

4. VIKING INVASION

Vikings were known as or Northmen. Vikings started to raid Britain around the 793 A.D. The first invasion took place in AD 793 because they had traded goods with the Anglo- Saxons for many years. Thus they knew of the wealth of Anglo- Saxons. Also, Vikings wanted new items to steal and trade. They wanted England so that they could claim it as their own. Vikings established the Danelaw. Vikings who settled in Ireland and in Scotland became Gaelicized and intermarried with Gaels.

The Viking presence in England was finally ended in 1066. The last raid occurred in 1066, when William the Conqueror became King of England following the Battle of Hastings. For almost 100 years, parts of north, east and central England were ruled by Norsemen. They spoke the Old Norse. London was named Lundenburgh by the Vikings. With the Viking Period (793-1066, the languages spoken in England were Celtic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Jute, Frisian, and Scandinavian Old Norse. All of these languages had a form of /r/ phoneme.

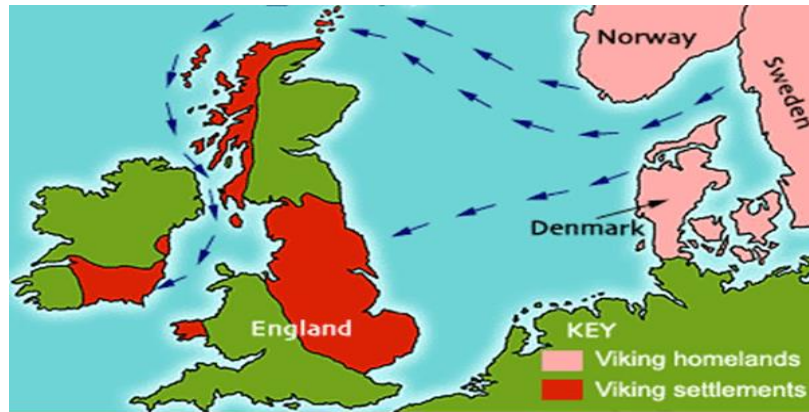


Fig. 6 Viking Invasion of England
 (<https://micklethwait.org/viking-history-of-the-family/>)

5. NORMAN CONQUEST (1066)

The term "Norman" comes from "Norseman". In 1066, the Duke of Normandy, the famous William, also "the Conqueror", sailed across the British Channel. He defeated Harold, William was crowned King of England. A Norman Kingdom was now established. The Normans spoke an early form of French, which quickly became the 'official' language of England. It overtook the native language of England which was a combination of Celtic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Jute, Frisian, and Viking languages, for governmental administration and legal matters. New French vocabulary was introduced to Old English, and the English grammar gradually became simplified as the Normans struggled with it. The linguistic influence of Norman French continued for as long as the Kings ruled both Normandy and England. When King John lost Normandy in the years following 1200, the links to the French-speaking community subsided. English then slowly started to gain more weight as a common tongue within England again.

For 150 years after the Norman Conquest, most of the kings of England spoke no English at all. The new overlords spoke a dialect of Old French known as Anglo-Norman. The king as well as overlords would use translators to talk with the local English people. The Normans eventually decided to speak the local tongue. The Norman influence was greatest in southern Britain, and diminishes the further north you go. The /r/ was rolled in these times, just like in Scottish. It is also still used by many people in the west and north of England, and people from Scotland and Wales. It started fading later. French, English, and Latin was also an important language in the Middle Ages. It was used for some government business, for education and during religious worship in church.

Latin had been only a minor influence on the English language, mainly through remnants of the Roman occupation. By the conversion of Britain to Christianity in the seventh century ecclesiastical terms were all in Latin, but by 1066 a wholesale infusion of Romance (Anglo-Norman) words took place. Also, in the early 1200's, England used three languages together. French became the literary and courtly language; Latin was the language of the church and legal documents; English was the language of communication among the common people.

By 14th century a large majority of the nobility no longer thought of themselves as Normans, but they politically felt themselves English. The slogan was "England for the English" and the outcome was both a linguistic and a political victory for the English.

Many other historical, social, and health facts brought back the use of English language. In 1337-1453, during the Hundred Years' War, French became the language of England's enemy. Hundreds of Latin and French teachers and scholars died during the Black Death plague that ravaged Europe between 1347 and 1351. The impact of Black Death plague was as dreadful as feared: In 1349, the Black Death killed about half of all Londoners. From 1347 to 1351, it killed between 30% and 60% of all Europeans. Furthermore, the Black Death created a lack of academicians in French and Latin, many schools resorted to English as a common medium of instruction. By 1385, the practice became general, and even universities and monastic institutions started to conduct their curricula, or academic courses, in English. Oxford and Cambridge advocated that French language must be entirely disused.



Fig. 7 The route of the Viking Invasion of England

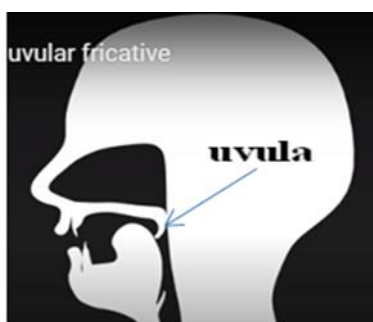
(Adapted from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/136041510@N05/29111417305>)

6. MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD (1066-1500)

Middle English is the name given by historical linguists to the diverse forms of the English language spoken between the Norman invasion from 1066 to 1470s, which marks the introduction of the printing press into England by William Caxton. The term Middle English is cover term to variety of languages. In the Middle English Period, the Norman invasion of England had significant effect on the Old English combination of Celtic, Roman, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisian languages, and Viking languages. The Middle English started in England from roughly the time of the Norman Conquest (1066) until about 1500. After the Norman Conquest, French largely displaced English as the loyal language of the upper classes and of sophisticated literature. Chaucer in his poetry is said to have rolled-r in his writings. But, still 1066 traditionally signifies the beginning of 200 years of the domination of French in English language.

“The exact nature of Middle English /r/ is unknown. It may have been an alveolar approximant [ɹ], as in most Modern English accents, an alveolar tap [ɾ] or an alveolar trill [r]” (https://www.academia.edu/25303539/Middle_English_phonology). In the Middle English period, the alveolar trill /r/ started to completely disappear especially in words where rhotic /r/ was followed by /s/. The Middle English speech of the city of London in the late 14th century (essentially, the speech of Geoffrey Chaucer) is used as the standard Middle English dialect in England. Middle English is still difficult for native English speakers to understand today.

In addition, the Norman invasion brought the rolled-r, which is a voiced uvular fricative into English pronunciation while most of the local Englishmen used an alveolar trill phoneme, which is symbolized as /r/ by linguists. The French rolled-r guttural /R/ was used at the British court by the King and Nobles.



The voiced uvular fricative is a type of consonantal sound. The symbol in the International Phonetic Alphabet is /ʀ/. This is a fricative consonant which is articulated with the back of the tongue touching the uvula while the vocal cords vibrate as the air stream coming from the throat goes out through the mouth only.

Fig. 9 French voiced uvular fricative

(Adapted from <https://www.mimicmethod.com/master-class/french/drills/voiced-uvular-fricative/>)

7. EARLY MODERN ENGLISH (1500 to 1700)

Early Modern English is said to begin roughly the years from 1500 and continued until 1800. Towards the end of Middle English, a sudden and distinct change started in pronunciation took place by the Great Vowel Shift), with vowels being pronounced shorter and shorter. Also, from the 16th century the British had contact with

many peoples from around the world. This period brought up the classical Renaissance learning. The arrival of printing in England in 1476 also fuelled the beginnings of the standardization of the written language. Modern English is often dated from the Great Vowel Shift, which took place mainly during the 15th century and ended in the 17th century.

The early modern English period follows the Middle English period towards the end of the fifteenth century which brought in the steps to be taken toward Standard English. In addition, this was also the time when Shakespeare wrote. Historically and politically speaking, the early modern English period coincides closely with the Tudor (1485–1603) and Stuart (1603-1714) dynasties. In 1604 the first English dictionary was published. Chaucer who lived from 1340s to 1400) was an English poet, author, and civil servant best known for *The Canterbury Tales*. He has been called the "father of English literature", or, alternatively, the "father of English poetry".

The new factors that triggered early modern English were the introduction of the printing press into England, the rapid spread of popular education, the increased communication and means of communication, the growth of specialized knowledge, and the emergence of various forms of self-consciousness about language. Sometime around 1600 A.D. early modern English the trill /r/ started to give way its modern form /ɹ/. The /r/ phoneme was not articulated after vowels and became a silent-r sound.

8. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRONUNCIATION FOR THE INTERPRETERS

Needless to say, interpreters mediate languages orally in terms of simultaneous interpretation (SI) on the spot while translators work with written material to be translated. Translators typically operate in a written medium, typically in a real-time environment; they translate texts from one language into another by doing their work conveniently from their desks. When it comes to language skills, translators need to have solid reading comprehension, transfer, and target language production skills. The job of professional translator and interpreter is to be able to communicate successfully both in the source and in the target language. It is the simultaneous interpretation where correct pronunciation, intonation, and consistency in one dialect is professionally required.

Successful communication requires correct pronunciation of consonants, vowels, diphthongs, silent vowels and consonants. The role of the translators and interpreters is very crucially important to use accurate pronunciation, which is a very important qualification, in any kind of oral interaction with these sounds. In any language, but especially in English, a faulty pronunciation leads to major message misunderstandings. Therefore, correct pronunciation is highly essential for any interpreter.

Many interpreters lack confidence with pronouncing English words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Unfortunately, they find this distracting and frustrating. As an interpreter, you need English that is clear and easy for listeners to understand in simultaneous interpretations. If your pronunciation is sometimes unclear, or listeners have to concentrate to understand your accent, it is going to negatively affect your ability to interpret and to be understood by your listeners.

Pronunciation along with intonation and accent will be as important as the heart and soul of a language. If the pronunciation-intonation duo is faulty, the interpreted language neither reaches the listener correctly, nor does it give the expected or desired results, especially in simultaneous interpretation (SI).

In terms of pronunciation, the articulation of the /r/ phoneme and its different variants, whether is a rolled-r, or trilled-r, or a retroflex-r requires consistency in the articulations of an interpreter in a dialect. This is very crucial because they communicate between people who do not share a common language. Bad pronunciation of an interpreter forces the listeners to devote much processing capacity to the listening and analysis effort pertaining to pronunciation and intonation; if such an atmosphere comes up during the simultaneous interpretations, the listeners start to judge the pronunciation intelligence of the interpreter negatively. Then, the listeners lose their belief on the interpreter and become suspicious on the interpreted materials. That is why the interpreter must have fluency, accuracy, and comfortable intelligibility, to a native level, in at least two languages. This means they must speak English in like a native speaker manner, if not, like in a near native-like manner.

A good translator or interpreter must not use the wrong register, wrong language variant, and wrong pronunciation variant in the wrong context, which can greatly interfere with comprehension of the text by the audience. Additionally, a good translator or interpreter understands that there are various "Englishes" pertaining

to pronunciation and intonation. S/he should confirm which variant of the language the audience will require him/her to use, along with which language or dialect tone must be utilized. That is why interpreters typically must be fluent speakers or signers of various “Englishes”.

9. CONCLUSION

It must be noted that there is a great of gab of research on the articulation and pronunciation that take place in oral interpretations made by the translators and interpreters. Due to scanty research on this field, the present article is taken up to fill the gap and to point to the role of the translators and interpreters pertaining to the importance of an accurate pronunciation in any kind of oral translations. Needless to say, correct and accurate pronunciation is essential for any translator and interpreter. The most common errors of oral translators and interpreters stem from “poor articulation” (Karjagdiu and Krasniqi, 2020, p. 1). “One of the causes that leads to the success or failure of an interpretation is related to the accuracy of the interpreter’s pronunciation” (Şimon, Kilyeni, and Suci, 2015, p. 2157).

Pronunciation along with intonation is all about making sure the interpreter sounds clear and is easily understood. By using the correct sounds when s/he speaks, the listeners can quickly understand what s/he trying to say. So, correct pronunciation is essential for any interpreter. While doing interpretation on the spot, the faulty pronunciation of /r/ phoneme, whether it is an alveolar approximant, or an alveolar trill, or a uvular approximant, it may sound pesky, which is very irritating to hear. Due to wrong articulation of /r/ phoneme, the comfortable intelligibility of articulation and pronunciation of the interpreter will be gone, and S/he will expose himself or herself an unknowledgeable, incompetent, and inefficient speakers, even causing frustration in the listeners.

The /r/ phoneme is one of the most common speech errors for ELT students and teachers, teachers on-the job as well as translators and interpreters. This error is known as rhotacism and it is customarily considered to be a serious speech impediment and articulation disorder for interpreters in simultaneous interpretations. Especially, the interpreters must not have speech impediment called rhotacism, which is a difficulty in pronouncing the /r/ sound. If they have it, they must get rid of it by means of speech therapy; otherwise, they may have professional handicaps and endanger their interpretership. Otherwise, they will never achieve perfectionism in their translation interpretation profession, due to rhotacism as a speech error.

Of course, faulty pronunciation is a collective accumulation of problem-causing consonants and vowels of English, but right at this junction the erroneous pronunciation of the /r/ phoneme by translators and interpreters will be a cause to reveal to the listeners their efficiency in articulation and pronunciation in the target language. Faulty articulation and pronunciation will definitely harm the intonation and prosody of the pauses over phrases, clauses, and sentences. Such errors must be removed from their speech in the language labs; otherwise, such errors will enable them to have the required level of fluency in oral translations. It must be noted that faulty pronunciation will definitely impede them to speak at a comfortable rate. “A comfortable rate means that the interpreters’ speech is intelligible and allows for good diction, i.e. clarity not only of pronunciation but also of what the interpreter is trying to express” (Horváth, 2012, p. 86). The incorrect and uncomfortable speech rate will definitely damage the psychology and behavior of translators and interpreters as well as listeners.

10. DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Scientific Research and Publication Ethics: In the study, all the rules specified to be followed by the *"Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive"* were complied with. None of the actions specified in the 2nd part of the Directive, titled *"Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics"*, were carried out.

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12. EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The /r/ phoneme in general is one of the trickiest sounds for English language teachers, translators, and learners to pronounce correctly. It is a challenging sound for English learners to produce because it is either a different sound in other dialects of English, or it does not exist or not pronounced at all in some others. In this respect, although the language of England and America is English, many of the accents in England are non-rhotic while the United States (US) accents are mostly rhotic by nature. Therefore, the pronunciation of the /r/ phoneme in British English (RP, BrE) and Standard American English (GA, NAE) is the most important difference.

The articulation of the /r/ phoneme between the two languages has become a difference of benchmark. Even though the English /r/ was hard to pronounce, and now the British people only pronounce the /r/ when it is followed by a vowel and is not articulated at the end of the words. American people pronounce this phoneme always. The difference stems from the surrounding vowels, the mobility and placement of the primary stress phoneme in words and sentences. This difference of pronunciation is a mega articulation problem in terms of dialectal inconsistency between translators, interpreters, Turkish English teachers, and many Turkish people who try to speak in English. In accordance with an eavesdropping technique applied for the identification of the /r/ phoneme pronunciation, the researcher has found out that almost all of the non-native English majors and even the English teachers-on-the-job articulate the /r/ phoneme in word-final positions after the vowels. In this respect, the articulation problems of /r/ phoneme will be analyzed in spoken English, and connected speech. It will be stressed that the silent < r > rule of British English is not a speech impediment but a socio-phonetic innovation and a matter of Least Effort Theory application in tandem with Zipf's Law. The place, point, and manner of articulation of British /r/ is demonstrated via photos, videos, and authentic texts in audio on how to make its pronunciation. How the British /r/ phoneme differs from American English dialect will also be clearly demonstrated by means of authentic texts in audio.

The pronunciation of the /r/ phoneme in British English has a long historical background. Its pronunciation has started as an alveolar trill in the Celtic times and Roman Period. In the Middle English it was realized both a voiced alveolar trill and voiced alveolar in many other dialects, such as Scottish English and Irish English. It has undergone a split from rhotic language into a non-rhotic language. This split between rhotic and non-rhotic pronunciation has its origins in London. The drop of /r/ began in eastern England in the mid-15th century, and by the mid-16th century it had spread to both other consonants and the London vernacular. Working-class speakers began dropping the /r/ sound at the ends of words.

As mentioned before, the /r/ phoneme is one of the most difficult sounds for English language learners to pronounce correctly. It is a challenging sound for English learners to produce because of its silent /r/, which is very confusing the non-native learners of English. For example, Turkish learners of English and Turkish English interpreting students keep pronouncing /r/ at the end of the words through mother tongue interference just because Turkish is a rhotic language. That is why Turkish learners of English never become a near-native like. A pronunciation of /r/ as a mixture of Turkish and English is unthinkable. Additionally, in terms of mother tongue interference, interpreters and translators some of languages such as Spanish, Russian, Kazakh, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Arabic, Finnish, Romanian, Indonesian, Russian, Italian, and Swedish articulate the English /r/ as a trill /r̄/, which is unacceptable.

All in all, rhotacism is the inability or difficulty in pronouncing the /r/ phoneme appropriately. It occupies a special place in the pronunciation of English by native or non-native interpreters and translators. Rhotacism is a challenging issue of /r/ articulation which must be treated because difficulty pronouncing the /r/ phoneme is customarily considered to be a speech impediment. The cause of a rhotacism may be biological as well. In some cases, it may be linked to tongue-tie (ankyloglossia). Tongue-tie cases limit the range of tongue movements, which is critical for pronouncing /r/. It must be noted that this difficulty may stem from the placement of the tip of the tongue for /r/, which is very specific and can be complicated to learn. Interpreters and translators who have rhotacism and mother tongue interference in their speech cannot be accepted as professionals.