A STUDY OF ACROLECTAL MALAYSIAN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
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A study of Acrolectal Malaysian English pronunciation

ABSTRACT

Most descriptions of Malaysian English (MalE) pronunciations focus on the colloquial and learner varieties. One of the reasons for this is the assumptions that MalE refers to the localised and more colloquial variety. The other is the assumption that the standard variety of MalE is similar to Standard British English (SBE). Whilst this may be true of the written standard variety, it is unlikely Malaysian speakers sound like SBE speakers or speak with a Received Pronunciation (RP) accent. However, there is a lack of research published in the area pertaining in the spoken variety of acrolectal MalE. One of the implications of this gap is the deference to RP as a reference point. To address this gap the current study sets out to identify the features of vowels and consonants in the acrolectal variety of MalE through an analysis of the pronunciations of Malaysian newscasters. The main reason for selecting broadcast English for this research is that we would expect the acrolectal variety of English to be used in this context. Extracts from ten newscasters, from two Malaysian English news channels were selected for the research. Perceptual analysis was supplemented by acoustic analysis of the sounds where relevant. The results indicate that the pronunciation of acrolectal MalE exhibits limited similarities to the spoken colloquial variety of MalE particularly in relation to the initial *th* stopping, a lack of vowel contrast and the realisation of some diphthongs as monophthongs. In conclusion, the acrolectal MalE is not similar to BrE, as previously maintained, and it is also not similar to the colloquial variety or learner variety which tends to have more marked pronunciation features.

Kajian sebutan Bahasa Inggeris akrolektal Malaysia

ABSTRAK

Kebanyakan penerangan mengenai sebutan Bahasa Inggeris Malaysia (MalE) memberi tumpuan kepada variasi bahasa harian dan bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh pelajar. Salah satu sebab ini berlaku adalah andaian bahawa MalE merujuk kepada bahasa tempatan dan bahasa harian. Andaian seterusnya adalah ialah variasi standard MalE adalah sama dengan variasi Standard British English (SBE). Walaupun ini mungkin benar dalam konteks penulisan, pentutur di Malaysia tidak mungkin mempunyai sebutan yang sama dengan pentutur SBE atau bertutur menggunakan sebutan Received Pronunciation (RP). Walaubagaimanapun, terdapat jurang dalam hasil penyelidikan yang telah diterbitkan dalam bidang pertuturan berkaitan variasi akrolektal MalE. Salah satu implikasi dari jurang ini ialah RP (Received Pronunciation) digunakan sebagai titik rujukan. Untuk mengatasi jurang ini kajian semasa bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti ciri-ciri vokal dan konsonan dalam variasi akrolektal MalE melalui analisis sebutan pembaca berita Malaysia. Tujuan utama memilih konteks berita bahasa Inggeris untuk penyelidikan ini ialah andaian bahawa bahasa Inggeris variasi akrolektal akan digunakan dalam konteks tersebut. Ekstrak berita dari sepuluh orang pembaca berita, dari dua saluran berita yang berbeza di Malaysia dipilih untuk penyelidikan ini. Analisis persepsi telah dilakukan dahulu dan ini diikuti dengan analisis akustik bunyi sekiranya berkaitan.

Hasil penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa sebutan akrolektal MalE memperlihatkan beberapa persamaan dengan jenis Bahasa Inggeris MalE yang lain terutamanya dalam penghentian awal *th*, kurang membezakan antara pasangan vokal dan realisasi diftong sebagai monoftong. Sebagai kesimpulan, bahasa Inggeris variasi akrolektal MalE tidak sama dengan BrE, seperti yang dikatakan sebelum ini dan ia juga

tidak sama dengan bahasa harian atau variasi bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh pelajar di mana bahasa Inggeris akrolektal mempunyai ciri sebutan yang lebih ketara.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AmE	American English
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASTRO	MEASAT Broadcast Network Systems Sdn Bhd
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BERNAMA	Bernama News Channel
BrE	British English
BruE	Brunei English
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETA	English Teaching Assistance
KSSM	Standard Curriculum for Secondary School
KSSR	Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah
L1	First language
MalE	Malaysian English
MBMMBI	Dasar Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Memperkasa Bahasa Inggeris (To uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to strengthen the English language).
PPSMI	Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Metematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris (The teaching of Mathematics and Science in English)
RP	Received Pronunciation
RTM	Radio Television Malaysia
SgE	Singapore English
SBE	Standard British English

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 English in Malaysia

English was used widely in administration, trade and economy, Christian evangelism, mass media and education during the British occupant. (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). English is still being used extensively in business and private enterprises today in Malaysia. However, there was a gradual phasing out of English as the main medium of instruction in secondary schools and tertiary institutions due to the implementation of the National Language Policy in Malaysia in 1967 (Crismore, Ngeow & Soo,1996). Like any other language contact situation, English in Malaysia has gone through a process of language modification by the local speakers to suit their social and communication needs. As a result, a new variety of English, Malaysian English (MalE) emerged (Pillai, 2010). However, based on Kachru's three-circle model of World Englishes, English in Malaysia can be the first, third or other language for many Malaysians, given the multilingual setting of Malaysia; the Malays with the subdivision of the various regional dialects of Malay; the Chinese with Mandarin and their various dialects such as Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Teochew; the Indians with the languages of the Indian subcontinent like Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu; and the host of indigenous groups found in Malaysia (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). Thus, Malaysian English (MalE) is not a 'uniform variety' as there are sub-varieties (Augustin, 1982; Baskaran, 1994; Benson, 1990; Pillai & Ong, 2018).

Earlier studies on MalE treated it the same as the Singapore English (SgE). Tongue (1979) referred to this variety of English as the 'English in Malaysia and Singapore' (ESM) because he regarded both as the same variety of English. Tongue

(1979) categorised two styles of ESM. The first style is called the 'formal style' which he claimed resembles Standard English while the second style is the 'informal style' that he regarded as incorrect English (Tongue, 1979). Other researchers who studied Singapore Malaysian English were Platt and Weber (1980, p. 168) who identified three sub-varieties: (1) 'Acrolect' the formal 'near-native' sub-variety, (2) 'Mesolect', the informal colloquial sub variety and (3) 'Basilect', the pidginised sub-variety. Baskaran (1984; 1994) who studied the aspects of MalE syntax also divided MalE into three main sociolects: the acrolectal variety which is 'near native' and permits considerable variation for words relating to local context: the mesolectal variety which is influenced by local languages like Malay and Chinese: and the basilect, a distorted form of Malaysian English which is heavily infused with items from local languages and dialects. Hence, the acrolectal variety is a formal variety used by most Malaysians in formal situation such as meetings, news and academia whereas the colloquial variety is used by most Malaysians in informal situations, such as informal communication among peers or family members. Baskaran (1994) points out that all the three sociolects vary from actual BrE. The acrolectal and mesolectal are intelligible internationally but the basilectal MalE being the most colloquial can be unintelligible. Benson (1990), lamented there are three types of MalE. The first type of MalE is the Anglo-Malay, which is a formal variety used by English educated older speakers. The second type is the informal English which is more like the colloquial form which has localized pronunciation, syntax and lexis. The third type of English is the English that has high occurrences of code switching which is influenced by local languages like Malay, Chinese and Indian languages and dialects. The acrolectal form is said to be closely related to standard British English (BrE) although the language might be influenced by local languages at the lexical and phonological level (Baskaran, 1994). The acrolectal MalE like any other Postcolonial Englishes (Schneider, 2007) would have gone

modification and developmental process. Therefore, equating MalE with BrE after 60 years of independence is irrelevant and in the recent years, numerous researches have been done on the non-acrolectal variety rather than the acrolectal variety. Hence, the current study is on the pronunciation features of acrolectal MalE as there is a dearth in description in the acrolectal variety because of the assumption that acrolectal MalE is similar to BrE (Baskaran, 1984).

1.2 Aim of the research

This study is motivated by the need to explore and describe the pronunciation features of acrolectal MalE for which there is currently a dearth of published research. This is because most descriptions of Malaysian English (MalE) pronunciation tend to focus on the colloquial and learner varieties. One of the reasons for this is the assumption that MalE refers to the localised more colloquial variety (e.g. see Zuraidah Mohd. Don, 2016). The other is the assumption that the standard variety of MalE is similar to Standard British English (SBE). Whilst this may be true of the written standard variety, it is unlikely Malaysian speakers sound like SBE speakers or speaks with a Received Pronunciation (RP) accent. This leads to pedagogic models in Malaysia still using RP as a reference point.

1.3 Research objectives

The current research is aimed to describe the pronunciation features of acrolectal MalE since there is not much research done particularly on the acrolectal MalE. The description is done through the analysis of consonants and vowels. In sum, this research is expected to help determine that the acrolectal MalE is not similar to other colloquial varieties of MalE.

1.4 Research questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the features of consonants in acrolectal Malaysian English?

2. What are the features of vowels in acrolectal Malaysian English?

1.5 Significance of the study

MalE, like any other variety of New Englishes, contains particular features due from the influence of local languages and culture (Jenkins, 2003). Some language purists view these new varieties of English as deviations from native speakers' norms. This study adopts a descriptive rather than deviationist point of view. This study hopes to describe what could be deemed as acrolectal MalE, in particular the consonants and vowels lexical. Hence, this study can contribute towards the effort developing a model for acrolectal or educated Malaysian English pronunciation which could help the Malaysians to treat the acrolectal MalE model as a norm.

1.6 Limitations

The participants of the current study were only ten newscasters from two news channels. Since the number of the participants is small, we could not generalize that the entire acrolectal speaker would exhibit the same pronunciation features similar to the features found in this study. However, we would expect most MalE acrolectal speakers would exhibit similar features with other MalE acrolectal speakers. This study was not limited to female newscasters. The speech of three male newscasters was also analysed. Although there was not equal number of male and female newscasters, the news transcription would provide enough data for analysis. There was also no Indian newscaster in this study. Besides that, the selection of the newscasters was random and there was no proficiency test was done to assess the proficiency of the newscasters.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Varieties of English

Kachru (1999) categories English into three circles (see Figure 2.1). The "inner circle" is countries where English is a native language for many such as Britain, America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. In those countries, English is widely used in all the domains ranging from family to administration. It is a first language to almost 370 million people living in these countries. (Graddol, 1997).

The next circle is the "outer circle". In this circle, English is a second language (ESL). There are between 150-300 million speakers of English in this circle (Gradool , 1997). Kachru (1999) lamented the varieties of English used in this circle are countries like Malaysia, Singapore, India, Philippines and Kenya as "institutionalized" or "nativized". The last circle is the "expanding circle' where the English has no historical role like the "outer circle" Englishes. However, in the "expanding circle" English is used as the mean of global communication. English in countries like Japan, China and Russia are categorized into this circle. In these countries, English is used mostly in trade and in international interaction.

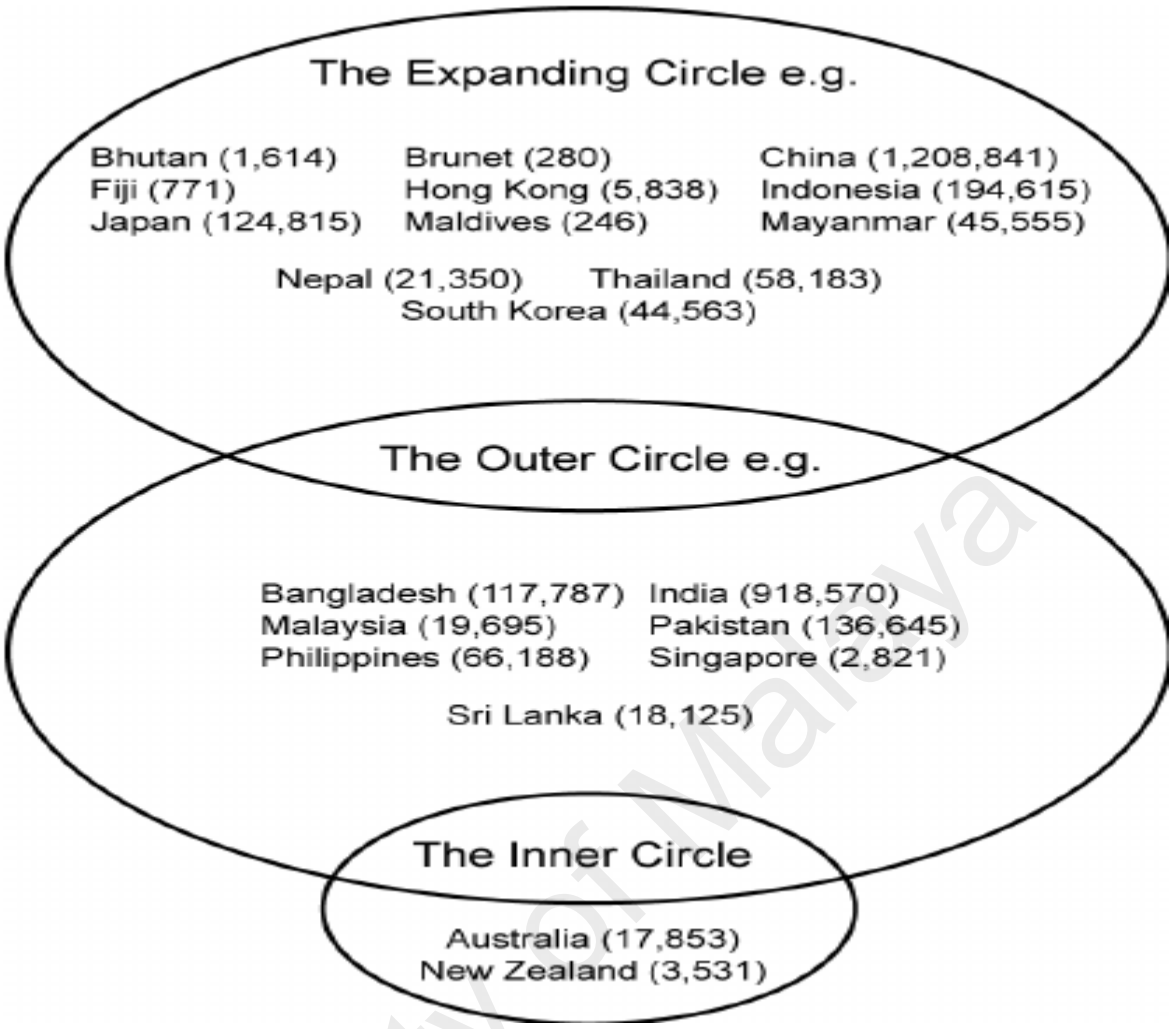

Figure 2.1: Kachru's **"Three Circles"** Model (Schneider, 2007, p.13)

In relation to Kachru's (1985) model, McArthur (1987) and Gorlach (1990) subdivide English with World Standard English as its core and further subdivide variations of this into the respective regional varieties. As shown in Figure 2.2, each regional variety is further classified into ethnic and social sub varieties. For instance, standard BrE is subdivided into a further 10 sub varieties such as BBC English, Welsh English and Scottish English. Other examples would be Australian Standard English, Maori English and Aboriginal English. MalE is placed under standard South Asian English.

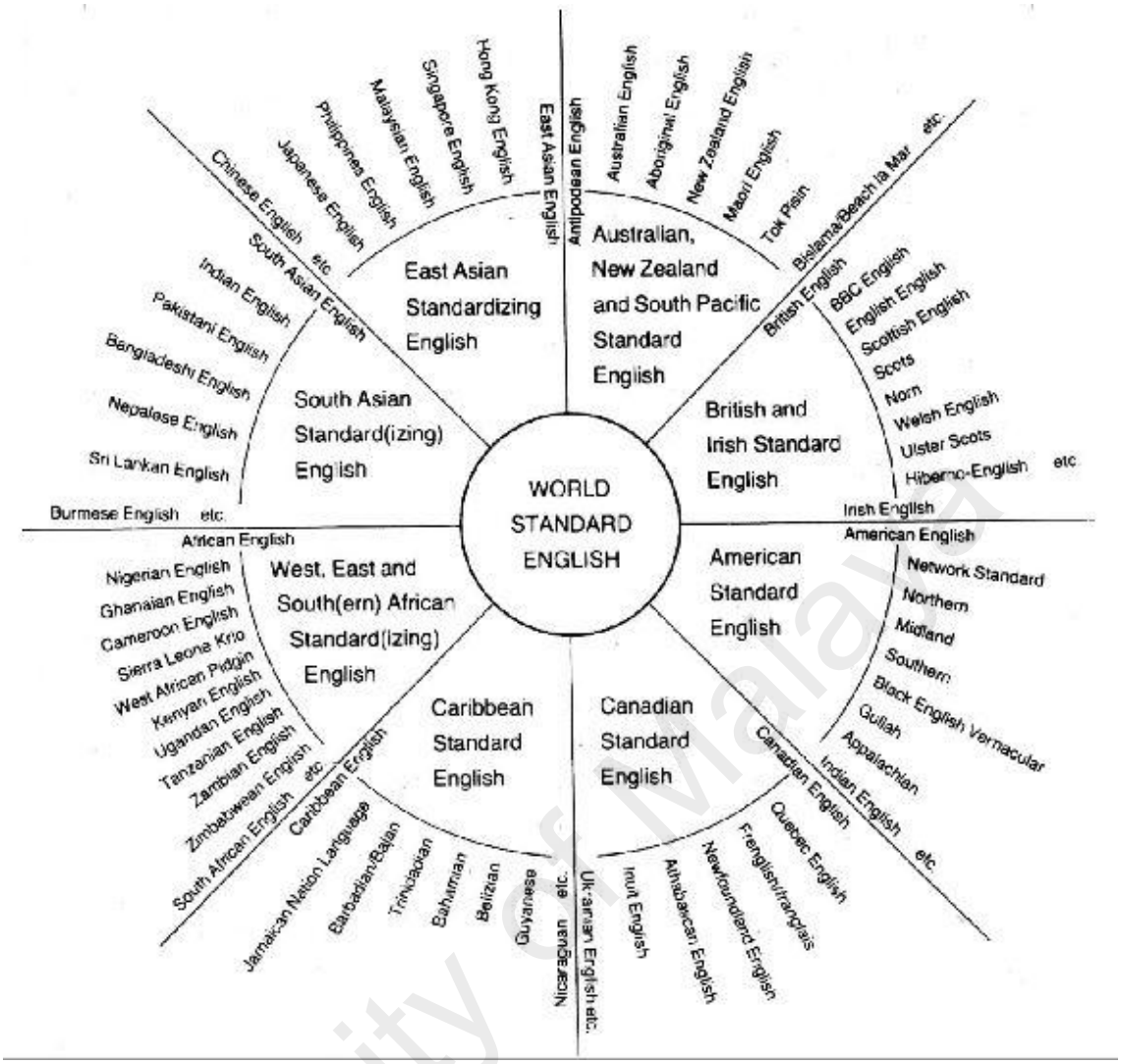

Figure 2.2: Crystal (1995, p.111)

McArthur's circle of World Standard English

One of the shortcomings of Kachru's model is that although there are many varieties in one circle, the circles do not in any way show the diversity in the form of Creoles to the dialectal varieties. In an attempt to show the rich diversity of Englishes, McArthur (1998) put forward a model that separates the world of English into eight regions, and includes what he describes as "a crowded (even riotous) fringe of sub varieties such as Aboriginal English, Black English Vernacular [now know as "African American Vernacular English" or "Ebonics], Guallah, Jamaican Nation Language,

Singapore English and Ulster Scots'. The rich diversity and heterogeneous nature of English as represented in Kachru and MacArthur's models of English show why the concept of Standard English is fuzzy. The current trend of celebrating differences and acknowledging local varieties has resulted in the view that there is no one uniform pronunciations of English.

Kachru defines the term "nativization" (Kachru, 1992 p.22) as when English is used by any other communities aside from the native speakers, the language goes through adjustments due to the language contact situations and socio culture situations. This means that English is codified and accepted as a result of new norms due to the influence of the dominant language of the languages in a particular nation and serves as a secondary language to the dominant language of a country in this circle. The result of this was that even when people in these countries adopted English, it was English adapted to the local languages (Bauer, 2002). MalE is an example of this evolution.

Both McArthur (1987) and Gorlach (1990) view English as a set of differing standards and do not show origins or influences of English varieties as compared to Kachru (1985).

Strevens (1983) defines Standard English as a particular dialect of English, being the only non-localised dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriated educational target in teaching English; which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accents. Trudgill (1999) said that in countries like USA, Scotland or New Zealand are the only places which Standard English speakers can be found. Since there are many accents of English it is not possible anymore to talk about a homogenous standard accent. This means that even if speakers are using Standard English, they may not necessarily be using a standardized accent, such as RP (Trudgill, 1999). With the existence of the different varieties of English worldwide, it may not be possible to say that there is only one Standard English.

As pointed out by Kembo-Sure (2003, p.108) "in a world of increasing intercultural interaction and requiring multilingualism and multiculturalism as the norm rather than the odd, the monolithic English standard is neither tenable nor desirable". However, even though there are differences in pronunciation, linguists do seem to agree that there is a shared grammar among most of the standard varieties of English with the exception of less fixed vocabulary (Kerswill, 2006).

Schneider (2007) proposed a 'dynamic model' of the evolution of New Englishes. This model discusses the linguistic features of the new variety of Englishes and also the development and the characteristic features of the New Englishes. Like any other new Englishes, MalE is still going through the developmental stages. The theory on postcolonial English is categorised into five phases. The first phase is the "Foundation". In this phase, English is used in a non-English speaking country. English is brought in because of colonization. Bilingualism and pidginization develops in phase one. Malaysian went through phase one during the settlement of the British in the late 17th century in the Malaya.

In second phase is the "Exornormative stabilization". In this phase, English is spoken in formal contexts such in administrative, education and even in informal context. In this phase, English is considered to be a commodity and needs to be learnt by the locals so that they would have a promising future or to secure a job in the colonized country by the colonizers. Linguistically, bilingualism is very common at this stage and 'broken' language of the English language emerges. The English at this stage becomes a second language for many locals. This can be seen in the use of English in education especially for the Malay royal families and traders during the colonization, business in the Straits Settlements.

The third phase is “Nativization”. In this phase, a new identity of the language begins to appear between the locals and the native speakers as the locals strive for independence from the colonizers. This also can be seen in the increment in the number of bilingual speakers among the locals in the territory. The features in the language are emerging and it can be seen in the syntax, lexis and phonological features of the language. This leads to the emergence of code switching among the local. The language at this phase is heavily influenced by the locally borrowed lexical items and the language would have a ‘marked accent’ and in the Malaysian context, it is when Malaya got the independence from Britain in 1957. Malayans were still viewing themselves under the rule of the British after the independent. Even after the independence from Britain, English is still had a very strong importance in Malaya as it was the main medium of instruction in education as well as in administration. Government as well as the private sectors were still using English as the official language until it was replaced by the government language policy which emphasizes the use of the Malay language in any official contexts regardless whether it’s written or spoken situation in Malaysia.

The fourth phase is the “Endonormative Stabilization”. In this phase, the gap between the local English (MalE) and the settler’s English (BrE) begins to reduce. The local English, in our case, MalE is gradually accepted as an identity. The local language norms are accepted and this leads to creativity in literary works. This phase in MalE can be seen in the acceptance of MalE norms as the integral part of English in Malaysia with the local norms which is used in some formal or informal language context. At the end of the present study, justification on the placement of MalE in the fourth phase will be given.

The final phase is “Differrentiation”. The colonized nation becomes an established nation with the new official national language. The new variety of English is stable and is free from any external threat. Hence, the newly establish English can stand

on its own without looking at the other model of English, in our case BrE for references. The locals are proud of their language identity and also their ethnically marked accents. The new language could exist in parallel with the other languages in Malaysia. (Schneider, 2007). MalE has yet to reach this phase as there is a lack of acknowledgment of MalE as the 'official' English in Malaysia, and many Malaysians still consider MalE as a distorted or mangled form English compared to BrE (see Zuraidah Mohd. Don, 2016).

In the case of MalE, it is now at "Nativization" which is the third stage. It is still undergoing structural development and grammatical changes. In the Malaysian context many Malaysians are either bilingual or multilingual and English is widely used in most urban areas in Malaysia. Like in any other acroletal English context, most acrolectal speakers would sound the same as it cuts across ethnicity and geographical regions of the speakers.

2.2 English in Malaysia

As the colonial rulers began to impede on the daily lives of local people, there was a need for a neutral language to be establish between these two parties to maintain communication, especially between colonial administers and the local aristocracies (Lowenberg, 1986). The arrival of merchants from Britain and Europe also led to the spread of English to the natives within the regions of Southeast Asia. Just as it did in the other regions in Southeast Asia, English arrived in Malaysia as a result of colonization during the late 18th century. Hence, when Malaya achieved its independence in 1957, the role of English changed as Malay language took the role of English before independence.

The status of English in Malaysia is a second language following Kachru's three-circle model of World Englishes. However, it can be a first, third or other language for many Malaysians, given the multilingual setting of Malaysia: the Malay with the subdivision of the various regional dialects of Malay; the Chinese with Mandarin and their various dialects such as Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Teochew; the Indians with the languages of the Indian subcontinent like Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu; and the host of indigineous groups found in Malaysia (Asmah, 1992). In Malaysia, many Malaysian converse in English however, not many speak English as their first language. Many especially in non-urban areas speak English as a second or third language. Most speak colloquial form of MalE which is influenced by the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of the vernacular languages (Asmah Haji Omar, 2004).

This can be traced back to the time when the British colonized the Malay states after the arrival of Francis Light's in Penang in 17th century. When the British ruled Malaya back then, they wanted people in Malaya to communicate with them. Hence, the British made English as their language of communication with the locals. During that period of time people conversed in English especially in government sector where the Malayans work with British were involved. However, the English that the Malayans learned was British English as the education system followed directly from Britain's education system. It was also mentioned by Bhathal (1990) English was only used in the Malayan colony in administration as it was the language of communication with the locals, used by the English rulers in Malaya and the Christian priests where English remained as the dominant language over other local languages. English remained dominant through and after the independent from the British. Tongue (1979) said that English was widely used in Malaysia and Singapore for well over a hundred years and is still used today in a great variety of way. Since English was the second language for

most people in Malaya back in the days. As immigrants from China and India spoke their native languages as their first languages and the Malays spoke the Malay language.

Over time, the English spoken in Malaysia had evolved into what we call as Malaysian English now. However, with the status of BrE associated with class and 'the right way to speak' in English, the status of MalE has always been associated with the colloquial variety. Wong (1991) lamented that many descriptions of spoken MalE has always focused on the colloquial or the learner varieties.

At present, there is a lack of published research on the acrolectal form of MalE, and this is due to the assumption that any variety of MalE is not the same as the entity called Standard English. Brown (1998) claims that, "there is little point in describing the vowels of the acrolectal EMS (English of Malaysia and Singapore) speech, as they are systematically at least, identical to RP". As mentioned earlier, the phonological features of acrolectal MalE is assumed to be similar to RP and Baskaran (2005) said that there are only slight variations between both the English varieties. However, due factors which include geographic settings and social factors, the varieties of accents in MalE particularly in the acrolectal variety, is very likely to be heard. MalE according to Gill (2002) has strongly marked to less ethnically unmarked accent.

Acrolectal speaking Malaysians usually come from areas where English is highly used. Like from example cities like Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Penang and Ipoh are some example of cities in Malaysia where we can find many proficient speakers of English. We can say that the varieties of English in Malaysia especially acrolectal English comes from these cities and the other variation of Malaysian English are most likely to be used in other parts throughout Malaysia.

Today, English in Malaysia serves a wide range of functions and some of these areas include administration, trade, religion and education. It has a second language status in the sense that it is the second compulsory languages taught in primary and

secondary schools in Malaysia. Malay is the main medium of instructions in public schools at the secondary school level. At the primary school, there are also Tamil and Chinese medium public schools.

The teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (PPSMI) was initiated in 2003. The policy was introduced to make sure that Malaysian students are proficient in Mathematics and Science since most of the sources for the subjects are in English. The move was also seen by many as Malaysia was gearing up towards globalization and the ability for the students to master the language. However, in 2012, the government introduced the usage of Malay and the English language in the teaching of Mathematics and Science. The move was crucial as English was given the same importance as the Malay language in the Malaysian Education system. Then in 2012, 'To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to Strengthen the English language' (MBMMBI) was introduced. The language policy was seen as another policy which was not to neglect the Malay language. At the same time, it was to enhance the proficiency of English among the students, and as part of MBMMBI, in 2016, an option to teach science and mathematics in English was introduces under the Dual Language Policy.

The Roadmap for English Language Education Reform which was established which spans over the duration of ten years, starting from 2015 until 2025. To ensure that English in Malaysia will be aligned with international standard, the roadmap will serve as a guide. The roadmap was established to raise the standard of English in the country and in 2013; English teachers throughout the country have been exposed to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The framework is part of a ten-year roadmap. Teaching and learning of English in Malaysia would drastically change until 2025 whereby the teaching methods and curriculum will be revamped in the hopes of changing the declining English proficiency in Malaysian schools. 2017 is

set to be a challenging year for many English teachers in most Malaysian schools as the teaching and grading will be based on the CEFR.

In the Malaysian context, many Malaysians consider English as their first language or second language. MalE is placed in the 'Outer Circle'. However, with the current government favouring the English language, English could become as important as Malaysia's official language which is the Malay language. However, some Malay political parties and language groups are against the idea of English being used as the one of the official Malaysian languages as they fear that this result in the declining number of Malay speakers in Malaysia or threaten heritage languages like Chinese and Tamil. However, with the revamp of the English curriculum for primary and the secondary schools and the introduction of CEFR in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2015-2025), the importance in English education in Malaysia remains strong.

The Malaysian Education Ministry particularly the English Curriculum Development Division is now focusing more on standardizing the English Language textbooks and curriculum. This can be seen in the newer English textbooks published from 2012 until 2018, particularly the teaching and learning materials for the primary and secondary schools. The textbooks and the curriculum have focused pronunciation exercises, refined reading sections and detailed Malaysianized vocabulary (e.g. *kampung*) which the students can relate to. However, with the American media influencing the young adults, the vocabulary used by many millennial Malaysians is a mixture of American and British vocabulary.

2.3 Regional Englishes

Within the regions of Southeast Asia, the new varieties of English that have emerged generally resulted from colonization. Neighbouring countries of Malaysia may share some similar characteristics in English as the MalE, as they share a number of traits, culturally, socially and linguistically. Salbrina (2006) investigated pairs of vowels in Bruneian English and the study found out that similar to MalE, there was a lack of vowel contrast distinctions between the vowels /i/ and /i:/ and /u/ and /u:/ especially in the case of speakers who were not very fluent in English. Salbrina used ten Bruneian females and seven British females as her subjects. Both the Bruneians and British speakers were considered to be speakers of the acrolectal variety of English. She recorded the subjects reading the passage (*The North Wind and the Sun*). She then compared the results of her study with earlier studies on Brunei English (Massop, 1996; Nor Aziah, 1991) and also Singapore English (Deterding, 2000). Based on the formant measurements, the vowels were plotted onto a Bark Chart. It was found that the vowels space of the Brunei English speakers is smaller than that of the British speakers (Salbrina Haji Sharbawi, 2006). Though the earlier study on Brunei English vowels (Mossop, 1996; Nor Aziah, 1991; Salbrina Haji Sharbawi, 2002), show that Bruneians tend not to contrast the English vowel pairs, Salbrina reports that experienced speakers show some contrast in the vowel pairs both qualitatively and durationally, which is similar to Pillai's (2008) findings. Further, it was also observed that in Brunei variety the diphthong /eɪ/ is produced as a long monophthong of /e/.

The findings in Singapore English (SgE) indicate that there is no distinction or vowel space between vowel pairs. It was found that, there is no contrast even in the vowel pair (/e/ and /æ/). Deterding's study on monophthongs vowels of SgE (2003) further confirms that there is neutralisation of the vowel pair /ɪ/ and /i:/ and the vowel pair /e/ and /æ/. Deterding's study involved five male and five females who spoke

Singapore English. In his study, formant values of the vowels were measured to see if they merged. The data comprised conversational data and the formants of the vowels were compared with similar measurements from BrE. This was used to determine which of the vowel distinctions of BrE are not maintained in SgE. The results indicate that compared to BrE, there was a lack of contrast in the vowel pairs such as /ɪ/ and /i:/ and /e/ and /æ/ and /u/ and /u:/ (Deterding, 2003). Even though the three varieties share similarities since they are in the same geographical regions and their speakers have similar first and second languages, the English used in these countries might not share too much similarity as discussed in the theory of the development cycle of New Englishes by Scheider (2007) due to the fact that the English language is treated different in these countries by the respective governments through language policies. Comparison on Malay subjects from Malaysian and Brunei and the Chinese subjects from Malaysia and Singapore did not indicate obvious similarities based on ethnicity.

Similar to Brunei and Singapore English where long and short vowels are not distinguished by length, MaE tend to be shortened as well. Salbina (2006), said the regional Englishes share more common similarities than with BrE. A new pattern of English in ASEAN is emerging as suggest by (Deterding and Kirkpatrick, 2006). The previous studies have shown that there are many similarities between the Singapore English and Malaysian variety of English (Platt and Weber 1980 and Platt and Weber, 1983). Similar finding is also found in BruE (Cane, 1994; Gupta, 2005). In building a more localised pronunciation model in the region, a detailed study on the similar features across the regional English needs to be conducted. This can help to identify the common features across the regional Southeast Asia Englishes.

2.4 Types of Malaysian English

There are sub-varieties in Malaysian English (MalE). Hence, MalE is not homogeneous (see Pillai & Ong, 2018). The varieties in MalE can be easily distinguished based on the setting or language context which is the formal or informal context. Normally, English used in the formal settings include newspaper, books or even any formal conversations. Whereas in the informal context, the less formal or colloquial form is tended to be used.

Baskaran (1987) maintains that the features of acrolectal MalE are not much different in the features of consonants, vowels and word stress with BrE. However, the after decades after colonial of the British, it is not relevant to associate BrE with MalE as the pronunciation features of MalE especially in the acrolectal variety has gone through changes with the infusion of the local languages and dialects.

Just like all other varieties, it is a common feature for sub varieties to occur within a variety. In relation to this, there are several definitions provided by local and foreign linguistics in the context of (MalE). These definitions are coined on the basis that every variety consists of different levels of proficiency and settings. The table 2.1 shows the MalE continuum by Baskaran (2005).

Table 2.1: The Malaysian English Continuum (Baskaran, 2005, p.22)

Syntax	• Offical	• Unofficial	• Broken MalE
Lexis	• Lexical items accepted in formal and informal use	• Lexical items, including those not used in more formal contexts	• Pidgin-like
Phonology	• Ethnically cannot be marked	• Usually marked, but not necessarily marked ethnic accent and intonation	• Ethnically marked accent and intonation
E.g.	• Newspaper reports • Formal letters and documents • Television news • Official speeches	• Informal spoken &written communication between colleagues, friends, family members etc.	• Used by those with limited proficiency in English.

These varieties within MalE can be easily distinguished whether the language is used in formal or informal settings. The acrolectal continuum however, is only used in formal settings It is from such continuum that Wong (1981) divides English into a hierarchy consisting of two levels, MalE 1 and MalE 2 in which, MalE 1 is hierarchical, placed at the top and is perceived as a 'Primary Language' used with proficiency, similar to acrolectal (Baskaran, 1994). At the bottom of the hierarchy MalE 2, are those who are not fluent in the language and can only cope with basic communicative purposes, similar to the basilect (Baskaran, 1994). Baskaran (1994) points out that the most commonly used sub-variety of Malaysian English is the mesolect, which is used even by the educated people especially in casual, informal speech. This is very common in most Malaysians when they speak with their peers or after work conversations with colleagues. The distinction between this form of Malaysian English and the English spoken by Malaysians speaking 'proper' or Standard English is necessary. While both share certain linguistic features, especially in terms of pronunciation and choice of words, standard MalE particularly in the written form is different. However, the more

mesolectal or colloquial variety, derogatively known as 'Manglish', may be more difficult to understand as its linguistic features are more heavily influenced by the local languages in Malaysia. Baskaran (1994) also points out that all the three sociolects vary from actual RP. The acrolectal and mesolectal are intelligible internationally but the basilectal MalE being the most colloquial can be unintelligible. It can be anticipated that MalE pronunciation will be influenced by the various local languages and dialects used in Malaysia. As mentioned in Pillai, Zuraidah Mohd. Don, Knowles and Tang (2010), Malaysian English pronunciation can range from more or less ethnically marked accents with a tendency for the more acrolectal form to be less marked. In case of vowels, most of the literature points to the shortening of long vowels and the monophthongisation of diphthongs among Malaysian speakers (Platt & Weber, 1980; Baskaran, 1987; Baskaran 2005; Zuraidah Mohd. Don, 1997; Pillai 2010). The realisations of diphthongs as monophthongs and the lack of contrast between vowel pairs would mean that there is likely to be smaller vowel inventory in Malaysian English (MalE).

2.5 Multilingualism in Malaysia

Malaysia is a melting pot of many different types of languages. The multi-ethnic population of Malaysia creates a linguistic diversity. A multilingual in Malaysia has endless horizon in any given language context. A multilingual is able to think and speak in different languages in any given time or situation. However, being a multilingual will somehow affect the utterances in any one of the languages (Tarone, 1983). This may not be the case in Malaysia as English and Malay languages are learned simultaneously in Malaysian schools and some students learn Tamil or Chinese language if they were to go to a Chinese or Tamil medium school. For instance, multilingual Malaysians might be equally proficient in one or two languages in informal conversations with their peers, family members and colleagues as many Malaysians are exposed to at least two or even

three languages at the same time. This has led to a multilingual environment in Malaysia. English in Malaysia has the status of second language which is why English is given the same amount importance by the government for many years (Rajadurai, 2010).

2.6 Malaysian English pronunciation

The lack of research in acrolectal MalE is due largely to the perception that Malaysian English refers to a colloquial form rather than as an umbrella term (e.g. Gaudart; 2000; Morais 2001; Pillai 2008; Pillai & Ong, 2018) for all the varieties of English used in Malaysia. As pointed out in (Pillai et al. 2010) there has been a lack of concerted efforts to describe linguistic features of the acrolectal variety of MalE. Instead, as mentioned previously, it is generally dismissed as being the same as British English (Brown 1998, Baskaran 1994). Yet, it would be hard to sustain the notion that MalE pronunciation in the acrolectal variety is akin to British English (Pillai et al. 2010). Received Pronunciation (RP) has 24 vowels (Gut 2006), whereas MalE has lesser vowels. This is because MalE lacks vowel contrast (Pillai, Zuraidah Mohd.Don, Knowles & Tang, 2010; Tan & Low 2010), and produces some diphthongs as monophthongs (Pillai, 2012) which could account for the smaller vowel inventory. It has been posited that ethnic marking in acrolectal MalE may not be perceptually evident (Pillai et al, 2010), which suggests acrolectal (as opposed to non-acrolectal) MalE speakers from different ethnic groups are likely to have less pronunciation differences among themselves. Malaysian English (MalE) has numerous pronunciation features which differ from Standard Spoken Southern BrE (Roach, 1983). Jassem (1994) said that standard MalE pronunciation diverges from that of BrE at the levels of individual phonemes or segments (vowels and consonants), stress, rhythm and intonation. (Phoon,

2009) said that the MalE that we know today has evolved and this due to the influence of AmE and other local languages and dialects.

According to Pillai, et al. (2010) the vowel qualities of English did not correlate with the speakers' L1s. Based on their findings, speakers' L1s do not hamper the English used by any MalE speakers. Gut (2007), in fact suggests that phonological differences found in new varieties of English are not because of the first language (L1) transfer but a result of a developmental process which results in the emergence of distinctive features over the years.

Earlier studies on MalE pronunciations were impressionistic in nature and tended to focus on the colloquial or learner varieties of spoken MalE (e.g. Phoon, Abdullah & Maclagan, 2013), where more ethnically marked features of pronunciation may be more prevalent (Phoon et al, 2013). However, characteristics which make MalE sounds different form RP have been reported in acrolectal speakers (Pillai, Zuraidah Mohd. Don, Knowles & Tang, 2010). Hence, it is debatable if RP remains a realistic reference model for English in Malaysia after 60 years of independence from the British (Pillai, 2014).

There is still an 'exonomative norm orientation' where English is concerned in Malaysia (Gut, 2007) as we still equating MalE with the colloquial form of MalE. We still look towards, in our case, British English, as a model of Standard English, including for spoken English. Many believe that MalE is still 'mangled' as the BrE considered as the reference model (Pillai, 2015). For example, the new primary and secondary school English syllabus (KSSR and KSSM) explicitly state that English teachers should use the Standard (BrE) as only model for teaching the English language. The references include the spelling and grammar as well as standard BrE pronunciation (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013).

Furthermore, the KSSM handbook states that, English in Malaysia has numerous varieties however, only the Standard BrE is considered as the official Standard English for reference for spelling, grammar and pronunciation in schools (Curriculum Development Division Ministry of Education, 2014). With the recent the hiring of native speakers to teach English in Malaysian schools is also another serious move by the Malaysian Education Ministry. For instance, the ETA (English Teaching Assistant) program was implemented in Malaysian schools since 2015. However, this program (The Fulbright Teaching Assistant Program) hires American teachers to teach English. This program is a joint effort by the Malaysia's Ministry of Education and the American Embassy in Malaysia. However, there are some dilemmas on whether ETA program enhances the usage of English in Malaysian schools as the native speakers' role in classroom is just to assist teaching and learning. A standard English model needs to be established as current model is based on BrE. This research hopes to bridge the gaps in identifying the features of acrolectal MalE and describe the acrolectal MalE features as there has been no concentrated effort to establish a standard MalE pronunciation; instead, BrE norms are still being revered. Gut (2007) maintains without a systematic description of a variety, in this case, what could constitute the acrolectal variety of MalE, including its pronunciation features; the orientation is likely to remain exonormative**.**

According to Platt and Weber (1980) the differences which have occurred between the native variety, British English/RP and the non-native variety, MalE can be viewed as follows in the consonant system. Firstly, the total number of consonants in MalE is almost as the same as RP although they do not always occur in the same linguistic context as RP. Looking at the variables, the pronunciation model of MalE has the tendency to delete the final consonant of words. For example, the word *just* has the final /t/ deleted to be replaced to be pronounced as [dʒʌs] Furthermore, there is a

tendency to replace the dental fricatives *th* with *t* and *d* especially in initial position in words such as thick [tik] and this [dis]. However, this may not be how fluent speakers of MalE produce these fricatives.

In Malaysian context, rhoticity is a new emerging phenomenon particularly among young adults of MalE (Ramasamy, 2005). She suggested that rhoticity among young adults could be due to Americanization in the young adults particularly in the choice of vocabulary and pronunciation. In fact, younger Malaysian Indians were reported to be rhotic in Ramasamy (2005) and Pillai (2014). These instances of rhotic could be due to the influences of American media on younger generation. (Pillai, 2014). However in study done by Phoon, Abdullah and Maclagan (2013), there were no instances of rhoticity. Thus, we would expect MalE to be non-rhotic at the moment. Similar to this, we would expect the current study to be non-rhotic as well as the previous literature exhibited inconsistency of rhoticity in MalE. Furthermore, the age group of the newscasters are between 30 to 40 years old which are assumed to be non-rhotic according to the previous studies. In contrast, rhoticity was present in Brunei English (Salbrina Haji Sharbawi and Deterding, 2010). In this study, words with /r/ in the final position as well as preceding consonants were analysed acoustically and perceptually. The data for the study was obtained through the passage *Wolf* passage (Deterding, 2006). The third formant (F3) of vowels was measured as it shows the relationship of rhoticity where F3 values can be expected if there is rhoticity.

Previous studies especially the study done by Phoon (2010) showed that in the learner variety speakers substituted /w/ with /v/ for the words *watch* and *web*. The subjects of that study were Malay and Chinese speakers. Previous research found have that Chinese MalE speakers tend to omit the final /l/. For example, the words *girl, twinkle, school* and *whistle* (Gut, 2007; Phoon, 2000). Phoon (2007) also found that the speakers in her study deleted morphological markers. It was reported that 20% of the

tokens had morphological markers deleted, where her participants omitted the past tense makers, such as in *jumped, kicked, laughed* and *played*.

In terms of the realisation of the dental fricatives orthographically represented as *th*, MalE speakers are said to substitute these with /t/ and /d/ (Tongue, 1974). In general *th*-stopping is defined as substitution of stops /t/ and /d/ and interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ (Lukowicz, 2013). The emergent of a new dental stop [t] was posited by Yamaguchi (2014) as a probable new sound in the Malaysian phonemic inventory. In that research, she studied the initial *th* word positioning on her 12 Malaysian Chinese participants. Yamaguchi (2014) claims there is a new type of [t] in the MalE consonant inventory which is reliased as dental stop rather than interdental fricative e.g. *thought*. She used voice onset time (VOT) to measure the stops in her subjects' targeted words in four parts. However, VOT is somehow suitable to measure /p t k/ stops rather than the interdental fricatives. Hence, for this study, the words with initial *th* words were looked at on spectogram to see if it was a fricative or a stop.

The earliest research on MalE vowels was done by Platt and Weber (1980). The more recent studies on MalE monophthongs is particularly done acoustically by (Pillai, 2008; 2010), found the typical vowel pairs (/ɪ/ and /i:/ and /e/ and /æ/ and also/ʌ/ and /ɑ:/) had lack of contrast. The vowels were produced differently to standard BrE. Baskaran (2004) states that the speakers tended to shorten the long vowels. Similar findings were reported by Wan Aslynn Wan Ahmad (2005) who looked at Malay speakers of English. Her study was an instrumental study of /u/ and /u:/ and /i/ and /i:/. The study was on ten female English who use English as their second language. They were recorded reading a word list containing the target vowels /u/ and /u:/ and /i/ and /i/. The words were put in carrier sentences before the subjects read them (/u/ and /u:/ and /i/ and /i:/). The target vowels were then analysed using Praat. The first and second formant, and the vowel durations were then measured and analysed. The findings

suggest that probably because Malay language has no discrimination of long and short vowels, the vowel durations for both long and short English vowels were not contrasted for length by her subjects.

There is also evidence that MalE vowels are produced differently from other varieties of English (Pillai, 2008; Wan Aslynn Wan Ahmad, 2005). In Pillai, Zuraidah Mohd. Don and Knowles (2012), a total of 15 educated female speakers consisting of Malay, Chinese and Indian speakers were asked to read the (*North Wind and the Sun*) passage. The targeted vowels in the words from the passage were extracted and analysed using Praat. Baskaran (2005) said that that emerged from this study which suggests that there were no significant differences in the vowels production regardless the ethnicity and MalE took up smaller vowel space compared to BrE. Similar findings were reported in Pillai (2008). The data was also from the Corpus of Malaysian English but was obtained from 47 female undergraduate students who were deemed to be proficient in English based on their English grades. The subjects were recorded reading the target words embedded in carrier sentences. A total of 517 vowels were analysed. The F1 and F2 of the vowels were measured and plotted on F1 and F2 vowel charts. The findings indicate there is a lack of contrast in the vowel quality between the vowel pairs *beg/bag, bird/bead, put/boot, bud/bard* and *pod/board*. However, length appeared to be contrasted, perhaps because the data compromised read speech. In the case of diphthongs, Table 2.2 shows the list of diphthongs in SSE (Standard Spoken English).

Table 2.2: Diphthongs in SSE (from Roach, 2000, p. ix)

Vowel	Example word	
eɪ	bay	closing diphthongs
aɪ	buy	
ɔɪ	boy	
əʊ	go	
aʊ	cow	
ɪə	peer	centering diphthongs
eə	pear	
ʊə	poor	

However, as Pillai (2014) found a tendency for Malaysian speakers to use monophthongs instead of the SSB diphthongs /eɪ/, /əʊ /and /eə/. Closing diphthongs, such as the first two, usually have larger negative ROC values (Deterding, 2000). Deterding (2000) found that the ROC values of British speakers were between -681 to -2273 Hz/sec, whereas for the Singapore Malay speakers who are monophthongal, the values are between -114 and -436 Hz/sec. Pillai (2014) also found that for the closing diphthongs, all except for /aɪ/ were low, ranging from -139 to -301 Hz/second. This indicated less less diphthongal movement for /eɪ/ and /əʊ /, confirmed by plotting these diphthongs on an F1-F2 chart.

2.7 The varieties of English in news broadcast

The term news and how it has impacted our lives in the recent decades has completed changed. With the emergence of the internet, it has changed how news is delivered to people. The terminology of 'news' varies these days. In English the word news appeared as "newis" in 1423, "newyes" in 1485 and evolved to "newes" in 1523. News was communicated by mouth before the era of printed and electronic news. Before the era of newspapers and electronic media, news was communicated by word of mouth. News is a crucial source in representing various concepts of reality in societies. It is a 'textual practice' to make senses of the world and this made possible by media (Meinof & Richardson, 1994). People might be dependent on different media sources to enrich their knowledge with what they consider to be genuine. According to Yorke (1997) a good newscaster should have a natural feel for the language, an instinct for the right word at the right time. What we can assume is that newscasters' job is a job that requires one to be highly proficient, in our case, in English. He also adds that the line between colloquial language and slang is a thin one. Therefore, we can assume that

newscasters in any news presentations would speak acrolectal English in their presentation.

In the case of the BBC, BBC English is English spoken by announcers of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in Britain. However, later the term evolved and became the standard British English (BrE) pronunciation in British; not only in Britain but throughout the world. The BBC is a publicly funded news agency in Britain but it also provides some international services throughout the world. For many years, BBC English has been heralded as the one of the respected broadcasters in the world. Mullan (2012) of the Guardian has also said that anything that had been said let it be a phrase or a word used in the news bulletin can be significantly accepted as Standard English. He also added that when English language is not used properly, the whole communication between viewers and listeners becomes pointless. The BBC news director, Richard Sambrrok (2001) also agrees by stating that BBC news sets out the highest standard of English in its usage of English. In the year of 1971, Daniel Jones a British phonetician first describes about RP in his English Pronouncing Dictonary. RP was a prestigious form of English Pronunciation at that time. He wrote in the introductory the RP and said that it was merely wide range of pronunciations understood by everyone. His work later became popular and reached twelfth edition in the 1960s (Yallop, 1999). Wells (1982) refers RP as "BBC English" and "Standard English". It should be noted that the majority of people in Britain do not speak RP, BBC English or Oxford English is the accent of a small number of people in Britain. According to Trudgill (1982), it is estimated that perhaps only three to five percent of England's population comprising the educated, speaks it.

In the Malaysian context, we would expect government owned Malaysian English news channels to use a standard form of English in the daily news and we also would expect the newscasters to use the acrolectal MalE. Over the past 60 years,

television in Malaysia has gone through a lot of changes. Starting with one or two channels, now there are over a few hundred channels which can be viewed with a press of a button. In December of 1963, Canadian technical consultants helped the Malaysian government to set up RTM (Radio Televisyen Malaysia). RTM is one of the departments which the Ministry of Information and Communications Malaysia oversees. RTM was established in Singapore and in 1959 it started to broadcast in then Malaya. As of 2017, ASTRO controls most of the channel views in Malaysia as ASTRO has wide selection of channels. This is followed by Media Prima and RTM. There is a huge shift in the current broadcasting norms in Malaysia. Most of the news channels in Malaysia are owned by the Malaysian government and ASTRO which is owned by the (Astro All Asia Networks Television). With most of the news channels controlled by the government, news presented to the public is determined by the government on the nature and the content. We also know that in formal situations like news, the chances of using slangs and colloquial jargons are very rare as the language used is expected to be formal. Therefore, we would assume that newscasters use formal variety of the language in our case acrolectal form of Malaysian English (MalE).

Another interesting notion that needs to be addressed is gradual substitution of the AmE over BrE. Over the recent decades, American media has taken over the world by storm. This could be seen with growing interest in the American movies and songs. The public seemed to be interested with movies and songs produced in and by American. Furthermore, AmE has captivated younger Malaysian generation through its television shows and films. It has greatly impacted the choice of words, vocabulary and the pronunciation of MalE. The pre-independent MalE is closely related to BrE, however with the emerging Americanization throughout the world, the domination of BrE as the 'mother of all the Englishes' is irrelevant. The choices of words and pronunciations can be seen and heard in many Malaysians formal and informal

conversations. However, what needs to be noted is that, the AmE is not too dominant in MalE, but it is spreading its roots into MalE and one day it will replace the domination of BrE in MalE.

2.8 Acoustic analysis

According to Laver (1994), there are four domains in the human auditory system. The first being perceptual quality. Second is duration. Third is pitch and lastly is loudness. Only a highly experienced phonetician can provide accurate impressionalistic transcription (Hayward, 2000). Therefore, impressionalistic analysis may not provide accurate descriptions of tokens. Hence, the use of acoustic speech analyser was employed. This is similar to the idea of (Pillai, 2008) that impressionalistic analysis may not be precise. Laver (1994) also said that only with acoustic analysis, the evidence of the four domains can be identified.

According to (Fry, 1979) the articulatory and the formant frequency in speech analysis is correlated. The spectrographic analysis of vowels, consonants and word stress of the pronunciation of any languages used acoustic analysis to give scientific comprehensive analysis. In order to study and analyse the vowels, the vowel sounds are isolated. For each vowel, a pair of figures representing in Herts are derived. The two lowest formants are labelled as first format (F1) and the second formant (F2) (Fry, 1979). The volumes and resonances of various vocal tract cavities (e.g. pharyngeal, oral and nasal) are determined by the acoustic spectrums in which energy is concentrated during the speech productions (Watt & Tillotson, 2001, p. 275). F1 relates to vowel height with lower F1 corresponding to higher vowels while F2 corresponds immensely to tongue fronting or retraction, that is, the higher the F2, the vowel is more frontal. For this research, acoustic analysis using Praat was employed on some sections which

acoustic analysis was necessary. Not all sections in the present study needed acoustic analysis as the present study was not fully acoustic based research.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the relevant discussion on the literature has been presented on the current status of English, English in Malaysia and the central idea of using the acoustic analysis. The central topic of the present research which is the study of acrolectal MalE pronunciation has also been presented. There is a need to re-examine the approaches taken towards the study of new varieties of English. We have seen that it is inadequate and unfair to adopt the approach that the goal of new varieties studies should be native-like proficiency. On the other hand, studies on new varieties should be approached from perspectives such as, the use of the variety for intranational communication. The following chapter discusses the research methodology used with the rationale and procedures used for the present research.

CHAPTER 3

METHDOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned the first two chapters, broadcast English as represented by the news was chosen as the context to analyse the acrolectal MalE pronunciation. Like other broadcast news context, especially mainstream news or on national television channels like the BBC news, the English used including the pronunciation, can be expected to reflect the acrolectal or educated variety of English in that country or region. Like the newscasters on the BBC or CNN news, all the newscasters on the Malaysian National Television Channel (BERNAMA) and Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) are assumed to be fluent in English. In terms of pronunciation, it can be assumed that newscasters would be using an acrolectal variety of English with a relatively unmarked social or regional accent to ensure that the language used in intelligible to a national and even international English-speaking audience. This can be perceived on, for example, BBC or CNN news. The current chapter will discuss the methodology in this study. Figure 3.1 illustrates the research process.

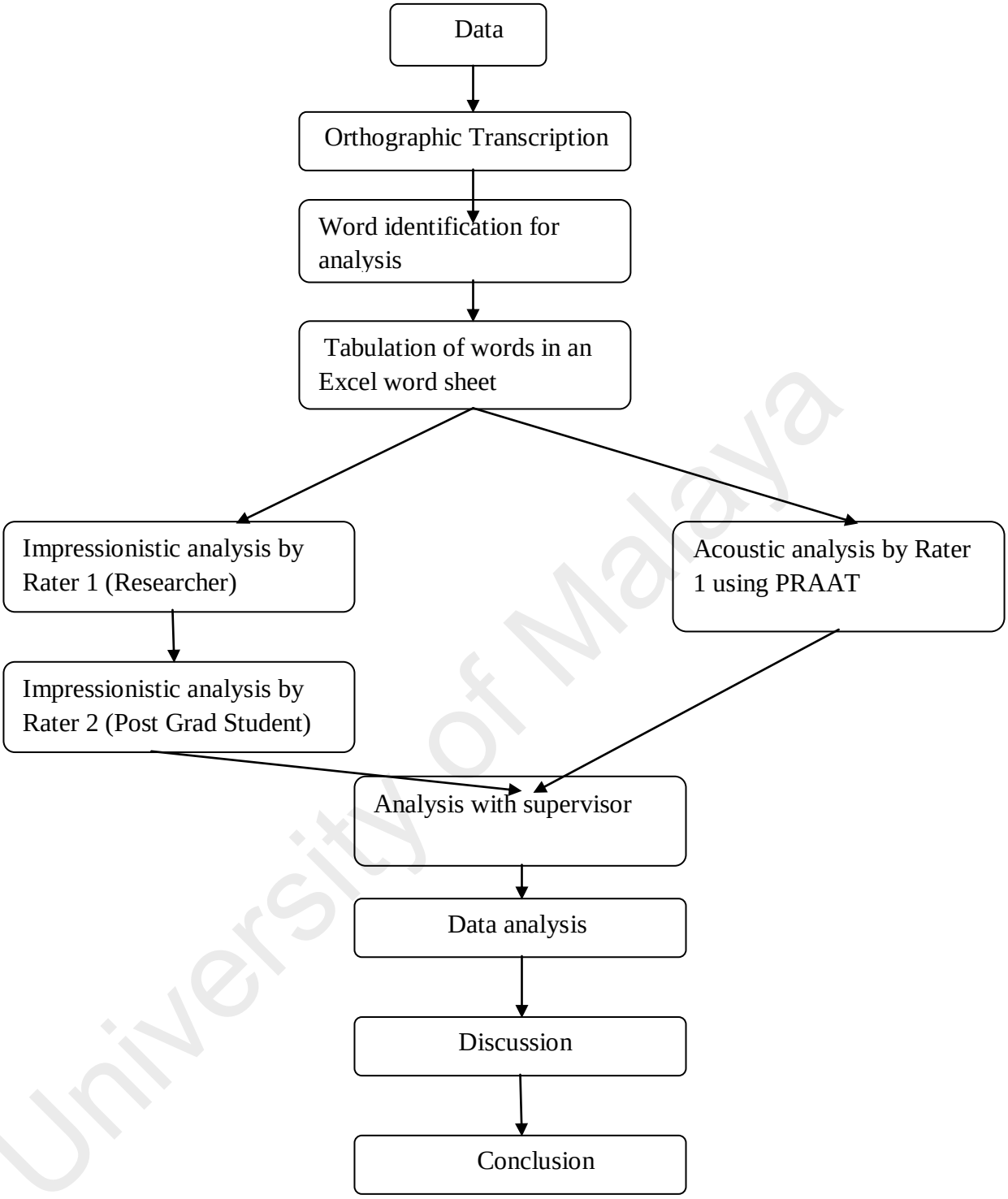

Figure 3.1: Flowchart of the research process

3.2 Recordings

The sample for this study is derived of ten newscasters from Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) and Malaysian National News Agency (BERNAMA). The recordings of the news were obtained directly from the news channels where the researcher wrote letters to the media departments of each news agency to get their approval in order to use their audio recordings. The individual news departments later sent their approval letters (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) to the researcher. The original news recordings were obtained from the news channels to avoid any disruptions in the quality of the news recordings. The recordings acquired from the news channels were in mp4 format. The videos were converted into .wav format, and Praat was later used to view the waveforms and spectrograms for annotations and analysis.

For analysis, speech of ten newscasters, five newscasters from RTM and five from BERNAMA were used. For RTM news channel, it was one female Malay newscasters, one male Chinese newscaster and two male Eurasian newscasters. For BERNAMA, it was four female Malay newscasters and one female Eurasian newscaster. The newscasters of each of the two television news channels were chosen to examine if acrolectal Malaysian pronunciation has similar features across speakers. The ethnicity of each of the newscasters was identified with the help of the Human Resources of each news channels.

A survey was done to obtain opinions as to whether broadcast English is considered to be an acrolectal variety of MalE. The survey (see Appendix 3) was carried out to make sure that the acrolectal variety cuts across ethnicity. This assumption is based on that proficient speakers of English would be fluent in the language and it would very hard to distinguish the ethnicity of the speakers. In this case, the participants of the survey were asked to identify the ethnicity of the newscasters individually after listening to each individual newscaster's news segments and why they would consider

the news recordings to be acrolectal MalE. The participants of the survey were considered to be fluent and well versed in English as they have been teachers of the English language for at least five years in Malaysian schools. Ten English teachers from the state of Pahang, Malaysia were chosen to answer the survey. The English teachers from this state were chosen as this is the current workstation of the researcher. The participants were asked to answer 24 open ended questions which aimed to get participants opinion on acrolectal Malaysian English and to test the participants' ability in identifying the ethnicity of each of the newscasters. The participants answered the questionnaire after listening to the audio recordings of the news. The participants answered the survey in a meeting room. The participants listened to the first one minute of the news recordings from all the newscasters of the news agencies. It was five RTM newscasters and five BERNAMA newscasters. After listening to the audio recordings, the participants completed the survey and handed the survey back to the researcher. In the survey, the participants mentioned that the English used in the news that they listened to was of the highest standard of English which is common among educated Malaysians or fluent Malaysians. In the acrolectal variety, we would expect that regardless of ethnicity, most speakers would sound the same when they speak regardless gender of the speaker.

The participants of the survey were not able to identify the ethnicity of the newscaster. All of them could not correctly identify the ethnicity of the newscasters based on their accents. The table below shows the result of the survey.

Table 3.1: The result of the survey on acrolectal English

Newscasters	Ethnicity/Gender	Result			
		Malay	Chinese	Indian	Others
Newscaster 1 **(N1)**	Female/**Malay**	0	2	5	3
Newscaster 2 **(N2)**	Male/**Chinese**	5	0	0	5
Newscaster 3 **(N3)**	Male/**Eurasian**	2	2	5	1
Newscaster 4 **(N4)**	Male/**Eurasian**	4	3	3	0
Newscaster 5 **(N5)**	Female/**Malay**	0	5	2	3
Newscaster 6 **(N6)**	Female/**Malay**	0	5	1	4
Newscaster 7 **(N7)**	Female/**Malay**	0	3	2	5
Newscaster 8 **(N8)**	Female/**Malay**	0	1	4	5
Newscaster 9 **(N9)**	Female/**Malay**	0	2	5	3
Newscaster10 **(N10)**	Female/**Eurasian**	5	0	5	0

3.3 Data selection and analysis

Extracts from the newscasters' speech were analysed in a few stages. The main news segments rather than other segments were selected because this segment tends to focus on the news programme, and this is where more 'serious' news items are presented. This means that the language in this segment can be assumed to be more acrolectal compared to other segments for example, on site interviews by correspondents in other states, the sports segments or weather segments. Approximately ten minutes of each news recordings were transcribed orthographically for this study. The news was orthographically transcribed independently by the first rater. Only the first ten minutes of the main news were used for this study. The first ten minutes was chosen as the main news is considered to be formal rather than the other segments in the news segments. Approximately, a total of ten minutes (see Table 3.2) of speech from ten different newscasters were transcribed, providing approximately 132 minutes of data from the news extracts. Table 3.2 presents the background of the newscasters for the current research. The background or the ethnicity of the newscasters was obtained through the Human Resource Departments of each of the individual news channels.

Table 3.2: Background of the newscasters

Date	Name/Newscasters (N?)	Gender/Ethnicity	Duration of the speech (minutes)	News Channel
04.03.2014	Newscaster 1 **(N1)**	Female/**Malay**	7.03	RTM
04.03.2014	Newscaster 6 **(N6)**	Female/**Malay**	10.45	BERNAMA
05.03.2014	Newscaster 3 **(N3)**	Male/**Eurasian**	11.00	RTM
05.03.2014	Newscaster 6 **(N6)**	Female/**Malay**	9.33	BERNAMA
06.03.2014	Newscaster 2 **(N2)**	Male/**Chinese**	9.22	RTM
06.03.2014	Newscaster 7 **(N7)**	Female/**Malay**	7.21	BERNAMA
07.03.2014	Newscaster 4 **(N4)**	Male/**Eurasian**	5.03	RTM
07.03.2014	Newscaster 7 **(N7)**	Female/**Malay**	8.04	BERNAMA
08.03.2014	Newscaster 5 **(N5)**	Female/**Malay**	11.34	RTM
08.03.2014	Newscaster 8 **(N8)**	Female/**Malay**	13.49	BERNAMA
09.03.2014	Newscaster 5 **(N5)**	Female/**Malay**	4.02	RTM
09.03.2014	Newscaster 9 **(N9)**	Female/**Malay**	13.02	BERNAMA
10.03.2014	Newscaster 2 **(N2)**	Male/**Chinese**	14.56	RTM
10.03.2014	Newscaster 10 **(N10)**	Female/**Eurasian**	9.24	BERNAMA

The symbol (**N)** = Newscaster

The news recordings used for this study were from 4 March 2014 to 10 March 2014. The English news segment run-time for both the channels is approximately 28 minutes. However, the targeted segment in this study was the main news. Hence, only the speech from the main news was extracted and analysed which was a total of 132 minutes of main news. These particular dates were chosen for data analysis was random. From the extracts of the main news segments, only words that occurred twice or more across the newscasters were selected for analysis. This was done to avoid idiosyncratic pronunciations. A total of 90 words (see Table 3.3) were selected for analysis. A total of 2101 tokens from these words were used for analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

The recordings were firstly transcribed orthographically based on impressionistic by the first rater (the researcher). All the words chosen by the first rater (90 similar words across speakers) placed into a spreadsheet. The first stage of impressionistic analysis was carried out by the first rater, who transcribed the words

phonetically. Then, the second rater (a post graduate student majoring in linguistics) continued with another round of impressionistic analysis and transcribed the words phonetically. This was to make sure that the transcriptions by the first rater were correct and valid. The inter-rater agreement was 90 %. For the remaining 10 %, another round of listening was carried out by both the raters until a 100 % inter-rater agreement was obtained. The second stage of analysis was carried out by the researcher using acoustic analysis where this could help in the analysis. A third stage of analysis was done by the researcher with the supervisor to ensure 100 percent agreement on the phonetic transcriptions.

Table 3.3: List of words

Words	NC1	NC2	NC3	NC4	NC5	NC6	NC7	NC8	NC9	NC10	Frequency of words
evening	1	1	1	1	1			1			6
immigrants	1	2	3								6
arrested	1	1	1		1						4
prime	2	3		1		2		3	4		15
minister	1	3	5	3		5	3	6	2		28
illegal	1	1	1								3
government	2	3	1			3	2		1	1	13
reported	2							2			4
edition		1		1			1	1	1	1	6
deputy		2	2			1					5
immigration		2	3					2			7
enforcement		1	1	1	1			1	1		7
ministry		1		1		1					3
million		1				1	1			1	4
sentenced		4		2	1						7
domestic		2				4	4				10
department		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
director				2	3	2			3	2	12
court		1		2							3
quarter			2	1		2					5
missing		1			1			1	2	1	6
passengers		1			2		1	2	1		7
welcome		1			1	1	1		1		5
watching						1	1	1	1	1	5
development				1	2	2			3		8
international					2	3	6		4	5	20
members		2			4			5	2		13
flight		2			3			4	7	4	20
airlines		5			5			4	5	5	19
authorities					2			5	3	2	12
board		2			1			1	2	1	7
parliament		1								2	3
plane		2			2				2	3	9
Boeing					1				1	1	3

Words	NC1	NC2	NC3	NC4	NC5	NC6	NC7	NC8	NC9	NC10	Frequency of words
confirmed		2			2			2		3	4
airport					4		3	2	4		13
charged		4							2		6
yesterday					1			2			3
agency		2			2		4	3	2	2	15
passport					2			2	4	4	12
aviation		2			2			4	5	6	19
location					1			2	3		3
meanwhile									1	1	2
general		3			1	2			3	2	11
bound		2			3				4		9
Saturday								1	1		2
aircraft									3	4	7
deployed								2	3		5
maritime		2			2			1	2	3	10
Wednesday						1	1				2
civil				1			2		4	4	11
the	50	52	64	61	32	46	55	37	40	30	464
this	2	2		2	5		4			3	18
election							2			2	4
speculation								2	4		6
peninsula						3	1				5
education	3						2				5
thanks		1			1			1	1		3
chief			5			2	2		1		10
aid						2	3				5
teenage									2	2	4
island	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	2	1	5	25
die	2	1		3	2		1			2	11
boy			1				2			2	5
oil								1	3		4
here				2		1	1				4
real	1						1				2
there		2			1			4	2		9
fuel			1			4	7		2		14
sure	2					2	1				5
over									4	7	11
open	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
hours	4	2		5	3		3			2	19
identified							3			3	6
showed		3						2	4		9
resulted						3	4				7
expected	1						1				2
sentenced		2			2			4	3		11
arrested						2	3		1		6
reported	3		2	3		8	2	2	2		22
jumped									2	1	3
confirmed	2	2	1	1	4	5	3	5	4	4	31
general	3	4		3	2		2			1	15
level							2			1	3
potential		1						1			2
peninsula						4	2				6
education	2						2				4
thanks		1			1			1	1		4
chief						1	1		1		3
little	1	1		1					1		4
Total	91	142	98	103	110	117	144	124	168	126	**2101**

The symbol (NC) = Newscaster

The data was then sorted in terms of their syllable combination for example initial consonant clusters (CV and CCV). This is based on the assumptions that the consonant inventory would be similar to other English acrolectal varieties. This assumption made in this study is that since this is an acrolectal variety, many of the more marked pronunciation features of MalE such as rhoticity, simplifications of diphthongs and lack of contrast between long and short vowels may not occur as discussed in the literature review. However, these descriptions were used as basis for comparison to examine if any of these features, such as devoicing of final consonants or alternative realizations of dental fricative, occurred in the speech of the newscasters. Praat Version 6.1.17 (Boersma and Weenik, 2017) was used to carry out acoustic analysis by the first rater on the consonant and vowel features which needed acoustic analysis will be explained in the following sections.

3.4.1. Rhoticity

There were two stages of analysis involved. The first stage of analysis was perceptual analysis. The words with /r/ before a vowel were marked as rhotic or non-rhotic. Following perceptual analysis, the vowels preceding *r* in the words containing /r/ in the final position or preceding a consonant (*minister*, *government*, *department*, *international* and *enforcement*) were analysed acoustically. The F3 values of the preceding vowels were measured in Hertz (Hz). The average (F3) of below 2500 Hz is an indication of rhoticity (Boyce and Espy-Wilson, 1994). The assumption is that "[v]ariations in the frequency of F3 indicate the degree of r-colouring: the lower the F3, the greater the degree of rhoticity" (Ladefoged, 2003, p. 149). This threshold has been used to measure the rhoticity (e.g. Pillai, 2015; Salbrina Haji Sharbawi, 2010; Salbrina

Haji Sharbawi & Deterding, 2010). In this study, perceived rhotic and non-rhotic tokens were measured and compared to see whether the perceived rhotic tokens vowels had a lower F3 compared to the non-rhotic tokens.

3.4.2 Consonant realisations

For the final consonants /t/, /d/ and morphological markers both perceptual and acoustic analysis using Praat was carried out. The acoustic analysis was done on the tokens by looking at the spectrograms of each individual tokens to determine whether there was evidence of the segments on the spectrograms.

3.4.3 Monophthongs and diphthongs

To understand the realisation of monophthongs and diphthongs by the newscasters, measurement of the monophthongs, the first and second formants of the vowels were measured and compared to examine if there was quality contrast between vowel pairs acoustically. Then, values of the vowels were converted in to a Bark scale to view the scale which would give a good proximity of the actual frequency analysis performed by the ear. (Kent & Read, 2002). The durations of the vowels were also measured to examine if there was length contrast between typical vowel pairs. (Pillai, 2010; Tan, 2010). In order to measure the diphthongal movement, the Rate of Change (ROC) based on the following formula was used (Deterding 2000: 94-95): $F1_{end}$ - $F1_{start}$/Duration (seconds) = ROC (Hz/second). In other words, the beginning of F1 and the end of F1 were measured. The beginning of F1 and the end of F1 of the words were differentiated and that number later was divided by its duration. The average ROC values indicate if a vowel is produced as a diphthong. For the rising diphthongs, the F1 can be expected to get lower as the vowel gets higher, and thus, a negative ROC value

can be anticipated. A diphthong is realised as a monophthong if the ROC has a lower value (Pillai, 2010).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the study and are presented in the forms of tables, scatter plots and vowel charts.

4.2 Consonants

The consonants found in the present study were tabulated in the table below. A consonant would be analysed if the word occurs at least twice in any of the newscasters' speech. There are 24 consonants in BrE and the same ones were found in this study (see Table 4.1), similar to Phoon, (2007). There were 24 consonants found in this present study. All of these consonants occurred at least twice in all the ten newscasters. The consonant realization of MalE was compared to previous findings on MalE and also to BrE which has been adopted in many researches pertaining MalE.

Table 4.1: Consonant inventory found in the present study

Place / Manner	Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Inter-Dental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
Affricate					ʧ ʤ			
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Liquid				l	ɹ			
Glide	w					j		

4.3 Consonant Realizations

As previously mentioned in chapter two, like many other varieties of New Englishes, the acrolectal MalE consonant inventory is akin to other standard varieties of English. However, some of the consonants were reliased in differently by the newscasters. In order for the consonants to be listed, the consonants must occur in the words listed in the present study for at least twice by two different speakers. In sum, the consonant realizations between the newscasters were not similar to BrE as some of the realisation for instance *th* realisation is not similar to BrE and MalE is not rhotic in the present study.

4.2.1 Rhoticity

Research suggested that MalE is a non-rhotic variety (Pillai, 2015). According to (Crystal, 2003), if the *r* n the spelling after a vowel and/or before a consonant or a pause is pronounced in a variety of English then this variety is a rhotic variety, such as American English. However, in non-rhotic varieties /r/ occurs before a vowel sound. Further study on the influence of AmE on MalE needs to be conducted. However, we would expect the newscasters to be non-rhotic because the newscasters are assumed to be between 28 to 40 years old, based on the age requirement for both the news agencies for the employment as a newscaster. Only these five words, *minister*, *government*, *department*, *international* and *enforcement* were analysed as these words occurred in all the ten newscasters' speech. Table 4.2 to Table 4.6 show the average F3 frequencies (Hz) of the preceding vowels and results of the perceptual analysis.

Table 4.2: F3 frequency (Hz) of the preceding vowel and perceptual analysis of the word *minister.*

Newscaster	Word	Perceptual Analysis	F3 (HZ)
N1	minister	**Rhotic**	2223 Hz
N2	minister	Non-Rhotic	2893 Hz
N3	minister	Non-Rhotic	2738 Hz
N4	minister	Non-Rhotic	2678 Hz
N5	minister	Non-Rhotic	2765 Hz
N6	minister	**Rhotic**	1932 Hz
N7	minister	**Rhotic**	2244 Hz
N8	minister	**Rhotic**	1912 Hz
N9	minister	Non-Rhotic	2459 Hz
N10	minister	Non-Rhotic	2638 Hz
Average **F3**			**2448 Hz**

The symbol (**N)** = Newscaster

Table 4.3: F3 frequency (Hz) of the preceding vowel and perceptual analysis of the word *government.*

Newscaster	Word	Perceptual Analysis	F3 (HZ)
N1	government	Non-Rhotic	2811 Hz
N2	government	Non-Rhotic	2765 Hz
N3	government	Non-Rhotic	2658 Hz
N4	government	Non-Rhotic	2749 Hz
N5	government	Non-Rhotic	2665 Hz
N6	government	Non-Rhotic	3008 Hz
N7	government	Non-Rhotic	2322 Hz
N8	government	Non-Rhotic	2765 Hz
N9	government	Non-Rhotic	3484 Hz
N10	government	Non-Rhotic	2734 Hz
Average **F3**			**2796 Hz**

The symbol (**N)** = Newscaster

Table 4.4: F3 frequency (Hz) of the preceding vowel and perceptual analysis of the word *department.*

Newscaster	Word	Perceptual Analysis	F3 (HZ)
N1	department	Non-Rhotic	2532 Hz
N2	department	Non-Rhotic	2544 Hz
N3	department	Non-Rhotic	2745 Hz
N4	department	Non-Rhotic	2865 Hz
N5	department	Non-Rhotic	2736 Hz
N6	department	Non-Rhotic	3244 Hz
N7	department	Non-Rhotic	2745 Hz
N8	department	Non-Rhotic	2875 Hz
N9	department	Non-Rhotic	2997 Hz
N10	department	Non-Rhotic	2876 Hz
Average **F3**			**2816 Hz**

The symbol (**N)** = Newscaster

Table 4.5: F3 frequency (Hz) of the preceding vowel and perceptual analysis of the word *international.*

Newscaster	Word	Perceptual Analysis	F3 (HZ)
N1	international	Non-Rhotic	2743 Hz
N2	international	Non-Rhotic	2742 Hz
N3	international	Non-Rhotic	2555 Hz
N4	international	Non-Rhotic	2765 Hz
N5	international	Non-Rhotic	2787 Hz
N6	international	Non-Rhotic	3456 Hz
N7	international	Non-Rhotic	2567 Hz
N8	international	Non-Rhotic	2987 Hz
N9	international	Non-Rhotic	3253 Hz
N10	international	Non-Rhotic	2738 Hz
Average **F3**			**2859 Hz**

The symbol (**N)** = Newscaster

Table 4.6: F3 frequency (Hz) of the preceding vowel and perceptual analysis of the word *enforcement.*

Newscaster	Word	Perceptual Analysis	F3 (HZ)
N1	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2956 Hz
N2	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2943 Hz
N3	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2445 Hz
N4	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2778 Hz
N5	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2998 Hz
N6	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	3234 Hz
N7	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2645 Hz
N8	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2898 Hz
N9	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2897 Hz
N10	enforcement	Non-Rhotic	2652 Hz
Average **F3**			**2845 Hz**

The symbol (**N)** = Newscaster

As can be seen in the tables, all the average F3 for the five words across the newscasters was 2753 Hz. There was no overwhelming evidence of the newscasters being rhotic. Although the pool of data for this part of the research was small, the reflection of rhoticity was not reflected in both perceptual and acoustic analysis. Since, there were not any Indian origin speakers in this research; we cannot conclude that all acrolectal speakers are not rhotic. Further research on rhoticity should be done on MalE Indian speakers. However, we would less likely see the acrolectal Indian MalE speakers

being rhotic as it cuts across ethnicity. Hence, in this present study the acrolectal MalE is not rhotic.

4.2.2 Final consonant /t/

A total of 350 tokens were analysed perceptually. The perceptual analysis indicated that only 38 tokens (10%) had the final /t/ omissions which were for the words (*government*, *enforcement*, *environment*, *department* and *parliament*). The chances of acroletal speaker omitting the final /t/ are highly unlikely. Therefore, acoustic analysis was done on these 38 tokens to check the consistence of the perceptual analysis. Table 4.7 shows the words and tokens chosen for analysis.

Table 4.7: Words and number of tokens with final /t/

Words	**Tokens**
airport	6
aircraft	16
assist	2
against	2
court	2
export	2
government	13
first	2
prevent	2
investment	2
environment	2
flight	17
enforcement	7
least	7
part	6
contact	5
incident	12
entertainment	8
parliament	3
department	17
transport	6
development	6
different	7
Total	**350**

Acoustic analysis was done on the tokens by looking at the spectrograms of the words to examine if the final stop was present. Based on the acoustic analysis, only 17 sounds tokens (4.8%) had the final /t/ omission. An example of this is the word *government* shown in Figure 4.1 where there is an absence of closure and release for the final /t/. The omission of the final /t/ in some words could be the result of speed of the newscaster reading the news. It is highly unlikely the newscasters omitted a /t/ before a preceding consonant such as (*assist, against* and *export*). In general, being an acrolectal English context, the newscasters tended not to omit the final /t/.

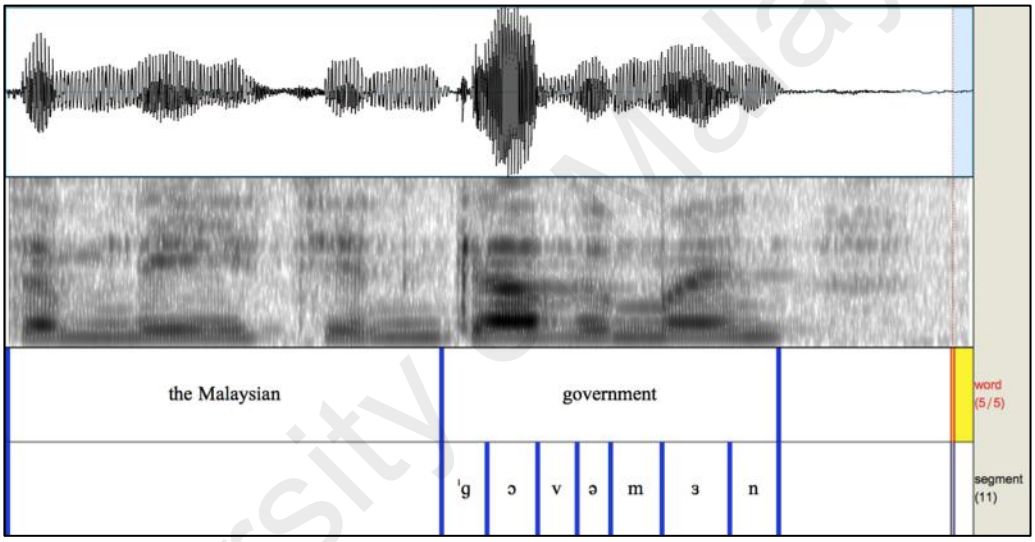

Figure 4.1: Retention of the final /t/

4.2.3 Initial *th*-stopping

For this research, 464 tokens were analysed. Table 4.8 displays the words and tokens with initial *th*. The perceptual analysis of the tokens suggested that these words: *thanks, the, this* were pronounced with possible dentalised /t/ and /d/: *thanks* [t̪ɛŋs], *the* [d̪ə], *third* [t̪əd], and *this* [d̪ɪs]. After the perceptual analysis, acoustic analysis used to look at the spectrograms to see if there was evidence of a fricative or a stop in the tokens with initial *th*. Table 4.8 shows the words and number of tokens with initial *th*.

Table 4.8: Words and number of tokens with initial *th*

Words	Tokens
the	419
this	30
third	5
thanks	10
Total	**464**

The results based on acoustic analysis confirms the earlier perceptual analysis that these words indeed were realised as previously mentioned Table 4.9 shows results for voiceless and voiced *th* sounds for the individual newscasters.

Table 4.9: Results for voiceless and voiced *th* sounds for the individual newscasters

Word / Newscasters	*thanks*		*the*		*third*		*this*	
	θ	**t̪**	**ð**	**d̪**	**θ**	**t̪**	**ð**	**d̪**
N1		1	2	43		1		2
N2	1		4	54				4
N3		1	4	38			2	2
N4		1	1	31		1		2
N5		1	2	42			1	2
N6		1	3	44		1		3
N7		1	1	35		1	2	2
N8		1	3	46	1		1	2
N9		1	1	24				1
N10		1	3	38			2	2
TOTAL	**1**	**9**	**24**	**395**	**1**	**4**	**8**	**22**

For the word *thanks,* 90% of the tokens were realised as [**t̪**ɛŋs]. For *the,* 94% of the tokens were realised as [**d̪**ə]. For *third,* 80% of the tokens were realised as [**t**əd] and for *this,* 73% of the tokens were realised as [**d̪**ɪs]. However due to limited number of tokens for the words *thanks* and *third,* generalization on these two words cannot be made. Figure 4.2 illustrates the difference between the realisation of *this* and *the* with the second word realised as a stop rather that a fricative.

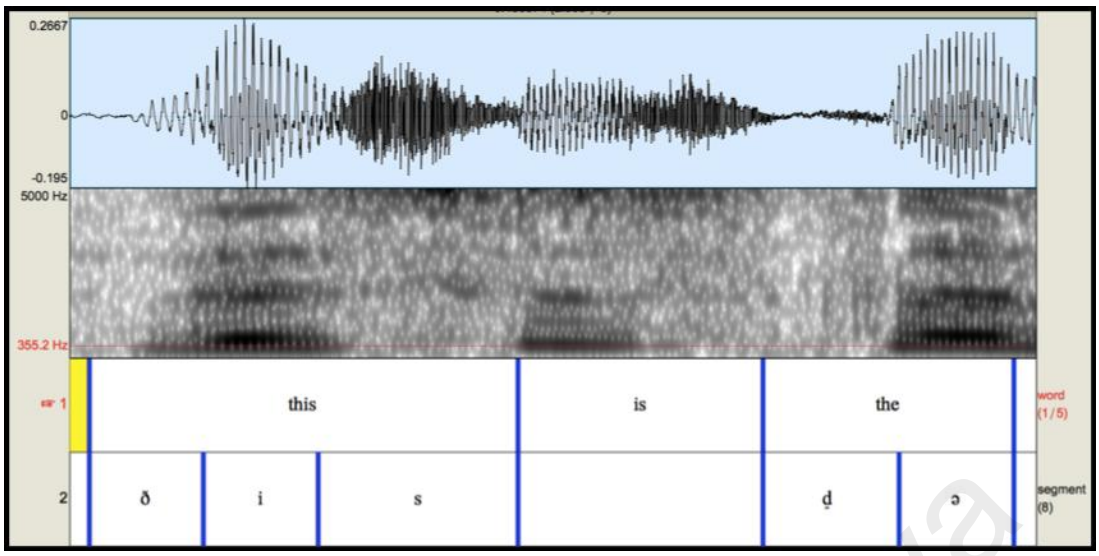

Figure 4.2: Realisations of initial *th* sounds in the words *this* and *the*

4.2.4 Substitution of /w/ with /v/

Previous studies have reported that MalE speakers tend to replace the word /w/ with /v/. However, in this study, there were no instances of the replacement of /w/ with /v/. A total of 19 sounds token were analysed perceptually. For this section, only perceptual analysis was used as both rater 1 and rater 2 agreed that the tokens did not have any instances of realization of the word /w/ with /v/ during the perceptual analysis. The analysis of the tokens concludes that all the newscasters did not realize the word /w/ with /v/. All of the newscasters did not substitute the /w/ with /v/ as the newscasters realized the word *watching* and *welcome*. For this study, none of the Malay, Chinese and Eurasian speakers exhibited the substitution of /w/ with /v/. This feature was not found in the present study as acrolectal MalE speakers are fluent speakers of English. Table 4.10 shows the words and the number of tokens with initial /w/, while Figure 4.3 is the evidence of /w/ rather that /v/ in the word *watching*.

Table 4.10: Words and number of tokens with initial /w/

Words	Tokens
welcome	9
watching	10
Total	**19**

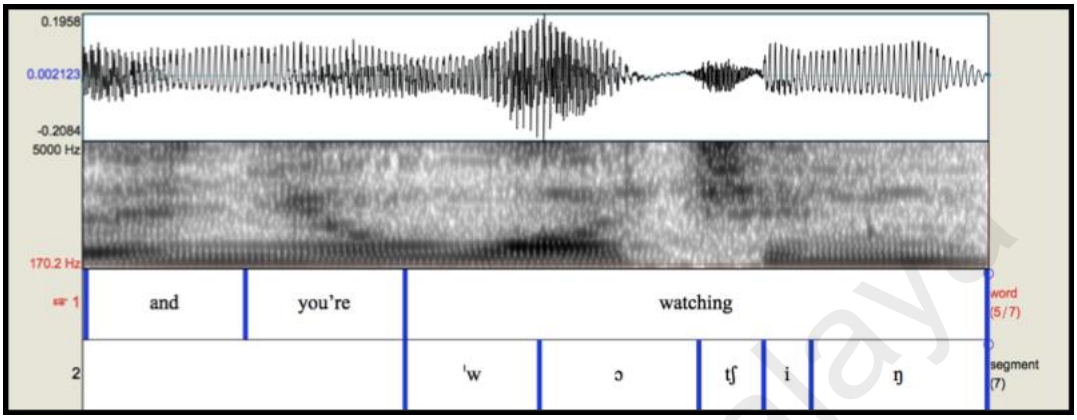

Figure 4.3: Realisation of /w/ in the word *watching*

4.2.5 Omission of final consonant /l/

The postvocalic deletion of /l/ was not observed in the current research. Perceptual analysis was done on 46 tokens in this section. The perceptual analysis yielded (0%) instances of final /l/ omission in any of the words. There was only one Chinese newscaster in this study and the newscaster did not exhibit the omission of the final /l/ perceptually. Furthermore, none of the Malay and Eurasian speakers exhibited the final /l/ omission during the perceptual analysis. For this section, only perceptual analysis was used as both rater 1 and rater 2 agreed that the tokens did not have any instances of deletion of /l/ in the final consonant. In this study, all the ten newscasters did not omit the final /l/. This finding suggests that acrolectal MalE speakers do not omit the final consonant /l/. This finding is different from findings of Phoon (2009) which reported 35% /l/ consonant omission (e.g. *girl*, *school* and *twinkle*) in four Malaysian Chinese speakers. Therefore, in acrolectal context, newscasters tended not to omit the final consonant /l/. Table 4.11 shows the words and the number of tokens for final /l/ while Figure 4.4 illustrates the final *l* is realized as a syllabic consonant.

Table 4.11: Words and number of tokens for final /l/

Words	**Tokens**
general	8
civil	11
illegal	2
international	20
level	3
potential	2
Total	**46**

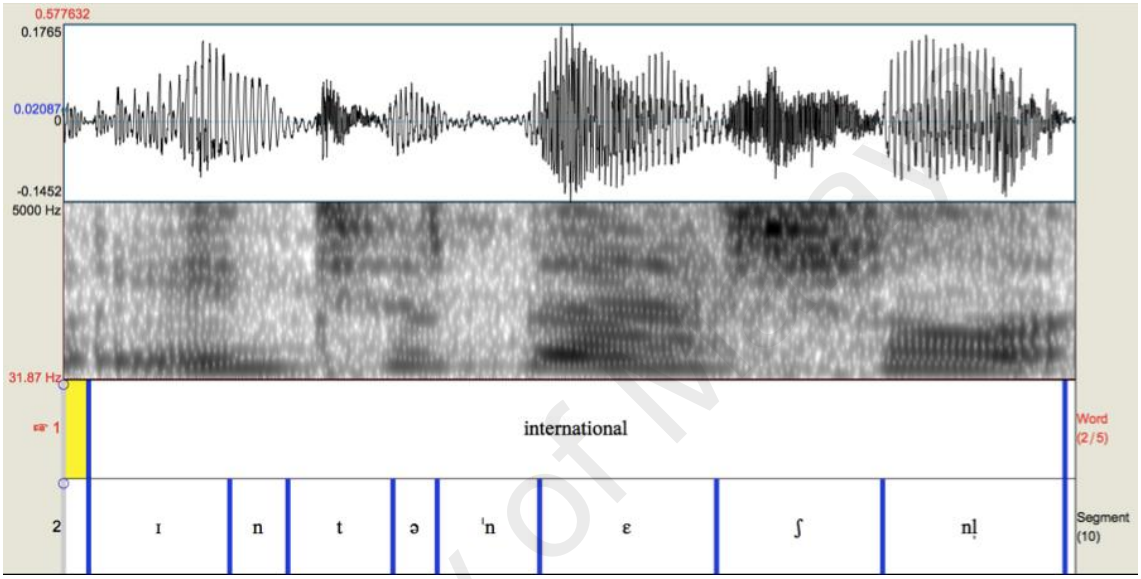

Figure 4.4: Realisation of the final *l* as a syllabic consonant

4.2.6 Morphological markers deletion

In this study, a total of 64 tokens were analysed perceptually, and no instances of morphological markers being omitted. Examination of the spectrogram confirmed this as shown in Figure 4.2. As expected, none of the newscasters omitted the past tense markers /t/, /d/ in the present study, for instance in the words *jumped, confirmed, sentenced, , showed*, and *identified*. Neither was there deletion of the past tense marker after verbs ending with /t/ or /d such as in *reported, arrested, excepted* and *resulted*. These instances show that acrolectal speakers are able to realise the morphological markers in speech without any deletions. Table 4.12 shows words and number of tokens with *–ed* ending and Figure 4.5 shows the retention of the final [d] in the word *confirmed*.

Table 4.12: Words and number of tokens with *–ed* ending

Words	**Tokens**
jumped	3
confirmed	18
reported	22
arrested	4
sentenced	6
excepted	2
resulted	4
showed	2
identified	3
Total	**64**

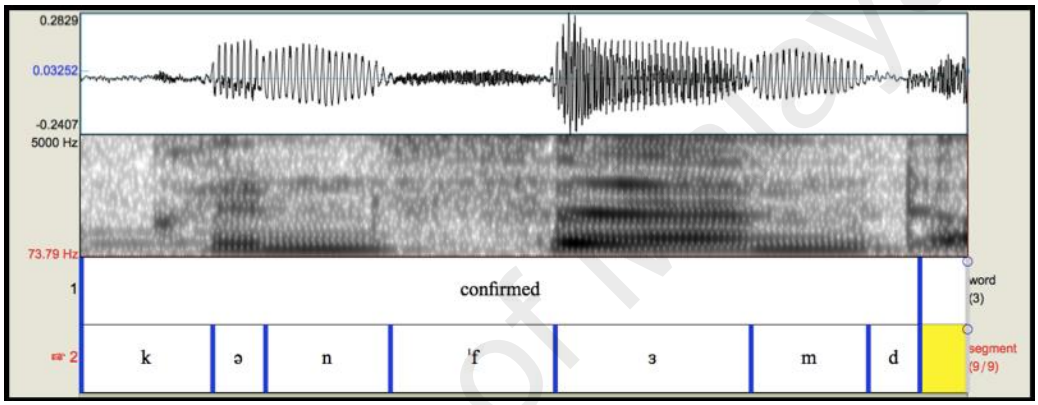

Figure 4.5: Retention of the final [**d**] in the word *confirmed*

4.4 Vowels

4.3.1 Monophthongs

In standard spoken BrE, there are a total of 20 vowels; 12 monophthongs, and eight diphthongs which is similar to the standard MalE (Deterding, 1997). Table 4.13 shows the list of monophthongs in SSE (Standard Spoken English).

Table 4.13: Monophthongs in SSE (from Roach, 2000, p. ix)

Vowel	Example word	Vowel	Example word
ɪ	pit	iː	key
ɛ	pet	æ	pat
ʌ	putt	ɑː	car
ɒ	pot	ɔː	core
ʊ	put	uː	coo
ɜː	cur	ə	about

A total of four vowel pairs were chosen as the research data contained limited numbers of vowel pairs for analysis. The vowel pairs which were analysed acoustically were vowel pair /ɪ/ and /iː/, vowel pair /ɛ/ and /æ/ and vowel pair /ʌ/ and /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and /ɔː/. The vowel pairs yielded a total of 47 tokens. As mentioned in (see 3.2) the first and second formants of the selected vowels were analysed acoustically using Praat (Boersma and Weenik, 2017). Table 4.14 shows the list of words and vowels used for this research.

Table 4.14: List of Vowels

Target vowels	NC1	NC2	NC3	NC4	NC5	NC6	NC7	NC8	NC9	NC10	
ɪ	l**i**ttle				l**i**ttle		l**i**ttle		l**i**ttle		4
iː	**e**vening	**e**vening	**e**vening	**e**vening	**e**vening			**e**vening			6
ɛ		**e**dition		**e**dition			**e**dition	**e**dition	**e**dition	**e**dition	6
æ		p**a**ssengers			p**a**ssengers		p**a**ssengers	p**a**ssengers	p**a**ssengers		5
ʌ	g**o**vernment	g**o**vernment	g**o**vernment			g**o**vernment	g**o**vernment		g**o**vernment	g**o**vernment	7
ɑː		dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	dep**a**rtment	9
ɒ						w**a**tching	w**a**tching	w**a**tching	w**a**tching	w**a**tching	5
ɔː		b**o**ard			b**o**ard			b**o**ard	b**o**ard	b**o**ard	5
Total number of tokens	3	6	3	4	5	3	6	6	7	5	47

Table 4.15 shows the first formant and second formant values of the vowels used for this research. Table 4.16 shows the average values of the first and second formant measurements of the vowels.

Table 4.15: Measurements of first and second formant of the vowels

Word	**F1** (Hz)	**F2** (Hz)	**F1** (Bark)	**F2** (Bark)	Duration (ms)
/ɪ/					
little N1	434	2323	4.33	14.01	134
little N5	486	2497	4.80	14.49	152
little N7	453	2367	4.50	14.14	143
little N9	412	2134	4.13	13.44	130
/i:/					
evening N1	392	2643	3.94	14.86	180
evening N2	342	2542	3.45	14.61	132
evening N3	329	2002	3.32	13.02	126
evening N4	332	2323	3.35	14.01	129
evening N5	367	2432	3.70	14.32	172
evening N8	342	2544	3.45	14.61	132
/ɛ /					
edition N2	586	2023	5.64	13.09	119
edition N4	623	2134	5.94	13.44	124
edition N7	645	2035	6.11	13.13	126
edition N8	673	2037	6.32	13.13	131
edition N9	623	2054	5.94	13.19	125
edition N10	644	2012	6.10	13.05	127
/æ/					
passengers N2	812	2134	7.32	13.44	287
passengers N5	723	2087	6.69	13.30	214
passengers N7	784	2067	7.13	13.23	254
passengers N8	801	2100	7.25	13.34	280
passengers N9	753	2176	6.91	13.58	222
/ʌ/					
government N1	876	1497	7.75	11.08	152
government N2	843	1452	7.53	10.88	129
government N3	864	1476	7.67	10.99	140
government N6	832	1474	7.46	10.98	123
government N7	883	1564	7.80	11.37	162
government N9	823	1443	7.40	10.84	112
government N10	843	1483	7.53	11.02	129
/ɑ:/					
department N2	798	1298	7.23	10.15	121
department N3	802	1304	7.25	10.18	120
department N4	832	1323	7.46	10.27	149
department N5	841	1354	7.52	10.42	152
department N6	812	1329	7.32	10.30	129
department N7	821	1312	7.38	10.22	131
department N8	832	1324	7.46	10.28	148
department N9	824	1342	7.41	10.37	134
department N10	823	1318	7.40	10.25	132
/ɒ/					

Word	**F1** (Hz)	**F2** (Hz)	**F1** (Bark)	**F2** (Bark)	Duration (ms)
watching N6	765	1209	7.00	9.70	112
watching N7	802	1295	7.25	10.14	124
watching N8	774	1234	7.06	9.83	116
watching N9	786	1223	7.14	9.77	117
watching N10	794	1212	7.20	9.17	120
/ɔ:/					
board N2	654	1076	6.18	8.97	176
board N5	632	1067	6.01	8.92	168
board N8	597	1008	5.73	8.58	153
board N9	612	1023	5.85	8.66	160
board N10	687	1124	6.43	9.24	184

Table 4.16: Average value of first and second formant of the vowels

Vowel	**F1** (Hz)	**F2** (Hz)	**F1** (Bark)	**F2** (Bark)	Duration (ms)
/ɪ/	446	2330	5.92	14.02	140
/i:/	351	2414	3.54	14.24	145
/ɛ /	632	2049	6.00	13.17	125
/æ/	775	2113	7.06	13.38	251
/ʌ/	852	1484	7.59	11.02	135
/ɑ:/	820	1321	7.38	10.27	135
/ɒ/	784	1235	7.13	9.72	118
/ɔ:/	636	1060	6.04	8.87	168

As shown in Figure 4.4, the vowel /i:/ was produced closer to /ɪ/ which is an indication of merging between the vowel pair /ɪ/ and /i:/. A similar finding was yielded for the vowel pair /ɛ/ and /æ/ (see Figure 4.8) where the vowel /ɛ/ was produced higher than /æ/. The vowel pair /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/ (see Figure 4.9) were produced closer to each other which indicated a merging of these vowels. The vowel pair /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ (see Figure 4.10) were produced further apart with each other which the vowel /ɒ/ was produced higher than the vowel /ɔ:/. This indicated there was no contrast between the vowel pair /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ as this vowel pair was placed close to each other. Figure 4.6 shows the monophthong vowels of acrolectal MalE. The vowel pair / ʊ/ and / u:/ was not analysed in this study due to the small number of tokens across the speakers. Further research on acrolectal MalE should examine this vowel pair. The schwa /ə/ was not analysed as it does not occur in stressed syllables.

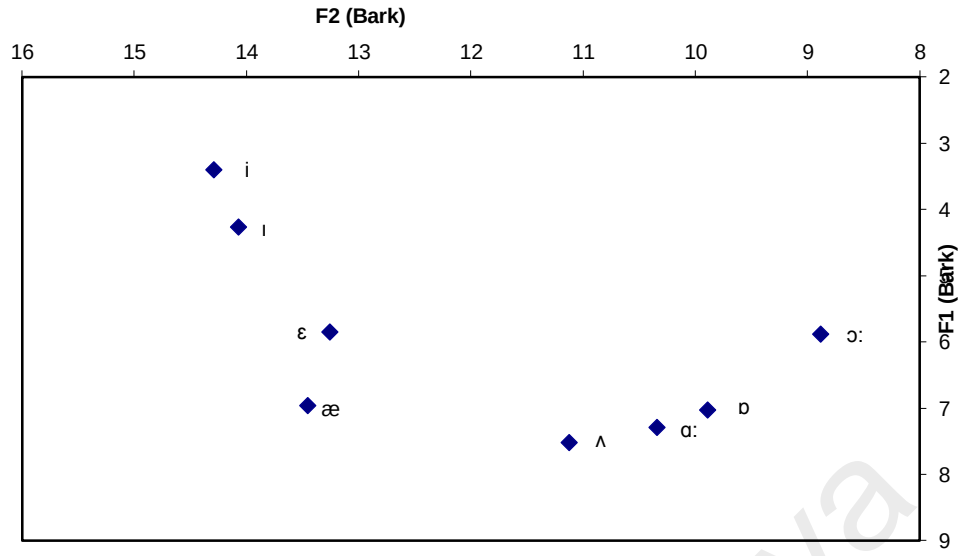

Figure 4.6: Monophthong vowels of acrolectal MalE

To examine the vowel pairs, the pairs were generated in scattered plots. Figure 4.7 shows the vowel pairs /ɪ/ and /i:/ in the words *little* and *evening* which were produced by the newscasters. As seen in Figure 4.6, there is little contrast between the vowels with /i:/ is placed more front and higher to the vowel /ɪ/.

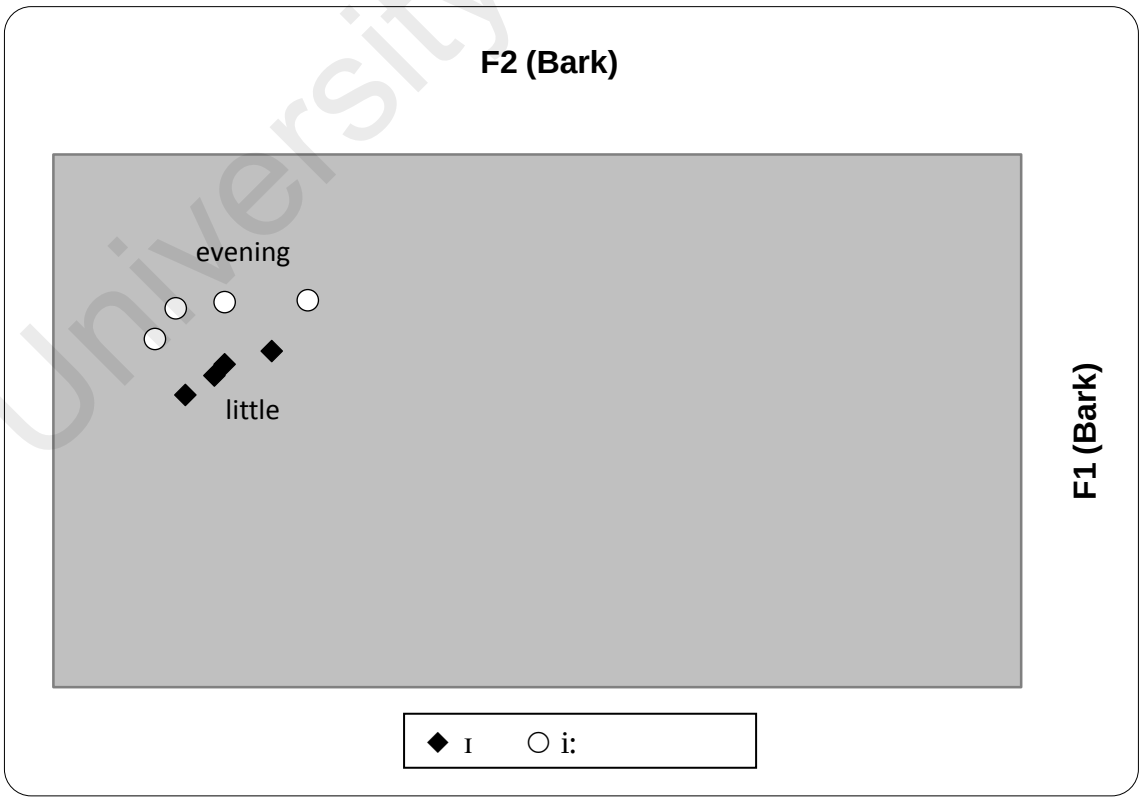

Figure 4.7 Scatter plot of /ɪ/ in *little* and /i:/ in *evening*

In Figure 4.8, the vowel pair /ɛ/ and /æ/ in the words *edition* and *passengers* lack contrast with each other. This is similar to what has been found in previous studies on MalE (Pillai, 2010; Tan, 2010).

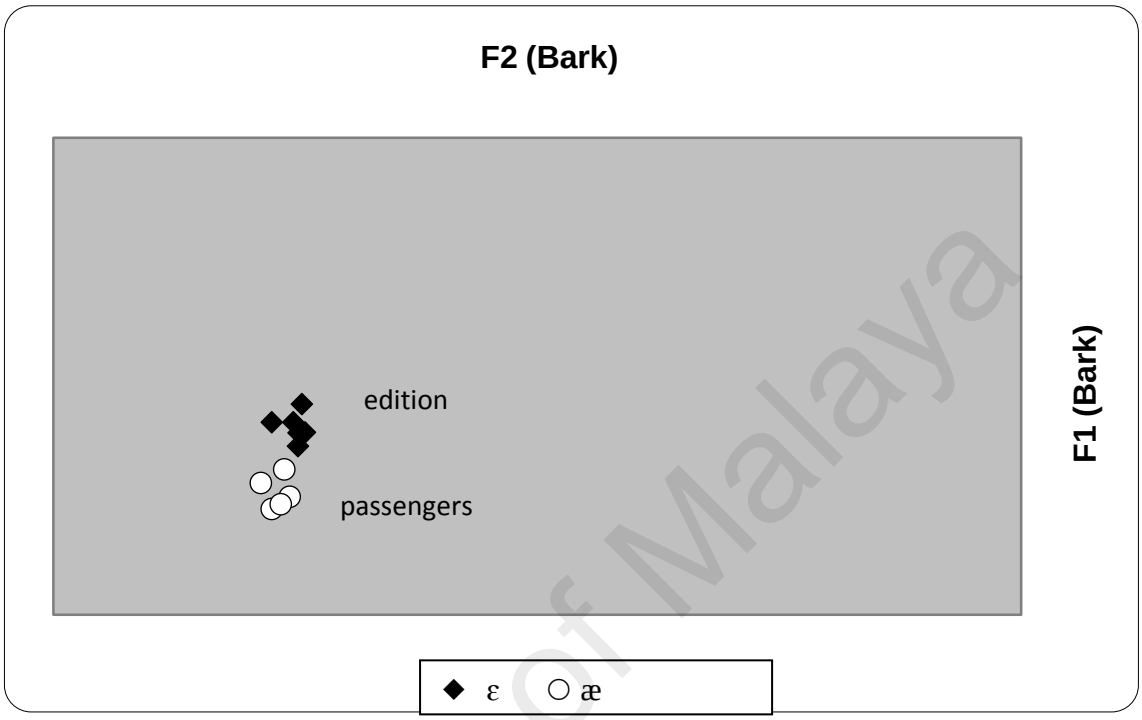

Figure 4.8 Scatter plot of /ɛ/ in *edition* and /æ/ in *passenger*

Similar findings were found for the vowel pair /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/ in the words *government* and *department* as can be seen in Figure 4.9, where the vowels are produced very close to each other. The vowel /ɑ:/ in the second syllable of the word *department* is produced slightly more retracted compared to the word with /ʌ/ in the first syllable of the word *government.* This finding confirms the auditory analysis done by Baskaran (2005) and Pillai (2010) on this vowel pair.

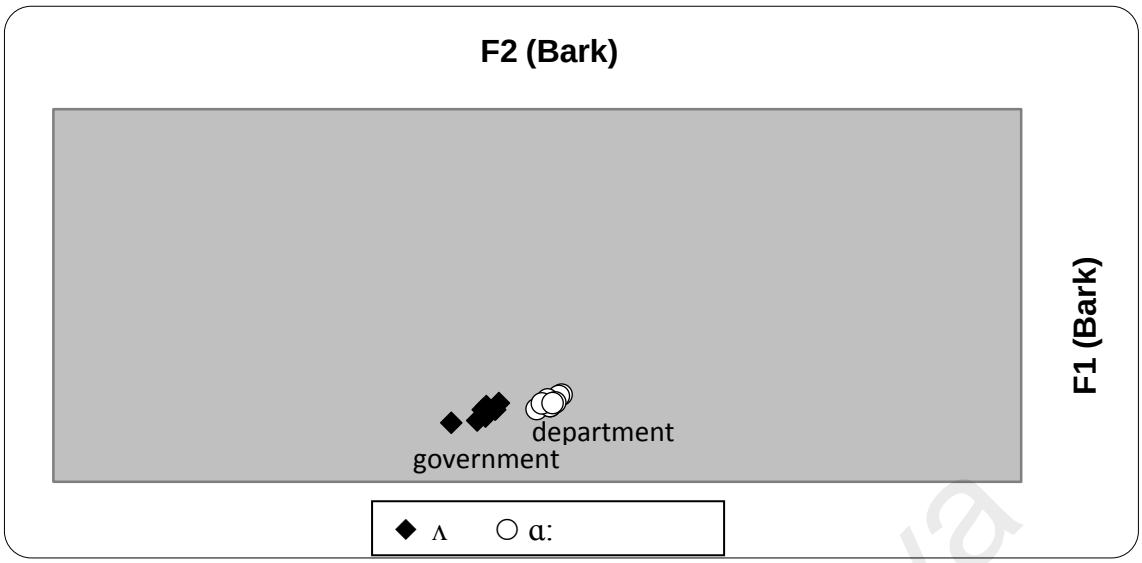

Figure 4.9: Scatter plot of /ʌ/ in *government* and /ɑ:/ in *department*

Based on the scatter plot in Figure 4.10 there is no overlap between these pairs /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ in words *watching* and *board* in the first syllable, although the tokens are placed close to each other. This finding is similar to the finding in MalE (Pillai 2010). Similar findings on this vowel pair has also been reported in SgE and BruE.

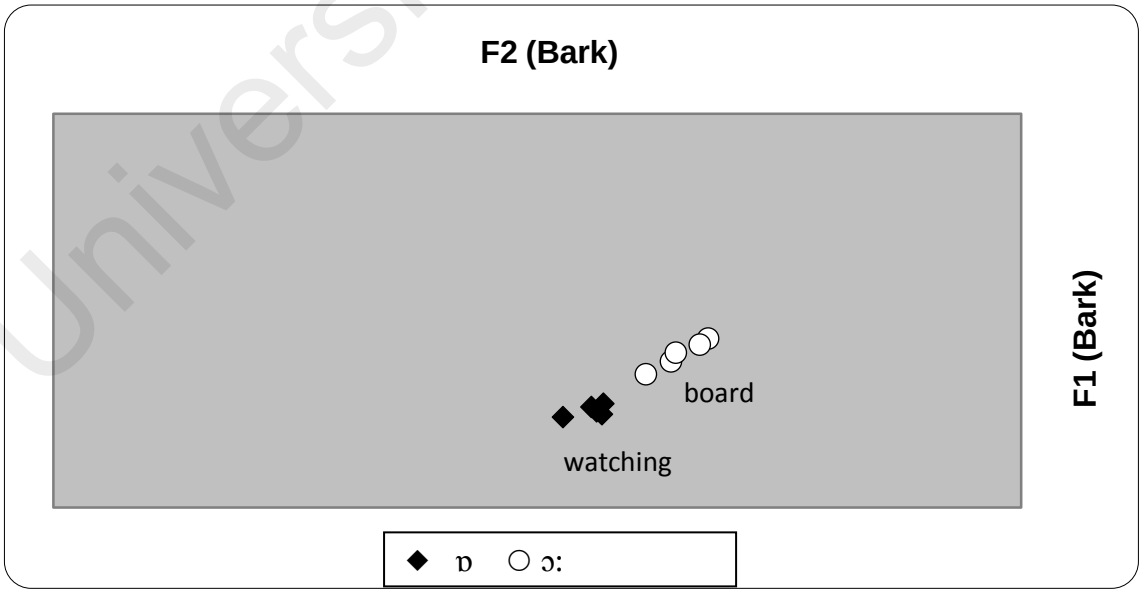

Figure 4.10: Scatter plot of /ɒ/ in *watching* and /ɔ:/ in *board*

The vowel duration was also measured to get the vowel length contrast. However, the results cannot be used to generalise the vowel length because of the small number of tokens. As can be seen in Figure 4.11 length contrast appears to be maintained by these acrolectal speakers similar to what was found in Pillai et al. (2010). This is with the exception of the vowels in *government* and *department*.

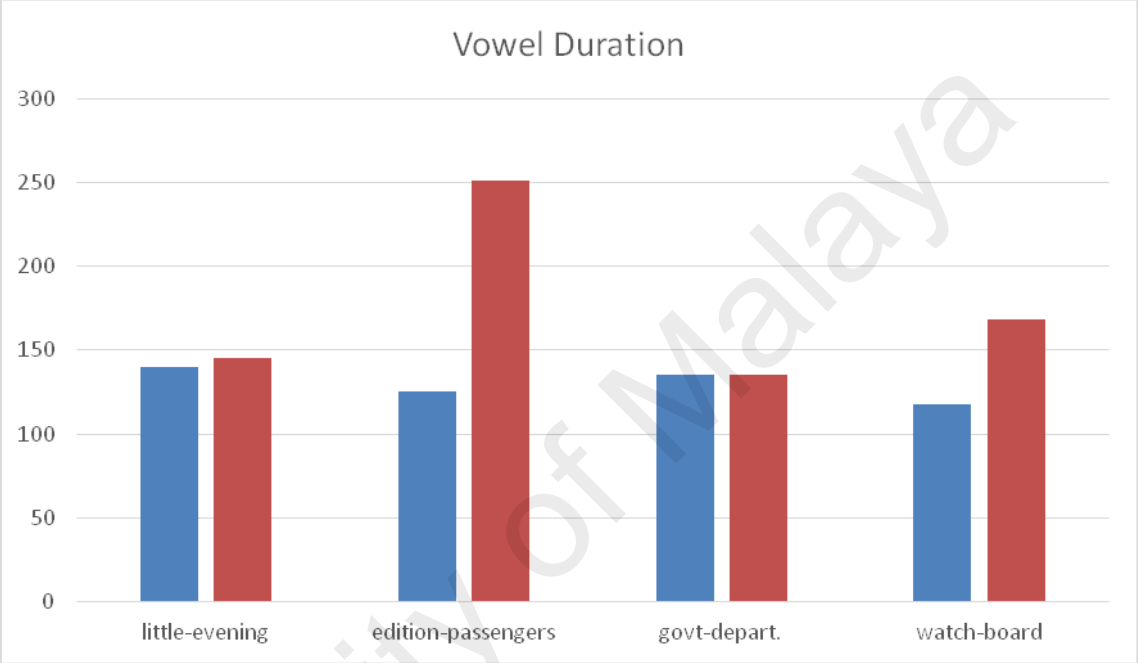

Figure 4.11: Vowel length discrimination in acrolectal MalE

Further research needs to be carried out on these vowel pairs. Due to limited set of vowel pairs in this research, we cannot generalise the findings in this research. Further research on acrolectal MalE vowels should set target vowel pairs in order to get larger and reliable data.

4.3.2 Diphthongs

For each of the diphthongs, two words of each newscaster speech were chosen and analysed using the Praat (version 6.0.26). A total of 160 tokens were analysed. There were 16 tokens for each of the newcasters which yielded 160 tokens. Table 4.17 shows the average ROC for the diphthongs produced by the newscasters while Table 4.18 to Table 4.27 provides the ROC per speaker.

The analysis of the average ROC of the closing diphthongs /ɔɪ/ and /əʊ/ appeared to be less diphthongal. This confirms the impressionistic findings in some previous studies (Phoon, 2009; Baskaran, 2004). The diphthongs /ɔɪ/ and /əʊ/ has less diphthongal movement as the ROC of both was low. The diphthongs /aɪ/ and /eɪ/ had large values suggesting /aɪ/ and /eɪ/ were indeed realized as diphthongs. This finding on the diphthong /eɪ/, suggests that the speakers in this study realise /eɪ/ as diphthong whereas the findings on Pillai (2008) found that /eɪ/ was monophthongised by her MalE speakers. Similar with the findings on Pillai (2008), the diphthong /aɪ/ had a large ROC average value suggesting it was indeed realised as diphthong by the newscasters. The vowel /aʊ/ had relatively low ROC which again suggests this vowel was realised as monophthong. The analysis on the centring vowels /ɪə/, /eə/ and /ʊə/ yielded low ROC for the respective diphthongs. The low ROC suggests there were little diphthongal movements for the vowels. This acoustic finding confirms the impressionistic findings in some previous studies (Phoon, 2009; Baskaran, 2004) where these diphthongs were treated as monophthongs. The findings in this section of the research suggest that the speakers tended to produced /aɪ/ and /eɪ/ as diphthongs as these diphthongs has large values in the ROC whereas the diphthongs /ɔɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/, /ɪə/, /eə/ and /ʊə/ were produced as monophthongs based on the low ROC values. Table 4.17 displays the

average ROC in Hz of the ten newscasters and Table 4.18 to Table 4.27 shows the measurements of F1 and ROC of the newscasters.

Table 4.17: Average Rate of Change (ROC) of the newscasters.

Diphthongs		Words	Average ROC (Hz/second)
raising	eɪ	aid	-1477
		teenage	-1529
	aɪ	island	-655
		die	-706
	ɔɪ	boy	-372
		oil	-362
central	ɪə	here	-450
		real	-361
	eə	airport	-565
		there	-804
	ʊə	fuel	-1073
		sure	-415
raising	əʊ	over	-820
		open	-1183
	aʊ	hours	-1210
		thousands	-1247

Table 4.18: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 1*

Word	**Start F1 (Hz)**	**End F1 (Hz)**	**Change (Hz)**	**Duration (sec)**	**ROC (Hz/sec)**
aid	942	721	-221	0.136	-1625
teenage	863	645	-218	0.140	-1557
island	842	783	-59	0.149	-396
die	976	843	-133	0.160	-831
boy	311	251	-60	0.171	-351
oil	231	168	-63	0.129	-488
here	461	342	-119	0.199	-598
real	543	488	-55	0.180	-305
airport	868	734	-134	0.229	-585
there	678	513	-105	0.186	-565
fuel	441	342	-99	0.123	-805
sure	331	263	-68	0.155	-439
over	821	666	-155	0.142	-1092
open	469	291	-178	0.129	-1380
hours	442	210	-232	0.179	-1296
thousands	943	699	-244	0.196	-1245

Table 4.19: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 2*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	902	742	-160	0.136	-1176
teenage	863	629	-234	0.142	-1648
island	832	732	-100	0.159	-629
die	973	842	-131	0.162	-809
boy	312	212	-100	0.180	-556
oil	224	162	-62	0.134	-463
here	456	363	-93	0.208	-447
real	600	423	-177	0.180	-983
airport	872	742	-130	0.240	-542
there	682	511	-171	0.180	-950
fuel	442	322	-120	0.123	-976
sure	332	273	-59	0.163	-362
over	791	681	-110	0.154	-714
open	449	290	-159	0.130	-1223
hours	432	220	-212	0.186	-1140
thousands	932	703	-229	0.194	-1180

Table 4.20: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 3*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	936	721	-215	0.130	-1654
teenage	871	641	-230	0.142	-1620
island	841	732	-109	0.159	-686
die	962	859	-67	0.160	-418
boy	312	259	-53	0.169	-314
oil	224	162	-62	0.132	-470
here	431	371	-60	0.211	-284
real	551	500	-51	0.189	-270
airport	877	742	-135	0.241	-560
there	681	530	-151	0.180	-839
fuel	455	320	-135	0.130	-1038
sure	341	279	-62	0.161	-385
over	809	671	-138	0.154	-896
open	449	290	-159	0.130	-1223
hours	439	214	-225	0.188	-1197
thousands	939	699	-240	0.199	-1206

Table 4.21: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 4*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	938	739	-199	0.138	-1442
teenage	876	635	-241	0.143	-1685
island	843	743	-100	0.153	-654
die	987	855	-132	0.164	-805
boy	321	252	-69	0.177	-390
oil	225	178	-47	0.132	-356
here	453	376	-77	0.209	-369
real	564	499	-65	0.187	-347
airport	876	743	-133	0.234	-568
there	687	521	-166	0.186	-892
fuel	453	321	-132	0.124	-1064
sure	342	272	-70	0.164	-427
over	802	677	-125	0.155	-806
open	453	298	-196	0.132	-1484
hours	435	212	-223	0.187	-1193
thousands	945	701	-244	0.196	-1244

Table 4.22: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 5*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	900	712	-188	0.121	-1554
teenage	832	631	-201	0.140	-1436
island	859	732	-127	0.149	-852
die	980	851	-129	0.160	-806
boy	311	251	-60	0.172	-349
oil	224	161	-63	0.130	-485
here	539	361	-178	0.199	-895
real	532	481	-51	0.182	-280
airport	869	731	-138	0.233	-592
there	878	521	-357	0.189	-357
fuel	543	311	-232	0.130	-1785
sure	341	261	-80	0.166	-481
over	800	679	-121	0.157	-771
open	450	300	-150	0.132	-1136
hours	431	231	-208	0.184	-1130
thousands	950	712	-238	0.199	-1196

Table 4.23: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 6*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	891	699	-192	0.140	-1371
teenage	861	623	-238	0.140	-1700
island	850	732	-118	0.152	-776
die	991	842	-149	0.160	-931
boy	312	261	-60	0.172	-349
oil	213	188	-25	0.128	-195
here	444	367	-77	0.199	-387
real	561	501	-60	0.183	-328
airport	861	746	-115	0.242	-475
there	689	531	-158	0.189	-836
fuel	461	340	-121	0.122	-992
sure	350	281	-69	0.163	-423
over	801	701	-100	0.150	-667
open	439	300	-139	0.130	-1069
hours	451	222	-229	0.185	-1238
thousands	959	712	-247	0.192	-1286

Table 4.24: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 7*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	891	741	-150	0.140	-1071
teenage	799	702	-97	0.141	-688
island	851	751	-100	0.150	-667
die	992	866	-126	0.172	-733
boy	313	250	-63	0.180	-350
oil	213	180	-33	0.122	-270
here	461	380	-81	0.210	-386
real	542	500	-42	0.182	-231
airport	881	741	-140	0.241	-581
there	689	531	-158	0.192	-823
fuel	462	311	-151	0.112	-1348
sure	341	276	-65	0.152	-428
over	792	681	-111	0.142	-782
open	431	201	-130	0.132	-985
hours	432	218	-214	0.180	-1189
thousands	939	692	-247	0.190	-1300

Table 4.25: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 8*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	927	729	-198	0.132	-1500
teenage	876	644	-223	0.140	-1593
island	844	742	-102	0.154	-662
die	978	866	-112	0.172	-651
boy	312	251	-61	0.181	-337
oil	241	180	-61	0.122	-500
here	452	362	-90	0.210	-429
real	571	501	-70	0.192	-365
airport	876	743	-133	0.233	-571
there	689	520	-167	0.182	-918
fuel	472	421	-51	0.111	-460
sure	341	273	-68	0.162	-420
over	803	681	-122	0.152	-803
open	461	309	-152	0.132	-1152
hours	443	200	-243	0.180	-1350
thousands	950	681	-269	0.192	-1401

Table 4.26: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 9*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	942	739	-203	0.122	-1664
teenage	877	630	-247	0.143	-1727
island	832	742	-90	0.150	-600
die	972	862	-110	0.165	-667
boy	310	250	-60	0.181	-331
oil	200	180	-20	0.141	-142
here	452	382	-70	0.192	-365
real	542	501	-41	0.182	-225
airport	877	742	-135	0.221	-611
there	692	530	-162	0.181	-895
fuel	452	320	-132	0.120	-1100
sure	342	282	-60	0.167	-359
over	811	673	-138	0.157	-879
open	452	301	-151	0.133	-1135
hours	430	209	-221	0.187	-1182
thousands	950	704	-246	0.197	-1249

Table 4.27: Measurements of F1 and ROC of *Newscaster 10*

Word	Start F1 (Hz)	End F1 (Hz)	Change (Hz)	Duration (sec)	ROC (Hz/sec)
aid	942	699	-243	0.142	-1711
teenage	876	627	-249	0.152	-1638
island	845	743	-102	0.162	-630
die	932	866	-66	0.160	-413
boy	325	257	-68	0.172	-395
oil	215	182	-33	0.130	-254
here	450	378	-72	0.210	-343
real	552	500	-52	0.188	-277
airport	878	743	-135	0.241	-560
there	678	512	-166	0.172	-965
fuel	462	333	-129	0.111	-1162
sure	343	274	-69	0.161	-428
over	800	681	-119	0.152	-782
open	450	302	-148	0.142	-1042
hours	429	214	-215	0.181	-1189
thousands	932	700	-232	0.200	-1160

In conclusion, the features described earlier are the analysis of the vowel features of the newscasters. Further investigations on larger samples of acrolectal MalE speakers besides newscasters on monophthongs and diphthongs need to be carried out to confirm the findings of the current research as well as towards building a standard model of MalE pronunciation. The following chapter will discuss the research summary and future directions in acrolectal MalE.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Research summary

As mentioned in earlier chapters, there have not been any comprehensive studies on acrolectal MalE. Most of the studies that claim to be on the acrolectal variety, tended to be on the mesolectal or the learner variety. Theoretically, in many acrolectal MalE cases, the speakers can be bilingual or trilingual; however, the first or any other languages of the speakers do not hamper the proficiency of the speakers in English. Hence, it can be concluded that all acrolectal MalE speakers would sound 'Malaysian' even if they have different first or second language background. In this case, the respondents of survey were not able to identify the ethnicity of the newscasters. This is an indication that acroletcal speakers are not ethnically marked. The respondents of the survey believe that the newscasters had standard spoken English which is most likely not to be found in non-acroletal variety. However, a larger number of respondant of the survey as well as newscasters is needed to confirm this theory where fluent English speakers are not ethinically marked.

With the revamp of the English curriculum for primary and the secondary schools, the introduction of CEFR in its Malaysian Education Blueprint (2015-2025), shows the Malaysian government is giving importance in English education in Malaysia. The MalE is now gradually moving towards stage four which is Endonormative Stabilization. The Malaysian Education Ministry particularly the English Curriculum Development Division is focusing more on standardizing the English Language textbooks and curriculum. This can be seen in the newer English textbooks published from 2012 until 2018, teaching and learning materials for the primary and secondary schools. The textbooks and the curriculum have focused

pronunciation exercises, refined reading sections and detailed Malaysianized vocabulary which the students could relate to e.g (kampung, jalan, amuk).

Recently, there has been a language preference policy in Malaysia throughout the country. Several individual states leaders have voiced out their stands on the status of English language (e.g. Sultan of Johor and Sarawak state Chief Minister) in press conferences that English should be given equal importance as the Malay language. However, some Malay political parties are against the idea of English being used as the one of the official Malaysian languages as this might result in the declining number of Malay speakers in Malaysia. As of 2018, the newly appointed Malaysian Education Minister has suggested that Malaysian schools should use every Tuesday of schooling day as an 'English Day' so the students can practise and master the English language in school. This suggestion is seen as a good move in improving the English proficiency among the students by many parents and the general public.

In relation to the research questions, the phonological features of the acrolectal MalE were categories into two sections; consonant features and vowel features. Overall, there were eight pronunciation features discussed in this study. The first research question sought to examine the consonants of acrolectal MalE as produced by selected newscasters while reading the news on television in English. Among the features found were that, firstly, the newscasters were generally not rhotic based on the findings from the perceptual and acoustic analysis.

Secondly, there was no omission of the final /t/ for words like *government; department* and *enforcement*. Thirdly, there were no instances of speakers omitting word final /l/, for example in the words *level* and *international*. Fourth, there was also no substitution of the consonant /w/ with /v/ and finally, there was no omission of morphological markers, for instance in words like *cofirmed*. These findings suggest that acrolectal speakers or at least in an acrolectal context, speakers do not exhibit the same

pronunciation feaures as those found in a more colloquial variety of spoken MalE. There were however instances of the dental fricatives being substituted with dentalised stops, such as in the words *this* and *the*.

The second research question examined the characteristics of vowels produced by the newscasters. There was some evidence of a lack of contrast between the vowel pairs /ɪ/ and /iː/, /e/ and /æ/, /ʌ/ and /ɑː/, and /ɒ/ and /ɔː/. As for the diphthongs, /aɪ/ and /eɪ/ had large average ROC values which suggest that these vowels were realised as diphthongs. However, the diphthongs /ɔɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/, /ɪə/, /eə/ and /ʊə/ were monophthongal based on their low average ROC values. On the whole, in an acrolectal context the consonants do not display much difference from most standard varieties of English. However, the main difference appears to lie in the realisation of the vowel in terms of vowel quality and a lack of contrast between typical vowel pairs.

Based on the features discussed in this research, like any other varieties of New Englishes, acrolectal MalE has its own phonological features distinguishing it from other acrolectal or educated varieities. These features are also found in more colloquial spoken varieties which tend to be more marked. Thus, features like the use of dentalised stops in place of dental fricatives, a lack of quality contrast between vowels pairs, and the monophthongisation of diphthongs were found to be produced by news readers in what can be considered as an acrolectal context, the news. In sort acrolectal MaE is not the same as standard spoken BrE or RP.

5.2 Future directions

For future research, one could look at the acrolectal MalE word stress, syntax or lexis. Furthermore, future research should also look into monolingual children or adults grew up speaking only English in Malaysia. This is because most of the children of mixed parentage may use mainly English in their household. These speakers would consider English as their first language rather than any local languages and dialects as they do not have solid grasp of other languages like Malay, Tamil or Chinese. This will further validate the finding of the current research which, the acrolectal MalE speakers do not share many phonological similarities with the other varieties of MalE. It will be also interesting to see English used by the East Malaysia speakers (Iban, Kazadan, Bidayuh, Melanau and Dusun languages) which the language is a part of the Austronesian family. There has been very little documentation of the English-speaking East Malaysians. In addition, due to the nature of the study which was to transcribe and analyse the news recordings, the researcher could not discuss an important acrolectal MalE feature which was the aspiration of /p t k/ and it is due to the limited number of word occurrences. Future research on acrolectal MalE should look into this feature. Only then can a detailed description of acrolectal variety of MalE can be accurately described and the government should be able to make decisions whether to use this variety of MalE as an English model in the education system.

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