Pronunciation Difference between Public and Private Basic School Pupils in Ghana

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Abstract: There is a general perception that pupils who attend private basic schools speak better English than those in public schools, but there has not been an investigation to ascertain whether indeed there is a distinction between the English language skills of a private basic school pupil and a public basic school pupil. The present study seeks to show the English pronunciation difference between public and private basic school pupils and also to show which of them speak better English. Recordings from pupils from both categories of schools obtained from two regions of Ghana are analysed. The findings show that the pronunciation of English segments is a way to differentiate between these pupils. The English vowels / ɪ /, / ɑː /, / eɪ /, / aʊ /, / ɪə / and the voiced palato-alveolar consonant / ʒ / are the English segments that distinguish public and private basic school pupils used for the study. In all the instances where a distinction exists between them, the direction of the pronunciation of the private basic school pupils alongside their reading skills support the claim that they speak better English.

Key words: Linguistic difference, Ghanaian English, English pronunciation, Vowel, Consonant, Public School, Private School, Basic School

1. Introduction

In Ghana, basic education covers the first twelve years of education: three years of kindergarten; six years of primary (Basic one to Basic six); and three years of Junior High School (JHS 1 - 3). Final year pupils (JHS 3) take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) before they proceed to Senior High School (SHS). It is the level of education with the largest number of schools and pupils. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census figures published on the website of Ghana Statistical Service, there are 3,809,258 pupils enrolled in primary schools and 1,301,940 pupils enrolled in junior high schools across the country.

There are large numbers of basic schools in the country. However, there have always been two main stakeholders involved in the provision of basic education in Ghana: the government or the state and private investors, which comprise individuals and religious bodies. This means that the basic school can broadly be categorized into private and public.

There are differences between the public and private basic schools. At this level in Ghana, the public school is largely free but pupils that attend private schools do not enjoy free education. It must be mentioned here that most private schools are very expensive. Now, most communities including rural areas have private schools. It is only the remotest villages that private schools do not exist. The private schools have survived over the years in spite of the introduction of free public education about ten years ago in Ghana. One other distinction between these schools is the academic performance of the pupils. For instance, pupils in private schools appear to perform better in external examinations. This was confirmed by the Acting Head of Private School Unit at the Ghana Education Service, as reported in the *Daily Graphic* page 11, November 26, 2010. In other words, private school pupils (PRI) do better academically than public basic school pupils (PUB) (Nsiah-Peprah, 2004, p. 60).

Furthermore, there is a general assumption that pupils at the private basic schools speak English better but investigation to ascertain the level of performance difference between the English of a private basic school pupil and a public basic school pupil has been inadequate. This paper aims at analysing the pronunciation of the English vowel and consonant sounds by some selected private and public basic school pupils to show the distinction between them. The study examined pupils in the final year of their first twelve years of education, culminating in the BECE. Since it is established that English is acquired mainly through the process of formal education in Ghana (Huber, 2008, p.70), it is necessary that features of English pronunciation at the various levels of education be described and made available to researchers as advised by Boadi (1971, p. 54) to serve as part of the material needed for the on-going codification and standardization of the Ghanaian variety. The informants used are what Boadi (1971) describes as post primary.

2. Review of Literature: English in Ghana

On the basis of English expressions, Gyasi (1991, p. 27) argues against Ghanaian English. The suspicion here is that Gyasi's (1991) argument against Ghanaian English has its source from Sey (1973). For instance, Sey (1973, p. 10) cited by Ofori (2012) advises that the most accurate method to eliminate Ghanaian English is to expose it; and the Ghanaian speaker will refrain from using the so-called Ghanaian variety. This has given the basis to assume that Ghanaian English does not exist or if it exists, it must be discouraged.

However, Ghanaian English exists as a different variety of English. Dako (2001, p. 107) views Ghanaian English as a type of English that is mostly

spoken in Ghana. The Ghanaian English accent is identified with a Ghanaian who schools in Ghana. According to Dolphyne (1995, p. 31) there is an accent called "Ghanaian English." To these scholars, Ghanaian English exists as an accent, and pronunciation or accent is associated with identity (Huber, 2008, p. 90) In other words, the Ghanaian accent is a form of language identity. Ghanaian English, therefore, refers to the pronunciation of English, and it cannot be denied that a Ghanaian way of speaking English exists.

The Ghanaian accent of English is necessarily different from other accents including Received Pronunciation (RP) although the target of English pronunciation in Ghanaian schools, especially at the senior secondary level, is RP. The model aimed at in schools in Ghana is RP as seen in the syllabi provided by the Ministry of Education, but the teaching of English pronunciation is given little attention because most of the teachers lack the ability to teach it effectively (Quartey, 2009). This has inevitably promoted the emergence of the variety spoken by educated Ghanaians. Since it is difficult for the Ghanaian to match the standard of RP, Koranteng (2006) proposes a Ghanaian pronunciation standard. This standard has been tested and the result is that the proposed standard is considerably in practice at the basic level of education and this standard is achievable (Ofori et al. 2014).

The general expectation of the language policy of the country is not much concerned about pronunciation where a target is set. It is well established that a Ghanaian who tries to sound foreign is even ridiculed (Ofori et al. 2014, p. 49). Despite this, a near-native pronunciation, although not necessarily sounding foreign, is admired and preferred. From the language policy, the National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP) which was introduced in 2006, focuses on pupils acquiring the ability to read in any of the indigenous languages (predominantly spoken in the region of the school) and simultaneously learning how to speak English, while the reading of it is delayed until Primary 2 (Quarcoo, 2014). Pronunciation is given little attention since the main target is the ability to speak, write and read. No matter the little effort put into pronunciation, once a child attends a school in Ghana, he or she acquires features that make him or her Ghanaian.

Huber (2008), writing on the vowels of Ghanaian English, observes that RP / iː / in 'sheep' and 'seat' is realised as [i]. Also, RP / ɪ / in 'ship' and 'sit' is realised as [i] in Ghanaian English. Huber's assertion that Ghanaian English speakers use [i] in both instances where RP uses /iː/ and /ɪ/ is one of the inventories in Ghanaian English pronunciation that most researchers do not agree with. For instance, Dako (2001) and Adjaye (2005) list [ɪ] as a distinctive vowel sound in Ghanaian English.

There is an observation that RP / uː / and / ʊ / in 'pool' and 'pull' respectively are pronounced as [u] in Ghanaian English. / ɔː / and / ɒ / in 'cork' and 'cock' respectively are pronounced as [ɔ] in Ghana (Huber, 2008, p. 75). In addition, Huber (2008, p. 76) explains that the RP / ɜː / in 'turn' is either [ɛ]

or [**ɛː**] in Ghanaian English. The predictable Ghanaian English replacement of RP / **ɜː** / with [**ɛ**] in all situations is labelled as 'across the board' feature (Bobda, 2000b, p. 190) and that is one of the features that distinguishes between Ghanaian English and the other West African Englishes (Huber, 2008, p. 76).

According to Huber (2008), the RP / **ɑ**ː / in 'cart' is rendered as [**a**] or sometimes [**aː**]. / **æ** / in 'cat' is pronounced as [**a**] and / **ʌ** / in 'cut' is realised as [**a**] in Ghanaian English (p.76). Of the pure vowels, the only short vowel that appears to be realised as it exists in RP is the vowel number 3 / **ɛ** /. In *ten*, it is pronounced as [**ɛ**] in Ghanaian English (Huber, 2008, p. 76). Huber (2008), further observes that Ghanaian English has the following vowels: [**i**], [**u**], [**ɔ**]**, [ɛ**], and [**a**]. This observation is consistent with Koranteng (2006) but she adds [**e**] and [**o**] as the Ghanaian English pronunciation of RP / **eɪ** / and / **əʊ** / respectively.

On English diphthongs, Huber (2008:81) groups the diphthongs into closing and centring. He remarks that all closing diphthongs can be monophthongized except / **ɔɪ** /**.**

Dako (2001) identifies nine pure vowels of Ghanaian English, four of which are front vowels and five are back vowels: she lists [**i**], [**ɪ**], [**ɛ**], [**a**], [**ɔ**], [**ɔː**], [**o**], [**u**], and [**uː**] (p. 110-111). The identification of / **ɪ** / and / **u** / (which is RP's / **ʊ** /) as distinctive sounds in Ghanaian English sets Dako's (2001) work apart from Koranteng (2006) and Huber (2008) who do not

treat these vowels as distinctive in Ghanaian English.

Dako (2001, p. 108) observes that 'dear' and 'fear' which are transcribed in RP as / **dɪə** / and / **fɪə** / are realised as / **dɛː** / and / **fɛː** / respectively in Ghanaian English. This is a possible realisation but ample evidence shows a different realisation for this vowel in Ghanaian English. For instance, Koranteng (2006, p. 327) observes that the word 'year' is rendered as [**ɪɛ ~ iɛ**]. Again, Huber (2008:82) argues that Ghanaian English has [**iɛ ~ ia**] equivalent of RP's / **ɪə** /. The result of this study also shows consistency with Koranteng (2006) on this diphthong. This shows that Dako's (2001) claim that Ghanaian English has [**ɛː**] for RP's / **ɪə** / is no more the case as it exists in the spoken English of Ghanaians today.

The word 'poor' which is said to be rendered as / **pɔː** / according to Dako (2001) is not exclusively a feature of Ghanaian English. Some English language dictionaries like the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, low price edition, transcribes 'poor' as / **p ɔː** ʳ /. Since RP is a non-rhotic accent, (ʳ) is only pronounced in word final position before another vowel. In this case, it is no longer arguable that **[ɔː]** in 'poor' is distinctly Ghanaian, but it becomes Ghanaian when it is observed that most Ghanaian English speakers do so without the length marker. In the present study, respondents pronounced 'poor' as / **puɔ** /.

Dako (2001, p. 109) remarks that 'bud' is rendered as / **bɛd** / in Ghanaian English but Huber (2008, p. 78) points

out the root of / ʌ / > / ɛ / in Ghanaian English and observes that it originated with the *Fantes* (who speak *Fante*, which is a dialect of *Akan* in Ghana). According to Huber (2008), / ʌ / > / ɛ / replacement is giving way today to / ʌ / > / ɔ / or / a / and that is one of the characteristics that sets Ghanaian English apart from other West African Englishes. It is clear that most Ghanaians do not say / **kɛp** / for / **kʌp** / (cup); /**kap** / is a more likely pronunciation.

On diphthongs, Dako (2001, p. 112) remarks that Ghanaian English has [**aɪ**], [**ɔɪ**], [**au**]. Her view that / **eɪ** / "is hardly ever heard" and that "it is replaced with [**ɛ**], thus: / **dɛ** / (they); /**tudɛ** / (today)" is also a possibility. Although / **eɪ** / is certainly hardly heard, it is rather replaced with [**e**] according to Koranteng (2006) and Huber (2008, p. 74) and not [ɛ].

On the issue of Ghanaian English consonants, most writers agree that they do not differ substantially from their British English equivalents. However, some important observations have been made. In her thesis, Quartey (2009, p. 86) points out that the velar nasal sound / **ŋ** / is replaced with [ɪ **n**], [**ng**] or [**ŋg**] and that this is not only unique to *Ga* and *Twi* speakers of English but according to Koranteng (2006, p. 242-243) it is a feature of Ghanaian English. There has always been an assumption that the *Gas* always drop their [h] in word initial position. Comparing some *Ga* and *Twi* English speakers, Quartey (2009, p. 89) states that the former have a 29% chance of omitting [h] where is it is required to be pronounced and they

inserting it where it ought not to be pronounced.

(Quartey, 2009, p. 92) goes on to reveal evidence of consonant cluster reduction by her informants in words like *correct, child,* and *question* which she transcribes as / **kɔ'rɛt** /, / **tʃaɪd** / and / **kwɛsʃin**/ respectively. Adjaye (2005, p. 175) adds that the dental fricative [θ] is replaced with the stops [**t** ~ **t̪**] in word initial position and that the labiodental fricative [**f**] is rare word initially to replace [θ]. With her informants, Adjaye (2005, p. 176) remarks that replacing / ð / with [**d** ~ **d̪**] at word-initial position has a high occurrence. These features of Ghanaian English pronunciation are easily identified and these with others mark it off as an accent of the English Language.

3. Methodology

Two basic schools from Greater Accra Region and two from Eastern Region were selected for this study. Accra and Koforidua were chosen respectively because they are cosmopolitan cities where most Ghanaian languages are spoken. Informants from such environments are likely to show less traces of their first languages (Ofori, et al. 2014, p. 51-52). This is a major reason why these two cities were used for this investigation. The paper seeks to minimize the influence of their L_1. The criteria for the selection of schools are that two of them should be private schools and the other two should be public or government-sponsored schools from each city.

3.1 Public Basic School

One of the characteristics of public basic schools is that they do not provide extra

classes (thus paid extra tuition after normal school hours and sometimes during weekends) for their pupils. They have PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations) but their influence is almost not felt since every decision needs approval from the District Directorate of Education. In addition, some run the shift system (two sets of pupils and staff share the same school building and other facilities in rotation: morning and afternoon). This shift system is still in place in some places in the country; however, there has been political pronouncement to abolish it. The pupils of these schools do not pay any levy or fees. The children are provided with free text books and other learning materials. Sometimes, the pupils get free exercise books and they get free school uniforms once a while from the government. Any maintenance or additional structures are funded by the public purse. Teachers are mostly professionally trained: that is, graduates from the colleges of education or graduates who possess Bachelor of Education degrees from the universities. The interest of this study, however, is to select a public school that represents the average government-sponsored schools which form the majority of public basic education in the country.

In the light of this, a *Junior High School* (JHS) which is part of a cluster of schools at Madina, a suburb of Accra, was selected. It is one of the five Junior High Schools on the same compound. The cluster is also made up of some primary schools which supply the Junior High Schools with pupils. The selected JHS does not run the shift system. The medium of instruction in the JHS is English. In the JHS, there are eleven professionally trained teachers: two of them teach English. Both of them have university degrees. One other public *Junior High School* selected from Betom, Koforidua has ten professionally trained teachers who teach the various subjects in the school. In all, five of them have first degrees. It must be mentioned at this point that one does not require a university degree to teach in a basic school in Ghana. A diploma from the colleges of education is all that a person needs to teach at this level. The school has a primary section that supplies the pupils. They do not run the shift system and they have common features with their counterpart from Accra.

3.2 Private Basic School

On the other hand, private basic schools provide extra tuition for pupils and often have functioning PTAs which contribute to the development of the school. Pupils pay tuition fees and other levies. These pupils do not get free exercise books or textbooks from the government. Private basic schools are owned by individuals who see them (the schools) as business entities, for which reason close supervision is always provided. These schools run the Ghanaian system of basic education. There is another kind of private schools which run the British or the American curricula. This type of private school was not considered because it is in the minority.

A Junior High School at Lapaz New Market, another suburb of Accra, was selected for the study. It is a private school with all the departments that make up the basic school and it is one of the private schools that are in the

majority (those that run the Ghanaian system of education in the country). This study includes private schools because, at this level of education in Ghana, the level of private participation in the provision of basic education is very high. The school has staff members who have qualifications such as Teacher's Certificate 'A', Higher National Diploma (HND) and University Degrees. In the JHS department, five teachers teach English Language which is divided into sections: comprehension, composition, and grammar. The medium of instruction is English. The other private Junior High School was selected from Old Estate, Koforidua. This school has every department: nursery to JHS. None of the teachers here is professionally trained. Of the twelve teachers, eight are first degree holders and four are HND graduates. The medium of instruction is mainly English and the pupils are strictly required to speak English in the school compound.

3.3 Selection of Respondents

The first condition for the selection was that respondents should be in the final year of the Junior High School because this represents the highest class at the basic level. Secondly, a respondent should have spent at least seven years in the school. This was to make it legitimate enough to label a respondent as a pupil of that category of school. The private school from Accra had 73 pupils and Koforidua had 32 pupils. Of this number, only 36 and 19 pupils respectively could meet the conditions. On the other hand, 18 and 16 pupils from the public basic schools from Accra and Koforidua of a total of 35 and 33 respectively met the conditions. Considering the vast volume of data to work with, the simple random sampling method was used to select five male and five female pupils from each school: bringing the total number to twenty public and twenty private basic school pupils.

3.4 Description of Respondents

The respondents were divided into two groups. The first group comprised respondents from the public schools and the second, the respondents from the private schools. The average age of the respondents was 15. The distributions of the L_1 of the respondents were as follows: Twi – 16; Ewe – 6; Hausa – 4; Fante – 4; Ga/Adamgbe – 4; Cherepon/Okere – 4; and Dagomba – 2. (The distribution of L_1 was not a determiner of how they spoke English because most of these pupils spoke more than one local language. The L_1 of a respondent did not qualify or disqualify him or her to take part in this exercise: the emphasis was not on that.) See Tables 1 - 2 below.

Table 1: Public School Respondents

F / F	16 / 16	Dagomba / Twi
F / F	17 / 17	Ewe / Twi
F / F	14 / 17	Hausa / Ewe
F / F	14 / 16	Twi / Twi
F / F	16 / 16	Twi / Hausa
M / M	16 / 16	Cherepon / Ga
M / M	16 / 14	Twi / Twi
M / M	17 / 14	Ewe / Ga
M / M	17 / 17	Twi / Dagomba
M / M	16 / 16	Ewe / Twi

Table 2: Private School Respondents

F / F	14 / 15	Ewe /Twi
F / F	14 / 14	Fante / Hausa
F / F	15 / 15	Fante / Ga
F / F	14 / 14	Twi / Cherepon
F / F	15 / 14	Hausa / Twi
M / M	14 / 15	Twi / Cherepon
M / M	14 / 15	Twi / Fante
M / M	15 / 14	Twi / Cherepon
M / M	15 / 14	Ga / Twi
M / M	14 / 14	Ewe / Fante

3.5 Data Collection

Before the data were collected, the heads of the schools were approached with formal letters requesting their permission to allow the participation of their pupils. Consent forms were attached to the letters which they signed appropriately. Also, since the respondents involved were minors, a parental consent form was given to each of them for their parents to read and agree by signing. All parental consent forms were received. All these were done prior to the days of recording.

3.5.1 Interview

A brief informal interview was conducted with each respondent before he or she was asked to read out the words and the sentences. The interview helped to obtain the age and the linguistic background of the respondents.

3.5.2 Reading Material

Each respondent read out a list of 231 English words that catered for each English vowel and consonant sound in the syllable initial, medial and final positions in different sound combination environments. Also, each respondent read out a list of 60 sentences in which the listed words were used. The sentence pronunciation was used mainly for verification. This means that, if a word which appeared on the wordlist and the sentences had two different pronunciations by the same respondents, the sentence pronunciation was considered for the analysis. The digital recorder, Zoom H2, obtained from the Department of English, University of Ghana was used.

3.5.3 Procedure

The set of respondents recorded first were those from Accra. They read out the words, followed by the sentences. Since the recording took place during school hours, the process was marginally disturbed by interference from other pupils. This procedure was repeated in Koforidua. There was some background noise from some school children who were playing on the compounds at the time, but this did not interrupt the process. The words put together were simple English words; however, a few were skipped by the respondents.

3.5.4 Transcription

The recordings were transferred to a computer with a headset. The transcription was impressionistic. The transcription was phonemic and the symbols were taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The transcription was checked by two experts from the Department of English of the University of Ghana.

3.5.5 Data Analysis

The number of realisations of each vowel and consonant sound by each group was computed and presented as proportions. The differences in the proportions between the two groups were compared using Chi-squared analysis or Fisher's exact test where necessary. A value of $p<0.05$ was considered statistically significant. For each speech sound, no fewer than five words, in different orthographies, were selected for the analysis but no sound had more than ten words for its analysis. All the English vowel and consonant sounds were analysed, however, two consonants were presented since the differences between the others were statistically insignificant.

4, Analysis

4.1 Pure vowels

From table 1 above, the respondents' realisations of all the twelve English pure vowels have revealed six distinctive vowels in Ghanaian English. There are no long vowels but it is possible to observe some length in some pure vowels made by some of the respondents. Nevertheless, their frequency is statistically insignificant. There are no central vowels: the English central vowels are realised in a number

of ways either with a front or back vowel. The quality of 'backness' of the back vowels is quite suspicious. Sometimes these back vowels were actually fronted.

The analysis shows that the respondents realised the English vowel **/ i:** / as [**i**] which recorded the highest mark and it has a quality as the English vowel number 1 but without the length marker: it is shorter. Other realisations like [**i:**] which is an equivalent of the English vowel was heard. Also [**i·**] which has the quality and half the length of the English vowel 1 was heard. In some instances, the English vowel 2 / ɪ / was actually used for English vowel / **i:** / by some of the respondents. This is becoming a new realisation in the word *feel* which one would have expected [i] in Ghanaian English. From the data, 38/40 or 95% of the respondents pronounced *feel* with
[ɪ].

English vowel number 2 / ɪ / was realised as [ɪ] at a 52% rate of occurrence by both groups. Although this was the realisation with the highest percentage, it was observed that [i] also occurred fairly high in the data. The meaning that can be made from this is that the realisation of English vowel number 2 as such in Ghanaian English has not disappeared yet. Some speakers use it quite well to distinguish between it and English vowel number 1 and others use it where it is not expected to be used. For instance, it occurred 21.5% in the realisation of vowel /i: /. English vowel number 3 / ɛ / was realised by all respondents as [ɛ] with a percentage of 98.13%.

English vowel number 4 / æ / was realised as [a] which recorded 85%. Another realisation which is a developing feature in Ghanaian English is the pronunciation of the word *thank* with English vowel number 3 / ɛ /.

The analysis revealed that the English vowel number 5 / ɑː / was realised by the respondents as [a] which recorded 82.14%. Realisations like [aː] and [a·] occurred but with low percentages.

It is clear at this point that English vowel / æ / and / ɑː / are pronounced as [a] by the respondents.

English vowel number 6 / ɒ /   was realised by the respondents as [ɔ] which recorded 92.86. Also, English vowel number 7 **/ ɔː** / was realised as [ɔ] which recorded 76.5% by the respondents. It is observed here that English vowels 6 and 7, / ɒ / and / ɔː / respectively are realised as [ɔ] in the spoken English of the selected pupils for this study. Furthermore, English vowels / ʊ / and / **u:** / were realised as [**u**]. [**u**] recorded 88.57% and 77.14% for / ʊ / and / **u:** / respectively. From the data, the central vowel sounds / ʌ / and / ə / have other realisations such as [ɛ] and [ɔ] but in all situations, the [**a**] rendition was more prominent. / ʌ / was realised as [**a**] with a 52.5% occurrence. The central vowel sound / ə / was realised as [**a**] with a percentage of 61.25. It can be said that the vowel sound [**a**] played a major role in the their English. The central vowel sound **/ ɜː** / was realised as [ɛ] at a 95.83% rate. It can also be said that the vowel sound [**ɛ**] is one of the prominent vowels in the spoken English of these pupils. This study shows the distinctive pure vowels used by these selected pupils of the basic schools as:

[i], [ɪ], [ɛ], [a], [ɔ], and **[u].**

4.2 English Diphthongs
It is observed that the eight English diphthongs have phonemic realisations in the spoken English of the respondents. Four of the realisations are what Ofori, el al. (2014) label 'Autonomous' diphthongs. This is so because they exist on their own and they are: [ai], [ɔi], [au], and [iɛ].

Unlike the 'Autonomous' diphthongs, / ʊə / was realised in a number of ways: [ɪɔ, uɔ, ua]. Specifically, [ɪɔ] was most realised in *pure* and *sure*; [uɔ] was most realised in *poor* while [ua] was realised in *actual* by the respondents.

The English Diphthongs / eɪ /, / əʊ /, and / ɛə / were realised as monophthongs [e], [o] and [ɛ] respectively. Since these realisations are similar to those talked about earlier as monophthongs, they can be seen as pure vowel sounds in the

spoken English of these respondents. See table 1 above.

4.3 English Consonant Sounds
A test on all the English consonant sounds was done and both sets of respondents did not show any significant divergence as far as the pronunciation of these sounds is concerned. However, it is quite important to show the analysis of the pronunciation of Palato – Alveolar Voiced and Voiceless Fricative sounds. The Public School Respondents pronounced / ʒ / as [ʃ] 80/120 or 66.67% and the Private School Respondents also realised it as [ʃ] 56/120 46.67%. Also, the Public School Respondents pronounced / ʒ / as [ʒ] 40/120 or 33.33% and the Private School Respondents realised it as such 64/120 53.33%. There is a significant difference here since the P value is 0.0491**.**

***Table 3**. Analysis of the Data*

No.	Vowel Sounds and the words they occur	Realisations by Public and Private School Respondents		P<0.05
1	/ iː / *eat, seat, thief, cheap, feel, sheep, week, reach, see, tree*	1. [i]- PUB - 128/200 or 64%	PRI- 134/200 or 67%;	0.8116
		2. [ɪ] - PUB - 52/200 or 26%	PRI- 34/200 or 17%	0.0956
		3. [i·]- PUB- 20/200 or 10%	PRI - 30/200 or 15%	0.1823
		4. [iː] - PUB- 0/200 or 0%	PRI - 2/200 or 1%.	0.1583
2	/ ɪ / *it, ring, live, ship, sin, pretty, fill, district, elect, enact*	**1. [i]- PUB- 104/200 or 52%**	**PRI- 60/200 or 30%**	**0.0037**
		2. [ɪ] - PUB- 80/200 or 40%	**PRI- 128/200 or 64%**	**0.0068**
		3. [ɛ]- PUB- 16/200 or 8%	PRI- 12/200 or 6%	0.4649
3	/ ɛ / *end, pets, bed, get, set, leg, yet, men*	1. [ɛ]- PUB- 158/160 or 98.75%	PRI- 156/160 or 97.5%	0.9361
		2.[ɛ·]- PUB- 0/160 or 0%	**PRI- 4/160 or 2.5%**	**0.0472**
		3.[i]- PUB- 2/160 or 1.25%	PRI- 0/160 or 0%	0.1592
4	/ æ / *academic, accident, cat, thank, man, scan*	1.[a]- PUB- 102/120 or 85%	PRI- 102/120 or 85%	1.0000
		2.[ɛ]- PUB- 18/120 or 85%	PRI- 18/120 or 85%	1.0000
5	/ ɑː / *arm, start, far, harm, farm, dark, smart*	1.[a]-PUB- 120/140 or 85.71%	PRI- 110/140 or 78.57%	0.6254
		2.[a·]- PUB- 20/140 or 14.29%	PRI- 24/140 or 17.14%	0.5756
		3. [ɑ·]- PUB- 0/140 or 0%	**PRI- 6/140 or 4.29%**	**0.0155**
6	/ ɒ / *option, orange, pot, stopped, cloth, lock, shop*	1. [ɔ]- PUB- 126/140 or 90%	PRI- 134/140 or 95.71%	0.7211
		2. [o]- PUB- 12/140 or 8.57%	PRI- 6/140 or 4.29%	0.1711
		3. - PUB- 2/140 or 1.43%	PRI- 0/140 or 0%	0.1595
7	/ ɔː / *order, ordain, fork, short, bought, caught, talk, fall, saw, war*	1. [ɔ]- PUB- 156/200 or 78%	PRI- 150/200 or 75%	0.7964
		2. [ɔ·]- PUB- 42/200 or 21%	PRI- 48/200 or 24%	0.5681
		3. [ɔː]- PUB- 0/200 or 0%	PRI- 2/200 or 1%	0.1588

		4.[o]- PUB- 2/200 or 1% PRI- 0/200 or 0%	0.1588
8	/ ʊ / *pull, put, book, full, could, look, cook*	1.[u]- PUB- 128/140 or 91.43% PRI- 120/140 or85.71%	0.7117
		2. [ʊ]- PUB- 12/140 or 8.57% PRI- 20/140 or 14.29%	0.1809
9	**/ uː /** *pool, stool, cool, smooth, do, shoe, school*	1. [u]- PUB- 112/140 or 80% PRI- 104/140 or 74.29%	0.6828
		2.[u˗]- PUB- 28/140 or 20% PRI- 36/140 or 25.71%	0.3675
10	/ ʌ / *under, upper, public, cut, res<u>ul</u>t, j<u>u</u>dge, just, w<u>o</u>nder*	1. [a]- PUB- 74/160 or 46.25% PRI- 94/160 or 58.75%	0.2116
		2. [ɔ]- PUB- 52/160 or 32.50 % PRI- 40/160 or 25 %	0.2706
		3.[ɛ]- PUB- 34/160 or 21.25% PRI- 26/160 or 16.25%.	0.3438
11	/ ɜː / *<u>ear</u>th, b<u>ir</u>d, n<u>ur</u>se, s<u>er</u>ve, h<u>ear</u>d, transf<u>er</u>*	1. [ɛ]-PUB- 118/120 or 98.33% PRI- 112/120 or93.33%	0.7776
		2. [ɛ˗]- PUB- 2/120 or 1.67% PRI- 8/120 or 6.67%.	0.0635
12	/ ə / *<u>a</u>way, <u>a</u>bout, <u>a</u>ffected, p<u>o</u>litical, possible, th<u>e</u>, col<u>ou</u>r, act<u>or</u>*	1.[a]- PUB-100/160 or 62.50% PRI- 96/160 or 60%	0.8221
		2.[ɪ]- PUB-18/160 or 11.25%PRI- 20/160 or 12.50%	0.7594
		3.[ɛ]-PUB-20/160 or 12.50% PRI- 20/160 or 12.50%	1.0000
		4.[ɔ]- PUB- 20/160 or 12.50%PRI- 20/160 or 12.50%	1.0000
		5.[i]- PUB- 2/160 or 1.25 % PRI- 2/160 or 1.25%	1.0000
		6.[ə]- PUB- 0/160 or 0% PRI- 2/160 or 1.25%	0.1592
13	/ eɪ / *eight, aim, education, shameful, away, tray*	1.[e]- PUB- 118/120 or 98.33% PRI- 108/120 or 90%	0.6334
		2.[e˗]- PUB- 2/120 or 1.67%./ PRI- 8/120 or 6.67%	0.0635
		3.**[ei]- PUB- 0/120 or 0%** **PRI- 4/120 or 3.33%**	**0.0477**
14	/ aɪ / *ice, identified, time, wife, thigh, fly*	1. [ai]- PUB- 102/120 or 85% PRI- 102/120 or 85%	1.0000
		2. [aɪ]- PUB- 16/120 or 13.33% PRI- 18/120 or15%	0.7486
		3. [ɪ]- PUB- 2/120 or 1.67%. PRI- 0/120 or 0%	0.1599
15	/ ɔɪ / *oil, choice, voice, joy, boy, toy*	1.[ɔi]- PUB- 110/120 or 91.67% PRI-106/120 or88.33%	0.8436
		2.[ɔɪ]- PUB- 10/120 or 8.33% PRI- 14/120 or 11.67%	0.4371
16	/ əʊ / *old, vote, joke, told, throws, ago*	1.[o]- PUB- 118/120 or 98.33% PRI- 120/120 or 100%	0.9269
		2. - PUB- 2/120 or 1.67% PRI- 0/120 or 0%	0.1599
17	/ aʊ / *out, about, mouth, town, cow*	1.[au]- PUB- 90/100 or 90% PRI- 98/100 or 98%	0.6756
		2.**[a]- PUB- 10/100 or 10%** **PRI- 2/100 or 2%**	**0.0251**
18	/ɪə / *ear, year, idea, fear, dear*	1.[iɛ]- PUB- 98/100 or 98% PRI- 90/100 or 90%	0.6756
		2.[ia]- PUB- 2/100 or 2% PRI- 0/100 or 0%	0.1604
		3. **[ɪɛ]- PUB- 0/100 or 0%** **PRI- 8/100 or 8%**	**0.0056**
		4.- jɛ/- PUB- 0/100 or 0% PRI- 2/100 or 2%.	0.1604
19	/ ɛə / *air, affairs, square, aware, pair, wear*	1.[ɛ]- PUB- 70/100 or 70% PRI- 66/100 or 66%	0.7916
		2. / ɛ˗ /- PUB- 30/100 or 30% PRI- 34/100 or 34%	0.6640
20	/ ʊə / *tour, pure, sure, poor, actual*	1.[ɪɔ]- PUB- 38/100 or 38% PRI- 40/100 or 40%	0.8479
		2.[uɔ]- PUB- 22/100 or 22% PRI- 20/100 or 20%	0.7795
		3.[ua]- PUB- 20/100 or 20% PRI- 18/100 or 18%	0.7666
		4.[ɔ˗]- PUB- 16/100 or 16% PRI- 16/100 or 16%	1.0000
		5.[ɔ]- PUB- 4/100 or 4% PRI- 4/100 or 4%	1.0000
		6.[uə]- PUB- 0/100 or 0% PRI- 2/100 or 2%	0.1604
	Consonants		
21	/ ʃ / *shoe, shy, fishing, flushed, wash*	[ʃ]- PUB- 100/100 or 100% PRI- 100/100 or 100%	1.0000
22	/ ʒ / *treasure, pleasure, measure, confusion, vision, television*	1. [ʃ]- PUB- 80/120 or 66.67% PRI- 56/120 46.67%.	0.0999
		2.[ʒ]- **PUB-40/120 or 33.33%** **PRI 64/120 53.33%**	**0.0491**

5. Discussion

The task of this study is to investigate the distinctions that exist between pupils of public and private basic schools with respect to their pronunciation of the English segments. The section discusses where there are differences in their pronunciations.

During the recording of the two groups, it was realised that those respondents

from the private school read and spoke English comfortably. It was easy to notice how difficult it was for some of the public school respondents to read the simple English words on the list. For instance, apart from the word *wreaths* which almost all the respondents found rather extremely difficult to pronounce, some of the public school respondents struggled with words like *flushed, though, tough, razor,* and *luggage.* Specifically, Respondent Pub8 could not pronounce *snake* and *joke* (the pronunciations were /**snak**/ and /**huk**/ respectively). Pub10 could not pronounce *absolutely* and *watched* in the data. He could not pronounce *enact, men, set, pot, seat, beat, bought* and *ordain* at first glance. The researcher had to point to them again before he was able to pronounce some of them.

Most importantly, a major difference between these sets of respondents is the realisation of English vowel number two /ɪ /. The Public School Respondents pronounced vowel / ɪ / as [i] 104/200 which is equal to 52% while the Private School Respondents realised it as [i] 60/200 or 30%. Since the P value is 0.0037 which is statistically significant, the Public School Respondents are more likely to realise English Vowel number two / ɪ / as [i]. Also, the Public School Respondents realised vowel / ɪ / as [ɪ] 80/200 which is 40%. On the other hand, the Private School Respondents realised it as [ɪ] 128/200 or 64%. The P value here shows 0.0068 which means that the Private School Respondents are more likely to realise Vowel / ɪ / as [ɪ] (See table 1). Koranteng (2006) states that there is a level of distinction between RP vowels / i: / and / ɪ / in

Ghanaian English but it is obvious that in Ghanaian English, / i: / and / ɪ / are realised as [i] in most situations. Again, writing on the vowels of Ghanaian English, it is observed that RP / i: / in 'sheep' and 'seat' is realised as / i / in Ghanaian English and / ɪ / in 'ship' and 'sit' is also realised as / i / in Ghanaian English (Huber, 2008). It is interesting to note that / ɪ / is listed as a distinctive Ghanaian English vowel (Dako, 2001; Adjaye, 2005; and Ofori el al., 2014). The observation here is that, unlike the Public School Respondents, the Private School Respondents make a clear distinction between English vowel number 1 and 2 which is supported by research findings.

From the tables above, it is seen that the Public School Respondents realised Vowel / ɑ:/ as [ɑ:] 0/140 or 0% while the Private School Respondents realised it as [ɑ:] 6/140 or 4.29%. The difference here is statistically significant since the P value is 0.0155. It means that the Private School Respondents are more likely to pronounce vowel /ɑ:/ as [ɑ:] in order to distinguish it from the other sounds. The low occurrence of this vowel is not strange since it is known, according to Gimson (2001: 116), that /ɑ:/ is absent in most languages so foreign learners of English are encouraged to make efforts to pronounce /ɑ:/ as it is in order to have a clear distinction between it and **/æ/** and **/ ɒ /.**

Significantly, the analysis of the pronunciation of the diphthong / eɪ / also shows a distinction between the Public School Respondents and the Private School Respondents. The PRI have a 3.33% chance of realising this sound as

[**ei**] while the PUB make no effort of having this realisation. Statistically, the P value of 0.0477 makes this distinction significant.

One other diphthong that brings a distinction between the two groups of pupils is / **aʊ** /. From the analysis, it can be seen that PUB are more likely to realise / **aʊ** / as [**a**] with 10% occurrence against 2% from the PRI. This means that the PUB are more likely to move away from the established realisation.

The last diphthong that shows a distinction between them is /**ɪə** /. The Private School Respondents are more likely to pronounce it as [**ɪɛ**] with 8% chance against 0% on the part of the Public School Respondents. The P value here is 0.0056.

There exists a distinction between the realisations of both groups: the pronunciation of the voiced palato-alveolar consonant / **ʒ** /. While the Public School Respondents realised it as [**ʒ**] at 33.33%, the Private School Respondents realised it as [**ʒ**] 53.33% and this is statistically significant. It is observed that / **ʒ** / exists more in -sure words and it is realised as / **ʃ** / in most -sion words. This observation is consistent with Ofori (2012, p. 17).

Finally, although the distinction that exists here is statistically insignificant, it is quite important to make this observation. Fourteen (14) of the Public School Respondents pronounced the vowel / **ʌ** / in *judge* as [**ɛ**] but only six (6) of them preferred [**a**]. On the other hand, only eight (8) Private School Respondents pronounced it as [**ɛ**] and twelve (12) of them preferred [**a**].

Again, the vowel / **ʌ** / in the first syllable of *public* was pronounced as [**a**] by all Private School Respondents while eight (8) of the Public School Respondents pronounced it as [**a**] and twelve (12) preferred [**ɔ**]. On the whole, of a total of eight (8) words used for the analysis, the Public School Respondents realised the vowel / **ʌ** / as [**a**] 74/160 which is 46.25% it was pronounced as [**ɔ**] 52/160 or 32.5% and as [**ɛ**] 34/160 or 21.25%. This means that the Public School Respondents have no specific realisation for the English vowel number ten, instead, they realised it in three forms [**a, ɔ, ɛ**] because non scores 50%. Meanwhile, the Private School Respondents realised the vowel / **ʌ** / as [**a**] 94/160 which is equivalent to 58.75%. This means that their preferred choice for vowel / **ʌ** / is [**a**]. Dako (2001:109) remarks that 'bud' is rendered as / bɛd / in Ghanaian English but Huber (2008, p.78) takes us to the root of / **ʌ** / > / **ɛ** / in Ghanaian English and observes that it originated with the Fantes (who speak Fante which is a dialect of Akan in Ghana). Huber is of the view that / **ʌ** / > / **ɛ** / replacement is giving way today to / **ʌ** / > / **ɔ** / or / **a**/ which is one of the characteristics that sets Ghanaian English apart from other West African Englishes. Since there is a claim that / **ʌ** /   / **a** / is a recent feature in Ghanaian English (Bobda, 2000b, p. 188), in effect, it can be said that the Private School Respondents' pronunciation of vowel / **ʌ** / is more recent than that of the Public School Respondents.

6. Conclusion

The study shows that pupils from the private school read and speak English comfortably while most of the public school pupils show an identifiable difficulty with the speaking and reading of English words and sentences presented to them. Findings also show that while the Public School Respondents prefer [i] in the context of / ɪ /, the Private School Respondents prefer [ɪ].Also, the Private School Respondents are more likely to pronounce vowel / ɑː/ as [ɑː] in order to distinguish it from **/ æ /** and **/ ɒ /**. The realisations of the diphthongs / **eɪ** /, / **aʊ**

/, and / **ɪə** / show distinctions between the public and private school pupils. Finally, the only English consonant sound that brings a distinction between pupils of the public and private basic schools is the voiced palato- alveolar consonant / **ʒ /.** At this point, it can be concluded that English speaking is a way to determine a distinction between pupils of the public basic schools on the one hand and pupils of the private basic school on the other. In all instances where distinctions exist between them, the private basic school pupils move toward the target. On that basis, it may be said that they speak English better.

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