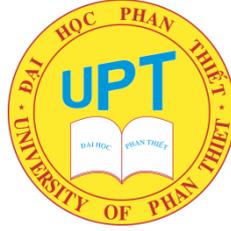**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

PHAN THIET UNIVERSITY

TRẦN NGỌC PHỈ TÚY

A STUDY OF COMMON ERRORS IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH CONSONANTS AT MUI NE ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE CENTER: SITUATION & SOLUTIONS

MASTER'S GRADUATION PROJECT

MAJORED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BÌNH THUẬN PROVINCE - 2023

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BÌNH THUẬN PROVINCE - 2023

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I certify the authenticity and originality of the master's graduation project, majoring in English language, which is being submitted today and is entitled: "A study of common errors in pronouncing english consonants at Mui Ne English Home Language Center: situation & solutions."

I affirm that all the data and results presented in this project have been directly observed and collected by myself with a completely objective and honest attitude. Any materials or sources from other authors that have been referenced are thoroughly and accurately listed, and no content has been copied from any source without proper citation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study explores consonant pronunciation errors among Mui Ne English Home Language Center students. A notable tendency among students is omitting final consonant sounds, such as /z/, /s/, /t/, /v/, and /dʒ/. Challenges also arise in articulating consonant clusters: /bl/, /sk/, /pt/, /br/, /pr/, /gr/, /str/, and /sks/. Distinct mispronunciations occur in specific consonant pairs, especially /s/ and /ʃ/, /t/ and /tr/, and /dʒ/ and /tʃ/, due to phonetic differences absent in Vietnamese. The absence of certain consonant sounds in Vietnamese, like /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/, poses significant challenges for accurate reproduction in English. Some students struggle to distinguish between voiced and voiceless consonants, resulting in mispronunciations like /p/ and /b/, /t/, and /d/. Findings from teacher interviews and classroom observations provide comprehensive insights into consonant pronunciation errors. In conclusion, this study underscores the need for effective pedagogical strategies to enhance learners' pronunciation skills.

Keywords: Consonant pronunciation errors, final consonant omission, consonant clusters, mispronounced pairs, voiced and voiceless consonants.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

MNEHLC: Mui Ne English Home Language Center

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English is an essential global language used in various fields such as commerce, science, and technology. As a result, the demand for English language learning has been increasing rapidly worldwide, including in Vietnam. English is an essential subject in Vietnam's education system, and an increasing number of parents are sending their children to English language centers.

Notably, Vietnamese is monosyllabic, while English is polysyllabic, resulting in stark differences in sound patterns. Consequently, achieving accurate pronunciation becomes particularly daunting. Established in 2019, the Mui Ne English Home Language Center (MNEHLC), located in Mui Ne, Binh Thuan Province, Vietnam, has emerged as an educational beacon. MNEHLC focuses on comprehensive English education, fostering students' communication skills, cultural awareness, and personal growth through tailored programs and small class sizes.

The center's modern facilities encompass four fully-equipped rooms outfitted with essential resources, including computers, air conditioning, whiteboards, and projectors. These amenities collectively foster an environment conducive to comfortable and practical learning. Thanks to these resources, the process of learning English at MEHLC becomes not only convenient but also gratifying. With students propelled by motivation and teachers empowered to deliver personalized instruction, the center embodies an unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional English language education.

Figure 1.1 Mui Ne English Home Language Center
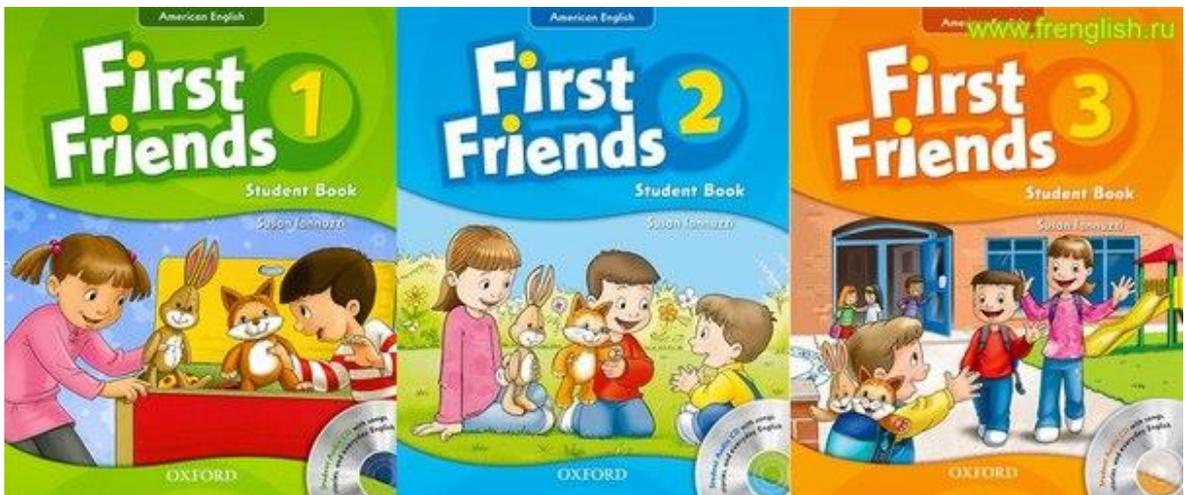
Figure 1.2 "First Friend" book series for students at the center

Therefore, this study aims to identify common errors in pronouncing English consonants at MNEHLC and provide solutions to help students improve their

pronunciation skills. The study aims to contribute to ELT and learning by addressing this issue.

Levis (2018) noted that pronunciation instruction is essential for second language learners to communicate successfully in the target language. Moreover, research by Derwing and Munro (2009) highlights the importance of identifying and addressing pronunciation errors early in language learning to prevent "fossilization," where mistakes become ingrained and difficult to correct.

The study will use a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The sample will comprise students at MNEHLC, and data will be collected through pronunciation tests, observations, and interviews. By analyzing the collected data, the study will comprehensively understand students' specific errors when pronouncing English consonants and propose practical solutions to improve their pronunciation skills.

Overall, this study will contribute to ELT and learning by providing valuable insights into Vietnamese learners' challenges in mastering English consonant pronunciation. By identifying common errors and proposing practical solutions, this study will help students at MNEHLC and beyond to improve their English pronunciation skills and communicate more effectively in the target language.

1.2   Problem statement

The research conducted by Hinofitis and Bailey (1980, pp. 124 -125) revealed that, for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, pronunciation is the most challenging aspect of communication until a certain level of proficiency is reached. This highlights the importance of pronunciation in enhancing learners' communicative competence. Learning a new language involves acquiring a new way to use and control speech organs, which can be difficult, mainly because some organs are invisible.

Vietnamese learners often face significant challenges in mastering English pronunciation for various reasons. The English sound system includes several sounds that are absent in Vietnamese. English speakers pronounce ending sounds

differently than Vietnamese speakers, making it difficult for Vietnamese learners to enunciate English words accurately. Consequently, they tend to make phonetic errors that impede their English speech comprehension.

Pronunciation proficiency is a persistent challenge for learners of EFL, impacting their communicative competence. Vietnamese learners, including those at MNEHLC, struggle with English consonant pronunciation due to differences in sound systems. This study aims to uncover common consonant pronunciation errors among MNEHLC learners, delve into their causes, and propose effective strategies for improvement.

This study aims to identify the most common consonant pronunciation errors made by Vietnamese learners at MNEHLC and investigate the possible causes of these errors. Additionally, it will propose appropriate solutions to address the identified problems and improve learners' English consonant pronunciation skills. Thus, this study will contribute to the existing literature on English pronunciation by providing valuable insights into the common errors made by Vietnamese learners and proposing practical solutions to enhance their pronunciation skills.

1.3   Aims of the study

The study will also discover what causes these mistakes and how they affect a learner's overall English skills. The research questions are:

1. What mistakes do MNEHLC students often make when pronouncing English consonants?

2. What strategies can help students improve their pronunciation of English consonants?

The study's first research question seeks to identify the most common mistakes Vietnamese students at MNEHLC make when pronouncing English consonants. This information will enable teachers to target their instruction more effectively and develop appropriate materials to help students overcome challenges.

The second research question proposes practical solutions to help students improve their pronunciation of English consonants. The study will focus on

practical strategies teachers can implement at MNEHLC to help students improve pronunciation. The solutions will emphasize incorporating pronunciation practice into regular classroom activities, providing explicit instruction and feedback, and using minimal pairs to highlight sound differences.

Additionally, the study will explore the importance of modeling and encouraging students to self-correct their pronunciation errors. By promoting student autonomy and self-awareness, students can take responsibility for their learning and become more confident and competent communicators in English.

The study's results will have implications beyond MNEHLC, as they can inform effective teaching strategies and materials for learners of ESL in other contexts. The study will provide valuable insights into the common pronunciation difficulties non-native speakers face, allowing language teachers and curriculum developers to design courses that prioritize pronunciation instruction.

Ultimately, the study aims to enhance students' communicative competence and overall English language proficiency, facilitating cross-cultural communication between Vietnam and other English-speaking countries. By producing a workforce with strong English communication skills, Vietnam can enhance its competitiveness in the global market and contribute to improving language education policies and practices in the country.

1.4 Research questions

1. What mistakes do MNEHLC students often make when pronouncing English consonants?

2. What strategies can help students improve their pronunciation of English consonants?

Because English and Vietnamese have different ways of making sounds, it can be challenging for Vietnamese people to learn English consonants. So, the first research question tries to discover the most common mistakes people at MNEHLC make when they say English consonants. The data for the study will be gathered using a mix of methods, such as pronunciation tests, observations, and interviews.

The second research question suggests real-world ways to help people learn how to say English consonants better.

The study will look into the best ways to deal with the problems found and help learners improve their pronunciation skills. The study will also explore the impact of these strategies on learners' confidence and motivation to speak English. This information can be used to make English language learners' programs for learning how to say words better. The solutions will focus on practicing pronunciation in regular classroom activities, giving clear instructions and feedback, and using minimal pairs to show how sounds differ. The study will also examine how important it is to show learners how to fix their pronunciation mistakes and encourage them to do so. The results of this study are essential for language teachers and students because they show that improving pronunciation can help people feel more confident and communicate better in the target language.

Additionally, the study may contribute to a better understanding of how pronunciation instruction can be integrated into language teaching practices. The study's results will contribute to ELT and learning by providing valuable insights into Vietnamese learners' challenges in mastering English consonant pronunciation. By identifying common errors and proposing practical solutions, this study will help learners at MNEHLC and beyond improve their English pronunciation and communicate more effectively in the target language. Additionally, the study will inform effective teaching strategies and materials for learners of ESL in other contexts, enhancing cross-cultural communication.

1.5 Scope and limitations

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combined quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, including pronunciation tests, observations, and interviews. Conducted from January to July 2023, the study involved 100 center-enrolled students.

The scope of the study is restricted to MNEHLC and does not extend to other aspects of English pronunciation, such as vowel sounds. Moreover, the study's

findings are limited to the sample of learners at MNEHLC. They may only be generalized to some Vietnamese learners of English or other educational institutions in Vietnam or other countries.

The study's limitations include the small sample size, which may only represent part of the population of Vietnamese learners at MNEHLC or other language centers in Vietnam. Additionally, the study only focuses on English consonants. It does not consider other factors, such as cultural and social aspects, that may impact learners' pronunciation skills. The researcher's subjectivity may also affect the study's conclusions, as their linguistic background and experience may influence them. Furthermore, the learners' proficiency level may affect the study's findings, as the learners at MNEHLC may differ from learners in other language centers or schools in Vietnam.

Lastly, the generalizability of the study's findings may be limited to the specific context of MNEHLC, and the proposed solutions may not be applicable in other settings or for learners with different language backgrounds. Despite these limitations, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the common errors made by Vietnamese learners in pronouncing English consonants. It proposes practical solutions to improve their pronunciation skills, contributing to the existing literature on English pronunciation.

1.6   Significance of the study

The findings of this study will be significant in several ways. First, the study will provide insights into the common errors Vietnamese learners make when pronouncing English consonants. This knowledge will enable language teachers to design more effective pronunciation instruction that addresses specific areas of difficulty. It will also inform the development of instructional materials and classroom activities to improve pronunciation skills.

Second, the study's results will contribute to the literature on English pronunciation by expanding our understanding of the challenges Vietnamese learners face when learning to pronounce English consonants. This knowledge will

be valuable to language teachers and researchers in developing practical approaches to teaching pronunciation to non-native speakers.

Third, the study will highlight the importance of early intervention in addressing pronunciation errors to prevent fossilization and enable learners to achieve communicative competence. This knowledge will be helpful to language teachers and learners as they strive to improve their pronunciation skills and achieve greater fluency in the English language.

Fourth, the study's findings will have practical implications for language education policies and practices in Vietnam. By improving learners' English pronunciation skills, the study will enhance Vietnam's competitiveness in the global market and promote cross-cultural communication between Vietnam and other English-speaking countries.

Finally, the study will provide a model for future research on English pronunciation among Vietnamese learners and non-native speakers. It will demonstrate the value of a mixed-methods approach in investigating pronunciation errors and proposing practical solutions to improve learners' pronunciation skills. In summary, this study's findings will contribute to ELT and learning by providing valuable insights into Vietnamese learners' common errors when pronouncing English consonants. It will also propose practical strategies to improve learners' pronunciation and English language proficiency.

1.7 Summary

The chapter introduces the topic of English pronunciation and the challenges that Vietnamese learners face in mastering it. It highlights the importance of English language learning in today's global context and how pronunciation plays a crucial role in successful communication in the target language. The chapter also identifies the research problem, objectives, and questions.

To provide context for the study, the chapter discusses the differences between the Vietnamese and English sound systems. It emphasizes the significance

of identifying and addressing pronunciation errors early in language learning to prevent long-term difficulties.

The chapter then outlines the mixed-methods approach used in the study and the specific data collection methods employed, such as pronunciation tests, observations, and interviews. The study suggests that explicit instruction, focused practice, and teacher feedback can enhance learners' pronunciation accuracy. It also identifies the most common errors and proposes appropriate strategies, including incorporating pronunciation practice into regular classroom activities, providing explicit instruction and feedback, and using minimal pairs to highlight sound differences. The study emphasizes the importance of promoting learner autonomy and self-awareness to enhance communicative competence and overall English language proficiency.

Finally, the chapter discusses the potential contribution of the study to ELT and learning and highlights the need for practical solutions to improve learners' English consonant pronunciation skills.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on English pronunciation, English consonants, and common errors in English consonant pronunciation among Vietnamese learners. The chapter begins with an introduction to the theoretical framework that underpins this study, including Contrastive Analysis Theory, Phonetics and Phonology Theory, and Models of Second Language Acquisition Theory.

Then, the chapter discusses the importance of good pronunciation and provides an overview of English consonants. Next, a contrastive analysis of some English consonants and Vietnamese consonants is presented, highlighting the potential difficulties Vietnamese learners face in producing English consonants accurately.

Finally, the chapter reviews previous research conducted on English consonant pronunciation errors in Vietnam and other countries. The literature review aims to provide a foundation for the current study and inform the development of appropriate solutions to address the common errors in pronouncing English consonants among students at the center.

2.2 Theoretical framework

In the theoretical framework of this study, three main theories are presented to provide a deeper understanding of the common errors in pronouncing English consonants at MNEHLC.

2.2.1 Contrastive Analysis Theory

The linguistic elements of a learner's native language influence their acquisition of a second language. In the study context, Contrastive Analysis Theory helps us understand why Vietnamese learners at MNEHLC make specific pronunciation errors when attempting to pronounce English consonants. By comparing the phonetic and phonological differences between Vietnamese and English, we can anticipate which consonant sounds might be particularly

challenging for learners and why they may gravitate toward specific substitutions or mispronunciations.

2.2.2 Phonetics and Phonology Theory

Phonetics and Phonology Theory explores the intricate sounds and rules that govern pronunciation in a language. Its significance here lies in identifying the specific English consonant sounds that Vietnamese learners struggle with. This theory enables us to analyze the nuances of articulation, stress patterns, intonation, and rhythm inherent to English pronunciation. By pinpointing which aspects of pronunciation diverge from Vietnamese phonetics, we can anticipate where learners might encounter difficulties and tailor instructional strategies accordingly.

2.2.3 Models of Second Language Acquisition Theory

This theory outlines the stages and processes of acquiring a second language, including developing pronunciation skills. In the study context, it helps us comprehend how learners at MNEHLC progress in acquiring English consonant pronunciation. By understanding the challenges they face during different stages of learning, we can tailor teaching strategies to enhance their pronunciation abilities. This theory also guides us in predicting the types of errors that might arise and developing targeted interventions to address them effectively.

Integrating these three theories offers a well-rounded framework for Vietnamese learners' challenges pronouncing English consonants. It helps identify the root causes of errors and equips teachers with insights to design more effective and tailored instructional approaches to foster improved pronunciation skills among learners at MNEHLC.

2.3 English pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way vocal organs produce sounds to form words. For language students, achieving good pronunciation is crucial for becoming fluent. Additionally, accurate pronunciation enhances speaking confidence, allowing language learners to express themselves more confidently. To improve their

pronunciation, language students must practice speaking and listening to the language regularly.

2.4   English consonants

In articulatory phonetics, consonants are speech sounds produced by either a complete or partial closure of the vocal tract, resulting in the constriction of airflow and producing characteristic sounds. Consonants are phonemes that are usually considered individual speech segments. The closure of articulators such as the tongue, teeth, and lips gives rise to these phonemes. As Roach (2001) pointed out, "All true consonants are the result of regulating the flow of air through the vocal tract" (p. 20). The place of articulation indicates the location of the consonant within the vocal tract.

According to Rogers (2000), "the manner of articulation refers to the degree and type of constriction in the vocal tract" (p. 23). The manner of articulation includes various sounds, such as plosives (stops), fricatives, approximants, affricates, and nasals. Voicing represents the last category in the classification of consonant sounds. The English language has 24 consonant sounds, which include /p/ /b/, /t/ /d/, /k/ /g/, /f/ /v/, /s/ /z/, /θ/ /ð/, /ʃ/ /ʒ/, /tʃ/ /dʒ/, /h/, /w/, /n/, /m/, /r/, /j/, /ŋ/, and /l/.
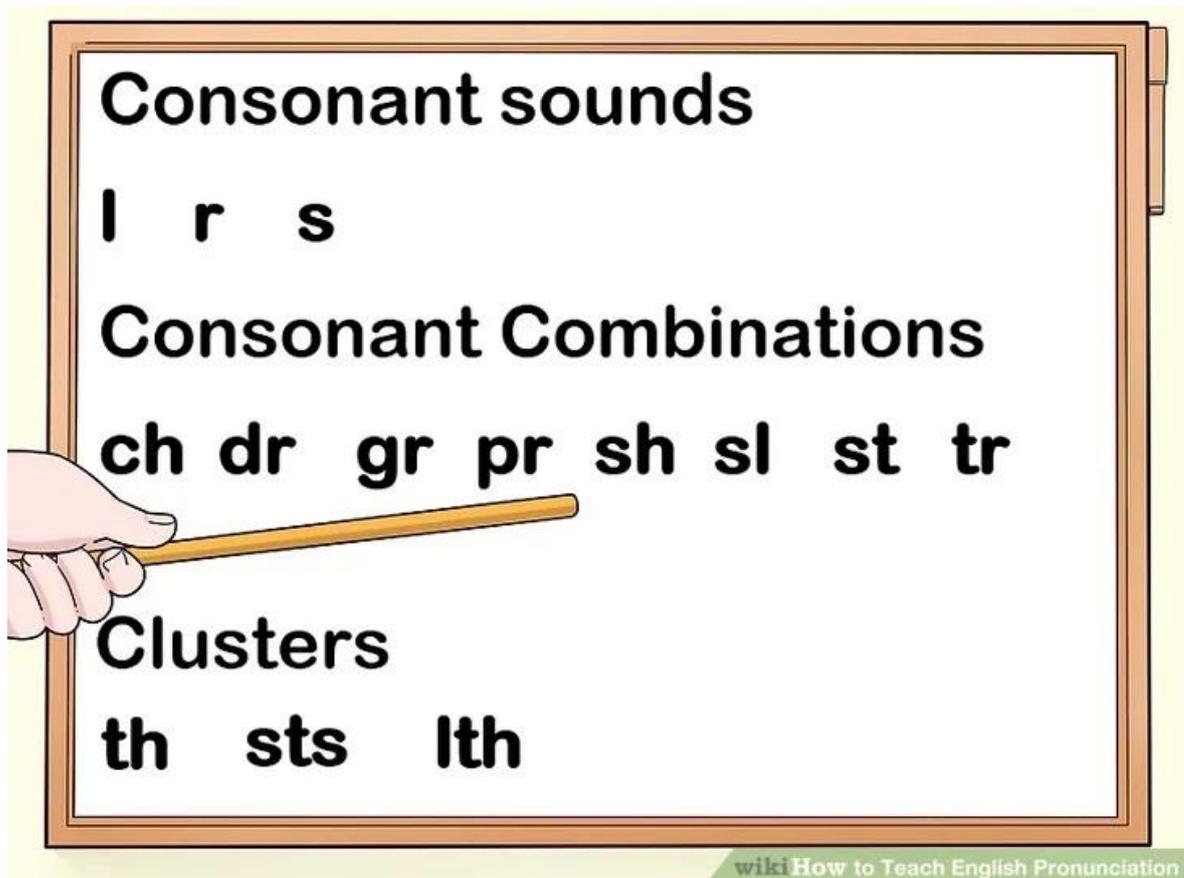
Figure2.1. Consonant Sounds, Consonant Combinations and Clusters

The distinction between these consonant sounds is essential for learners to accurately produce English words and sentences, making it crucial to developing good pronunciation skills.

Table 2.1 Chart of English consonants phonemes

Voice-Place-Manner Chart
Complexity Approach

Manner		Voicing	Place							
			Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Obstruent	Affricates	Voiceless					tʃ		
		Voiced					dʒ		
	Fricatives	Voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ		
		Voiced		v	ð	z	ʒ		
	Stops	Voiceless	p			t		k	ʔ
		Voiced	b			d		g	
Sonorant	Liquids	Voiced				l	r		
	Glides	Voiced	w				j		
	Nasals	Voiced	m			n		ŋ	
			Labial	Coronal					Dorsal

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Yoshida (2005) provides a comprehensive classification of consonants based on three main categories: voicing, manner of articulation, and place of articulation. This classification system aids in understanding and teaching the pronunciation of English consonants. The categories are as follows:

2.4.1 Voicing

Consonants can be classified as either voiced or voiceless. Voiced consonants involve the vibration of the vocal cords during their production, while voiceless consonants do not have vocal cord vibration. Examples of voiced consonants include /b/, /d/, /g/, /v/, /z/, and /ʒ/. Examples of voiceless consonants include /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /s/, and /ʃ/.

2.4.2 Manner of Articulation

Consonants can be further categorized based on how airflow is obstructed or modified during production. Some common manners of articulation include:

- Plosives (or stops): These consonants completely close the airflow and its sudden release. Examples include /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, and /g/.

- Fricatives: These consonants produce a continuous airflow with partial obstruction, resulting in a friction-like sound. Examples include /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/.

- Affricates: These consonants combine a stop closure with a fricative release. Examples include /tʃ/ (as in "chair") and /dʒ/ (as in "judge").

- Nasals: These consonants involve the airflow passing through the nasal cavity. Examples include /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/ (as in "sing").

- Liquids: These consonants have a relatively free airflow without complete closure or friction. Examples include /l/ and /r/.

- Glides: These consonants involve a smooth transition from one sound to another. Examples include /j/ (as in "yes") and /w/ (as in "we").

2.4.3 Place of Articulation

Consonants can also be classified based on the specific location where the airflow is obstructed or modified. Some familiar places of articulation include:

- Bilabial: The obstruction occurs between the two lips. Examples include /p/, /b/, and /m/.

- Labiodental: The lower lip contacts the upper teeth. Examples include /f/ and /v/.

- Dental: The tongue tip or blade makes contact with the upper teeth. Examples include /θ/ (as in "think") and /ð/ (as in "this").

- Alveolar: The tongue tip or blade contacts the alveolar ridge behind the upper teeth. Examples include /t/, /d/, /s/, /z/, /n/, and /l/.

- Palatal: The tongue contacts the hard palate. Examples include /ʃ/ (as in "she") and /ʒ/ (as in "pleasure").

- Velar: The back of the tongue contacts the soft part of the palate. Examples include /k/, /g/, and /ŋ/ (as in "sing").

- Glottal: The obstruction occurs at the level of the glottis. Examples include /h/ (as in "hat") and the glottal stop (as in the Cockney pronunciation of "butter").

Understanding the classification of consonants based on voicing, manner of articulation, and place of articulation is essential for teachers and learners when addressing pronunciation difficulties and developing effective strategies for English language instruction.

2.5 Contrastive analysis of some English Consonants & Vietnamese Consonants

There are some differences between English and Vietnamese syllables:

Table 2.2 English and Vietnamese syllables

	Vietnamese Syllables	American English Syllables
Characteristics	- High degree of independence - Clear separation - Border line coincides with syllable boundary - No phenomenon of linking sounds - No consonant clusters - Has tonal accents - Begins with a consonant - Ends with a vowel, consonant or semi-vowel	- Dependent on context - Not always clearly separated - Borderline may or may not coincide with syllable boundary - Has linking sounds - Has consonant clusters - No tonal accents - May begin with up to 3 consonants - May end with up to 4

	• Has a relatively limited set of consonant sounds • Final consonants are sometimes pronounced very softly or dropped altogether.	consonants • Has a much more extensive inventory of consonants. • Final consonants are usually pronounced clearly.
Structure	• Syllable structure is fixed • Structure: Initial consonant + Vowel	• Syllable structure is flexible • Structure: Consonant cluster + Vowel (vowel + consonant cluster) • Structure is loose

Overall, while both languages have a similar basic structure of syllables, the specific characteristics and patterns of those syllables are different between Vietnamese and English.

Vietnamese consonants and English consonants have some similarities but also some distinct differences. Vietnamese consonants are more relaxed and have less articulation than English consonants. Most Vietnamese consonants are made with less tightness in the mouth and throat, which makes them sound smoother and less apparent. In English, consonants are held longer and must be spoken more precisely. For example, the English sounds /p/, /t/, and /k/ are made by closing the vocal tract more entirely than their Vietnamese counterparts. Because Vietnamese does not have aspiration, consonants are said more softly and often without aspiration. For instance, the English consonant "p" is usually said with an intense

burst of air. It is clear, while the equivalent sound in Vietnamese, the glottal stop, lacks aspiration and is much less clear.

List of the 17 consonant sounds in Vietnamese and the ten consonant combinations: 17 consonant sounds: b, c, d, đ, g, h, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, x, and ten consonant combinations: ch, gh, gi, kh, ng, ngh, nh, th, tr, qu. Here is the table of 22 initial consonants in Vietnamese:

Table 2.3 Chart of Viet Nam Consonants

Vietnamese Consonants (Hanoi): IPA   Phụ Âm Tiếng Việt: Bảng mẫu tự ngữ âm quốc tế

	Bilabial môi-môi	Labio-Dental môi-răng	Alveolar chân răng	Palatal vòm	Velar vòm mềm	Glottal thanh hầu
Stop âm bật hơi	• b		t • d		k •	
Implosive Stop âm khép	• ɓ		• ɗ			
Nasal âm mũi	• m		• n	• ɲ	• ŋ	
Fricative phụ âm xát		f • v	s • z		x • ɣ	h •
Approximant âm tiếp cận				• j	• w	
Lateral Approx. âm thanh bên			• l			

English consonants are more phonetically complex than Vietnamese, with multiple allophones for each sound. Vietnamese consonants are articulated with a consistent sound with no regional variations. Another way to compare English and Vietnamese consonants is to look at how the English /t/ t/has more aspiration than its Vietnamese counterpart and how the English /d/ has much more articulation than the Vietnamese dental stop. Also, English consonants have a higher level of friction because more contact is made between the articulators, and more force is used to make them. On the other hand, Vietnamese consonants are usually made without the articulators touching each other. This makes them less stressed and smoother than their English counterparts. As the sounds /dʒ/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/, /ð/, and /θ/ are not present in Vietnamese, learners may struggle to distinguish and produce these sounds accurately. For instance:

- /dʒ/: "judge" - In Vietnamese, there is no exact equivalent for this sound, and learners may find it challenging to pronounce it correctly since it involves combining a stop closure with a fricative release.
- /ʒ/: "measure" - Similar to /dʒ/, this sound is not found in Vietnamese, and learners may struggle to produce it accurately due to its unfamiliarity.
- /ʃ/: "she" - Vietnamese does not have the /ʃ/ sound, which makes it difficult for learners to differentiate it from similar sounds in their native language.
- /ð/: "this" - The voiced dental fricative /ð/ is not present in Vietnamese, and learners may have difficulty producing this sound, as there is no direct equivalent in their native language.
- /θ/: "think" - The voiceless dental fricative /θ/ is another sound not found in Vietnamese, and learners may find it challenging to produce due to its rarity in their language.

English consonants: /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /s/, /ʃ/, and /ʧ/ may be similar to those in Vietnamese, but the pronunciation may differ slightly. Similarly, while some consonant sounds in English may be similar to those in Vietnamese, subtle

differences in pronunciation may need to be learned to avoid confusion or misunderstanding.

Schwa sounds can impact English consonant sounds and vary depending on the word, surrounding sounds, and speaking style. This can certainly be a challenge for English learners. The pronunciation of certain consonant sounds can be affected by the presence of a schwa sound, which can vary depending on the word and context. This can lead to word recognition and production difficulties, especially when the speaker speaks quickly or with reduced clarity. For example:

- Pronunciation of "butter": The schwa sound in the second syllable (/ˈbʌtər/) can influence the preceding "t" consonant. Due to the weak, unstressed nature of the schwa, the "t" sound may be pronounced with reduced force or even omitted, resulting in a pronunciation like /ˈbʌɾər/.

- Pronunciation of "evening": The schwa sound in the second syllable (/ˈiːvənɪŋ/) can affect the preceding "v" consonant. The "v" sound may become more relaxed or less distinct, resulting in a pronunciation like /ˈiːvənɪŋ/ instead of /ˈiːvnɪŋ/.

- Pronunciation of "bottle": The schwa sound in the second syllable (/ˈbɒtəl/) can influence the preceding "t" consonant. The "t" sound may be pronounced with less aspiration or clarity, resulting in a pronunciation like /ˈbɒtl/ instead of /ˈbɒtəl/.

These examples demonstrate how schwa sounds in English words can impact the pronunciation of adjacent consonants, leading to potential reductions, assimilations, or changes in their articulation. As a result, learners should pay attention to the occurrence of schwa sounds in connected speech and practice recognizing and producing them in various contexts.

2.6 Common errors in pronouncing English consonants at MNEHLC

Research has identified several common errors in English consonant pronunciation among Vietnamese learners. These errors can be attributed to the

differences between English and Vietnamese phonetics and phonology, as well as the influence of the learners' first language on their second language acquisition. Common Errors in Pronouncing English Consonants:

2.6.1 Substitution of /p/ with /b/

Vietnamese learners often substitute the voiceless aspirated /p/ sound in English with the voiced /b/ sound from their native language. In Vietnamese, there is no distinct /p/ sound with the same aspiration found in English. Instead, the Vietnamese /b/ sound is produced with less aspiration and voiceless unaspirated stops. As a result, when Vietnamese learners attempt to pronounce the English /p/ sound with the strong aspiration it requires, they might unintentionally produce the more familiar Vietnamese /b/ sound.

2.6.2 Substitution of /t/ with /d/

The substitution of the voiceless aspirated /t/ sound in English with the voiced /d/ sound in Vietnamese can be attributed to the differences in aspiration patterns. Vietnamese voiceless stops, including /t/, lack the aspiration that is present in English. Vietnamese learners might struggle to fully aspirate the /t/ sound in English and replace it with the more familiar /d/ sound from their native language, which does not require the same degree of aspiration.

2.6.3 Substitution of /k/ with /g/

Similar to the previous cases, Vietnamese learners' substitution of /k/ with /g/is influenced by the lack of aspiration in Vietnamese phonology. Vietnamese /k/ is voiceless and unaspirated, while the English /k/ sound is voiceless and aspirated. The Vietnamese /g/ sound, on the other hand, shares voicing with the English /g/. This phonological difference can lead to the incorrect pronunciation of /k/ as /g/ when Vietnamese learners attempt to produce aspirated sounds.

2.6.4 Substitution of /ʃ/ with /s/ and /tʃ/ with /ʃ/

The substitution of the voiceless fricatives /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ with /s/ and /ʃ/, respectively, can be attributed to the absence of these sounds in Vietnamese phonology. Vietnamese does not have the /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ sounds, so learners might use

the closest approximations from their language, which are /s/ and /ʃ/. The lack of exposure and practice with these unfamiliar sounds can result in these substitutions.

2.6.5 Omission of Final Consonants and Incorrect Pronunciation of Consonant Clusters

Vietnamese learners might omit final consonants or mispronounce consonant clusters due to the phonotactic rules of their native language. Vietnamese has a more limited range of final consonants, and clusters are less common. When attempting to produce English words with final consonants or clusters, Vietnamese learners might need help with articulatory complexity and phonotactic patterns, leading to errors in pronunciation.

Understanding these specific challenges and error patterns provides teachers with valuable insights into the root causes of these errors. By addressing these challenges directly, teachers can design more effective strategies to help Vietnamese learners improve their English consonant pronunciation and overall communication skills.

2.7   Previous research on English consonant pronunciation errors

Several studies have investigated English consonant pronunciation errors among Vietnamese learners. A study by Dinh (2017) examined the common errors in English consonant pronunciation among Vietnamese university students and found that the substitution of /p/ with /b/ was the most frequent error, followed by the substitution of /t/ with /d/ and /k/ with /g/. Another study by Nguyen (2020) investigated the effectiveness of using Minimal Pair Pronunciation Training to improve English consonant pronunciation among Vietnamese learners and found that the training effectively improved learners' pronunciation accuracy.

Other studies have investigated English consonant pronunciation errors among learners from different countries. For example, a study by Gimson (1975) investigated the common errors in English pronunciation among learners from various countries and found that the substitution of /p/ with /b/, /t/ with /d/, and /k/ with /g/ were common errors across different learner groups. A study by Guion

(1998) investigated French learners' perception and production of English consonants and found that they had difficulties distinguishing between /p/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/, and /k/ and /g/.

Overall, previous research has identified common errors in English consonant pronunciation among learners from different countries and provided insights into effective teaching strategies to improve learners' pronunciation accuracy. However, more research is needed to investigate the specific errors and challenges faced by learners at the center

2.7.1 Domestic research

In recent years, several studies have been conducted in Vietnam on common errors in English consonant pronunciation by Vietnamese learners. For instance, Tran and Nguyen (2022) conducted a case study on common mistakes made by Vietnamese learners in pronouncing English consonant clusters, with a tendency to simplify the complex clusters of three consonants by deleting the first, second consonant, or in some cases, both. They found that 34 learners frequently omitted ending sounds and experienced sound confusion, as some English sounds do not have their Vietnamese counterparts.

Similarly, Bui, Mai, and Diep (2021) found that sophomores of English majors often mispronounced final consonants, particularly /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /f/, and /v/, in two main mistakes, including omission and substitution.

Huyen (2021) conducted a comparative analysis of the consonants in English and Vietnamese, highlighting significant differences between the two languages. The author aimed to provide insights for English teachers and learners to improve their pronunciation and communication skills in English.

Nguyen (2019) investigated word-final consonant production errors in Vietnamese English interlanguage among high and low-English language experience groups at a university in the Mekong River Delta. The study found various errors, including deletion, epenthesis, devoicing, substitution, and more. The high and low experience groups showed similarities and differences in error

types, and the study provided implications to help Vietnamese learners of English minimize word-final consonant pronunciation errors.

Finally, Sao Bui (2016) found that substitution was the main problem in the participants' pronunciation of /θ/ and /ð/, with the most common mistake being the replacement of /θ/ with Vietnamese /tʻ/ and /ð/ with /z/. Additionally, a new type of mistake was discovered: the tendency to pronounce /dʒ/ instead of /ð/. The participants attributed their pronunciation errors to the lack of English exposure and practice, emphasizing the need for an effective English environment. These studies provide important insights into the common errors Vietnamese learners make in English consonant pronunciation and offer recommendations for improving English teaching and learning in Vietnam.

2.7.2 Foreign studies

Foreign studies have also examined non-native speakers' common errors in pronouncing English consonant sounds. One such study by Inayatul (2023) investigated the errors produced by students in pronouncing labiodental and dental sounds. The study aimed to identify the specific types of errors and their causes.

The analysis revealed that the students made errors in pronouncing labiodental and dental sounds. Regarding labiodental sounds, the errors were categorized as follows: 1) 2 items or 1.12% of omission errors, and 2) 177 items or 98.88% of misformation errors. The errors were categorized for dental sounds as 1) 5 items, or 1.40% of omission errors, and 2) 353 items, or 98.60% of misformation errors.

Furthermore, the study examined the causes of these errors. The results indicated that the errors were influenced by various factors, including interlingual causes (86.81%), intralingual causes (72.72%), communication strategies (71.11%), and the context of learning (23.33%).

Lubis, dewi sartika, and evi sriwinda simanjuntak. (2022). An analysis of students'errors in pronouncing english consonants (a case study of the eleventh grade of sma negeri 1 sumbul). The writer found there were 77 errors in

pronouncing English consonants. The finding of data analysis showed that the types of English consonant was b/ /w/ /v/ /z/ /ʤ/ /g/. The result showed the total number of each error pronunciation. The types of consonants mispronounced by students at SMA N 1 Sumbul were found to be 77 mispronounced by the student. They are / b/ /w/ /v/ /z/ /ʤ/ /g/. The total number of the errors was b=20.8%, w=9.09%, v=19.48%, g=12.98%, ʤ=27.27%, z=10.38%. The most dominant type of consonant error in pronouncing is ʤ, with the highest frequency and percentage of 27.27%. The benefits of this research for the state and nation, especially for students and English teachers, are that this research can be used as a source for teaching phonology material, students' sources in learning more about phonology and pronunciation, and for the next researcher, especially English consonants. However, it no longer researches students' errors in pronouncing English consonants but can be an added source, especially English consonants / b/ /w/ /v/ /z/ /ʤ/ /g/.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The study aims to identify and analyze the specific types of consonant pronunciation errors exhibited by these students. The data collection process and analysis techniques are described in detail below.

3.1 Participant

The study was conducted to answer the following question: 1. What common pronunciation mistakes do students at MNEHLC make when pronouncing English consonants?

Each student was given a thorough overview of the study's purpose, with their information used strictly for research purposes. They were provided a list of single words and short sentences from their textbook consisting of one- or two-syllable words featuring individual consonants or consonant clusters at the beginning or end of words. Students were then tasked with reading the given content orally, and the researcher recorded their voices.

A total of one hundred recordings were collected from students. A meticulous comparison was conducted between their pronunciation and native speakers, explicitly focusing on consonant sounds. Through statistical analysis, the research precisely determined the percentage of consonant pronunciation errors made by the students.

3.2 Interview

Kvale (1996) describes interviews as fundamental conversations. He characterizes qualitative research interviews as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects." (p.1). This resonated particularly well with the study's aim to delve into English teachers' lived experiences and perspectives, providing a direct avenue to extract valuable insights.

One of the primary strengths of the semi-structured interview approach is its flexibility. By allowing tailored questions based on participants' responses, the research team ensured that the interviews could adapt to the specific expertise and experiences of the English teachers. This enabled a nuanced exploration of the

common consonant errors made by students at the center, leveraging the teachers' rich contextual knowledge.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews serve as a robust tool in case studies. Given the unique learning environment at the center, direct participant interaction provided an in-depth and holistic view of the phenomenon under investigation. Engaging with five experienced English teachers allowed the research to tap into their professional expertise and understanding of the challenges faced by learners. This approach helped to triangulate and complement the findings from recorded pronunciations.

The semi-structured interview format facilitated fluid yet focused conversations. As the teachers shared their insights, the researcher dynamically adjusted the questions to ensure comprehensive responses. This enabled the extraction of multifaceted perspectives on the common consonant errors encountered by students. The interviews were a crucial bridge between the theoretical frameworks and the empirical data, enhancing the study's credibility and depth.

In conclusion, applying a semi-structured interview approach to English teachers at the center was a deliberate choice that added significant value to the investigation of consonant pronunciation errors. By combining insights from interviews and recorded pronunciations, the study achieved a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, capturing both the theoretical underpinnings and the practical experiences of teachers. This approach aligned with Kvale's philosophy of qualitative research interviews and directly contributed to the research's aim of identifying and analyzing common errors in English consonant pronunciation.

3.3   Observational

Richie and Lewis (2003) highlight that observational research, a data collection technique, has become intertwined with qualitative research (page 3). This acknowledgment underscores the significance of integrating observation into

the research framework. Through observation, researchers can acquire valuable insights into the intricate patterns of English consonant pronunciation errors among students at the MNEHLC.

Observational research can provide a view of students' unscripted behaviors and interactions. Unlike interviews that rely on participants' reflections, observation captures real-time responses, unveiling authentic reactions to the challenges posed by English consonant pronunciation. This facet is precious for understanding the immediacy and spontaneity of error occurrence. The method allows for a deeper exploration of the nuanced aspects of pronunciation errors, revealing intricacies that might not be articulated during interviews or self-reporting.

The dynamic nature of observational research enables the researcher to capture the subtleties of student behavior, actions, and responses that could remain unexpressed through conventional interview methods. By immersing oneself in the learning environment, the researcher gains access to a treasure trove of nonverbal cues, gestures, and interactions that contribute to the errors' context. This contextual richness enhances the depth of data collection, offering a multi-dimensional understanding of the error occurrence phenomenon.

Integrating observational research with interviews creates a powerful synergy that comprehensively addresses the research objectives. Observation complements interviews, focusing on the dynamic learning environment's lived experiences and reactions. This combined approach triangulates and validates findings, ensuring a robust and holistic exploration of the prevalent errors students encounter when pronouncing English consonants.

The choice of observational research aligns with the research team's dedication to capturing authentic, context-driven insights into English consonant pronunciation errors. This method augments the overall research endeavor by providing a real-time, unfiltered perspective on the errors' occurrence, thus enriching the understanding of the challenges faced by learners within the learning environment at MNEHLC.

3.4   Pronunciation Test

The purpose of the pronunciation assessment material was to comprehensively evaluate students' English consonant pronunciation proficiency. 35 single words and 20 short sentences, each accompanied by their respective International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcriptions, this test was designed to capture various dimensions of pronunciation accuracy and offer valuable insights into learners' mastery of English consonant sounds.

3.4.1 Single Word Assessment

Including single words with IPA transcriptions in the pronunciation assessment is a targeted method for consonant sounds. This approach allows for the isolation of individual phonetic elements, enabling the identification of errors related to substitution, omission, and misarticulation. The carefully selected words encompass a diverse range of consonant sounds, clusters, and combinations, presenting learners with challenges they may encounter in their pronunciation journey. Through this method, the research aims to gauge learners' proficiency in accurately producing phonetic sounds in isolation, providing a foundation for phonetic competence.

3.4.2 Short Sentences Assessment

The integration of short sentences with IPA transcriptions extends the assessment to connected speech, mirroring real-world communicative scenarios. This method enables the evaluation of learners' ability to navigate the complexities of pronunciation within meaningful contexts. By analyzing sentence stress, rhythm, intonation patterns, and the accurate articulation of consonant clusters, the test captures learners' aptitude for applying pronunciation skills in natural conversation. The inclusion of sentences aligns with the research's goal of assessing learners' competency in real-world communicative situations.

3.4.3 IPA Transcriptions

Incorporating IPA transcriptions throughout the assessment material enhances the precision of error identification and intervention. The IPA notation system provides a standardized and phonetically accurate representation of sounds, transcending the limitations of conventional orthography. This notation system is precious in pinpointing errors in sounds that may need to be adequately represented in the English writing system. By leveraging IPA transcriptions, the research team aims to provide teachers with clear, standardized feedback to aid learners in refining their pronunciation skills.

3.4.4 Considerations and Limitations

While the pronunciation assessment material offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The controlled nature of the assessment may only partially capture learners' spontaneous pronunciation in dynamic interactions. Additionally, the absence of extended discourse limits the assessment's ability to evaluate learners' sustained pronunciation accuracy over longer stretches of speech. It is crucial to interpret the results within the assessment's controlled setting and consider potential variations in learners' pronunciation in diverse communicative contexts.

In conclusion, the meticulously crafted pronunciation assessment material, featuring single words and short sentences with IPA transcriptions, presents a robust and multifaceted approach to evaluating learners' English consonant pronunciation proficiency. By leveraging targeted methods for isolated sounds and connected speech, this test offers teachers a comprehensive tool for identifying specific pronunciation errors and guiding learners toward enhanced phonetic accuracy. Integrating IPA transcriptions further enriches error analysis and intervention precision, aligning with the research's commitment to fostering effective language learning outcomes.

3.5   Data collection

The researcher prepared a list of single words and short sentences to gather data on students' consonant pronunciation. These items were carefully selected from the English textbook used in the course.

Each word and sentence was chosen to encompass a diverse range of consonant sounds and combinations, representing the spectrum of challenges students might encounter during pronunciation. This deliberate approach aimed to capture the full scope of potential errors that could arise in the learning process.

3.6   Data analysis

Once the data collection phase was complete, the researcher obtained 100 recordings from the 100 participants. These recordings were then systematically reviewed and analyzed. The analysis primarily focused on the students' consonant sound pronunciation accuracy. Comparing the students' recorded pronunciations with native English speakers' pronunciations, this step aimed to identify and note any consonant pronunciation errors made by the students during the recording.

3.7   Categorization of pronunciation errors

Upon careful analysis, the identified consonant pronunciation errors were categorized into distinct groups. The categorizations were based on the types of errors observed among the students. The standard English consonant pronunciation errors made by students included:

3.7.1 Omission of final consonant sounds

Students tended to omit the conclusive consonant sounds in their pronunciation. Notably, consonant sounds such as /z/, /s/, /t/, /v/, and /dʒ/ were found to be frequently omitted, contributing to the characterization of this particular error pattern. This type of error can stem from various linguistic factors, including difficulties in sound differentiation, fluency, and influences from the student's native language, Vietnamese. This phenomenon underscores the intricacies of second language acquisition, highlighting how subtle phonetic intricacies can pose

significant hurdles for learners. Identifying and analyzing this error category contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of students' specific challenges when striving for accurate pronunciation.

3.7.2 Difficulty pronouncing consonant clusters

Students struggle with consonant clusters in the medial and initial positions within words and sentences. In the context of medial consonant clusters, challenges were observed in articulating sequences such as:

- /bl/ in words like 'black.'
- /sk/ in words such as 'desk.'
- /pt/ at the end of words like 'helped.'

Students tend to omit or modify certain sounds, affecting overall pronunciation accuracy.

Moreover, the pronunciation of initial consonant clusters posed a substantial challenge. These intricate clusters included:

- /br/ as in words like 'break.'
- /pr/ found in words such as 'print.'
- /gr/ in words like 'green.'

The distinct nature of these clusters, demanding a seamless transition between consonant sounds, proved to be a complex hurdle for students.

Further adding to the intricacies were instances where three consonant sounds converged, leading to notable complexities in pronunciation:

- /str/ in words like 'string.'
- /sks/ evident in words such as 'tasks.'
- /kst/ in words like 'sixty.'

The challenges these clusters pose highlight the intricate nature of pronunciation acquisition, as they necessitate precise articulation and fluid transitions between sounds.

3.7.3 Mispronunciation of consonant pairs

Students have difficulty discerning and accurately articulating specific pairs of consonant sounds, leading to mispronunciations and potential linguistic confusion when differentiating between the following consonant pairs:

- /s/ and /ʃ/ as in the contrast between 'see' and 'she.'
- /t/ and /tr/ as seen in the distinction between 'took' and 'truck.'
- /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ are evident in the challenge between 'judge' and 'chew.'

The fine distinctions between these consonant pairs require acute phonetic awareness, precise tongue placement, and mastery over airflow control. The mispronunciations underscore the potential pitfalls that learners may encounter when confronted with these closely related consonant sounds. The struggle to accurately differentiate these consonant pairs echoes the intricacies of second language acquisition. Phonetic variations and the subtle differentiation between these pairs pose significant challenges, often influenced by the learners' native language, Vietnamese.

3.7.4 Difficulty in pronouncing certain consonant sounds not present in Vietnamese

Students need help pronouncing specific consonant sounds that are absent from the phonetic inventory of the Vietnamese language. This challenge underscores the influence of native language phonology on the acquisition of unfamiliar phonetic elements. Students encountered notable difficulties when attempting to pronounce consonant sounds, such as:

/θ/ as in the sound 'th' in words like 'thin.'

/ð/ found in the sound 'th' as in words like 'this.'

/ʃ/ and /ʒ/ evident in sounds like 'sh' and 'zh' as in 'ship' and 'measure'

/tʃ/ present in the sound 'ch' as in words like 'church.'

/dʒ/ resembling the sound 'j' as in words like 'judge.'

The challenge stems from the absence of these sounds within the Vietnamese phonetic. Students may struggle to produce these unfamiliar sounds accurately due to their unavailability in their native language's phonology.

3.7.5 *Lack of distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants*

An insightful discovery from the research revolves around the students' challenges in distinguishing between voiced and voiceless consonant pairs in mispronunciations. Some students grappled with accurately identifying and articulating consonants according to their voicing distinction. Following voiced and voiceless consonant pairs:

- /p/ and /b/
- /t/ and /d/
- /k/ and /g/
- /v/ and /f/
- /z/ and /s/
- /ʒ/ and /ʃ/
- /dʒ/ and /tʃ/

These underscore the intricate nature of phonetic distinctions that influence pronunciation precision. The vibration of the vocal cords characterizes voiced consonants, whereas voiceless consonants lack this vibration. Accurate differentiation between these pairs is pivotal for intelligible speech.

3.8   Statistical analysis

Table 3.1 Type of pronunciation error

No.	Type of Pronunciation Error	Description	Amount	Percent (%)
1	Omission of final consonant sounds	Excluding final consonants like /z/, /s/, /t/, /v/, and /dʒ/ from	28	16%

		pronunciation		
2	Difficulty pronouncing consonant clusters	Struggling with clusters like /bl/, /sk/, and /pt/ in words	42	23%
3	Mispronunciation of consonant pairs	Misarticulating pairs like /s/ and /ʃ/, /t/ and /tr/, and /dʒ/ and /tʃ/	19	11%
4	Difficulty in pronouncing certain consonant sounds not present in Vietnamese	Challenges with sounds like /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/ absent in Vietnamese	54	30%
5	Lack of distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants	Struggling to differentiate between /p/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/, and other pairs	35	20%

3.9 Conclusion

As presented in Table 3.1, the statistical analysis categorized the pronunciation errors into distinct types, quantifying their occurrences and percentages. This analysis supported the identification of prevalent errors and served as a foundation for further research and pedagogical interventions.

Despite the strengths of the methodology, certain limitations were acknowledged. The sample size of participants, potential bias in interviews and observations, and generalizability of findings were recognized as factors that might impact the study's scope and applicability.

This study's methodology paves the way for future research endeavors. Broader participant inclusion, exploration of cognitive factors, and examining intervention strategies present exciting opportunities for further contributing to understanding English consonant pronunciation errors among Vietnamese learners.

In the next chapter, the study's findings will be presented, analyzed, and discussed in detail, providing insights into students' pronunciation errors and their implications for English language teaching.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis results of the collected data regarding consonant pronunciation errors made by students at MNEHLC. The findings are discussed in detail, highlighting common errors, and potential implications for ELT.

4.1   Introduction

Mispronunciations can impede the clarity and fluency of language interactions. Imagine an English learner striving to express their thoughts, aspirations, and emotions precisely. The aspiration to communicate is universal, yet the path to linguistic mastery is paved with challenges, especially when mastering consonant pronunciation's intricacies.

This chapter investigates consonant pronunciation errors among students at the MNEHLC. Students' challenges in articulating consonant sounds mirror the broader journey of mastering a language. From the omission of final consonant sounds that can alter the meaning of a word to the consonant clusters that challenge even the most astute learners, exploration contributes to language acquisition. The journey is both empirical and aspirational, and it resonates with the shared hope that every utterance, every syllable, and every consonant contributes to a more harmonious world of communication. The following sections provide a breakdown of the identified errors based on the categorizations mentioned in chapter 3.

4.2   Omission of final consonant sounds

A significant number of students demonstrated a tendency to omit final consonant sounds in their pronunciation. The most commonly omitted consonant sounds were /z/, /s/, /t/, /v/, /p/, /k/, /d/, /dʒ/… For instance, words like "des" instead of "desk" and "roc" instead of "rock" were frequently observed. This omission pattern suggests a potential challenge in accurately producing final consonant sounds. Teachers' perspectives on the omission of final consonant sounds shed light on the significance of this error. One teacher remarked, "Students often drop the last sound in words, and it's like a missing puzzle piece in their speech. It can change the whole picture."

4.3 Difficulty pronouncing consonant clusters

The analysis indicated that students encountered difficulties pronouncing initial and final consonant clusters. Final consonant clusters, such as /bl/, /sk/, and /pt/, posed significant challenges. Similarly, initial clusters like /br/, /pr/, and /gr/ were frequently mispronounced. Three-consonant clusters like /str/ and /sks/ proved problematic. These findings suggest that students struggle with articulating complex consonant combinations.

Examining these clusters gives valuable insights into the specific challenges that learners encounter within this linguistic domain. The students grapple with initial and final consonant clusters, presenting a multifaceted challenge. The articulation of /bl/, /sk/, and /pt/ emerged as noteworthy obstacles among the final clusters. These intricate combinations, characterized by a sequence of consonant sounds, underscored students' difficulties in maintaining clarity and precision in pronunciation.

Overall, the observed difficulties in pronouncing consonant clusters illuminate the intricate nature of English pronunciation. The student's struggles with both initial and final clusters and the presence of three-consonant clusters underscore the necessity for dedicated attention to the complexity of articulation.

4.4 Mispronunciation of consonant pairs

One noteworthy observation was the difficulty of certain students in effectively distinguishing between specific consonant pairs. Particularly, the pairs /s/ and /ʃ/, /t/ and /tr/, and /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ were found to be frequently mispronounced. This recurring mispronunciation sheds light on an intricate aspect of phonetic contrast in English. The challenges in accurately articulating these pairs could potentially stem from the subtle phonetic nuances that differentiate them, nuances that might not be as pronounced or even present in the student's native language phonetic inventory.

Such mispronunciation of consonant pairs emphasizes the role of phonetic training and exposure to the distinct phonemes of the English language, especially

those not typically found in the student's linguistic background. These findings underscore the significance of targeted pronunciation practice and phonetic awareness as crucial components in developing accurate and intelligible English speech. Moreover, this mispronunciation phenomenon serves as a point of consideration for teachers, encouraging them to design pedagogical approaches that address the specific challenges posed by these consonant pairs. Overall, the mispronunciation of these consonant pairs highlights the intricate interplay between phonetic characteristics of different languages and its impact on learners' English pronunciation proficiency.

4.5 Difficulty in pronouncing certain consonant sounds

A notable area of difficulty among the students revolved around the accurate pronunciation of consonant sounds that need to be added to the phonetic inventory of the Vietnamese language. Consonant sounds like /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/ posed substantial challenges for the learners. These sounds, characterized by their distinct phonetic qualities, proved to be intricate obstacles in achieving precise English pronunciation.

For instance, the /θ/ sound, as in "three," was commonly mispronounced as "tree." Similarly, the /ð/ sound in "the" was often articulated as "ze." Additionally, the /ʃ/ sound found in "she" was observed to be mispronounced as "se." These inaccuracies in pronunciation can be attributed to the absence of these specific sounds within the phonetic range of their native Vietnamese language. The contrast between the phonetic systems of Vietnamese and English becomes evident in the mispronunciation of these consonant sounds, underlining the impact of linguistic background on learners' ability to replicate foreign phonemes accurately. Recognizing these challenges highlights the importance of focused instruction and practice in addressing these unique phonetic obstacles, fostering improved intelligibility and overall pronunciation proficiency in English.

4.6   Lack of distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants

A challenge the students faced was their difficulty distinguishing between voiced and voiceless consonant pairs. Consonant pairs such as /p/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/, /k/ and /g/, /v/ and /f/, /z/ and /s/, /ʒ/ and /ʃ/, and /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ were consistently mispronounced. This misidentification of voiced and voiceless counterparts can be attributed to the subtle variations in vocal cord vibration and airflow that differentiate these pairs. One teacher expressed, "Students sometimes don't realize the subtle differences in pairs like /s/ and /ʃ/. It's like trying to spot shades of color in language."

The inability to differentiate between these consonant sounds effectively can lead to pronunciation inaccuracies and potential communication breakdowns. The distinctiveness between voiced and voiceless consonants represents a fundamental aspect of English phonology, and any blurring of this distinction can significantly impact the clarity and intelligibility of spoken English. The recurrent mispronunciations of these pairs highlight the need for targeted instruction and practice to accurately enhance students' proficiency in recognizing and reproducing these phonemic differences. By addressing this challenge, teachers can play a pivotal role in refining students' pronunciation skills and facilitating more effective communication in various English contexts.

4.7   Implications for english language teaching

The insights from this study have profound implications for the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT) practices within the context of Mui Ne English Home Language Center (MNEHLC). Rooted in the comprehensive analysis of students' consonant pronunciation errors, these implications serve as guideposts for teachers aiming to bolster their students' phonological competence. The ensuing points encapsulate practical implications that provide a roadmap for refining instructional strategies and pedagogical approaches:

4.7.1 Targeted Consonant instruction

Teachers should meticulously address the specific consonant errors unveiled by the study. Emphasizing the most challenging sounds, such as /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/, can yield substantial advancements in students' pronunciation accuracy. Purposeful instruction tailored to these intricate sounds is pivotal in assisting learners in surmounting inherent difficulties.

4.7.2 Consonant Clusters practice

Effectively addressing students' struggles in pronouncing consonant clusters necessitates the integration of targeted practice activities. Engaging learners with final and initial consonant clusters will enable them to cultivate the skills required to articulate complex sound amalgamations with heightened precision. This dedicated practice can contribute to a more nuanced mastery of English pronunciation. A teacher noted, "I found that breaking down clusters into individual sounds helps. For 'strong,' we work on 'st' and 'r' separately, then blend them." This approach highlights the scaffolded instruction required to conquer complex clusters.

4.7.3 Promotion of voiced and voiceless Consonant distinction

To rectify the absence of distinction between voiced and voiceless consonant pairs, teachers should craft exercises that explicitly spotlight the nuances of vocal cord vibration and airflow disparities inherent in these pairs. Engaging students in focused drills that underscore these subtleties can refine their capacity to discern and replicate these unique phonemic divergences. The significance of distinct voiced and voiceless consonants was emphasized by teachers. One teacher shared, "Precision matters. Mixing /b/ and /p/ can alter meaning. We work on the 'vibration' concept so students 'feel' the difference."

4.7.4 Integration of Phonetic Contextualization

Incorporating real-world scenarios and contexts where these challenging consonant sounds naturally can give students a comprehensive grasp of their application. Encouraging learners to identify these sounds in authentic speech can

fortify their adeptness in employing accurate pronunciation within meaningful communication settings.

4.7.5 Pedagogical adaptations for unfamiliar sounds

Recognizing the absence of certain consonant sounds in the Vietnamese phonetic repertoire, teachers should exert additional efforts to introduce and acquaint students with these unfamiliar phonemes. Employing mnemonic techniques, phonetic transcription exercises, and visual aids can facilitate students' comprehension and production of these distinct English sounds.

4.7.6 Heightened Phonological awareness

Addressing the mispronunciation of consonant pairs necessitates teachers cultivating phonological awareness among students. Nurturing their ability to differentiate subtle phonetic disparities can foster heightened accuracy in reproducing challenging pairs like /s/ and /ʃ/, /t/ and /tr/, and /dʒ/ and /tʃ/. Phonemic awareness activities stand as valuable tools in this endeavor.

By embracing and implementing these implications, teachers at MNEHLC can adopt a targeted and multifaceted approach to address the various consonant pronunciation challenges witnessed among their students. These strategies are poised to significantly elevate students' phonological prowess, thus fostering more effective communication in English and advancing their overall language proficiency.

4.8 Comparison with interviews and observations

The results obtained from the analysis were compared with the insights gathered from interviews with English teachers and observations of students' pronunciation in the classroom. This triangulation of data sources strengthened the validity of the findings and provided a comprehensive understanding of the consonant pronunciation errors.

Table 4.1 Pronunciation Error Improvement After Intervention

No.	Type of Pronunciation Error	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Improvement Percent (%)

		Amount	Amount	
1	Omission of final consonant sounds	16%	11%	31.25%
2	Difficulty pronouncing consonant clusters	23%	18%	21.74%
3	Mispronunciation of consonant pairs	11%	7%	36.36%
4	Difficulty in pronouncing certain consonant sounds not present in Vietnamese	30%	24%	20%
5	Lack of distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants	20%	17%	15%

This table presents a comprehensive overview of the improvements observed in pronunciation errors after implementing the intervention strategy. Each row corresponds to a distinct category of pronunciation error, encompassing details such as the initial error rate prior to the intervention (Pre-Intervention Amount), the error rate after the intervention (Post-Intervention Amount), and the calculated percentage improvement achieved as a result of the intervention (Improvement Percent (%)).

Omission of Final Consonant Sounds:

- Pre-Intervention Amount: 16%
- Post-Intervention Amount: 11%
- Improvement Percent: 31.25%

This category pertains to the omission of final consonant sounds during pronunciation. The data illustrates a substantial reduction in error rates from 16% to 11%, signifying a noteworthy improvement of 31.25% following the intervention. This indicates that the intervention strategy effectively addressed this specific pronunciation challenge.

Difficulty Pronouncing Consonant Clusters:

- Pre-Intervention Amount: 23%
- Post-Intervention Amount: 18%
- Improvement Percent: 21.74%

This category involves the challenge of pronouncing consonant clusters. The observed data indicates a decrease in error rates from 23% to 18%, showcasing an improvement of 21.74% as a direct outcome of the intervention. This suggests the successful mitigation of difficulties associated with pronouncing consonant clusters.

Mispronunciation of Consonant Pairs:

- Pre-Intervention Amount: 11%
- Post-Intervention Amount: 7%
- Improvement Percent: 36.36%

This category addresses instances where participants mispronounce consonant pairs. The recorded figures demonstrate a significant decline in error rates, with a decrease from 11% to 7%, resulting in an improvement of 36.36%. This underscores the effectiveness of the intervention in rectifying mispronunciation issues.

Difficulty Pronouncing Unfamiliar Consonant Sounds:

- Pre-Intervention Amount: 30%
- Post-Intervention Amount: 24%
- Improvement Percent: 20%

This category highlights challenges when pronouncing consonant sounds absent in the participants' native language. The data showcases a reduction in error rates from 30% to 24%, indicating an improvement of 20% due to the intervention. This

suggests that the participants made progress in effectively articulating previously unfamiliar sounds.

Lack of Distinction Between Voiced and Voiceless Consonants:

- Pre-Intervention Amount: 20%

- Post-Intervention Amount: 17%

- Improvement Percent: 15%

In this category, the focus is on distinguishing between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds. The data highlights a decrease in error rates from 20% to 17%, resulting in a 15% improvement after the intervention. This implies that the participants successfully enhanced their ability to differentiate between these distinct consonant sounds.

To summarize, the intervention yielded diverse outcomes across distinct pronunciation errors. Particularly notable was the remarkable headway achieved in rectifying the mispronunciation of consonant pairs, while other error categories also displayed favorable advancements. Ensuring these improvements' perpetuation and further enhancement necessitates a continued focus on targeted practice and reinforcement.

4.9 Limitations of the study

While this study has yielded valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its inherent limitations. The primary limitations are outlined below:

4.9.1 Sample size constraints

The study's findings were derived from a sample size of 100 participants. While this sample size was substantial, it might not encapsulate the full spectrum of English language learners at the center. Learners' diversity and varied proficiency levels might have yet to be comprehensively represented within this limited sample.

4.9.2 Scope of pronunciation errors

The study predominantly focused on consonant pronunciation errors, which inadvertently shifted attention away from other critical aspects of pronunciation and language acquisition. Factors such as intonation, stress patterns, and vowel sounds

were outside the scope of this study, potentially limiting the holistic understanding of students' overall pronunciation proficiency.

4.9.3 Contextual limitations

The study's scope was constrained to the context of MNEHLC, which might need to reflect the broader English language learning landscape fully. Different learning environments, teaching methodologies, and cultural contexts could yield varying results, thereby limiting the generalizability of the study's findings.

4.9.4 Language Background Variation

The participants in this study primarily hailed from a Vietnamese language background, potentially introducing bias based on shared linguistic traits. The findings might not directly apply to English learners with different native languages, where distinct phonological challenges could arise.

4.9.5 External Factors

External factors such as individual motivation, exposure to authentic English environments, and learning history were not deeply explored within the scope of this study. These factors could play a significant role in learners' pronunciation proficiency but should have been accounted for in the analysis.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a valuable foundation for understanding specific consonant pronunciation errors among English language learners. Future research endeavors could address these limitations by expanding the sample size, encompassing a broader array of pronunciation aspects, exploring varied learning contexts, and accounting for individual differences and external factors. Such refinements would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of English pronunciation challenges and the formulation of targeted pedagogical strategies.

4.10 Analysis of teacher interviews

The teacher interviews conducted as part of this study provided valuable insights into the common pronunciation errors made by students at the Mui Ne English Home Language Center when pronouncing English consonants. The

interview challenges faced by students and teachers shed light on effective strategies for addressing these issues. The following is a comprehensive analysis of the interview responses:

4.10.1 Common pronunciation mistakes

The interview responses highlighted several recurrent pronunciation mistakes made by students. Notably, the omission of final consonant sounds emerged as an issue. Teachers observed that students often need help with the final consonants of words, which can lead to misunderstandings in communication. This tendency could be attributed to the influence of the student's native language's phonology.

Furthermore, teachers noted that students encounter difficulties pronouncing consonant clusters, specifically those involving /s/ and /ʃ/ sounds. This observation aligns with the broader research findings, emphasizing the challenges learners face in producing complex sound combinations that are not present in their native language.

The interviews also highlighted mispronunciation of consonant pairs, particularly /θ/ and /ð/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, and /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. These pairs represent sounds that are acoustically similar but distinct in English. Such confusion could be attributed to the lack of these sounds in the student's native language's phonetic inventory.

4.10.2 Practical techniques and exercises

Teachers shared various techniques and exercises that they have found effective in assisting students in improving their consonant pronunciation. One commonly mentioned approach is the use of minimal pairs. By contrasting words with only one phonemic difference, such exercises sensitize students to subtle distinctions between similar sounds.

Visual aids, such as diagrams illustrating the position of vocal cords during voiced and voiceless sounds, enhanced students' understanding of these concepts. The incorporation of audio examples and interactive activities, where students mimic voiced and voiceless pairs, contributed to refining their auditory discrimination skills.

Incorporating technology through pronunciation apps and online platforms was emphasized as a contemporary method for independent practice and real-time feedback. This approach aligns with the evolving landscape of language education, enabling students to engage with pronunciation exercises beyond the classroom.

The analysis of teacher interviews revealed a cohesive pattern of common pronunciation errors and effective strategies for addressing these challenges. By recognizing recurring errors and leveraging innovative techniques, teachers contribute significantly to enhancing students' phonetic proficiency and overall communication skills.

The insights from the teacher interviews validate the findings from the broader research and provide a perspective on the classroom dynamics and instructional strategies employed to mitigate these errors. In conjunction with the broader study, these insights present a comprehensive foundation for formulating targeted pedagogical interventions to bolster English consonant pronunciation skills among students at the Mui Ne English Home Language Center.

4.11 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has delved into the topic of consonant pronunciation errors among students at MNEHLC. By examining these errors, it has provided insights with implications for both ELT and language acquisition as a whole. This exploration sets the stage for refining teaching methods, improving pronunciation skills, and fostering effective communication abilities.

The upcoming chapter will explore tailored recommendations to address the identified consonant pronunciation errors. These strategies aim to equip students with tools for enhancing their pronunciation skills. The combination of analysis, insights, and effective teaching approaches creates a path for students to elevate their proficiency in English consonant pronunciation.

CHAPTER 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR PRONUNCIATION IMPROVEMENT

This chapter presents a set of recommendations and strategies designed to address the identified consonant pronunciation errors and enhance the overall pronunciation skills of students at MNEHLC. The recommendations are based on the study's findings and aim to provide practical guidance for English language teachers and learners.

5.1   Targeted pronunciation practice

Teacher should design precise pronunciation practice activities in response to the identified consonant pronunciation errors. These activities can target challenging phonemes like /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/. Potential exercises may encompass minimal pair drills, tongue placement exercises, and guided repetition of words containing these specific sounds. By isolating and honing these auditory nuances, students can cultivate heightened precision in their speech articulation.

Teachers can offer specialized practice avenues to enhance their phonetic proficiency by pinpointing particular pronunciation discrepancies that hinder students. For example, teachers can effectively address issues like the omission of terminal consonant sounds, complexities in uttering consonant clusters, mispronunciation of consonant duos, challenges in vocalizing certain phonemic elements, and the struggle to differentiate between voiced and voiceless consonants. The measurable outcomes of this pedagogical intervention have proven significant. Learners who undergo personalized guidance tailored to their distinctive pronunciation hurdles exhibit marked enhancements in their capacity to emit accurate phonetic sequences and correctly enunciate lexical items. This pedagogical engagement not only fosters the development of auditory muscle memory but also advances the realm of precision and fluency through consistent practice and feedback.

These exercises are designed to enhance students' phonetic proficiency and accuracy in producing English consonant sounds.

5.1.1 Exercise 1. Targeted Consonant practice

This exercise focuses on addressing specific consonant sounds that students commonly struggle with. Students can refine their pronunciation skills by targeting challenging consonant pairs and distinguishing between similar sounds. The exercise involves pairs of words with minimal differences in their consonant sounds. For instance:

Thin /θɪn/ - Sin /sɪn/

This /ðɪs/ - Dis /dɪs/

Students are encouraged to practice these pairs repetitively to improve their accuracy in pronouncing subtle sound distinctions.

5.1.2 Exercise 2. Consonant Cluster practice

Consonant clusters are combinations of two or more consonant sounds within a single syllable. This exercise helps students tackle initial and final consonant clusters, often challenging due to their intricate sound patterns. Examples include:

Play /pleɪ/ - Slay /sleɪ/

Grab /ɡræb/ - Cram /kræm/

Repeating these clusters will aid students in overcoming difficulties associated with blending and articulating multiple consonant sounds within words.

5.1.3 Exercise 3. Voiced and Voiceless Consonant Discrimination

Distinguishing between voiced and voiceless consonants is vital for accurate pronunciation. In this exercise, students listen to audio clips containing voiced and voiceless consonant sounds. Their task is to identify whether each sound is voiced or voiceless. For instance:

[Audio Clip] - Is the sound voiced or voiceless? (Answer: Voiced / Voiceless)

This activity enhances students' ability to differentiate between consonant sounds based on their vocal cord vibration.

5.1.4 Exercise 4. Minimal Pairs Practice

Minimal pairs are words that differ only in one sound, such as vowel or consonant sounds. This exercise focuses on minimal pairs involving consonant sounds. Examples include:

Top /tɒp/ - Stop /stɒp/

Zoo /zuː/ - Sue /suː/

Students can grasp the subtle distinctions between similar sounds through repetition and comparison, leading to improved pronunciation accuracy.

5.1.5 Exercise 5. Phonetic transcription activity

Phonetic transcriptions provide students with a visual representation of correct pronunciation. In this exercise, students read phonetic transcriptions of words and aim to pronounce them accurately. For instance:

[Transcription] - Pronounce the word correctly (Answer: Word)

This activity reinforces the connection between phonetic symbols and actual sounds, aiding students in refining their pronunciation skills.

5.1.6 Exercise 6. Interactive pronunciation App

This exercise involves an interactive app to guide students through practicing consonant sounds. The app offers real-time feedback, allowing students to self-assess and adjust their pronunciation based on visual and auditory cues.

Students gain a multifaceted approach to enhancing their pronunciation skills by engaging in these exercises. The various activities cater to different learning styles, promoting comprehensive skill development.

5.2   Consonant cluster exercises

To improve students' ability to pronounce consonant clusters, teachers should incorporate exercises targeting initial and final clusters. Interactive activities like tongue twisters and sentence repetition exercises can help students develop the coordination required for accurate cluster pronunciation. Gradually increasing the

complexity of the clusters in these exercises can provide a scaffolded approach to mastering this skill.

Tongue twisters and sentence repetition exercises are valuable interactive activities to enhance student's ability to pronounce consonant clusters accurately. These exercises engage learners practically and dynamically, fostering the development of coordination necessary for proficient cluster pronunciation.

5.2.1 Tongue Twisters

Tongue twisters are playful and challenging phrases containing multiple consonant clusters. They require individuals to articulate rapid and precise speech, which helps build muscle memory and improve articulation. For example:

"She sells seashells by the seashore."

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."

These tongue twisters encourage students to practice clusters in various combinations repeatedly, gradually enhancing their dexterity in articulating complex sound sequences.

5.2.2 Sentence repetition exercises

Sentence repetition exercises involve students listening to and repeating sentences containing consonant clusters. Teachers can create sentences that include initial and final clusters, progressively increasing the complexity of the clusters over time. For instance,

"The black cat jumped over the white fence."

"A small frog hid behind the big rock."

These exercises provide students with contextual practice, allowing them to apply their cluster pronunciation skills to realistic sentence structures. Students internalize cluster patterns and improve their pronunciation accuracy by repeating the sentences.

Both tongue twisters and sentence repetition exercises contribute to a scaffolded learning approach. As students become more comfortable with simpler cluster patterns, they can gradually tackle more intricate combinations. This

incremental progression aids in building students' confidence and competence in producing accurate consonant clusters, ultimately enhancing their overall pronunciation proficiency.

5.3 Voiced and voiceless consonant discrimination

Teachers can employ various teaching modalities to grasp the distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants comprehensively. These modalities, including visual aids, examples, and audio exercises, collectively enhance students' ability to discriminate between these two fundamental aspects of pronunciation.

5.3.1 Visual Aids

Teachers can effectively utilize visual aids to visually elucidate the intricate mechanics of voicing in consonant sounds. By incorporating animated diagrams and illustrations, teachers can demonstrate the phenomenon of vocal cord vibration during the production of voiced sounds, such as /b/ or /d/. Simultaneously, they can depict the absence of vocal cord vibration in creating voiceless sounds, such as /p/ or /t/. These visual representations provide a distinct and tangible contrast that aids students in comprehending the underlying concept.

For example, an animated diagram could illustrate the vibration of vocal cords during the pronunciation of voiced consonants, showcasing how they come together to produce sound. In contrast, the diagram could depict voiceless consonants with separated vocal cords, highlighting the absence of vibration. This side-by-side comparison through visual aids enhances students' conceptualization of the concept and reinforces their understanding of the distinction.

By embracing visual aids, teachers create a multi-sensory learning experience accommodating diverse learning styles. Visual learners can better internalize the concept of voicing, resulting in a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the nuances of English consonant pronunciation.

5.3.2 Audio examples

Integrating audio examples into the curriculum is a powerful tool to enhance students' ability to differentiate between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds. By

offering audio clips that include minimal pairs featuring contrasting consonant pairs like /b/ and /p/, /d/ and /t/, or /v/ and /f/, teachers enable students to directly compare and contrast voiced and voiceless sounds through an engaging auditory experience. For instance, students can listen to a recording of the words "bat" and "pat," where the only distinction lies in voicing the initial consonant. This hands-on, auditory exposure enables students to fine-tune their discrimination skills by identifying the subtle differences in vocal cord vibration. Through this exercise, students develop a heightened sensitivity to the distinct auditory characteristics that distinguish voiced and voiceless consonants.

Teachers can pair these audio clips with corresponding visual images to enhance learning. These images can portray the articulatory positions of the mouth and vocal cords during the production of each consonant sound. By reinforcing the auditory input with a visual reference, students strengthen the auditory-visual association, leading to a more profound understanding of the distinctions between voiced and voiceless consonants.

Incorporating audio examples in conjunction with visual aids maximizes the effectiveness of the teaching approach, catering to both auditory and visual learners. Through this integration, students develop a well-rounded comprehension of voiced and voiceless consonants, setting the stage for improved pronunciation accuracy and communicative competence.

5.3.3 *Physical interaction: enhancing understanding through tactile learning*

Teachers can incorporate a tactile dimension into the learning process to ensure a comprehensive grasp of the differentiation between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds. This approach encourages students to interact physically by placing their hands on their throats while producing these sounds. By doing so, students can feel the vibrations generated by voiced sounds like /b/ or /d/, and, contrastingly, the absence of vibrations in voiceless sounds such as /p/ or /t/. This tactile experience bridges the gap between theoretical concepts and sensory

perceptions, solidifying the connection between vocal cord activity and sound production. This innovative kinesthetic strategy empowers students to transform abstract phonetic principles into tangible, experiential understanding.

5.3.4 Interactive activities: gamifying voiced and voiceless sound discrimination

Teachers can harness the power of interactive activities to augment the discernment of voiced and voiceless consonant sounds. A dynamic learning environment is fostered by designing exercises that necessitate students' identification of voiced or voiceless sounds. Modern educational technology can seamlessly integrate to create digital platforms housing interactive quizzes or games. These innovative tools challenge students to differentiate between voiced and voiceless sounds across diverse contexts, fostering active engagement and participation. The gamified approach transforms sound discrimination into an exciting venture, catering to the contemporary learning preferences of students and bolstering their auditory acumen.

5.3.5 Audio pronunciation practice: replicating accurate sounds through self-assessment

Audio exercises are a potent method to faithfully refine the ability to reproduce voiced and voiceless consonant sounds. Through this practice, students endeavor to emulate voiced and voiceless pairs, recording their own pronunciation under controlled circumstances. This recorded attempt can be juxtaposed with native speaker models, allowing students to gauge the accuracy of their rendition. The iterative process of self-production and self-evaluation hones the capacity to replicate these sounds authentically. Beyond precise sound replication, this practice nurtures phonetic sensitivity and self-correction aptitudes, enabling students to fine-tune their pronunciation effectively.

By harmoniously amalgamating these interactive and tactile techniques, teachers cater to diverse learning modalities, optimizing the understanding and utilization of voiced and voiceless consonant distinctions. This comprehensive

approach cultivates a nuanced grasp of these phonetic nuances, equipping students with the skills to articulate English consonant sounds with precision and fluency.

5.3.6 Real-world context

One particularly impactful strategy to foster a nuanced understanding of the distinction between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds involves the integration of real-world contextual exposure. This method capitalizes on authentic audio samples from various real-life contexts, such as movies, interviews, or casual conversations. These audio clips are vivid illustrations that vividly showcase the pronounced contrast between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds as they naturally occur in spoken language.

Immersing students in genuine instances of voiced and voiceless consonant usage within authentic communication settings significantly heightened their auditory perception and discrimination abilities. Exposure to these genuine speech patterns refines students' listening skills, enabling them to distinguish between subtle variations in pronunciation. Additionally, this real-world context facilitates a deeper understanding of how these consonant sounds are utilized in different speech registers and social interactions.

By seamlessly integrating this diverse spectrum of pedagogical approaches – encompassing visual aids, audio examples, physical interaction, interactive activities, and audio pronunciation practice – teachers adeptly cater to their students' diverse learning preferences and styles. This comprehensive and multifaceted instructional strategy empowers students with a robust and versatile skill set that extends beyond the confines of the classroom. Ultimately, it equips them to discriminate accurately between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds and cultivates practical communication skills adaptable to real-world scenarios and interactions.

5.4   Incorporating minimal pairs

5.4.1 Introduction to minimal pairs

Minimal pairs are a potent pedagogical tool to refine students' ability to discriminate between subtle phonetic differences. These pairs consist of words that vary by a single sound, such as a consonant and are particularly effective in addressing specific consonant errors that learners encounter. Minimal pairs provide learners with a heightened awareness of phonetic intricacies by focusing on these minute distinctions.

5.4.2 Curating targeted minimal pairs

Teachers should curate sets of minimal pairs that encapsulate sounds challenging for students. For instance, pairs like /s/ and /ʃ/ (e.g., "sip" and "ship"), /t/ and /tr/ (e.g., "top" and "trop"), and /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ (e.g., "judge" and "church") are prime examples. These pairs are selected based on the consonant sounds that commonly pose difficulties for learners regarding pronunciation differentiation.

5.4.3 Pronunciation practice activities

Teachers can design activities centered around minimal pairs to engage students in sound discrimination practice actively. Some possible activities include:

Word repetition: Have students repeat both words in the minimal pair after the teacher. Please encourage them to focus on the consonant sound differentiating the two words. Provide corrective feedback if necessary to ensure accurate pronunciation.

Word differentiation: Dictate one word from the minimal pair, and students must identify which word it is and its corresponding minimal pair partner. For example, if the instructor says "sip," students should recognize that the paired word is "ship."

Minimal pair sentences: Create sentences using the minimal pair words, ensuring the context highlights the distinct consonant sound. For instance, "I want to buy a ship" and "She needs a sip of water" emphasize the difference between /s/ and /ʃ/.

5.4.4 Progressive complexity

Begin with minimal pairs encompassing sounds most frequently, causing difficulties. Gradually introduce pairs involving more nuanced or challenging phonetic differences as students gain proficiency. This gradual increase in complexity ensures learners build their phonetic discrimination skills incrementally.

5.4.5 Regular practice

Encourage consistent and repetitive practice with minimal pairs. Assign regular practice sessions, and provide opportunities for self-assessment through recordings or peer evaluations. Repetition fosters familiarity with the subtle distinctions, enhancing students' ability to differentiate between the sounds.

5.4.6 Interactive practice

Utilize technology to create interactive exercises or digital flashcards that present minimal pairs to students. These platforms can offer immediate feedback on pronunciation accuracy, aiding self-directed learning.

5.4.7 Assessment and progress tracking

Incorporate minimal pairs exercises into assessments to gauge students' phonetic discrimination skills. Track their progress over time and celebrate improvements, reinforcing the importance of consistent practice.

By thoughtfully incorporating minimal pairs exercises into the curriculum, instructors provide learners with a tailored and targeted approach to conquering specific consonant errors. The careful selection of challenging pairs and engaging and varied practice activities contribute to heightened phonological sensitivity and accurate pronunciation. This method ensures that students develop a nuanced understanding of English consonant sounds and acquire the skills needed for effective communication.

5.5 Phonetic transcription activities

5.5.1 Introducing Phonetic Transcription

Phonetic Transcription is a method that employs symbols to represent the sounds of speech accurately. Introducing students to phonetic transcriptions allows them to visualize the intricate nuances of English consonant sounds. This approach provides an analytical lens through which learners can dissect and reproduce sounds more precisely.

5.5.2 Using phonetic transcriptions

Teachers can integrate phonetic transcription activities into the classroom to enhance students' pronunciation skills:

Word transcription: Provide students with a list of words and corresponding phonetic transcriptions. Encourage students to analyze the transcription symbols and then attempt to reproduce the correct word pronunciation based on the symbols.

Sentence transcription: Present sentences in standard orthography and challenge students to transcribe them into phonetic symbols. This exercise sharpens their transcription skills and compels them to focus on the individual sounds within words.

Comparative Analysis: Offer pairs of words that differ by a single consonant sound. Students should transcribe both words and note the phonetic differences. This exercise fosters heightened sensitivity to sound distinctions.

5.5.3 Interactive tools and resources

Leverage online tools and resources that facilitate phonetic transcription practice. Websites, apps, and software platforms often provide interactive exercises where students can input phonetic symbols, receive immediate feedback, and compare their transcriptions to the correct ones.

5.5.4 Symbol-sound correspondence

Highlight the connection between phonetic symbols and actual sounds. As students engage in transcription, emphasize that each symbol represents a specific sound

produced during speech. Please encourage them to listen to native speaker models and compare these sounds to their transcriptions.

5.5.5 *Progressive complexity*

Start with simpler words and sentences and gradually introduce more complex phonetic transcriptions. This incremental approach allows students to build their transcription skills gradually and steadily.

5.5.6 *Collaborative learning*

Encourage students to work in pairs or small groups when transcribing words or sentences. This collaborative approach facilitates peer learning, where students can discuss their transcriptions, exchange ideas, and collectively problem-solve challenging sounds.

5.5.7 *Feedback and correction*

Provide feedback on students' transcriptions, focusing on areas that need improvement. Please encourage students to compare their transcriptions to the correct versions and identify areas of discrepancy.

5.5.8 *Assessment and reflection*

Incorporate phonetic transcription exercises into assessments, allowing students to demonstrate their transcription skills. Please encourage students to reflect on their progress over time and recognize the improvements in their pronunciation accuracy.

Teachers incorporating phonetic transcription activities into the curriculum offer students a unique opportunity to engage deeply with English consonant sounds. This analytical approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of phonetics and equips learners with the tools to produce and reproduce sounds accurately. Phonetic transcription activities complement other strategies, creating a well-rounded approach to pronunciation improvement and effective communication.

5.6   Integration of technology

Technology is pivotal in enhancing pronunciation skills. Teachers can harness pronunciation apps, interactive online platforms, and software that offer a real-time assessment of pronunciation accuracy. These resources empower students to practice autonomously, gain immediate feedback, and monitor their advancement. For instance, applications like Duolingo, ELSA Speak, and HelloTalk are excellent options.

5.6.1 Technology in pronunciation enhancement

In the digital age, technology plays a crucial role in revolutionizing language learning, particularly in pronunciation improvement. The integration of technology offers innovative tools and resources that provide personalized and interactive learning experiences for students seeking to enhance their English consonant pronunciation.

5.6.2 Pronunciation Apps and interactive platforms

Teachers can leverage pronunciation apps and online platforms specifically targeting pronunciation skills. These tools often include real-time assessment, immediate feedback, and guided practice. Using these apps, students can engage in focused exercises pinpointing their pronunciation errors and providing corrective guidance.

5.6.3 Advantages of technology integration

The integration of technology offers several advantages for pronunciation improvement:

Autonomous Practice Pronunciation apps and online platforms allow students to practice independently, catering to their learning pace and preferences.

Immediate Feedback: Technology provides instant feedback on pronunciation accuracy, enabling students to identify and rectify errors in real-time.

Multi-modal Learning: Many apps and platforms combine visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, catering to diverse learning styles and enhancing comprehension.

Monitoring Progress: Technology often includes tracking mechanisms that allow students to monitor their advancement over time, fostering a sense of achievement and motivation.

5.6.4 Notable applications

Several pronunciation-focused applications are well-regarded in the educational community:

Duolingo: A popular language-learning app with pronunciation exercises and interactive challenges.

ELSA Speak: An AI-powered app that provides real-time feedback on pronunciation accuracy and offers personalized lessons.

HelloTalk: A language exchange app that connects learners with native speakers for authentic language practice, including pronunciation improvement.

5.6.5 Implementing technology in the classroom

Teachers can seamlessly integrate technology into the classroom environment:

Introduction and Training: Introduce students to pronunciation apps and platforms and guide their usage.

Incorporate App Time: Designate specific periods for students to use pronunciation apps in their regular language learning routine.

Feedback and Assessment: Utilize the feedback provided by these tools to identify common errors and areas of improvement among students.

Individualized Learning: Technology allows for personalized learning experiences, enabling students to focus on their unique pronunciation challenges.

5.6.6 Promoting active engagement

Technology integration promotes active engagement by allowing students to take ownership of their pronunciation improvement journey. It empowers learners to engage with English consonant sounds dynamically and interactively, resulting in more effective and lasting skill development.

By harnessing the potential of technology, teachers can amplify their efforts in enhancing students' pronunciation proficiency. Integrating pronunciation apps and interactive online platforms aligns with modern learning preferences. It equips students with the tools to navigate the intricacies of English consonant pronunciation with confidence and accuracy.

5.7 Incorporating games and activities into pronunciation practice

Incorporating interactive games and engaging activities into pronunciation practice offers a powerful strategy to enhance student involvement and foster effective learning. Games promote active participation, collaborative skills, and visuals often associated with traditional learning approaches. This approach contributes to improved concentration, self-confidence, and retention of information.

At the Muine English Home Language Center, specific games have proven practical tools for refining English consonant pronunciation. Activities like word searches and crosswords reinforce vocabulary and concepts, while games such as bingo, memory, and dominoes link words and concepts with visual aids, enhancing long-term memory.

Additionally, traditional board games can be adapted to incorporate pronunciation exercises. By integrating prompts that require correct pronunciation and response before advancing in the game, students are challenged while enhancing their language skills.

Incorporating games and activities into pronunciation practice promotes enthusiasm and complements conventional teaching methods. When aligned with

the curriculum and connected to recent learning experiences, these games create an engaging and enjoyable environment, fostering improved pronunciation skills.

In summary, integrating diverse methodologies, including drills, exercises, games, and activities, significantly enhances the mastery of English consonant pronunciation. Adopting a multifaceted approach enables teachers to facilitate enhanced student skill development, ensure heightened engagement, and foster effective communicative language application.

5.8   Conclusion

The culmination of this chapter underscores the significance of the comprehensive recommendations and strategies presented to address the consonant pronunciation errors identified among the students at MNEHLC. The multifaceted approach advocated in this chapter serves as a valuable guide for teachers aiming to enhance students' overall pronunciation proficiency and foster more effective communication in the English language.

By assimilating these recommendations into the language teaching curriculum, teachers can create a transformative impact on students' pronunciation skills. The amalgamation of targeted exercises, interactive activities, and technology integration equips students with the necessary tools to navigate the intricate landscape of English consonant pronunciation with heightened accuracy and confidence.

It is essential to underscore that the successful implementation of these strategies necessitates a collaborative effort involving teachers, students, and the broader learning environment. A synergistic approach, rooted in open communication and a shared commitment to pronunciation improvement, will maximize the efficacy of these strategies and ensure sustained progress.

As teachers embark on this journey to enhance students' pronunciation proficiency, they are encouraged to adapt and tailor these strategies to their classroom's unique needs and dynamics. The transformational potential lies in the strategies and their seamless integration into the teaching pedagogy.

This chapter offers a roadmap for teachers to navigate the complex landscape of English consonant pronunciation improvement. By embracing these recommendations and fostering collaboration and dedication, teachers can empower students to master the intricacies of English pronunciation and realize their potential for effective communication in the global English-speaking community.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1. Pronunciation Assessment Material

In order to facilitate pronunciation assessment for students at the language center, the following list contains 35 single words and 20 short sentences along with their corresponding International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcriptions.

Single Words with IPA:

1. cat /kæt/
2. dogs /dɒgz/
3. big /bɪg/
4. best /bɛst/
5. stop /stɒp/
6. black /blæk/
7. frog /frɒg/
8. desk /dɛsk/
9. rock /rɒk/
10. help /hɛlp/
11. task /tæsk/
12. six /sɪks/
13. top /tɒp/
14. rest /rɛst/
15. fast /fæst/
16. list /lɪst/
17. spin /spɪn/
18. mask /mæsk/
19. jump /dʒʌmp/
20. skip /skɪp/
21. drum /drʌm/
22. plan /plæn/
23. flag /flæg/

24. swim /swɪm/

25. grab /græb/

26. flip /flɪp/

27. vest /vɛst/

28. lamp /læmp/

29. test /tɛst/

30. gloves /glʌvz/

31. badge /bædʒ/

32. street /striːt/

33. spring /sprɪŋ/

34. three /θriː/

20 Short Sentences with IPA:

1. The black cat sat on the mat. /ðə blæk kæt sæt ɒn ðə mæt/

2. She helped him fix the clock. /ʃi hɛlpt hɪm fɪks ðə klɒk/

3. My friend has three cats. /maɪ frɛnd hæz θriː kæts/

4. The frog jumped into the pond. /ðə frɒg dʒʌmpt ˈɪntu ðə pɒnd/

5. The desk is made of wood. /ðə dɛsk ɪz meɪd əv wʊd/

6. The rock is big and heavy. /ðə rɒk ɪz bɪg ænd ˈhɛvi/

7. The teacher will help you. /ðə ˈtitʃər wɪl hɛlp jʊ/

8. The task is not easy. /ðə tæsk ɪz nɒt ˈiːzi/

9. Six students are absent today. /sɪks ˈstjuːdənts ɑːr ˈæbsənt təˈdeɪ/

10. The top of the mountain is snowy. /ðə tɒp əv ðə ˈmaʊntən ɪz ˈsnoʊi/

11. After the race, she took a rest. /ˈæftər ðə reɪs ʃi tʊk ə rɛst/

12. He runs very fast. /hi rʌnz ˈvɛri fæst/

13. The best book is on the shelf. /ðə bɛst bʊk ɪz ɒn ðə ʃɛlf/

14. Please add your name to the list. /pliːz æd jɔr neɪm tə ðə lɪst/

15. The top can spin for a long time. /ðə tɒp kæn spɪn fɔr ə lɒŋ taɪm/

16. He wore a mask at the party. /hi wɔr ə mæsk æt ðə ˈpɑːrti/

17. The monkey can jump high. /ðə ˈmʌnki kæn dʒʌmp haɪ/

18. Skip to the next page. /skɪp tə ðə nɛkst peɪdʒ/

19. He plays the drum in the band. /hi pleɪz ðə drʌm ɪn ðə bænd/

20. We plan to go on a trip. /wiː plæn tə goʊ ɒn ə trɪp/

This pronunciation assessment material is intended to assist in identifying and addressing specific pronunciation errors for the students at the center.

Appendix 2. Teachers Interview

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather valuable insights from experienced English teachers like you regarding common pronunciation errors made by students at the Mui Ne English Home Language Center when pronouncing English consonants. Your expertise and perspective are invaluable to our study.

Interview Questions:

1. Based on your teaching experience, what common pronunciation mistakes have you observed among students when pronouncing English consonants?

2. Are there any specific techniques or exercises you find effective in helping students improve their consonant pronunciation?

We appreciate your time and willingness to contribute to this interview. Your insights will significantly enhance our study's ability to identify and address common pronunciation errors among students. If you have any additional thoughts, experiences, or information to share, please feel free to do so.

Once again, we express our heartfelt gratitude for your contribution. Your expertise plays an instrumental role in enhancing English language teaching methodologies and advancing English language proficiency among students.

Warm regards,

Trần Ngọc Phỉ Túy

Appendix 3. Sample Pronunciation Practice Exercises

Incorporating the recommendations from Chapter 5, this appendix provides sample pronunciation practice exercises for addressing the identified consonant pronunciation errors. These exercises are designed to enhance students' phonetic proficiency and accuracy in producing English consonant sounds.

Exercise 1: Targeted Consonant Practice

Practice the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds:

Thin /θɪn/ - Sin /sɪn/

This /ðɪs/ - Dis /dɪs/

Practice the /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ sounds:

She /ʃiː/ - Sea /siː/

Measure /ˈmɛʒər/ - Leisure /ˈliːʒər/

Practice the /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ sounds:

Chair /tʃɛər/ - Dare /dɛər/

Teach /tiːʧ/ - Deed /diːd/

Exercise 2: Consonant Cluster Practice

Practice initial consonant clusters:

Play /pleɪ/ - Slay /sleɪ/

Grab /græb/ - Cram /kræm/

Practice final consonant clusters:

Help /hɛlp/ - Helped /hɛlpt/

Desk /dɛsk/ - Desks /dɛsks/

Exercise 3: Voiced and Voiceless Consonant Discrimination

Listen to the audio clip and identify if the sound is voiced or voiceless:

[Audio Clip] - Is the sound voiced or voiceless? (Answer: Voiced / Voiceless)

Exercise 4: Minimal Pairs Practice

Listen and repeat the minimal pairs:

Top /tɒp/ - Stop /stɒp/

Zoo /zuː/ - Sue /suː/

Exercise 5: Phonetic Transcription Activity

Read the phonetic transcription and pronounce the word correctly:

[Transcription] - Pronounce the word correctly (Answer: Word)

Exercise 6: Interactive Pronunciation App

Use the provided pronunciation app to practice consonant sounds and receive real-time feedback.

These sample exercises are adaptable and can be integrated into classroom activities or assigned for independent practice. By engaging students in focused and interactive exercises, teachers can address the identified consonant pronunciation errors and improve overall pronunciation proficiency.