



English Consonant Errors Pronounced by Seventh Grade Students in Dwijendra High School

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Abstract. *The study aimed to identify and analyze the errors made by seventh-grade students at SMP Dwijendra Denpasar in pronouncing certain English consonants, which are essential components of their target language learning. The study specifically focuses on the student's articulation of six English contour consonants: [ʃ], [ʒ], [θ], [ð], [dʒ], and [dʒ]. A qualitative descriptive method was applied in this research, involving several stages: collecting data from the students as research subjects, organizing and constructing the data for analysis, interpreting the results, and drawing relevant conclusions. The research findings revealed that no students could pronounce the targeted consonants accurately according to standard English pronunciation norms. The articulation errors were mainly caused by various influencing factors, including interlingual transfer, where the students' first language interferes with their pronunciation of English sounds, and intralingual factors, which refer to difficulties arising from the complexities within the English language. However, the mispronunciation of key consonant sounds created misunderstandings and affected the clarity of their spoken language. As a result, these errors posed a challenge in achieving effective oral communication as a critical aspect of mastering a second language. The findings emphasized the importance of addressing these pronunciation challenges through targeted interventions and improved teaching strategies to enhance students' language proficiency and communication skills.*

Keywords: *English consonant, pronunciation error, Dwijendra Junior High School*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a structured system of communication in which sounds are regularly organized into meaningful units (Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 311). As a fundamental aspect of human interaction, language plays a vital role in everyday life. Despite countless languages spoken across the world, the theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) proposed by Troike (2006: 2) suggests that every individual possesses two prior types of language: the first language (L1) and the second language (L2).

The first language, or L1, refers to a person's native language acquired from birth, serving as their primary means of communication. In contrast, the second language, or L2, refers to any additional languages learned beyond the native tongue. Even when individuals acquire several other languages, such as a third, fourth, or more, these are still classified as L2 or target languages within the SLA framework. This distinction emphasizes the difference between naturally acquired language skills and languages learned through subsequent exposure,

highlighting the ongoing process of language development as individuals adapt to multilingual contexts.

Patel and Jain (2008: 6) state that English is an international language and a key communication medium. Consequently, English has been incorporated into the educational curricula of many countries as an essential foreign language subject, and it is formally used as a means of communication across various fields. Hornby (2008:352) defines pronunciation as how a language, word, or sound is articulated. It plays a crucial role in speaking skills, as clear pronunciation enhances communication.

However, many learners find pronunciation one of the most challenging parts of learning English. Despite this dilemma, students with good pronunciation are more likely to be understood, even if they make errors in other linguistic areas. Whereas, students with weak level of pronunciation must be difficult to be understood. In line with this, previous studies, such as those conducted by (Yusriati & Hasibuan, 2019); (Dewi et al., 2024); (Marantika et al., 2025); (Anindiata & Munandar 2025), have also found that Indonesian learners of English as a foreign language continue to mispronounce the vowels, consonant, and diphthongs.

These difficulties arise due to substantial differences in diverse aspects of the target language, such as pronunciation, spelling, and cultural background. Similarly, Brown, as cited in Wenanda and Suryani (2016: 145), highlights that errors are an inevitable part of the learning process for second or foreign-language learners. These mistakes are considered a natural and essential phase in language acquisition, reflecting learners' efforts to internalize the new language system and gradually enhance their proficiency.

Preliminary observations of seventh-grade students at SMP Dwijendra Denpasar indicated they had acquired a substantial amount of English vocabulary and its pronunciation. Therefore, pronouncing certain English words should not be entirely unfamiliar to them. However, phonological aspects are one of the most frequent errors made by students in learning English. As noted by Odden in Wenanda and Suryani (2016: 146), pronunciation falls under the study of phonology, a branch of linguistics that examines the sound structure of a language.

The student's pronunciation errors are particularly noticeable when articulating words containing specific English consonant, such as [ʃ] in 'national' /næʃ.nəl/, [ʒ] in 'future' /'fju:.tʃə/, [θ] in 'thanks' /θæŋks/, [ʒ] in 'Asia' /'eɪ.zə/, [dʒ] in 'bridge' /brɪdʒ/, and [ð] in 'that' /ðæt/. These mispronunciations highlight difficulties in mastering the phonological features of English, which differ considerably from the phonological system of their native language.

English learners must recognize that accurate pronunciation is essential for conveying messages effectively. To ensure successful communication, learners must be confident that

their spoken messages are clear and easily understood by listeners. Pronunciation is crucial in determining whether a message is delivered accurately and without confusion. Correct word pronunciation in English is essential, as even slight variations in pronunciation can change the meaning of a word.

Mispronunciations may lead to misunderstandings, causing listeners to misinterpret the speaker's intent. Such errors can disrupt communication and result in confusion between speakers and their interlocutors. Therefore, mastering accurate pronunciation is required to foster both explicit and effective interactions in English.

Several studies have examined English consonant mispronunciations among learners from different linguistic backgrounds. Awololon et al. (2021) found that junior high school students in East Adonara, whose first language is Lamaholot, struggled with consonants such as [v], [θ], [ð], [ʃ], [ʒ], and [z] due to their absence in Lamaholot phonology. Similarly, Trisnawati et al. (2020) investigated mispronunciations among students at Institut Parahikma Indonesia, focusing on ten English consonants. Their findings revealed that [v] and [ð] were the most frequently mispronounced sounds, reinforcing the influence of first-language phonology on English pronunciation challenges.

Recently, a study conducted by Johan and Cahyani (2024) also examined velar consonant mispronunciations among students at Muhammadiyah University Purworejo. Their findings indicated that pronunciation difficulties were particularly evident when velar sounds appeared in different word positions, highlighting the impact of phonetic variation between English and the learners' native language. While these studies provide valuable insights, they exhibit spatial and theoretical gaps. Differences in research settings introduce variations in findings, and previous studies have not thoroughly examined pronunciation errors about specific linguistic constraints within English phonology.

In addressing these gaps, the present study investigates the mispronunciation of [ʃ], [ʒ], [θ], [ʒ], [dʒ], and [ð] among Balinese-speaking students at SMP Dwijendra Denpasar, along with the contributing factors. Theoretically, this research contributes to phonological studies by deepening the understanding of second-language pronunciation errors. Practically, it offers pedagogical insights for English language instruction, emphasizing targeted pronunciation training to improve speech clarity and communicative competence. Enhancing pronunciation instruction based on these findings is expected to facilitate more effective language learning and minimize misunderstandings in spoken English.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method employed in this study is descriptive qualitative research. This descriptive design is chosen in alignment with the nature of linguistics as a descriptive science, while the qualitative approach is applied to explain phenomena based on naturally occurring linguistic data.

The steps in this study included clearly and specifically defining the objectives to be achieved, designing the approach, collecting data, and organizing the report. This study focused solely on analyzing the errors in the articulation of English consonant sounds [ʃ], [tʃ], [θ], [ʒ], [dʒ], and [ð]. Data was collected, organized, analyzed, and interpreted based on the linguistic data obtained from the students.

There were 15 seventh-grade students from SMP Dwijendra Denpasar as the subject of this study, selected based on their demonstrated proficiency in English vocabulary, which is considered to be at an adequate level. The data collection instruments employed in this study include direct observation and audio recordings, which documented how the subjects articulated the provided phoneme distributions. These recordings served as a key source of data for analyzing pronunciation patterns and errors.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the study presented and discussed the findings conducted in the seventh-grade students at SMP Dwijendra Denpasar. The primary objective of the study was to identify pronunciation errors in English consonant by the students as part of their target language learning. Based on the observations, the students at this educational level have been exposed to a wide range of English texts and frequently engage in speaking activities aimed at summarizing the content of these texts. This practice is designed to enhance their language comprehension and communication skills.

The study highlighted that, despite their exposure to English reading materials and speaking exercises, the students still faced challenges in pronouncing certain English consonants accurately. These pronunciation difficulties are expected at this stage of language learning, given the complexity of English phonology and its differences from their native language. The results indicated that while the students were generally proficient in understanding the content of the texts, their pronunciation errors reflected areas that require further attention and improvement in their language learning process.

This finding indicated that the students had become familiar with English consonants that do not exist in Indonesian. Therefore, this study is focused on investigating the students' pronunciation, drawing on the theory of transfer. Additionally, errors made by individuals when learning a foreign language are often influenced by the phonological structures of their native language. Identifying the causes of these pronunciation errors in the target language consonants should serve as a valuable reference for language instructors. Addressing these errors can help teachers enhance the role of language as a functional tool for communication.

Pronunciation Error

Based on the previously presented table comparing Indonesian and English consonant sounds, the primary differences are observed in the consonant sounds [ʃ], [tʃ], [θ], [ʒ], [dʒ], and [ð]. To assess the students' pronunciation of these sounds, the researcher provided a randomized list of English words containing the target consonants without categorizing them according to their phonetic distribution.

This study specifically focused on analyzing how students articulate the target consonants [ʃ], [tʃ], [θ], [ʒ], [dʒ], and [ð] using the word list delivered. The students' pronunciation was recorded, analyzed, and summarized to form the core findings of this study. The following is the list of words provided to the respondents, which served as the basis for evaluating their pronunciation accuracy and identifying common pronunciation errors:

Table 1. Word List and Its Articulation to Electronic Cambridge Dictionary

Word	Sound	Word	Sound	Word	Sound
1 Sure	/ʃʊr/	6 Asia	/'eɪ.ʒə/	11 Rush	/rʌʃ/
2 Large	/lɑ:rdʒ/	7 National	/'næʃ.nəl/	12 Jar	/dʒɑ: r/
3 Think	/θɪŋk/	8 Virgin	/'vɜ: .dʒɪn/	13 Mouth	/maʊθ/
4 Church	/tʃɜ:tʃ/	9 Paunchy	/pɔ:n.tʃi/	14 Lithe	/laɪð/
5 This	/ðɪs/	10 Mother	/'mʌð.ə r	15 Pithy	/'pɪθ.i/
			/		

1. [ʃ]

The consonant [ʃ] is an English consonant classified as an alveolar-palatal sound based on its place of articulation and a voiceless fricative sound based on its manner of articulation.

Table 2. The Articulation of Sound [ʃ]

No	Consonants		
	/ʃɔr/	/'næʃ.nəl/	/rʌʃ/
1	/sur/	/nasional/	/rus/
2	/ʃur/	/nasional/	/ras/
3	/sur/	/nasional/	/ras/
4	/ʃɔr/	/'næʃ.nəl/	/rʌʃ/
5	/ser/	/nasional/	/ras/
6	/ser/	/nasional/	/ras/
7	/sur/	/nasional/	/rus/
8	/ʃɔr/	/nasional/	/rʌʃ/
9	/ʃɔr/	/'næʃ.nəl/	/rʌʃ/
10	/sur/	/nasional/	/rus/
11	/ʃur/	/nasional/	/rʌʃ/
12	/ʃɔr/	/nasional/	/rʌʃ/
13	/ser/	/nasional/	/ras/
14	/ser/	/nasional/	/rus/
15	/ʃɔr/	/'næʃ.nəl/	/rʌʃ/

The findings presented in Table 2 revealed that not all students could accurately pronounce the consonant sound [ʃ] in English words. The data indicated that only 7 out of 15 students (47%) correctly articulated the [ʃ] sound when it appeared in the initial position of a word. However, for words where the [ʃ] sound occurred in the middle and final positions, only three students (20%) in each case could pronounce it correctly. These results implied that students experienced higher difficulty producing the [ʃ] sound in the middle and at the end of words compared to its occurrence at the beginning.

2. [tʃ]

The sound [tʃ] is classified as an alveolar-palatal sound based on its place of articulation and a voiceless affricate based on its manner of articulation.

Table 3. The Articulation of Sound [tʃ]

No	Consonants	
	/pɔ:n.tʃi/	/tʃɜ:tʃ/
1	/panci/	/curk/
2	/paunci/	/tʃartʃ/
3	/paun.tʃi/	/curk/
4	/pan.tʃi/	/tʃurtʃ/
5	/ponci/	/cark/
6	/penci/	/curk/
7	/paunci/	/curk/
8	/pontʃi/	/curk/
9	/pan.tʃi/	/tʃɜ:tʃ/
10	/ponci/	/kurk/

11	/ponci/	/cark/
12	/paun.tʃi/	/tʃartʃ/
13	/panci/	/cark/
14	/ponki/	/cark/
15	/pauntʃi/	/tʃɜ:tʃ/

Table 3 revealed that not all students could pronounce the consonant sound [tʃ] in English accurately. The data showed that only 6 out of 15 students (40%) correctly pronounced the [tʃ], when it appeared in the middle of a word in the first test word. Meanwhile, for the second word, only five students (33%) successfully articulated the [tʃ] sound in both the medial and final positions. These results indicated that students faced challenges pronouncing the [tʃ] sound, particularly in non-initial word positions.

3. [dʒ]

The consonant sound [dʒ] is classified as an alveolar-palatal sound based on its place of articulation and a voiced affricate based on its manner of articulation.

Table 4. The Articulation of Sound [dʒ]

No.	Consonants		
	/dʒɑ: r/	/vɜ:dʒɪn/	/lɑ:rdʒ/
1.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
2.	/dʒɑ: r/	/pɪrdʒɪn/	/lɑ:rdʒ/
3.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
4.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lɑ:rdʒ/
5.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
6.	/dʒɑ: r/	/pɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
7.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrdʒ/
8.	/dʒɑ: r/	/pɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
9.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lɑ:rdʒ/
10.	/dʒɑ: r/	/pɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
11.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lɑ:rdʒ/
12.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
13.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
14.	/dʒɑ: r/	/fɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrc/
15.	/dʒɑ: r/	/pɪrdʒɪn/	/lʌrdʒ/

The Table 4 shows that the consonant sound [dʒ] was correctly pronounced by all respondents when it appeared at the beginning and middle positions of the word. However, when the sound occurred in the final position, only 6 out of 15 students (40%) could articulate it accurately. Despite, it is evident that the pronunciation of other sounds within similar words does not always meet the expected standard.

4. [θ]

The consonant sound [θ] is classified as an interdental sound based on its place of articulation and a voiceless fricative based on its manner of articulation.

Table 5. The Articulation of Sound [θ]

No.	Consonants		
	/θɪŋk/	/'pɪθ.i/	/maʊθ/
1.	/θɪŋ/	/pɑti/	/maʊd/
2.	/tɪŋ/	/pɪti/	/mot/
3.	/tɪŋ/	/pɪθ.i/	/maʊθ/
4.	/θɪŋ/	/pɪθ.i/	/maʊθ/
5.	/tɪŋk/	/pɪti/	/mod/
6.	/tɪŋ/	/pɪti/	/maut/
7.	/tɪŋ/	/pɪti/	/mut/
8.	/θɪŋk/	/pɑti/	/maut/
9.	/θɪŋk/	/pɪθ.i/	/maut/
10.	/θɪŋ/	/pɑti/	/maud/
11.	/θɪŋk/	/pɪti/	/maʊθ/
12.	/θɪŋk/	/pɪti/	/maʊθ/
13.	/tɪŋ/	/pɪti/	/mot/
14.	/tɪŋk/	/pɪti/	/maʊθ/
15.	/θɪŋk/	/pɪθ.i/	/maʊθ/

Based on the findings presented in table 5, not all students were able to pronounce the consonant sound [θ] accurately in English words. The data shows that only 7 out of 15 students (47%) correctly articulated the [θ] sound when it occurred in the initial position of a word. In contrast, for the second word, only four students (27%) could pronounce the [θ] sound correctly in the medial position, while six students (40%) could articulate it accurately when it appeared in the final position. These results revealed that the students struggled more with the [θ] sound in non-initial positions.

5. [ð]

The consonant sound [ð] is classified as an interdental sound based on its place of articulation and a voiced fricative based on its manner of articulation.

Table 6. The Articulation of Sound [ð]

No.	Consonants		
	/ðɪs/	/mʌð.ə r/	/laɪð/
1.	/dɪs/	/mʌd.ə r/	/lɪ.də/
2.	/dɪs/	/mʌd.ə r/	/laɪ.də/
3.	/dɪs/	/mʌd.ə r/	/laɪ.də/
4.	/ðɪs/	/mʌð.ə r/	/laɪ.də/
5.	/ðɪs/	/mʌd.ə r/	/lɪ.də/

6.	/dɪs/	/mʌd.ə r/	/lɪ.də/
7.	/dɪs/	/mʌd.ə r/	/lɪ.də/
8.	/ðɪs/	/mʌd.ə r/	/lɪ.də/
9.	/ðɪs/	/mʌð.ə r/	/laɪdə/
10.	/dɪs/	/mad.ə r/	/laɪdə/
11.	/dɪs/	/mʌð.ə r/	/lɪ.də/
12.	/ðɪs/	/mad.ə r/	/laɪdə/
13.	/dɪs/	/mad.ə r/	/laɪ.də/
14.	/dɪs/	/mad.ə r/	/laɪ.də/
15.	/ðɪs/	/mʌð.ə r/	/laɪ.də/

Based on the findings presented in Table 6, not all students could pronounce the consonant sound [ð] correctly. The data indicated that only 5 out of 15 students (33%) managed to pronounce the [ð] sound accurately when it appeared at the beginning of a word. Meanwhile, for the second word, only four students (27%) pronounced the [ð] sound correctly in the medial position, and no students could articulate the [ð] sound when it occurred in the final position. These results highlight significant challenges for students pronouncing the [ð] sound, especially when it appears at the end of a word.

6. [ʒ]

The consonant sound [ʒ] is classified as an alveolar-palatal sound based on its place of articulation and a voiced fricative based on its manner of articulation.

Table 7. The Articulation of Sound [ʒ]

No.	Consonants
	/'eɪ.ʒə/
1	/esia/
2	/asia/
3	/esia/
4	/eʒə/
5	/eɪ.ʒə/
6	/esia/
7	/eɪ.ʒə/
8	/eʒə/
9	/eɪ.ʒə/
10	/asia/
11	/eɪ.ʒə/
12	/asia/
13	/eɪ.ʒə/
14	/eɪ.ʒə/
15	/eɪ.ʒə/

Based on the findings presented in Table 7, not all students could pronounce the consonant sound [ʒ] accurately. The data shows that only 9 out of 15 students (60%) correctly articulated the [ʒ] sound when it appeared in the medial position of a word.

The Cause of Errors

As seen in the data on students' pronunciation of various consonant sounds, which were used as the focus of this research, it is obvious that even though students at the junior high school level (Grade VII) have studied and mastered several English vocabularies, pronunciation of English consonant sounds remains a significant issue.

It is a crucial matter that requires the attention of language teachers to ensure it is addressed more seriously. It highlights the need for foreign language instructors to implement effective teaching methods and approaches to enhance students' pronunciation skills in communicating in the target language. Given the fundamental role of language as a communication tool, accurate pronunciation in the target language is essential to avoid misunderstandings between speakers and listeners. It is particularly crucial in English, where differences in pronunciation can lead to differences in meaning.

Based on Brown's theory, which explains the factors contributing to errors in using the target language, the primary cause of errors identified in the analysis is interlingual transfer, where pronunciation errors stem from the influence of the student's first language (Brown, 2007). It is evident when comparing the consonant sounds in Indonesian (as the first language) and English (as the target language), where certain consonant sounds in the target language are absent in the first language. As a result, in the pronunciation process, students are inevitably influenced by the sounds of their first language. The research findings indicated that not all students could accurately pronounce the consonant sounds provided by the researcher, as shown in the table of research results above.

The factors of learning context and communication strategies also contribute to why students produce errors. Both of these factors are heavily dependent on creativity in the use of teaching methods or approaches (Els et al., 1984). As a result, students often have limited practice in pronouncing target language sounds that are not present in their first language. Teachers tend to focus primarily on ensuring that students can understand the content and grammar without considering the functional aspect of language, which requires students to communicate effectively in the target language. Furthermore, teachers, as facilitators of the target language and the textbooks used, can also influence pronunciation errors. As Brown (2007) points out in his book, students tend to imitate and adopt whatever is said or presented

in the textbooks, even when there are occasional errors made by the teacher or typographical mistakes in the textbooks. As a result, students are likely to replicate these mistakes in their pronunciation.

The intralingual factor also plays a significant role in influencing errors (Elis, 1997). As shown in the previous analysis table, all students made pronunciation mistakes with consonant. The primary cause of these errors lies within the target language itself, which lacks consistency in producing sounds, such as the consonant letter 's' not always being pronounced as [ʃ]. This inconsistency creates uncertainty in students' pronunciation. Such variations are also confusing for seventh-grade students if their knowledge and pronunciation techniques are not further developed.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion and data regarding the pronunciation errors of seventh-grade students at Dwijendra Junior High School Denpasar, it can be concluded that there are only 7 (47%) out of 15 students could correctly pronounce the [ʃ] consonant sound when it occurred at the beginning of the word. In contrast, in the second word, only 3 (20%) out of 15 students were able to pronounce the [ʃ] sound correctly in the middle and final positions of the word.

Regarding the consonant [tʃ], 6 (40%) students pronounced it correctly in the middle position, while 5 (33%) students did so in both the middle and final positions. The [dʒ] sound was correctly pronounced by all subjects at the beginning and middle positions, but only 6 (40%) students pronounced it correctly at the end of words. Next, only 7 (47%) students correctly pronounced the [θ] sound at the beginning of words, 4 (27%) students pronounced [θ] correctly in the middle position, and 6 (40%) students did so at the end position. There are only 5 (33%) students could pronounce the [ð] sound correctly at the beginning of words, 4 (27%) students at the middle, and none could pronounce [ð] at the end of words. Lastly, the [ʒ] sound, which occurs in the middle of words, was correctly pronounced by only 9 (60%) students based on the analysis.

Besides, the factors causing errors in second language learning, such as interlingual transfer, intralingual factors, context of learning, and communication strategies play a significant role. Given the function of language as a crucial communication tool, accurate pronunciation of the target language is essential to avoid misunderstandings between speakers and listeners. It is crucial that the differences in English pronunciation can lead to different words.

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