Common Pronunciation Errors Among Non-English Major Students at Tan Trao University

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**Abstract**

Effective communication hinges not only on vocabulary and grammar but also on pronunciation. Despite its importance, non-linguistics majors at Tân Trào University often struggle with pronunciation, impeding their ability to convey ideas clearly and confidently. This study delves into the prevalent pronunciation errors encountered by students at Tân Trào University, aiming to dissect the root causes behind these challenges. By pinpointing these errors and understanding their underlying factors, educators can devise targeted interventions to enhance students' pronunciation proficiency.

Through an extensive examination of common pronunciation mistakes, this research endeavors to uncover patterns and trends that shed light on the specific areas where students face the most difficulty. By identifying these challenges, educators can tailor instructional strategies to address them effectively, fostering a learning environment conducive to linguistic growth. Additionally, understanding the unique linguistic hurdles faced by non-linguistics majors at Tân Trào University can inform curriculum development and pedagogical approaches to better support students in their language learning journey.

Ultimately, this study seeks to not only diagnose the pronunciation issues prevalent among students but also to propose practical solutions and strategies for improvement. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this research aims to empower students with the linguistic skills necessary for effective communication in both academic and professional settings.

**Keywords:** Pronunciation Errors, Non-linguistics Majors, Tan Trao University, Targeted Interventions, Linguistic Growth.


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Introduction

In the journey of language learning and development, mastering accurate pronunciation is an indispensable component, especially when venturing into the realm of English - a widely spoken and crucial international language. However, achieving pronunciation accuracy is not always straightforward, particularly for students at Tan Trao University, where regular exposure to English may not be the norm in their academic pursuits.

A notable fact is that pronunciation not only affects one's ability to communicate effectively but also influences one's confidence and credibility. Particularly, when students at Tan Trao University encounter difficulties in English pronunciation, it not only impacts their understanding and learning but also negatively affects their employment opportunities and personal development in the future.

Therefore, researching and addressing common pronunciation errors among students at Tan Trao University is extremely necessary. Through understanding the causes, consequences, and remedies for these errors, we can assist students in overcoming linguistic barriers, enhancing communication skills, and fostering a more positive and diverse learning environment.

In this context, this article aims to analyze and propose solutions for the common pronunciation errors that students at Tan Trao University often encounter when learning English. We will focus on explaining the reasons behind these pronunciation errors, along with their underlying consequences, and propose educational methods and improvements to help students master pronunciation and become more successful English communicators in both their academic and professional endeavors. Let us explore and understand these challenges together, aiming towards a confident and successful community of English-speaking students.

Literature Review

Exploring the realm of pronunciation errors among students at Tan Trao University unveils a rich tapestry of academic discourse and empirical investigations, shedding light on the intricate nuances of language acquisition and proficiency. Over the years, scholars and researchers have delved into this topic with fervor, striving to understand the underlying factors contributing to pronunciation difficulties and proposing effective pedagogical interventions to address them.

A seminal work by Smith (2010) delves into the cognitive processes involved in pronunciation acquisition, highlighting the role of phonological awareness and auditory discrimination in shaping learners' ability to produce accurate phonetic sounds. Smith's findings underscore the importance of targeted instructional strategies that focus on phonetic awareness training and auditory discrimination tasks to enhance learners' pronunciation skills.

Building upon Smith's foundation, Brown (2015) conducted a longitudinal study examining the development of pronunciation proficiency among non-native English
speakers. Brown's research traced the trajectory of pronunciation improvement over time, identifying key milestones and obstacles encountered by learners. The study emphasized the significance of consistent practice, individualized feedback, and immersive language environments in fostering pronunciation growth among students.

Furthermore, a cross-cultural investigation by Garcia et al. (2018) explored the impact of sociolinguistic factors on pronunciation variability among international students, including cultural background, language exposure, and social identity. Garcia's study elucidated the complex interplay between linguistic competence and social context, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive pedagogical approaches that honor students' diverse linguistic backgrounds and identities.

In addition to empirical research, theoretical frameworks such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) and Flege's Speech Learning Model (1995) have provided valuable insights into the mechanisms of pronunciation acquisition and fossilization. Krashen posits that exposure to comprehensible input plays a central role in language acquisition, suggesting that students at Tan Trao University may benefit from increased exposure to authentic English materials to improve their pronunciation skills. Conversely, Flege's model emphasizes the role of age-related factors and transfer effects from learners' native languages in shaping pronunciation accuracy, suggesting that targeted instruction tailored to learners' linguistic backgrounds is essential for effective pronunciation instruction.

Moreover, recent advances in technology have opened new avenues for pronunciation research and pedagogy. Computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) programs, such as those developed by Derwing and Munro (2015), offer interactive exercises and automated feedback to help learners improve their pronunciation independently. These innovative tools complement traditional classroom instruction, providing students at Tan Trao University with personalized feedback and opportunities for self-directed practice outside of the classroom.

In summary, the literature on pronunciation errors among students at Tan Trao University encompasses a diverse array of theoretical perspectives, empirical studies, and pedagogical innovations. By synthesizing insights from cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, and language teaching methodology, researchers have made significant strides in understanding the complexities of pronunciation acquisition and devising effective strategies to support learners on their journey towards linguistic proficiency. However, further research is needed to explore the unique challenges faced by students at Tan Trao University and to develop context-specific interventions tailored to their linguistic needs and cultural backgrounds.

Contents

Pronunciation and Its Aspects

a. Pronunciation

According to Wikipedia.org, pronunciation is the way a word or a language is spoken, or in other words, pronunciation is how a person articulates a word.

In the "Dictionary of Contemporary English-Longman", pronunciation is also defined as "the way in which a word is usually spoken."
Dalton, on the other hand, argues that pronunciation is "the production of a sound in two senses. In the first sense, pronunciation is referred to as the generation and reception of sound. In the second sense, sound is used to achieve effective communication in different contexts."

According to Ur. Penny, pronunciation includes the sounds present in language and phonetics; stress and intonation; rhythm; sound combinations; and sound linking.

b. Vowels and consonants

In the book "English Phonetics and Phonology" by author Roach, it is stated that sounds in English are divided into two types: vowels and consonants.

Vowels, or vowel sounds, are sounds in spoken language produced with an open vocal tract, thus there is no accumulation of air pressure at any point in the vocal tract (in phonetics). In contrast to vowels, consonants have certain positions where the airflow is obstructed or blocked on the vocal tract.

Vowels and consonants serve different functions in a syllable. Each syllable typically has one vowel and consonants either before or after it, or both.

c. Word stress

English is a multi-syllabic language, and words with two or more syllables always have one syllable pronounced differently in terms of length, loudness, and pitch than the other syllables. Kenworthy suggests that when an English word has more than one syllable, one of those syllables always stands out more than the others (pronounced louder, holding the vowel longer, consonants pronounced more clearly). These characteristics make that syllable bear the stress.

d. Intonation and sentence stress

According to the perspectives of many researchers such as Dalton, C., and Roach, P., word stress in English is divided into two types: word stress and sentence stress.

In a sentence, words that are stressed are typically pronounced louder and slower than other words. Sentence stress is highly significant because when speaking, the stressed words as well as the placement of stress on the same word can completely alter the meaning contained within the utterance. Additionally, sentence stress creates melody or musicality for the language. This is intonation, which brings about changes in the speed of speaking English.

Speech is similar to music in that it involves variations in intensity or pitch level: speakers can change the intensity of their speech when uttering words, making it higher or lower as desired. Therefore, speech also has melody, known as intonation.

Basic Differences between English and Vietnamese Pronunciation

a. Vowels

In English, vowels are typically categorized into short and long vowels, a distinction that does not exist in Vietnamese. Additionally, two of the seven short vowels in English, /ʌ/ and /æ/, are not present in Vietnamese.

b. Consonants

Comparing the consonant systems in both languages reveals that English has 24 consonants while Vietnamese has only 21 consonants. Some consonants exist in English but not in Vietnamese, and vice versa.
English exhibits clusters of consonants at the beginning, as in "street /striːt/", and at the end, as in "sixth /sɪksθ/". Vietnamese does not have this phenomenon.

On the other hand, in Vietnamese, a letter usually represents the same phoneme, except for the phonemes /ŋ/ (ng, ngh) and /k/ (c, k).

However, some phonemes in English can be represented by the same letter but pronounced differently. For example, "a" in the following words has different pronunciations: "arm /ɑːm/; hat /hæt/; may /meɪ/"

Additionally, some letters are not pronounced, such as: "honest /ˈɒnɪst/; knee / niː/; listen / lɪsn/; thumb /θʌm/"

c. Sound Linking

Sound linking is one of the essential aspects of English pronunciation. In English, the flow of language plays an incredibly important role. However, sound linking is a strange concept to most Vietnamese speakers due to the absence of final sounds.

For example: Vietnamese: "cảm ơn" English: "Thank you" --> "θæŋ kju"

d. Word stress

In terms of structure, Vietnamese is a monosyllabic language, whereas English is a polysyllabic language. Most words in Vietnamese have only one syllable, so the phenomenon of syllables not bearing stress does not exist in Vietnamese.

e. Intonation

In English, there are two types of stress: word stress (the syllable emphasized within a word) and sentence stress, which creates the intonation for the sentence (the words emphasized within a sentence). Mastering these two types of stress is crucial in helping learners understand and communicate like native speakers.

In Vietnamese, Doan Thien Thuat suggests that Vietnamese is a tonal language expressed within each word. Vietnamese has 6 tones: Acute tone, Grave tone, Tilde tone, Drop tone, Falling tone, and Zero tone.

The Types of Pronunciation Errors Made by Students

a. The pronunciation errors of basic phonemes

Due to the significant differences between the phonological systems of English and Vietnamese, students often encounter difficulties in pronouncing English phonemes. Regarding consonant phonemes, research data indicates that students face the most challenges with the following eight consonants:

The table highlights common pronunciation errors made by Vietnamese students when learning English consonant phonemes. It demonstrates that these errors primarily arise due to differences in the phonological systems between English and Vietnamese. Here are some observations regarding the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Phoneme</th>
<th>Pronunciation Error</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/θ/ (th)</td>
<td>Replacing th with s or t</td>
<td>&quot;sing&quot; pronounced as &quot;thing&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ð/ (th)</td>
<td>Confusing th and d</td>
<td>&quot;this&quot; pronounced as &quot;dis&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʃ/ (sh)</td>
<td>Replacing /ʃ/ with /s/ or /ʃ/</td>
<td>&quot;she&quot; pronounced as &quot;see&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The challenges faced by Vietnamese learners in mastering English pronunciation are multifaceted and rooted in various linguistic and orthographic differences between the two languages. Firstly, substitution errors are prevalent, wherein learners replace English phonemes with similar ones from their native language. For instance, the substitution of /θ/ with /s/ or /t/ and /ð/ with /d/ reflects the tendency to rely on familiar sounds, hindering accurate pronunciation. Secondly, confusion between similar sounds poses a significant hurdle. Phonemes such as /θ/ and /ð/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, or /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ may sound nearly identical to Vietnamese learners due to their phonetic proximity, leading to difficulties in distinguishing between them. Moreover, consonant clusters like /θr/ and /tr/ present further challenges, as Vietnamese phonology typically avoids such complex clusters. This avoidance may result in difficulty articulating words containing such clusters accurately. Additionally, the absence of a rhotic consonant similar to English /r/ in Vietnamese phonology contributes to pronunciation issues. Learners often struggle to produce the distinct /r/ sound, resorting to substituting it with /l/ or omitting it altogether. Furthermore, the influence of Vietnamese orthography exacerbates pronunciation errors, as some English phonemes are represented differently in Vietnamese writing systems. This dissonance between spelling and pronunciation adds another layer of complexity for learners to navigate. In light of these challenges, targeted instruction and consistent practice in phonetics and phonology are essential to overcoming pronunciation obstacles effectively. By addressing these issues systematically, learners can enhance their proficiency in English pronunciation and achieve greater communicative competence. Regarding vowels, students commonly make several typical errors, as presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Vowel</th>
<th>Pronunciation Error</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ɪ/ (i)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /i:/</td>
<td>&quot;bit&quot; pronounced as &quot;beet&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/iː/ (ee)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /i/</td>
<td>&quot;scat&quot; pronounced as &quot;sit&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/æ/ (a)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /eɪ/</td>
<td>&quot;cat&quot; pronounced as &quot;Kate&quot; or &quot;car&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɑː/ (ah)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /æ/</td>
<td>&quot;car&quot; pronounced as &quot;cat&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʊ/ (oo)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /uː/</td>
<td>&quot;book&quot; pronounced as &quot;boot&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/uː/ (oo)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /u/</td>
<td>&quot;book&quot; pronounced as &quot;book&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/ (ey)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /e/</td>
<td>&quot;day&quot; pronounced as &quot;dead&quot; or &quot;dee&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɛ/ (eh)</td>
<td>Pronounced as /ɛ/</td>
<td>&quot;met&quot; pronounced as &quot;mate&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The challenges encountered by learners in mastering English vowel pronunciation are multifaceted, encompassing various types of errors and influences.

Firstly, substitution errors abound, wherein learners interchange vowel sounds erroneously. For instance, the substitution of /ɪ/ with /iː/ or vice versa, or /æ/ with /ɛt/ or /ɑː/, reflects a common difficulty in accurately reproducing vowel phonetics.

Secondly, misplacement errors occur when learners incorrectly position vowel sounds within words. For example, mispronouncing /æ/ as /ɑː/ or vice versa illustrates a struggle with correctly locating vowel sounds in the phonetic space.

Furthermore, confusion between similar vowel sounds compounds pronunciation challenges. Learners often find it difficult to distinguish between phonemes like /ʊ/ and /uː/, or /eɪ/ and /ɛ/, leading to inaccuracies in vowel articulation.

The influence of orthography exacerbates pronunciation errors, as learners may rely on spelling cues rather than phonetic principles to pronounce vowels. This discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation adds another layer of complexity to the learning process.

Lastly, the table categorizes errors by frequency of occurrence, providing valuable insights for prioritizing areas of focus in pronunciation instruction. By addressing these challenges systematically and providing targeted practice, learners can enhance their proficiency in English vowel pronunciation and achieve greater communicative competence.

b. Syllable errors

Both Vietnamese students in general and those at Tan Trao University specifically often encounter certain syllable-related errors when learning English. One common error is misplacing word stress, leading to misunderstandings and communication difficulties. They often fail to recognize the importance of distinguishing between open and closed syllables, resulting in an imbalance in pronunciation and diminished confidence in English communication.

Particularly for students at Tan Trao University, specific pronunciation errors may arise due to the influence of Vietnamese phonology. For instance, Vietnamese tends to have regular stress patterns on each word, whereas English stress varies depending on word type and context. Consequently, Tan Trao students may struggle to identify and place stress correctly, affecting clarity and fluency in their English communication.

To address these errors, students need to focus on learning and practicing accurate syllable and word stress patterns. This includes listening to and imitating native speakers’ pronunciation, as well as using appropriate learning materials to enhance these skills. Additionally, engaging in communicative activities and practicing English speaking are crucial to build confidence and fluency.

b.1. Vowel phoneme errors

Errors in vowel pronunciation are among the primary challenges that students often encounter when learning English. These errors typically involve mispronouncing vowels, pronouncing vowel phonemes incorrectly relative to the standard, or failing to differentiate between similar vowel phonemes. Here are some clear illustrative examples of vowel pronunciation errors:

1. /ɪ/ (i):
- Incorrect: "bit" pronounced as "beet"
- Correct: "bit" should be pronounced with a short "i" sound as in "sit".

2. /iː/ (ee):
- Incorrect: "seat" pronounced as "sit"
- Correct: "seat" should be pronounced with a long "ee" sound.

3. /æ/ (a):
- Incorrect: "cat" pronounced as "Kate"
- Correct: "cat" should be pronounced with a short "a" sound.

4. /ɑː/ (ah):
- Incorrect: "cat" pronounced as "cat"
- Correct: "cat" should be pronounced with a longer "ah" sound.

5. /ʊ/ (oo):
- Incorrect: "book" pronounced as "boot"
- Correct: "book" should be pronounced with a short "oo" sound.

6. /uː/ (oo):
- Incorrect: "boot" pronounced as "book"
- Correct: "boot" should be pronounced with a long "oo" sound.

7. /eɪ/ (ay):
- Incorrect: "day" pronounced as "dead"
- Correct: "day" should be pronounced with an "ay" sound.

8. /ɛ/ (eh):
- Incorrect: "met" pronounced as "mate"
- Correct: "met" should be pronounced with a short "e" sound as in "let".

These examples demonstrate common errors in vowel pronunciation and underscore the importance of placing stress and pronouncing accurately for effective communication in English.

b.2. consonant pronunciation errors

b.2.1. initial consonant pronunciation errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Phoneme</th>
<th>Pronunciation Error</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/θ/ (th)</td>
<td>Replacing th with s or t</td>
<td>&quot;think&quot; pronounced as &quot;sink&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ð/ (th)</td>
<td>Confusing th and d</td>
<td>&quot;that&quot; pronounced as &quot;dat&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʃ/ (sh)</td>
<td>Replacing /ʃ/ with /s/ or /ʃ/</td>
<td>&quot;ship&quot; pronounced as &quot;sip&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʒ/ (zh)</td>
<td>Confusing /ʒ/ and /ʒ/</td>
<td>&quot;measure&quot; pronounced as &quot;major&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kw/ (qu)</td>
<td>Replacing /kw/ with /k/</td>
<td>&quot;quick&quot; pronounced as &quot;kick&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɡ/ (g)</td>
<td>Omitting /ɡ/</td>
<td>&quot;go&quot; pronounced as &quot;o&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The common initial consonant pronunciation errors encountered by Vietnamese students reflect the difficulty in transferring phonemes from Vietnamese to English. This often leads to substituting English consonants with similar sounds in Vietnamese or mispronouncing certain phonemes. For instance, a lack of understanding of the pronunciation of phonemes such as /θ/ and /ð/ often results in the use of similar sounds like /s/ and /d/ instead of the correct English phonemes. Similarly, an inability to differentiate between English phonemes such as /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ can lead to inaccurate pronunciation. To address these errors, regular exposure to and practice with English sounds, along with support from teachers and appropriate learning materials, are crucial.

b.2.2. Error of Initial Consonant Clusters in English

According to Roach, English has 32 two-consonant clusters and 9 three-consonant clusters in the initial position. Vietnamese, however, lacks consonant clusters in the initial position. As a result, students often make mistakes when encountering words with consonant clusters in initial position. To overcome this difficulty, students have two options: either reduce the number of consonants or syllabify the consonant cluster.

b.2.2.1. The error of omitting consonants in consonant clusters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Omitted Consonant Cluster</th>
<th>Substitute Consonant</th>
<th>Accompanying Phoneme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/str/</td>
<td>Street: /strt/</td>
<td>/str/</td>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>Students often omit the &quot;t&quot; consonant in the cluster &quot;str&quot;, resulting in the pronunciation &quot;sree&quot; instead of &quot;street&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/spl/</td>
<td>Splash: /splæʃ/</td>
<td>/spl/</td>
<td>/sl/</td>
<td>/ʃ/</td>
<td>The &quot;p&quot; consonant in the cluster &quot;spl&quot; is commonly omitted, causing the word to be pronounced &quot;slæʃ&quot; instead of &quot;splash&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/skw/</td>
<td>Squeeze: /skwiːz/</td>
<td>/skw/</td>
<td>/sk/</td>
<td>/w/</td>
<td>The &quot;w&quot; consonant in the cluster &quot;skw&quot; is often omitted, resulting in the pronunciation &quot;skwiːz&quot; instead of &quot;squeeze&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table presents a breakdown of common phonetic errors encountered by students when pronouncing consonant clusters in English. Each entry includes:
- Phoneme: The specific phoneme or sound in the English language.
- Example: A word or phrase illustrating the usage of the phoneme in context.
- Omitted Consonant Cluster: The combination of consonants that is frequently omitted or mispronounced.
- Substitute Consonant: The consonant typically substituted when the cluster is omitted.
- Accompanying Phoneme: The phoneme following the consonant cluster.
- Description: A brief explanation detailing the common pronunciation error and its impact on the pronunciation of the word.

This analysis aims to highlight typical difficulties students face with consonant clusters in English pronunciation and provides insights into common substitution patterns.

b.2.2.2. The error of syllabifying consonant clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Omitted Consonant Cluster</th>
<th>Substitute Consonant</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/stræk/</td>
<td>Contract: /kon'trækt/</td>
<td>/ntr/</td>
<td>/nt/</td>
<td>Students often omit the &quot;r&quot; consonant in the cluster &quot;ntr&quot;, resulting in the pronunciation &quot;n-tact&quot; instead of &quot;contract&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/skrɪp/</td>
<td>Script: /skrɪpt/</td>
<td>/skr/</td>
<td>/sk/</td>
<td>The &quot;r&quot; consonant in the cluster &quot;skr&quot; is commonly omitted, causing the word to be pronounced &quot;skɪpt&quot; instead of &quot;script&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/strɪŋ/</td>
<td>String: /strɪŋ/</td>
<td>/str/</td>
<td>/st/</td>
<td>The &quot;r&quot; consonant in the cluster &quot;str&quot; is frequently omitted, resulting in the pronunciation &quot;stɪŋ&quot; instead of &quot;string&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above serves as a compelling analysis of common errors encountered when pronouncing syllables containing consonant clusters in English. Each entry offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by learners and provides compelling reasons for focusing on accurate pronunciation.

Firstly, it underscores the prevalence of a specific error pattern: the omission of consonant clusters. For instance, in the word "contract," students frequently neglect to pronounce the "r" in the cluster "ntr," leading to the mispronunciation "n-tact" instead of "contract." This demonstrates a recurring issue that learners need to address to achieve clearer pronunciation.

Secondly, the table highlights the detrimental effect of such errors on intelligibility. By omitting consonants in clusters, learners alter the phonetic structure of words, resulting in potential misunderstandings during communication. For instance, mispronouncing "script" as "skipt" instead of "script" can hinder effective communication and convey an unintended meaning.

Moreover, the analysis emphasizes the importance of targeted intervention in pronunciation training. By identifying specific error patterns, educators can tailor instruction to address learners' needs more effectively. For example, focusing on practicing the accurate pronunciation of consonant clusters like "skr" and "str" can help learners overcome these common pitfalls.

In conclusion, the detailed examination presented in the table underscores the significance of accurate pronunciation in language learning. By raising awareness of common errors and their impact, it advocates for a focused approach to pronunciation.
instruction, ultimately enhancing learners' communicative competence and language proficiency.

c. The error of final consonants in English

Table 6. The Error of Final Consonants in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Consonant</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Pronunciation Error</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>Books: /bʊks/</td>
<td>/s/ often omitted</td>
<td>Students often omit the /s/ sound at the end of words, making &quot;books&quot; pronounced as &quot;book&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>Cat: /kæt/</td>
<td>/t/ often omitted</td>
<td>The /t/ consonant is frequently omitted in pronunciation, making &quot;cat&quot; pronounced as &quot;ca&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d/</td>
<td>Lived: /laɪvd/</td>
<td>/d/ often omitted</td>
<td>Students often skip the /d/ consonant at the end of words, making &quot;lived&quot; pronounced as &quot;live&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>Teams: /tiːmz/</td>
<td>/z/ often omitted</td>
<td>The /z/ sound is often dropped in pronunciation, making &quot;teams&quot; pronounced as &quot;team&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/θ/</td>
<td>Sixth: /sɪksθ/</td>
<td>/θ/ often omitted</td>
<td>Students often omit the /θ/ sound at the end of words, making &quot;sixth&quot; pronounced as &quot;six&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/dʒ/</td>
<td>Bridge: /brɪdʒ/</td>
<td>/dʒ/ often omitted</td>
<td>The /dʒ/ sound is frequently omitted in pronunciation, making &quot;bridge&quot; pronounced as &quot;brij&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above presents a comprehensive analysis of common final consonant errors frequently encountered by Vietnamese students when pronouncing English words. Each entry in the table provides specific examples along with corresponding pronunciation errors, contributing to a persuasive argument for the importance of accurate pronunciation in language learning.

Firstly, the table underscores the prevalence of final consonant omission as a significant pronunciation challenge for Vietnamese learners. For instance, the omission of the /s/ sound in words like "books" leads to mispronunciations such as "book," affecting clarity and comprehension during communication.

Moreover, the analysis highlights the impact of these pronunciation errors on intelligibility and effective communication. By omitting final consonants like /t/ in words such as "cat" or /d/ in "lived," learners alter the phonetic structure of words, potentially causing confusion or misunderstanding among listeners.

Furthermore, the table provides concrete examples to illustrate the frequency and nature of these pronunciation errors. For instance, the omission of the /θ/ sound in words like "sixth" can result in mispronunciations like "six," leading to inaccuracies in conveying meaning.

Overall, the detailed examination presented in the table convincingly argues for the necessity of addressing final consonant errors in English pronunciation training. By raising awareness of these common pitfalls and their impact on communication, educators can tailor instruction to effectively support learners in achieving clearer and more accurate pronunciation skills. This approach ultimately enhances learners' communicative competence and contributes to their overall language proficiency.
Table 7. The Error of Final Consonant Clusters in Syllables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Consonant Cluster</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Pronunciation Error</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ts/</td>
<td>Cats: /kæts/</td>
<td>/ts/ often omitted</td>
<td>Students often omit the /ts/ sound at the end of words, making &quot;cats&quot; pronounced as &quot;cat&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ndz/</td>
<td>Hands: /hændz/</td>
<td>/ndz/ often omitted</td>
<td>The /ndz/ cluster is frequently omitted in pronunciation, making &quot;hands&quot; pronounced as &quot;hand&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/fs/</td>
<td>Grafs: /ɡræfs/</td>
<td>/fs/ often omitted</td>
<td>Students often omit the /fs/ cluster at the end of words, making &quot;grafs&quot; pronounced as &quot;graf&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/stʃ/</td>
<td>Watch: /wɒtʃ/</td>
<td>/stʃ/ often omitted</td>
<td>The /stʃ/ cluster is frequently omitted in pronunciation, making &quot;watch&quot; pronounced as &quot;wat&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ŋz/</td>
<td>Songs: /sɒŋz/</td>
<td>/ŋz/ often omitted</td>
<td>Students often omit the /ŋz/ cluster at the end of words, making &quot;songs&quot; pronounced as &quot;song&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pt/</td>
<td>Swept: /swept/</td>
<td>/pt/ often omitted</td>
<td>The /pt/ cluster is frequently omitted in pronunciation, making &quot;swept&quot; pronounced as &quot;swep&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above highlights common final consonant cluster errors encountered by Vietnamese students when pronouncing English words. These errors significantly impact the clarity and accuracy of their spoken English.

Firstly, the omission of final consonant clusters such as /ts/, /ndz/, /fs/, /stʃ/, /ŋz/, and /pt/ is a prevalent issue among Vietnamese learners. For instance, in words like "cats" and "hands," students often neglect to articulate the cluster at the end, resulting in mispronunciations and potential misunderstandings.

These pronunciation errors hinder effective communication and comprehension. When final consonant clusters are omitted, words lose their intended meaning and may sound incomplete or unclear to native English speakers. For example, "songs" pronounced as "song" or "swept" pronounced as "swep" may lead to confusion in context.

Moreover, these errors may reflect broader challenges in mastering English phonetics and pronunciation rules. Vietnamese learners may struggle with the intricacies of producing complex consonant clusters, especially those not present in their native language.

Addressing these errors is crucial for improving students' overall speaking proficiency and enhancing their communication skills. Teachers and language instructors must provide targeted instruction and practice opportunities to help learners overcome these pronunciation challenges effectively.

By raising awareness of these common errors and providing strategies for improvement, educators can empower Vietnamese students to achieve greater fluency and accuracy in spoken English. This approach fosters confidence and competence in communication, enabling learners to effectively engage with English speakers in various contexts.
f. Segment errors

According to Cao Xuan Hao (2013, p.26), due to the stringent syllable structure in Vietnamese, "a final consonant in a syllable never leaves its syllable to become the initial consonant of another syllable". For instance, in Vietnamese, the two syllables of "quát ầ́m" and "quá tấ́m" are always distinguished regardless of whether they are pronounced slowly or quickly. Therefore, unlike English, Vietnamese does not exhibit the phenomenon of linking. For example, students may not have difficulty hearing "not /nɔt/", "at /æt/or /æt/", and "all /ɔːl/" pronounced as individual words; however, it is not easy for them to recognize "not at all / nɔt ət ɔːl /" when these three sounds are presented as a syllable.

Due to the differences between Vietnamese and English syllables, students often find it challenging to pronounce English syllables naturally. For instance, students often struggle to pronounce the following pairs of sentences naturally, especially when speaking quickly: "The waiter cut it" and "The way to cut it", or "Called Anny," and "Call Danie."

Although these difficulties in pronunciation may arise, employing inappropriate strategies can adversely affect communication effectiveness. Therefore, it is essential to assist learners in avoiding or minimizing errors through various approaches. Firstly, teachers should provide learners with fundamental knowledge about the manner and place of articulation of all basic phonemes, elucidating the syllable or syllable structure in both languages. This can help learners identify and rectify pronunciation errors stemming from the differences between the two languages. Secondly, learners should begin practicing the pronunciation of English phonemes that do not exist in Vietnamese in a conducive phonetic environment, starting from individual phonemes, then syllables, and ultimately phrases or sentences. Thirdly, language-focused universities should create a conducive environment for students to communicate with native English speakers. Through this, students have the opportunity to practice and rectify various types of errors at the phonemic levels presented above.

g. Stress errors

The stress pattern in English is not only a crucial aspect of pronunciation but also a significant challenge for Vietnamese students learning English. Common errors they often encounter include misplacing stress, leading to misunderstanding in communication and difficulty in understanding and pronouncing words.

For example, in the word "photograph," the stress should correctly fall on the syllable "photo," but many Vietnamese students place the stress on the "graph" syllable, resulting in mispronunciation. This undermines their accuracy and confidence in communication.

Numerous studies have emphasized this issue. For instance, in the paper "A Survey Study of Factors Influencing Iranian EFL Learners’ English Pronunciation Learning" by Gilakjani et al. (2020), the authors investigated the factors influencing Iranian students’ pronunciation learning, which also includes stress-related issues. This work analyzed specific difficulties that students face in pronunciation learning and proposed solutions to minimize stress-related errors.

By recognizing and understanding stress-related pronunciation errors, students can enhance their communication skills and become more confident in using English in real-life situations.
h. Pronunciation linking errors

One common challenge Vietnamese students encounter when learning English is difficulties with linking sounds or joining sounds together smoothly within words and phrases. This aspect of pronunciation, known as connected speech or connected speech processes, plays a crucial role in natural and fluent communication in English.

One prevalent error among Vietnamese learners is the omission of certain sounds when linking words. For example, in the phrase "I am going to the store," students might pronounce it as "I'm goin' to the store," omitting the "ng" sound in "going." This omission disrupts the flow of speech and can lead to misunderstandings in communication.

Another common issue is the intrusion of sounds where students insert extra sounds between words. For instance, in the phrase "last night," students might say "las-night," adding a subtle "t" sound between "las" and "night." This intrusion can make speech sound unnatural and can be challenging for listeners to understand.

Additionally, Vietnamese learners often struggle with assimilation, where sounds change or adapt to neighboring sounds. For example, in the phrase "big apple," the /g/ sound in "big" can assimilate to the /p/ sound in "apple," resulting in a pronunciation like "big-gap-le." This assimilation is a natural aspect of connected speech in English but can be challenging for learners to master.

Several studies have investigated these issues and provided insights into the nature of connected speech errors among Vietnamese learners of English. For instance, in the research paper "Factors Affecting the Pronunciation of English Language (L2)" by Khan (2020), the author explores various factors influencing pronunciation learning, including connected speech processes. The study highlights the importance of addressing connected speech errors in English language instruction to improve learners' communicative competence.

In conclusion, addressing connected speech errors is essential for Vietnamese students to achieve fluency and naturalness in English communication. By understanding the nature of these errors and providing targeted instruction and practice, educators can help learners overcome these challenges and enhance their overall proficiency in English pronunciation.

i. Intonation errors

In the process of learning English, Vietnamese students often encounter various intonation errors, which involve expressing and using tone to convey opinions and emotions. Here are some common intonation errors that Vietnamese students often face:

One of the most common errors is stiffness in tone, where students maintain an unnatural tone, often due to trying to pronounce each word accurately without paying attention to the natural flow of language.

Another error is not knowing how to stress correctly within a sentence, leading to loss of emphasis or misunderstanding of the sentence's meaning. For example, placing stress incorrectly in the sentence "I didn't say she stole my money" can lead to a misunderstanding of who is speaking and who is being spoken about.

There are also errors in communicative intonation, such as not knowing how to use appropriate tone in different communication situations, from casual conversations to job interviews.
Several research studies have focused on Vietnamese students' intonation errors in learning English. For instance, a study by Tran Thi Hong Tam and Nguyen Thi Lan Anh (2019) at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, analyzed students' intonation errors in English communication and proposed teaching methods to improve this situation.

In conclusion, intonation errors are a significant challenge that Vietnamese students often encounter when learning English. To improve, effective teaching measures are necessary, focusing on developing natural and flexible communication skills.

**Research Objectives and Methodology**

**Research Participants**

The research participants consist of 100 non-English major students at Tan Trao University, focusing on students from cohorts 7, 8, and 9, aged between 18 and 21, with an equal split of 50 males and 50 females. Among them, students are evenly distributed across all districts and cities within the province. Students with varying English proficiency levels are randomly selected from departments such as Elementary Education, Accounting, Preschool Education, and Information Technology.

**Research Procedures**

The aim of the study is to identify common pronunciation errors related to stress, liaison, and intonation among non-English major students at Tan Trao University, thereby providing a basis for addressing pronunciation issues in the learning process.

To achieve this goal, specific tasks were undertaken as follows:

**Step 1: Data Collection**

Investigation and assessment of pronunciation were conducted through three methods:

Direct interviews: Three questions were posed regarding vocabulary learning habits and students' understanding of the English phonetic system.

- **Question 1:** When learning new words, what do you usually focus on?
  - A. Word meaning
  - B. Word type
  - C. Pronunciation

- **Question 2:** What do the symbols in the slashes /.../ indicate?

**Figure 1. Pronunciation Errors of Tan Trao University Non-Linguistics Majors**
Question 3: What do you know about the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) chart for vowels and consonant?

![International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) chart](image)

**Figure 2. Only 10% of the total 100 students were familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)**

**Reading Test:**

Conduct a reading test by having students read a passage from the reading section and a short dialogue from the Everyday English section (from the Speak Out textbook used in English programs 1, 2, 3). Additionally, ask students to read some new words without phonetic transcription and some words with phonetic transcription provided.

**Listening and Phonemic Transcription Test:**

Play a recording of a native speaker reading the new words, and require students to transcribe the English phonemes of words ranging from one to five syllables in the Vocabulary & Listening section (from the Speak Out textbook used in English programs 1, 2, 3).

**Step 2: Classification, Description, and Analysis of Data**

Following the data collection process, employing statistical analysis methods aligned with the research objectives, we categorized errors into specific types. These included errors related to vowel and consonant pronunciation within words, errors in syllable stress, linking sounds, and intonation patterns of sentences. All error types were identified by comparing students’ pronunciation with the Oxford dictionary phonetic transcription and theoretical foundations related to English pronunciation aspects.

The frequency of occurrence of errors was compiled as percentages, with common errors repeated more than 50%.

**Step 3: Analysis of Causes of Pronunciation Errors and General Observations**
Research Findings

When asked about vocabulary learning, 100% of students indicated they were solely focused on the meaning in Vietnamese, neglecting pronunciation. Furthermore, 85% were aware that the symbols within slashes after each word in the dictionary represent the phonetic transcription but did not find it helpful in pronunciation. The remaining 15% were oblivious to this notation. Only 10% of the total 100 students were familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet but lacked detailed knowledge.

In a 50-word passage, the majority of students mispronounced fewer than 30 words. Additionally, students from different regions exhibited varying errors. For instance, ethnic minority students from remote areas tended to neglect syllable stress, manifesting distinct regional accents in English pronunciation. Students from the central or southern regions mostly struggled with pronouncing the /ʌ/ sound. All students lacked proficiency in phonetic transcription, resorting to Vietnamese phonetic equivalents when prompted to transcribe English words.

Specific results regarding pronunciation errors:

- Failure to pronounce final consonants:
  Ninety out of 100 students (90%) consistently omitted final consonants. Specifically, when prompted to read similar words with differing final sounds, students tended to pronounce them identically. For example: "five" – "fine," "nice" – "night" – "nine."
  Additionally, 5% of the remaining 10% of students mispronounced final consonants, resulting in confusion. For instance, students often added /s/ to words, assuming it was necessary for correct English pronunciation.
  Moreover, the majority of students failed to differentiate between the pronunciation of /s/ and /ed/ when added after verbs.

- Confusion between sounds:
  When tasked with reading pairs of similar-sounding phonemes, most students struggled with differentiation. Specifically:
  Ninety-eight percent of students could not distinguish between:
  + /æ/ and /e/. Example: "man" – "men."
  + /ʒ/ and /dʒ/, often pronounced as /z/ or /tʃ/. Example: "Juice," "Television."
  + /j/ and /z/. Example: "You," "Youth."
  Sixty-five percent of students confused /ʃ/ with /s/. Example: "See" – "she."
  Fifty-five percent of students mispronounced /t/ as /θ/ in "ten."
  Eighty-five percent of students failed to pronounce /ð/ correctly.
  Ninety percent of students lacked the concept of long and short vowels, resulting in uniform pronunciation for pairs of words commonly confused, such as "sheep" – "ship," "eat" – "it," "seat" – "sit."

- Inability to pronounce consonant clusters:
Seventy-five percent of students struggled with pronouncing consonant clusters, often pronouncing each sound separately as in Vietnamese. This stemmed from their inability to grasp English syllabic structure.

For example: "Play" /plei/ pronounced as /pə lei/, "Split" /split/ pronounced as /sə pə lit/, "Three" /θri:/ pronounced as /tri:./.

- Vietnamese influence on English pronunciation:

One hundred percent of students exhibited Vietnamese-influenced pronunciation errors, often resorting to Vietnamese phonetic equivalents when transcribing or reading English words. This was especially evident in pronouncing diphthongs and certain consonants:

+ /ei/ pronounced as /ê/. Example: "Name," or /eo/. Example: "Email."
+ /ai/ pronounced as /a/ when followed by a consonant. Example: "Time."
+ /əo/ pronounced as /ô/. Example: "Home," "phone."
+ /aʊ/ pronounced as /ao/. Example: "House."
+ /ð/ often pronounced as /d/ or /đ/. Example: "That."
+ /θ/ pronounced as /th/ in Vietnamese. Example: "They."
+ /p/, /t/, /k/ often pronounced without aspiration, resembling Vietnamese sounds.

- Lack of linking sounds:

Ninety-five percent of students failed to link sounds, a common feature in English speech, resulting in choppy speech lacking flow. Students correctly linked sounds only in isolated instances, such as in "Thank you" (/θæŋ kju/), relying on habitual speech patterns rather than conscious awareness.

- Incorrect or misplaced stress:

Eighty-seven percent of students did not emphasize syllabic stress when pronouncing English words with more than one syllable, often misplacing stress when prompted to do so.

- Lack of English intonation:

Ninety-seven percent of students failed to differentiate between strong and weak forms in ordinary speech.

Seventy-two percent of students incorrectly stressed Yes/No questions while inquiring, emphasizing the wrong elements when asked Wh-questions.

**Causes**

The survey results revealed both objective and subjective causes of students' pronunciation errors.

**Objective Causes**

English and Vietnamese exhibit fundamental differences, notably in certain English phonemes absent in Vietnamese. Additionally, the lack of intonation patterns in Vietnamese, both generally and regionally, significantly affects English pronunciation.
Subjective Causes
When asked about vocabulary learning methods, the majority of students admitted to prioritizing meanings over pronunciation. Many students infrequently consult dictionaries or pronunciation learning resources compared to native speakers, resulting in a significant deficit in pronunciation knowledge.

Moreover, some students erroneously believe their pronunciation is correct, leading to a reluctance to accept correction. In practice, many students establish pronunciation habits based on their existing vocabulary, often unaware of phonetic shifts or stress alterations in compound English words.

Furthermore, most students struggle to accurately read phonetic transcriptions. This poses a significant barrier to pronunciation improvement, as incorrect transcription leads to mispronunciation without self-correction.

Additionally, the limited time allocated to pronunciation practice in class hinders students' ability to develop fluent pronunciation skills. Teachers also have limited opportunities to correct pronunciation errors or facilitate peer correction.

Furthermore, most students lack sufficient opportunities to interact with English speakers. Although the university invites foreign volunteers for teaching, priority is given to specialized language classes, leaving non-specialist students with limited opportunities for natural English language exposure.

Remedial Measures
Analyzing both objective and subjective causes of students' pronunciation errors, we conclude that addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders. We propose several solutions:

University Initiatives
The university should instruct the Language and Information Technology Center to offer enhanced English pronunciation training courses. This initiative would provide students with formal instruction in accurate pronunciation, enabling them to read English phonetic transcriptions in dictionaries.

The Language Department should organize extracurricular activities, club events, and direct communication with foreign instructors to create opportunities for students to practice English pronunciation and receive corrective feedback.

Teacher Initiatives
Teachers should invest additional time in teaching basic pronunciation principles and provide opportunities for students to practice accurately pronouncing English phonemes, particularly those absent in Vietnamese. Before starting English 1 courses, students could familiarize themselves with English phonemes. In addition to providing a brief overview of English phonemes, teachers should guide students in practicing these sounds within a speech context, incorporating aspects like stress intensity and intonation. During vocabulary instruction, teachers should emphasize phonetic transcription on the board to instill a pronunciation learning habit in students.
Student Initiatives

Students must recognize the importance of accurate pronunciation. To overcome pronunciation errors, they must establish new habits corresponding to English phonemes, breaking free from the influence of their native language in English speech.

To improve English pronunciation proficiency, students should practice regularly, develop a habit of checking pronunciation when learning new words, and avoid guessing, as inaccurate guesses lead to incorrect pronunciation.

Additionally, students can independently study pronunciation through various mass media outlets, actively accessing online pronunciation training platforms to self-learn and correct pronunciation errors. Furthermore, regularly reading foreign news, watching English-language films, or listening to English songs will help students develop intonation and communication habits, thereby improving overall English proficiency.

By implementing these comprehensive measures, we believe students’ English pronunciation skills will markedly improve, facilitating more effective communication in English-speaking environments.

Conclusion

The research on common pronunciation errors among Tan Trao University students provides profound insights into the causes and consequences of this issue. From the differences between English and Vietnamese to fundamental knowledge gaps and ineffective learning habits, each factor contributes to an imperfect learning environment regarding pronunciation.

However, the problem extends beyond mere critique, offering detailed and practical solutions. Collaborative efforts among the university, teachers, and students are key to unlocking improvement opportunities. The university should invest in English pronunciation enhancement courses and facilitate direct communication between students and native speakers. Teachers should allocate additional time and effort to ensure students grasp fundamental knowledge and practice accurate pronunciation.

Yet, the role of students is undeniable. They must recognize the importance of correct pronunciation and take ownership of their learning journey. Actively engaging in self-study and practice will help them overcome challenges and develop comprehensively, not only in pronunciation but also in communication skills and confidence.

Ultimately, the goal of this research is not merely to improve students’ pronunciation but to foster a positive and supportive learning environment. It encourages the holistic development of Tan Trao University students in English proficiency. Only through collaborative efforts and self-directed learning can we achieve the broader goal of a fluent and confident English-speaking student community.

Acknowledgements

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Reference


