A Preliminary Investigation of English and Thai Consonants

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Abstract
This paper examines similarities and differences between Thai and English consonants. It determines areas of difficulty when Thai students try to pronounce English consonantal sounds. It is found that some English sounds that do not occur in Thai phonology tend to pose great difficulty; these sounds include /γ/, /ϖ/, /T/, /Δ/, /ζ/, /Σ/, /Z/, /τΣ/ and /δZ/. Sounds that exist in Thai but can occur in different syllable positions in English also tend to be difficult to pronounce; examples include /ϕ/ and /σ/. In attempting to tackle the problem of sounds nonexistent in Thai, Thai students are likely to substitute Thai sounds for English sounds. An additional problem is the interchangeability of /λ/ and /P/ in Thai, erroneously transferred to English. To alleviate the problem sounds for Thai learners of English, this paper recommends that teachers follow listening and speaking pedagogy for pronunciation in terms of recognition, discrimination and production.

Consonant sounds

Regarding the analyses of Jotikasthira (1999), Bowman (2000), Ronakiat (2002), Arya (2003) and Tuaycharoen (2003) on a comparison between Thai and English phonology, this paper presents a rough idea of aspects Thai students may encounter when learning to utter English consonants. While there are 21 Thai consonant phonemes, English has 24 such sounds (Tuaycharoen, 1990), as shown, respectively, in Tables 1 & 2 below (the highlighted symbols are voiceless).

Table 1: Thai consonantal sounds

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Lamio-prepalatal	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	π πH β		τ τH δ			κ κH	/
Nasal	μ		ν			N	
Fricative		ϕ	σ				η
Affricate				τ⌋ τ⌋H			
Tap			P				
Lateral			λ				
Semivowel	(ω)				φ	ω	

Table 2: English consonantal sounds

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	π β			τ δ			κ γ	
Nasal	μ			ν			N	
Fricative		ϕ ϖ	T Δ	σ ζ	Σ Z			η
Affricate					τΣ δZ			
Lateral				λ				
Approxi-mant	(ω)			♦		φ	ω	

As can be seen from both tables, there are both similarities and differences between English and Thai consonantal sounds, which are now discussed.

Plosives

In Thai, an aspiration is a key in distinguishing different phonemes. The aspirated counterparts of /π/, /τ/ and /κ/, i.e. /πH/ /τH/ and /κH/ indicate that they are different phonemes. For example:

/π/	→	/πα˥/	<ปา>	/πH/	→	/πHα˥/ <พา>
/τ/	→	/τα˥/	<ตา>	/τH/	→	/τHα˥/ <ทา>
/κ/	→	/κα˥/	<กา>	/κH/	→	/κHα˥/ <คา>

In English, however, an aspiration indicates allophonic distribution of a phoneme. It is not a feature to indicate phonemic realization of the sound.

As can be seen from the above two tables, voiceless aspirated phonemes in Thai, /πH/, /τH/ and /κH/, are not problematic to pronounce in English initial syllable position because, in English, the phonemes /π/, /τ/ and /κ/ are pronounced with aspiration: [πH], [τH] and [κH]. When voiceless plosive phonemes in English follow the sound /σ/, they are pronounced without aspiration, which is the same as Thai voiceless unaspirated phonemes /π/, /τ/ and /κ/. This can be generalized that, when Thai students utter the sounds /π/, /τ/ and /κ/ in initial position in English, they do not have any difficulty at all.

Examples: *Aspirated feature of English plosives*

Voiceless plosives	*Examples*
Voiceless aspirated bilabial plosive [πH]	pan [πHΘν], pie [πHαI], pat [πHΘτ]
Voiceless aspirated alveolar plosive [τH]	tie [τHαI], ten [τHεν], tall [τH□˥λ˩]
Voiceless aspirated velar plosive [κH]	key [κHι˥], kite [κHαIτ], can [κHΘν]

Examples: *Unaspirated feature of English plosives*

spy	→	/σπαI/	not	[σπHαI]
stay	→	/στεI/	not	[στHεI]
sky	→	/σκαI/	not	[σκHαI]

Ronakiat (2002) notes that, even though the pronunciation of [πH], [τH] or [κH] after the phoneme /σ/ is understood by native speakers of English, it might seem unnatural in actual speech.

A problem arises when Thai students learn to pronounce the sounds /π/, /τ/ and /κ/ in final syllable position in English. In Thai, the three sounds are pronounced with no audible release: [π|], [τ|] and [κ|]; in English, however, the final sounds /π/, /τ/ and /κ/ are uttered in three different ways:

1. Aspiration: [πH], [τH], [κH],
2. Non-aspiration: [π], [τ], [κ], and
3. No audible release: [π|], [τ|], [κ|].

Examples:	*Pronunciation variation*		
Key words	*Aspirated*	*Unaspirated*	*Inaudible*
sop	[σ□πH]	[σ□π]	[σ□π|]
lot	[λ□τH]	[λ□τ]	[λ□τ|]
sack	[σΘκH]	[σΘκ]	[σΘκ|]

Thai speakers who learn English voiceless plosives in the final syllable tend to pronounce the final plosives with inaudible release, which may confuse native speakers of English as not being pronounced at all. Thus, it is suggested that Thai speakers practise pronouncing English voiceless plosives finally with more puff of air (or with aspiration).

When it comes to the voiced counterparts of English and Thai plosives, Thai learners do not have any difficulty in pronouncing the sounds /β/ and /δ/ in English initial syllables at all since Thai phonology allows such phonemes to occur. The English voiced velar plosive /γ/, however, may cause difficulty for Thai learners of English in all syllable positions since there is no such sound in Thai. It is likely that the sound /γ/ in English is replaced with the Thai /κ/ (voiceless unaspirated velar plosive) because the voice onset time (henceforth, VOT) in releasing the sound /κ/ is so short that English native speakers may perceive the sound as having a voiced feature in it, /γ/ (Bowman, 2000). That is why it is so difficult for Thai learners to pronounce the /γ/ sound correctly; they tend to pronounce it with its voiceless counterpart, /κ/. For example:

good	[γY>δ]	→	[κυ⇔⎤τ|]
ago	[↔∪γ↔Y]	→	[α∃/ κo⎤]
league	[λι⎡γ]	→	[λι∃⎡κ|]

All of the English voiced plosives, when pronounced in a final syllable, pose a lot of difficulty for Thai learners to master since, in Thai phonology, there is no voiced plosive occurring finally, and voiceless plosives, /π/, /τ/, /κ/ and ///, even though they can occur finally, are pronounced with no audible release (due to short VOT). In this case, it is suggested that, when learning to pronounce English voiced plosives, Thai students should try to vibrate their vocal cords to have a voiced feature in each phoneme. In English, voiced and voiceless plosives can be identified as being pronounced differently by the length of the vowel preceding each plosive. If a voiceless consonant occurs before a long vowel, the vowel tends to be shortened. A short vowel, when followed by a voiced consonant, tends to be pronounced longer than it is normally uttered (Ronakiat, 2002).

Nasals

Thai learners have no difficulty in uttering nasals in English (Ronakiat, 2002). In Thai, the sounds /μ/, /ν/ and /N/ occur initially and finally in a syllable. In English, the sounds /μ/ and /ν/ occur in an initial position of a syllable, and they, as well as the sound /N/, occur finally in a syllable. That is why Thai students have no difficulty in pronouncing English nasals at all. However, a problem arises when the sounds /μ/ and /ν/ function as syllabics, meaning that they are pronounced without any vowel. This function does not exist in Thai; therefore, it poses difficulty for Thai students to master. For example:

Syllabic m	*Syllabic n*
rhythm [∪♦IΔμ ‾]	sudden [∪σ℘δν ‾]
prism [∪π♦Iζμ ‾]	listen [∪λIσν ‾]

In order to practise pronouncing syllabics in English, it is suggested that Thai students place their articulators of the syllabic when they are uttering the consonant preceding it; this way, no vowel is pronounced and the syllabic occurs in English syllables.

The sound /N/ is usually spelled *ng* in English or is sometimes written as *nk* (Ronakiat, 2002). For example:

Spelling <u>ng</u>	*Spelling <u>nk</u>*
sing /σIN/	link /λINκ/
strong /στ♦□N/	trunk /τ♦℘Nκ/

When words such as *sing* and *strong* are attached with a suffix, *-er*, for example, Thai students are prone to be confused and add the sound /γ/ before the suffix. It is noted that the asterisk (*) is marked in front of a word, phrase or sentence to signify that such a starred word is not usually acceptable in English. For example:

strong /στ♦□N/	→	stronger /∪στ♦□Nγ↔/
sing /σIN/	→	singer */∪σINγ↔/

As can be seen from the above examples, the correct pronunciation of *singer* is a challenge for Thai learners. Therefore, it is recommended for Thai students to understand that, when the root word is a verb ending in *–ng* and a suffix is added, it is pronounced /N/ with no intrusion of the sound /γ/ at all (Ronakiat, 2002). For example:

sing /σIN/	→	singer /∪σIN↔/	not	*/∪σINγ↔/	
	→	singing /∪σININ/	not	*/∪σINγIN/	
belong /βI∪λ□N/	→	belonging /βI∪λ□NIN/	not	*/βI∪λ□NγIN/	

Fricatives

English fricatives impose great challenges for Thai students to pronounce correctly since, in English, fricatives are very rich compared to Thai's three fricatives, namely /ϕ/, /σ/ and /η/. All of these three sounds occur as initial syllables in Thai, with no final fricatives at all. According to Ronakiat (2002) and Kanokpermpoon (2004), these three fricatives are not difficult for Thai learners to utter when they are in initial syllable position; other English fricatives, however, are difficult to pronounce due to their absence from Thai phonology.

In English initial position, voiceless fricatives /T/ (mostly spelled *th*) and /Σ/ (usually spelled *sh*) tend to be challenging for Thai students to master (Ronakiat, 2002, and Kanokpermpoon, 2004). This is due to the fact that the two sounds do not exist as Thai initial syllables. However, Tuaycharoen (2003: 50) has indicated that, presently, Thai students are likely to be influenced by Amerasian and Eurasian singers and actors who use /Σ/ for /τ⌡H/, as "most Thai youngsters appear to follow suit". For example:

English word with initial <u>th</u>	*Mostly replaced with*
thin - /TIν/	*/τHιν/

thanks - /TΘNκσ/	*/τHE⇔Nκ/

English word with initial <u>sh</u>	*Mostly replaced with*
shoe - /Συ⎤/	*/τ⎦Hυ⎤/
shop - /Σ□π/	*/τ⎦H□⇔π/

All of the English voiceless fricatives /ϕ/, /T/, /σ/ and /Σ/ (see highlighted symbols in Table 2 above), when occurring word finally, are likely to impose great difficulty for Thai students to pronounce since, based on the analysis of Thai plosives and nasals above, there are only four Thai final plosives /π/, /τ/, /κ/ and ///, and three final nasals /μ/, /ν/ and /N/. All of them are pronounced inaudibly (cf. Abramson, 1972, and Tuaycharoen, 1990). Therefore, Thai students are prone to replace English final voiceless fricatives with their corresponding Thai finals or omit them. For example:

English words with final voiceless fricatives	*Replaced with*
puff - /π℘ϕ/	*/πHα⇔π/
breath - /β♦εT/	*/βPε⇔τ/
kiss - /κIσ/	*/κHι⇔δ/
cash - /κΘΣ/	*/κHE⇔τ/

English voiced fricatives /ϖ/, /Δ/, /ζ/ and /Z/ are likely to pose great challenges for Thai students to utter since none of them exist in Thai in any syllable position. As a result, the replacement of English voiced fricatives with Thai consonants tends to occur across three syllable positions (initial, medial and final). For example:

Initial voiced fricatives	*Replaced with*
van - /ϖΘν/	*/ωE⎤ν/
then - /Δεν/	*/δεν/
zoo - /ζυ⎤/	*/συ⎤/
genre - /∪Z□ν♦↔/	*/τ⎦□NP↔⇓/

Medial voiced fricatives	*Replaced with*
living - /∪λIϖIN/	*/λι⇔⎤πωι⇓N/
breathing - /∪β♦ι⎤ΔIN/	*/βPι⇔⎤δι⇓N/
easy - /∪ι⎤ζι/	*//ι⇔⎤σι⇓⎤/
pleasure - /∪πλεZ↔/	*/πHPε⇔τ⎦HΦ⇓⎤/

Final voiced fricatives	*Replaced with*
leave - /λι⎤ϖ/	*/λι⇔⎤π/
soothe - /συ⎤Δ/	*/συ⇔⎤τ/
please - /πλι⎤ζ/	*/πλι⇔⎤τ/
beige - /βεIZ/	*/βε⇑⎤τ/

Regarding the above evidence, it is recommended that Thai students pay particular attention to the practice of English fricatives in all syllable positions. In practising, they should try to articulate each sound correctly with a voiceless feature before moving towards the voiced counterpart. Here are examples of practice recommended to students (see Kanokpermpoon, 2004, for more examples).

1. **/ϕ/ - /ϖ/** Move the lower lip towards the upper teeth by having a narrow gap between them. Try pronouncing /f/ before vibrating the vocal cords to produce the sound /v/.
2. **/Τ/ - /Δ/** Move the tongue tip towards the upper teeth or in between the upper and lower teeth. Leave a narrow gap between them. Try pronouncing the sound /T/ without vibrating the vocal cords before vibrating them to produce the sound /Δ/.
3. **/σ/ - /ζ/** Move the tongue blade towards the gum ridge by leaving a narrow gap between them. Pronounce the /s/ sound before vibrating the vocal cords to produce the sound /z/.
4. **/Σ/ - /Ζ/** Pronounce the /Σ/ sound by moving the front and blade of the tongue towards the area behind the gum ridge. Raise the upper lip and pronounce the sound without vibrating the vocal cords. When familiar with the sound, vibrate the vocal cords to produce the sound /Z/.

For the English sound /η/, Thai students do not have any difficulty in pronouncing it due to the existence of the sound in Thai. For example:

hi - /ηαI/ hello - /ηε∪λ↔Y/ he - /ηι⅂/

However, Kanokpermpoon (2004) has observed that /h/, which is silent in words such as honour, hour and exhaust, may, somehow, lead Thai students to pronounce it, resulting in its existence in their pronunciation.

Affricates

Regarding the Thai phonetics, there are only two affricates available, namely a voiceless aspirated alveolo-palatal affricate /τ⌡H/ and a voiceless unaspirated alveolo-palatal affricate /τ⌡/ (Harris, 1972). Comparing these to English, there are two different phonemes available, /τΣ/ and /δZ/. The accounts of Thai learners' pronunciation may be seen from different researchers as follows.

Based on an analysis of Bowman (2000), Thai affricate /τ⌡/ (or, in Bowman's analysis, /τΣ/) should not be a problem for Thai learners to utter "since the voice onset time of the vowel succeeding the articulation of Thai /τ⌡/ is considerably shorter than for English /τΣ/, causing it to sound almost indistinguishable from English /δZ/" (Bowman, 2000: 45). In the same way, the Thai aspirated /τ⌡H/ tends to be similar to English /τΣ/ (in initial position), which is, therefore, substitutable accordingly. In contrast to the analysis of Bowman (2000), Jotikasthira (1999) posits that the sounds /τΣ/ and /δZ/ do not occur in Thai and they are considered problem sounds for Thai learners to utter.

Ronakiat (2002) notes that the Thai aspirated affricate /τ⌡H/ is normally substituted for the English /τΣ/ since the places of articulation of the two sounds are very close; as a result, the two sounds are quite similar to each other. However, to pronounce the English /τΣ/ correctly, it is recommended that Thai learners raise their tongue tips to the area behind the alveolar ridge and press the articulators tightly before gradually releasing them so that the air can flow out. Ronakiat (2002) further notes that, in pronouncing the English sound /δZ/, Thai learners use Thai unaspirated affricate /τ⌡/ to substitute the target sound, resulting in a clear difference between voicing of the two sounds. Therefore, to pronounce the sound /δZ/ correctly, Thai learners of English should try to voice the sound with the same articulation as that of /τΣ/.

In pronouncing the English affricates /τΣ/ and /δZ/ in final position, Thai students tend to pronounce them with great difficulty in the same way as that of English fricatives (cf. Fricatives section above) since, according to Ronakiat (2002), they tend to replace the sounds with Thai final plosives and nasals, that is /π/, /τ/, /κ/ and ///, and /μ/, /ν/ and /N/, respectively. For example:

English words with final affricates	*Replaced with*
church - /τΣ∈⌉τΣ/	*/τ⌋HΦ⇔⌉τ|/
George - /δZ□⌉δZ/	*/τ⌋□⇔⌉τ|/

Laterals

Based on Tables 1 and 2 above, English and Thai laterals are quite similar, at least in the initial position, so Thai learners of English are unlikely to pronounce them wrongly. However, when the lateral /λ/ occurs word medially and finally in English, the realization of the two positions is quite different from that of the initial position. In the words of Roach (2002), 'clear l', with the raise of the front of the tongue, "will never occur before consonants or before a pause" (Roach, 2002: 61) while 'dark l', pronounced with the raise of the back of the tongue, "will never occur before vowels" (Roach, 2002: 61). In an analysis of Ronakiat (2002), 'dark l' occurring word finally in English tends to pose a great challenge for Thai learners of English to master since they usually replace it with Thai nasal /n/ or omit it. For example:

English words with final lateral	*Replaced with*
ball - /β□⌉λ⌈/	*/β□ν/
call - /κ□⌉λ⌈/	*/κH□⌉/

Approximants

In English, there are three approximants, /ω/, /φ/ and /♦/, the former two existing in Thai with a tap /P/. Ronakiat (2002) accounts for the difference between English and Thai /ω/ in that the former is pronounced with more rounded and protruded lips than the latter, but this does not challenge Thai learners. When considering the sound /φ/ in English and Thai, Thai learners of English do not normally have any difficulty in pronouncing it due to its similarity across both languages. However, a difficulty in pronouncing the English sound /φ/ arises when it occurs secondly as a consonant cluster after the sounds /ϕ/, /ϖ/, /η/, /τ/, /δ/ and /ν/ in British English, and the sounds /ϕ/, /ϖ/ and /η/ in American English. Thai learners tend not to pronounce it correctly due to the nonexistence of such a cluster in Thai (Ronakiat, 2002). Word examples of this phenomenon are *few*, *view*, *huge*, *tune*, *due* and *new*.

The English sound /♦/ has two distinctions in pronunciation in terms of rhotic accent and non-rhotic accent. British English is considered to represent a non-rhotic accent because, in most dialects, the spelling 'r' is usually pronounced when it occurs word initially or medially, but, word finally, only when it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel sound. In American English, however, the 'r' is pronounced across syllable positions and most Americans use a retroflex approximant /©/ interchangeably with /♦/ (Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo, 1998; and Roach, 2002).

Examples:	*British English*	*American English*
red	/♦εδ/	/♦εδ/
bird	/β∈⌉δ/	/β∈∏δ/

car /κA⌉/ /καΠ/

When Thai learners of English try to utter the English sound /♦/, two potential problems arise (Ronakiat, 2002). First, Thai people often use [λ] in place of /λ/ and /P/ in Thai syllable and this tends to transfer to the pronunciation of English /♦/. This results in a misunderstanding in their speech.

Examples:	*English*	*Thai*
read	/♦ι⌉δ/	*/λι⇔⌉τ/
lead	/λι⌉δ/	/λι⇑⌉τ/

Second, the use of the Thai tap /P/ instead of using the English /♦/ (in careful reading) results in a mispronunciation of the English 'r'.

Examples:	*English*	*Thai*
read	/♦ι⌉δ/	*/Pι⇔⌉τ/
red	/♦εδ/	*/Pε⇔⌉τ/

In order to pronounce the sound /♦/ correctly, it is recommended that Thai learners of English raise their tongue tips approximately to the area behind the alveolar ridge but never make contact with the roof of the mouth. While articulating, they have to vibrate their vocal cords and optionally round and protrude their mouth.

Teaching implications

As can be seen from the above analysis, it is important to note here that Thai teachers of English who are willing to improve the pronunciation of their students, especially regarding English consonants, take a deeper analysis of their students' pronunciation when they are articulating English consonants. If problem sounds are found, it is recommended that teachers follow the process of pronunciation teaching (Hubbard et al., 1994), which consists of recognition, discrimination and production. Also, to train students, pronunciation pedagogy that moves from listening (discrimination) to speaking (production) is advised. The following is an example of a pedagogical technique in pronunciation training of the sound /Σ/.

- ***Recognition***

EFL teachers are advised to analyse the root cause of students' pronunciation errors. For example, if a Thai student of English utters the sound /τ⌋H/ instead of /Σ/ in words such as *<u>sh</u>oe*, *na<u>t</u>ion*, or *fi<u>sh</u>*, it can be recognized that the sound /Σ/ does not exist in Thai and Thai learners of English are prone to use their native Thai fricative /τ⌋H/ in place of the target sound /Σ/. From Bowman's (2000) analysis, recognizing that the feature /τ⌋H/ is quite similar to that of the English sound /τΣ/, except the raising of the tongue tip for the target sound, it is therefore advisable that EFL teachers train their students to listen to and identify the sound /τΣ/ before the sound /Σ/, and to have them practise articulating the sound /τΣ/ before the target sound /Σ/.

- ***Discrimination***

After analysing the root cause of the /Σ/ pronunciation error, the next step of training EFL learners to produce the target sound correctly is to have them listen and discriminate it from their familiar sound, in this case the closest familiar sound to /τ⌋H/ in Thai is that of /τΣ/ in English (Bowman, 2000). In listening and speaking pedagogy,

Hubbard et al. (1994) recommend that students are exposed to listening at word level prior to sentence level. In addition, they should be exposed to the problem sound in different syllable positions (Kanokpermpoon, 2004). Teachers should try having their students discriminate between the sounds /τΣ/ and /Σ/ by raising their left hands when they hear the sound /τΣ/ and their right hands for the sound /Σ/.

Words for discrimination (*listening*)

1. chip /τΣ/	5. ship /Σ/	9. sherry /Σ/
2. catching /τΣ/	6. cashing /Σ/	10. ditch /τΣ/
3. wash /Σ/	7. watch /τΣ/	11. wish /Σ/
4. share /Σ/	8. chair /τΣ/	12. chop /τΣ/

After students can discriminate the two sounds correctly, they should listen to sentences containing the familiar sound /τΣ/ and the target sound /Σ/. Again, if they hear the sound /τΣ/, the teacher should have them raise their left hands, and their right hands for /Σ/.

Sentences for discrimination (*listening*)

1. Where did you buy the *sherry* from?
2. The *chip* looks beautiful.
3. Paul gives his *share* to his friend, Peter.

When students can discriminate the target sound from their familiar sound, it is time to proceed to the production practice.

- ***Production***

In helping EFL students correctly pronounce the target sound, in this case /Σ/, it is important to drill them, ranging from sounds in isolation to minimal pairs and sentence reading (Hubbard et al., 1994); also, teachers should try to drill sounds which are familiar to students prior to the target sounds. The first part of practising the target sound /Σ/ correctly is to have students repeat words with the familiar sound prior to the target sound. Teachers should pronounce correctly both the familiar sound and the target sound phonetically. Here are some examples to practise /Σ/, starting with the familiar sound /τΣ/ and moving to the target sound /Σ/.

Words with familiar sound for drilling (*speaking*)
chat, church, catch, search, chair, watch, ditch, teach

Words with target sound for drilling (*speaking*)
share, sherry, cash, push, wash, posh, shop, shoe, shine

Immediately, after drilling both the familiar sound and the target sound, students should practise pronouncing the target sound in *minimal pairs* with the familiar sound. According to Kelly (2003), working with minimal pairs is one of the activities that can be used to train students with pronunciation difficulties. “Minimal pairs are words or utterances which differ by only one phoneme” (e.g. Kelly, 2003, p. 18). In this case, the words *chip* /τΣIπ/ and *ship* /ΣIπ/ are minimal pairs since both words have only one phoneme difference, /τΣ/ and /Σ/, in the initial position. Here are examples of minimal pairs of the familiar sound and the target sound, /τΣ/ and /Σ/.

Minimal pairs for drilling (*speaking*)

chip /τΣ/	ship /Σ/
catching /τΣ/	cashing /Σ/
watch /τΣ/	wash /Σ/
which /τΣ/	wish /Σ/
chair /τΣ/	share /Σ/

After drilling the minimal pairs, students should pronounce the target sound in sentences; again, teachers should have them practise the familiar sound before the target sound.

Sentence pairs for drilling (*speaking*)

- Where did you buy the *cherry* from?
- Where did you buy the *sherry* from?

- Paul gives his *chair* to his friend, Peter.
- Paul gives his *share* to his friend, Peter.

Finally, teachers should have students practise the target sound in a sentence or paragraph format, possibly using tongue twisters, and make sure that they can pronounce the target sounds correctly. Here is an example.

A paragraph for practising (*speaking*)

*Sh*e sells sea *sh*ells on the sea *sh*ore;
the *sh*ells that *sh*e sells are sea *sh*ells, I’m sure.
So if *sh*e sells sea *sh*ells on the sea *sh*ore,
I’m sure that the *sh*ells are sea *sh*ore *sh*ells.

Conclusion

The number of consonants in English is a lot greater than in Thai. English sounds that do not exist in Thai are likely to pose a great challenge for Thai learners of English to utter as are sounds common to both languages but which occur in different syllable

positions. Possible solutions for Thais to tackle their pronunciation difficulties are to use their Thai phonetics in place of the English sounds or to omit the target sounds completely. With careful consideration of the differences between the two sound systems, it is recommended that Thai teachers of English guide their students using listening and speaking pedagogy, comprising recognition, discrimination and production. Through the process of careful practice, Thai EFL learners' awareness of their pronunciation will be raised and their spoken English will be more comprehensible.

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