

An Analysis of Common Pronunciation Errors Made by Adult Burmese EFL Learners: A Study Taken at the Experts English Language Center in Yangon, Myanmar

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Abstract: *This paper examines the common pronunciation errors in segmental features of English pronunciation made by Burmese adult EFL learners in Yangon, Myanmar. The study was conducted at The Experts English Language Center where most Burmese adult EFL learners attend English classes in Yangon, Myanmar. This research paper was written from the view of traditional English pronunciation teaching approach rather than using English as a Lingua-Franca framework in pronunciation teaching. As a traditional English language teaching approach, the pronunciation standard model used in this research to identify the common errors was the British RP (Received Pronunciation) model. The reason is that most Burmese students usually learn English to find work or education opportunities in English speaking countries (Min, 2008). And most English language proficiency tests such as IELTS used Received Pronunciation model in their assessments. Therefore, RP model together with the Read Aloud Test from Ann Baker's Ship or Sheep Pronunciation book were used to answer the research questions. The results were interpreted qualitatively with a consideration of reliability, suitability and validity. After common errors were identified, the root causes of those errors were highlighted with suitable recommendations for both English teachers in Myanmar and future researchers.*

Keywords: Burmese EFL Learners, Common Pronunciation Errors, English Pronunciation, Learning and Teaching, Segmental Features

Introduction

For every language learner, pronunciation plays an important role in developing their language and communication skills. On one hand, learners with correct English pronunciation will be able to interact effectively and confidently with native speakers and with people from around the world. On the other hand, learning languages would be incomplete without improving pronunciation. In addition, being able to speak with correct pronunciation would inevitably show one's ability of being competence in language skills and thus opening up a lot more job or academic opportunities (Levis, 2021). According to Khoirunida (2019), pronunciation can be defined as how the words of a language are sound. Most English learners make errors in English pronunciation. However, types of the errors and what caused them varies from one group of learners to others based on their different backgrounds and mother-tongue languages. L1, sometimes, influence and affect the pronunciations of a second language. Moreover, the pronunciation errors and mistakes made by students are assumed not the same. Jeremy (2019) defined errors as something that is done wrongly due to lack of knowledge whereas mistakes are done accidentally although the correct usage is known. Thus, it is very important for English teachers and researchers to know what kinds of common pronunciation errors usually occur in students so that those errors can be noticed and corrected early for the learners.

Background of the Study

Myanmar is one of the South East Asian countries and it is still in the list of developing countries. Since Myanmar has fallen into military leadership in 1962, its English language policy was changed. English

has never been an official language since that time and English is put on the same page as other foreign languages in Myanmar. Therefore, most people from Myanmar are weak in English proficiency skills compared to other countries. It is also said that being able to speak in English proficiently is very important in developing countries such as Myanmar. Being able to speak English would open up lots of opportunities for developing countries such as Myanmar. Thus, speaking English with correct pronunciation is very essential for Myanmar. Furthermore, the chosen organization, The Experts English Language Center is a language school located in Yangon, Myanmar. It runs English language proficiency classes with local and foreign trainers. In addition, it has served around 10,000 students since it was founded in Myanmar. Currently, it has 200 active students who are now attending English classes. At The Experts, majority of students are Burmese speakers. Thus, this research has taken place at The Experts English Language center where it can represent Adult Burmese EFL learners in Yangon, Myanmar.

Statement of the Problem / Research Gap

It has been observed that many researchers have conducted study on common pronunciation errors in their related contexts. However, little or no recent research has been found on pronunciation errors of Burmese EFL students at the time this study has taken. Furthermore, it has been stated that English is very important especially for developing countries such as Myanmar. According to English Proficiency Index (2020), Myanmar's English proficiency level ranked second lowest among Asian countries (EF EPI 2018 - EF English Proficiency Index, 2020). Turner (n.d.) also highlighted the fact that improving English pronunciation is the key that links all other aspects of improving English four skills (Turner, n.d.). Additionally, in Myanmar, most English teachers tend to skip the pronunciation part in teaching English (The Experts Internal Record File, 2021). Likewise, At the chosen organization, The Experts English Language Center, most English teachers do not focus on teaching English pronunciation. Thus, 'The Experts' could not systematically distinguish what pronunciation errors are commonly made by its students. Therefore, identifying common pronunciation errors of Burmese EFL learners at The Experts is crucially needed in benefit of both the chosen organization and Burmese students at large.

Research Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this research is "To Identify Common Pronunciation Errors Made by Adult Burmese EFL Learners at The Experts English Language Center in Yangon, Myanmar"

The research objectives of this study are as followed.

- (1) To identify the common pronunciation errors in consonant sounds
- (2) To identify the common pronunciation errors in vowel sounds
- (3) To identify the common pronunciation errors in diphthongs

Therefore, the research questions that this research looks forward to answer are given below.

- (1) What are the common pronunciation errors in consonant sounds made by Burmese EFL learners at The Experts?
- (2) What are the common pronunciation errors in vowel sounds made by Burmese EFL learners at The Experts?
- (3) What are the common pronunciation errors in diphthongs made by Burmese EFL learners at The Experts?

Scope of the Study

This research focuses only on identifying the segmental part of English pronunciation. To be exact, it emphasizes on pronunciation errors in making consonant sounds, vowel sounds and diphthongs.

Moreover, the study is made on The Experts' students who has intermediate English proficiency level and who are adult EFL learners only. All participants are native speakers of Burmese language. Therefore, this research does not ascertain the common pronunciation errors in other ethnic language speakers in Myanmar. This research does not cover the whole population of adult EFL learners in Myanmar. Hence, the study is only taken and can be accounted for The Experts' intermediate students and Burmese students of that level in general who are based in Yangon, Myanmar.

Significance of the Study

This research will be very useful and crucial for The Experts to know their students' common pronunciation errors so that they can take effective lesson planning and teaching methods to help students overcome these errors. Moreover, this research will also be beneficial for Burmese EFL learners in Myanmar as they can witness what common pronunciation errors can be occurred to them. English teachers of Myanmar can also learn students' common pronunciation errors and take necessary measures to prevent them or to improve them in their English language classes.

Moreover, in workplaces nowadays, communication skill is one of the job skills that employers do look for in candidates. Effective communication will allow tasks to be executed meritoriously and promote team working which are essential to thrive successfully in 21st Century organizations (Sonia & Lotfi, 2016). Sonia and Lotfi (2016) pointed out that having accurate and correct pronunciation would definitely help people to succeed in effective communication with other people. Hence, it can strongly be believed that this research would definitely contribute to the chosen organization and Burmese EFL learners in improving not only their pronunciation and language proficiency skills but also their communication skills as well. Last but not least, this research will benefit the future researchers who are interested to conduct researches on common pronunciation errors of Burmese EFL learners.

Literature Review:

Learning and Teaching English Phonetics

English phonetics and phonology are the essential components of English pronunciation. According to Poole (1999), English phonetics can be defined as the study of speech sounds. The branches of phonetics include articulation, transmission and perception of speech sounds (Poole, 1999). The articulatory phonetics is the study of speech organs, airstream mechanism, voicing, articulatory process of consonants and vowels, Oro-nasal process and International Phonetic Alphabet. Phonology, on the other hand, is the study of the sound system and how it is organized with rules in a language. It has two main branches; segmental and suprasegmental. Segmental phonology studies the single units of sounds such as phonemes etc. However, suprasegmental phonology, on the other hand, studies intonation and stress patterns etc. (Poole, 1999).

Pancare (2018) mentioned that teaching phonetics is complicated and it can make learners more confused as sounds are not always consistent. Kalaldehy (2016) also pointed out that most teachers of English find it difficult to teach phonetics and they are not always motivated to teach phonetic alphabets to students. Some English teachers adopted repetition method to teach English pronunciation rather than teaching phonetics as they believe in behaviorism to form habits of pronouncing words correctly. However, Saidi (2017) argued that phonetics and phonology play an important role in learning and teaching English pronunciation. Without teaching phonetics, students will not be able to learn specific sounds and patterns. They will not be independent learners. Thus, he suggested teaching phonetic alphabets in order to improve English pronunciation effectively. In opposition with this view, Vivian Cook (2016) proposed multi-Competence perspective to English language learning and teaching field. He claimed that second language acquisition process will be different for those who are bilingual or multilingual from monolingual people. Hence, according to Cook (2016), second language learners should not be compared

against native speakers' standards. Thus, some researchers and teachers who believe in multi-Competence model have found teaching phonetics with the native speaker's standards nonsense. They claimed that teaching pronunciation should focus on producing the second language and on communication with each other successfully.

Nevertheless, in reality, some people still prefer near native-like proficiency even in the job market. This model can still be very unrealistic for most teachers and learners. For example, when learners are assessed of their proficiency levels in English as a second language, CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) is widely used. Some English tests such as CEFR, IELTS, TOFEL and IGCSE English, SAT English etc. are widely accepted around the world to benchmark against learners' abilities to use English. If learners need to get Visa, Permanent Residence (PR), university degree or foreign jobs, most countries and organizations still use those tests as a standard. Thus, although the perspective of multi-competence model is invaluable and preferred by most learners and teachers, it still needs to be accepted in reality worldwide (Dervin & Zehavit Gross, 2016).

At the chosen organization 'The Experts', CEFR framework has been used to teach English as their policy (The Experts Internal Record File, 2021). In addition, most teachers and researchers, nowadays, have also recognized the importance of teaching and learning phonetics in ELT field as well. Thus, in this research, students' common pronunciation errors are identified based on standard IPA charts against native speakers' pronunciation. Likewise, Pennington and Richards (1986) stated that learning and teaching pronunciation involves three main areas which are segmental features, voice-setting features and prosodic features. In contrast, Poole (1999) said that pronunciation teaching would involve segmental, suprasegmental and phonetic alphabets. Nevertheless, English teachers are now trained to cover all aspects of phonetics in teaching English pronunciation (Learn English - British Council, 2019).

Common English Pronunciation Problems (Definition of Key Terms)

As Khoirunida (2019) pointed out in his research, common English pronunciation problems are usually occurred in consonant sounds, vowel sounds, diphthongs, voicing, articulations and the vowel system in terms of segmental phonology. For suprasegmental phonology, common problems are observed in intonation and stress (Khoirunida, 2019). Baker (2012) defined consonants as speech sounds created by an articulation with narrowing or closures of the vocal tract to form a complete or partial blockage of the flow of air (Baker, 2012). There are twenty-four consonant sounds in English as shown in the figure 1 below.

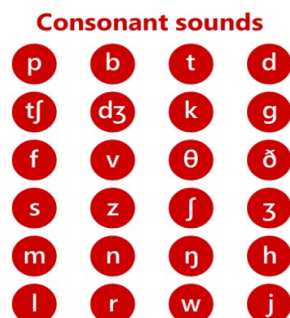


Figure 1: Consonant Sounds (Adapted from <https://www.englishradar.com/english-pronunciation/english-consonant-sounds/>)

Consonant sounds are characterized by voicing, manners of articulation and place of articulation (Baker, 2012). Voicing in consonant sounds involves two systems; voiced and unvoiced. The place of articulation is the place where obstruction occurs in the vocal track to produce the sounds. There are ten places of articulation namely as bilabial, labio-dental, dental, alveolar, post-alveolar, retroflex, velar, glottal, palatal

and labial-velar. These ten places of articulation are defined by the movements and interaction of the upper and lower articulators in the vocal track in order to produce the consonant sounds. Manners of articulation, furthermore, tell us how speech organs are used to produce the sounds. The manners of articulations are stop or plosive where the mainstream air is stopped, fricative where it allows the small air to escape with friction, affricate where the stop and fricative happens together, nasal where the airstream is passed through the nose to make sounds etc. (Baker, 2021). The detailed descriptions of how the consonants sounds are made using places of articulation and manners of articulations are shown in the figure 2 below.

Place-Voice-Manner (PVM) Chart: English

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PVM Chart: English			PLACE						
			LABIAL	CORONAL				DORSAL	
				Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
OBSTRUENTS	Stop	Voiceless	p			t		k	ʔ
		Voiced	b			d		g	
	Fricative	Voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ		
		Voiced		v	ð	z	ʒ		
	Affricate	Voiceless					tʃ		
		Voiced					dʒ		
SONORANTS	Nasal	Voiced	m			n		ŋ	
	Liquid	Lateral				l			
		Rhotic					r		
		Glide	Voiced	w				j	w

Figure 2: Consonant Sounds with Different Articulations

Vowels, on the other hand, are sounds made from the flow of the air from the lungs which go through the mouth as a resonance chamber with minimal obstruction and without audible frictions. Vowel sounds are classified according to the position of the tongue and lips and whether or not the air is released through the nose. There are fourteen vowel sounds in English as describe in the figure 3 below. Moreover, vowels can be classified as long vowels, short vowels and diphthongs. Long vowels are vowels which require making of the long sounds such as in the word 'Need' (/i:/) etc. Short vowels are vowels which require making of the short sounds such as in the word 'Rob' (/ɒ/) etc. Diphthongs are sounds which contain two vowel sounds together such as in 'Near' (/iə/) etc. (Pachina, 2020).

Vowel sounds

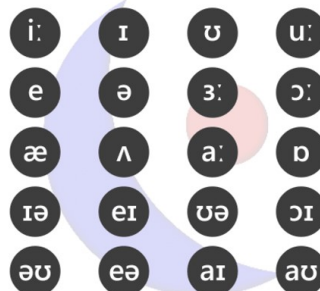


Figure 3: Vowel Sounds

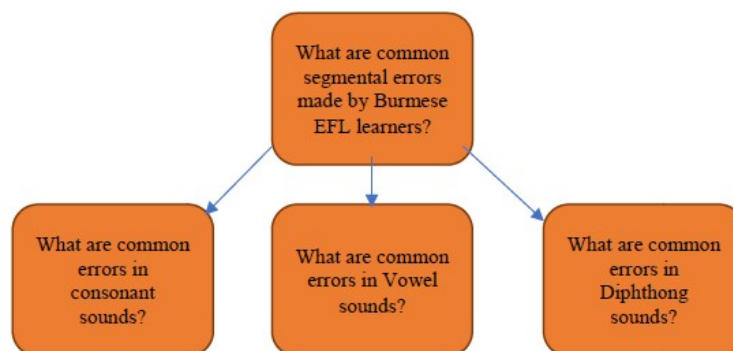
Burmese Language and English Language Pronunciations

Burmese is one of the Sino-Tibetan languages and it is tonal. Unlike English, Burmese language has 45 letters in its vowels and consonants. It is said by Pachina (2020) that English pronunciation is the most difficult one to learn for Myanmar students as they are completely different languages (Baker, 2012). In

most of the schools in Myanmar, students do not have to learn English phonetics. Instead, they use repetition method to improve their English pronunciation. Pachina (2020) highlighted that most Burmese students usually find ending sounds very difficult to pronounce. The reason can be the fact that Burmese language does not have any closing sounds just like in French (Tinnyuntpu, 2018). Besides, Parish (1963) proposed in his research that the voiceless stops /p/, /t/, /k/ are the most problematic sounds for Burmese students. However, for minimal pairs of voiced-voiceless contrast like pin-bin, tin-din and kill-gill, Burmese students do not have any problems pronouncing at all. Moreover, he added the fact that Burmese students had no problems making sounds in labial, post-dental (or alveolar), and velar positions. By contrast, Pachina (2020) claimed that the most difficult sounds for Burmese students to pronounce in English are /t/ and /d/. He said that Burmese students always often confuse those two sounds with each other. Similarly, intonation and word stress in English can also be problematic for Burmese students. As said by Ozerov (2020), Burmese language has a rich tone with different variations in sentence intonation and it is very complex in nature. When speaking in English, most students tend to put equal stress with rich tones on each word resulting in English pronunciation with strong Burmese accents (Ozerov, 2020). Moreover, most Burmese students speak English with falling intonations (Geissler, 2020). This can be because of the Burmese language interference on English pronunciation as well. Other usual types of pronunciation errors made by most students can be ‘/v/’ sound often mispronounced as ‘/w/’, ‘/dʒ/’ sound often mispronounced as ‘/y/’ and /e/ is mispronounced as /ε/ sound etc. (Sánchez et al., n.d.)

Research Conceptual Framework

Therefore, after reviewing the related literature, it became obvious that errors made by most Burmese students in either consonant or vowel sounds of English pronunciation haven’t been identified by researchers specifically. Thus, this research has been carried out in order to fill the research gap of identifying specific segmental errors made by most Burmese EFL learners. The conceptual framework of this research has been described as follows.

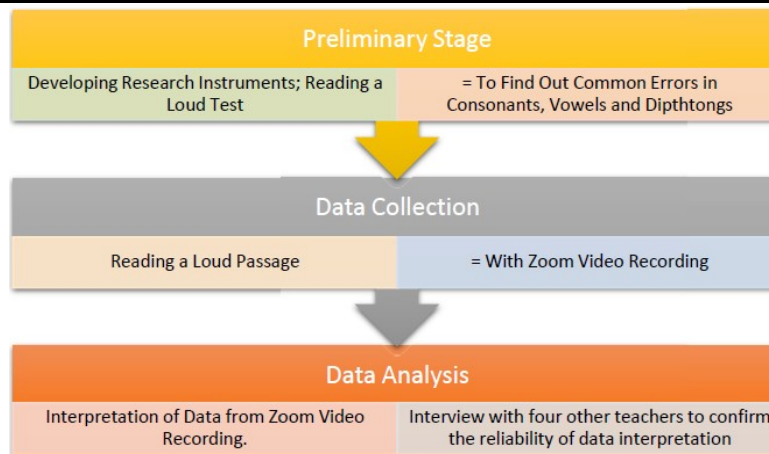


Research Methodology

In this section, the detailed steps of carrying out the whole research process have been explained with separate sub-headings. This section will cover the information on participants, research instruments, sampling, data collection and procedures etc.

Research Methodological Framework

There are three main stages involved in carrying out this research. They are preliminary, data collection and data analysis which were performed step by step.



Participants and Sampling

At The Experts, there are 30 active students who are studying intermediate level English classes as of November 14th, 2021 by the time this research was carried out. Thus, the whole population can be considered 30 in numbers. The sampling methods used were purposive sampling with participants who are from Yangon, Myanmar. All participants are native Burmese speakers who are learning English online with The Experts English Language Center. The participants from the intermediate level are decided to be chosen because students of the intermediate level have reached a certain English proficiency level which would make the researcher easier to differentiate between pronunciation errors and careless mistakes in making consonant and vowel sounds by Burmese students. Moreover, the participants were informed that the data gathered from them would be collected and used in this research. All the participants agreed to take part in this research. There were no absent participants. All participants took part in this research.

Research Instruments

Two main research instruments have been used in this research. The first one is a Read Aloud Test adapted from the book “ship or sheep” by Ann Baker (2006). The Read Aloud Test is a shopping list which covers all the consonants and vowel sounds of English. The reason of choosing the Read Aloud Test instrument from Ann Baker’s was that it was a pronunciation diagnostic test that covers all the sounds in consonants, vowels and diphthongs. Moreover, the book ship or sheep was revised three times with consultations from professors, teachers and researchers which were published from Cambridge University Press. Besides, Ship or Sheep was a widely used pronunciation course-book with the intermediate level diagnostic test. Thus, the instruments chosen can be called reliable and suitable with the research questions that this research tried to answer (Baker & Cambridge University Press, 2006). The Read Aloud Test and Result Interpretation Sheet are attached in Appendix 1.

Data collection, Data Management and Data Analysis

The type of data mainly gathered was qualitative data with interpretations based on the researcher’s own teaching experience. So, this research can be called qualitative research. In the data collection process, first of all, all the 30 participants were gathered on zoom video appointed class. Secondly, ethical consent was asked and the detailed steps of this research were explained to them. Next, participants were explained about the Read Aloud Test and let them ask questions that they were not clear of. Then, difficult words and words that participants might not know on the Read Aloud Test were explained as Baker (2006) mentioned in her book that teachers or researchers must first explain the difficult words so

as to distinguish errors from mistakes in this pronunciation test. Finally, participants were asked to read the passage ‘Shopping List’ aloud one by one and it was recorded.

After the data was collected, it was interpreted by using zoom video recording that was recorded in the earlier data collection process. The interpretation was made based on researcher’s own teaching experience of ten years and guidelines from Baker (2006). When the sound students made was unclear, the recording was played multiple times in order to avoid misinterpretation of the data. After the interpretation stage was over, the results were consulted with four other English teachers who have teaching experience of more than five years at The Experts in order to make ensure that the data is reliable and correctly interpreted. Once the data have been interpreted and consulted, the final findings are presented using tables and pie-charts.

Findings and Data Analysis

In the data collection from the read aloud test, the findings were categorized according to errors in consonant sounds, vowel sounds and diphthongs as described in the figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Findings from the Read Aloud Test

Types of Pronunciation Errors	Mispronounced Symbols	No. of students mispronounced the sounds	Percentage
Consonants	1. /dʒ/ (jam)	2	6%
	2. /ʒ/ (Television)	28	93%
	3. /tʃ/ (Chinese)	3	10%
	4. /g/ (Egg)	5	16%
Vowels	1. /e/ (Bread)	1	3%
	2. /æ/ (Man)	2	6%
	3. /ə/ (Bun)	4	13%
	4. /ɜ:/ (Girl)	26	86%
	5. /a:/ (Heart)	30	100%
Diphthongs	1. /ɔɪ/ (Boy) (Toy)	29	96%
	2. /eə/ (Chair)	22	73%

Common Errors in Consonant Sounds

In the findings, it showed that 28 out of 30 students mispronounced the sound “/ʒ/” (Television) as “/f/” (Information) which accounts for around 93% of the total population. Second most common error made by students was /g/ ending in the word ‘Egg’. 5 out of 30 students didn’t pronounce /g/ sound at the end of the word. Other minor errors were /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ sounds which only accounts for 10 % and 6% of the total population. However, in all other 20 consonants, all students do not have any struggles in pronouncing the correct sounds. It is astonishing to find out that all students could pronounce all other

consonant sounds except only four consonants which were /dʒ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /g/, respectively. The data can be seen in the figure 4 as above.

Common Errors in Vowel Sounds

For the vowel sounds, out of total 14 vowels, pronunciation errors were found only in five sounds which are /a:/, /ɜ:/, /ə/, /æ/ and /e/ which can be seen in the figure 4 above. The most common error found was /a:/ (as in heart) in all 30 students which yield for 100% in total population. All 30 students have problems pronouncing the sound 'a:'. They confused the sound /a:/ with /ɑ/ (as in hot). The second most common error was in the sound 'ɜ:/' (as in girl). 26 Students out of 30, which is 86% of the whole population, wrongly pronounced the sound 'ɜ:/' with 'e/'. Other minority errors were 'ə/' (Bun) sound with 'a/' sound which is 13%, 'æ/' (man) sound with 'e/' sound which is 6% and /e/ (bread) with 'i:/' which is 3% of the total respondents, correspondingly.

Common Errors in Diphthongs

There are eight diphthong sounds in English. They are /aɪ/, /eɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/, /eə/, /ɪə/, /ɔɪ/ and /ʊə/. Out of eight diphthongs, all students at The Experts mispronounced only two sounds of diphthongs which are /ɔɪ/ (as in Boy) and /eə/ (as in chair) shown in the figure 4 above. 29 out of 30 students which is around 96% pronounced /ɔɪ/ as /aɪ/. Instead of saying the 'boy' pronunciation as "/bɔɪ/", nearly all of the students said "/baɪ/". The second most common error was /eə/ as in chair which accounts for 73% of the total population. They mispronounced as the chair as "/tʃeɪ/" instead of the correct one "/tʃeə/".

Other Findings from the Read Aloud Test

After analyzing the common errors in consonants, vowels and diphthongs, other beneficial findings were also discovered from The Read Aloud Test as illustrated in the figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Other Findings

Other Pronunciation Errors	Symbols	Total Number of students mispronounced the ending sounds	Total Percentage of Errors
(1) Pronouncing the plural morpheme "s"	/s/ (Plates) (Spoons)	1	3%
(2) Pronouncing the plural morpheme "es"	/əs/ (Sausages) (Oranges)	27	90%
(3) Pronouncing the ending sounds in words	/p/(Shop), /d/(Bread), /b/(Bob), /k/(Milk), /m/(Jam)	29	99%

There are three types of other pronunciation errors found in this test among participants which were

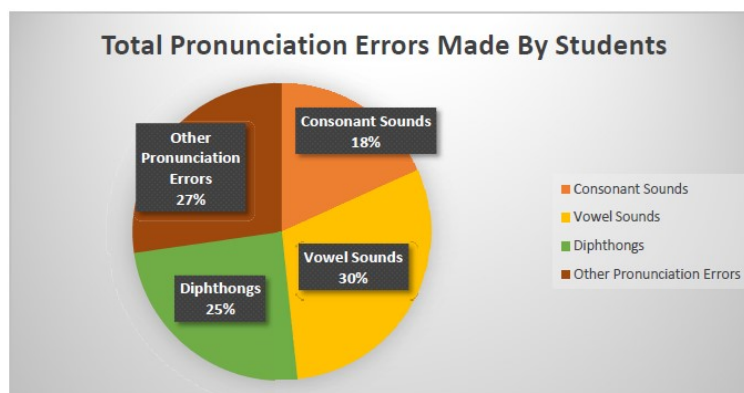
1. Failing to pronounce plural morphemes "s" in plural endings of words
2. Mispronouncing the plural morpheme "es" as "/s/" and
3. Failing to pronounce the endings of consonants /p/(Shop), /d/(Bread), /b/(Bob), /k/(Milk), and /m/(Jam)

99% of the students found it hard to pronounce the word endings in consonant sounds such as /p/(Shop), /d/(Bread), /b/(Bob), /k/(Milk), and /m/(Jam). 90% of the students wrongly pronounced /əs/ as /s/ in words that end with 'es' such as sausages and oranges. Other 3% of the students didn't pronounce /s/ endings in plural words.

The Summary of the Findings

After all the analysis of the data from all sections, the findings can be summarized by the following pie-chart in figure 6 as follows.

Figure 6: An Overview of the Findings



Overall, it can be summarized that most segmental pronunciation errors were found in the following areas.

- Errors in vowel sounds which are 30%
- Errors in word endings of plural and consonants which account for 27%
- Errors in Diphthong sounds which yield for 25% and
- Errors in consonant sounds which cover 18% of the total population.

Discussion and Recommendation

After the analysis of the data, it was clear that the long vowel sounds such as heart /a:/ and girl /ɜ:/ are most problematic for the Burmese EFL learners at The Experts. All students know the meaning and correct pronunciation of girl and heart at an intermediate level. However, they just couldn't pronounce /a:/ and /ɜ:/ sounds correctly which can be the fact that these sounds are absent in Burmese language.

Likewise, words ending in consonant sounds of /p/, /d/, /b/, /k/, /m/ are the second most trouble sounds for Burmese EFL learners at The Experts. This can be due to the fact that there is no closing sounds in Burmese language. Thus, Burmese learners should be given time to work on their ending sounds beside teaching the main lessons.

Moreover, the third most common errors are pronouncing the diphthongs /ɔɪ/ and /eə/ sounds because there are no such sounds in Burmese language. Burmese language is monophthongal language. Thus, students should be given separate time to practice diphthongs during the class as well. For English consonant sounds, which most of them also exist in Burmese language, are not a very big problem for Burmese ELF learners. However, the consonant sound "/z/" should be practice more as this was the most difficult sound for learners among other consonant sounds as there is no /z/ sound in Burmese.

Thus, by looking at all the common errors, it can be realized that most errors of intermediate students are caused by L1 interference on L2. For learning and teaching English pronunciation in Myanmar context, most of the teachers do not teach English phonetics in their classrooms (Tin, 2013). They thought that it is time-consuming. Furthermore, they usually use shadowing method to teach English pronunciation together with other skills lessons (Tin, 2013). However, based on the findings of this research, most common errors are caused by L1 interference on L2. Hence, teaching English phonetics is the only way to learn crucial sounds in English which do not exist in Burmese language. Saidi (2017) also mentioned that teaching phonetics is the best method to help students learn specific sounds in English. Min (2008) also agreed with Saidi (2017) that teaching phonetics can help minimized the L1 interference on L2 (Min, 2008). One of the good methods to teach English phonetics is Adrian Underhill's model. Underhill (2005) has developed a pronunciation teaching model called Adrian Underhill's Sound Foundations which would help students to minimize L1 interference on L2. In this model, teaching and learning pronunciation emphasizes on the physicality of sound productions. Students learn what parts and organs are used to make specific sounds and they try to produce those sounds by trying to adjust their organs too. For example, teachers teach specific sounds by increasing the awareness of the movements of organs involved in making those sounds. And students study the organs of mouth and tongue movements and control of airflow to produce particular sounds in English such as the height and front/back of the tongue for vowels, and the manner and place of articulation for consonants etc. When students are fully aware of which organs and movements are involved, then they can produce the sounds successfully by adjusting their movements of organs (Underhill, 2005). Thus, this model can help students achieve near native-like English pronunciation. In addition, students learn best of what they can see and hear clearly. Min (2008) also agreed with Underhill (2005) that learning English pronunciation is physical. Thus, English teachers in Myanmar should teach English phonetics rather than just using shadowing method to teach specific sounds in English that do not exist in Burmese language.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has fulfilled all the research questions that were asked in the earlier of this paper. It successfully identified the common errors of Burmese EFL learners in all segmental aspects of English pronunciation which are consonants, vowels and diphthongs. Useful recommendations for English teachers and students to improve their segmental parts of English pronunciation have also been made in the former chapter of this paper. However, this research needs to cover the suprasegmental parts of English pronunciation such as errors in intonation and stress. The common errors of Burmese EFL learners in suprasegmental aspects of English pronunciation were not answered by this research. Moreover, there are many ethnic groups in Myanmar whose first language is not Burmese. Thus, this research's findings cannot be equally applied to other ethnic students who speak more than two languages in Myanmar. So, future researchers need to fulfill the needs of different ethnic people of Myanmar in English language pronunciation learning and teaching as well. Last but not least, although this research is not generalizable for the whole Myanmar population, it has pointed out the common segmental errors in English pronunciation by Burmese students and the importance of teaching English phonetics in English classrooms in Myanmar.

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Appendix 1

1. Read Aloud Test

13

Shopping list

- 1 some cheese (cheap cheese); some tea (Chinese tea)
- 2 fifty biscuits; four fish
- 3 ten eggs (big eggs)
- 4 jam; apples and oranges; a cabbage
- 5 ten tomatoes (large tomatoes)
- 6 five kilos of veal (very good veal)
- 7 some strong string (long string)
- 8 four forks (small forks); spoons; cups; small paper plates
- 9 some good sugar; milk; coffee; a cake
- 10 pick up Jude's blue shoes at the shoe shop; two kilos of brown rice; a grapefruit
- 11 nuts; honey; half a dozen hot buns
- 12 one lemon; nine brown onions; flowers for the house
- 13 some paper for my mother's letters; collect Grandfather's leather jacket from the cleaner's
- 14 a girl's shirt and skirt (size thirteen); cold drinks (don't get dry ginger); some good bread
- 15 eight small cakes and paper plates; some sausages for supper
- 16 some yellow roses for your sister
- 17 white wine (sweet wine); some ice
- 18 beer for Bob (buy it from the pub near here)
- 19 some shampoo for Claire's hair; some pears
- 20 some tins of New Zealand peas, or frozen beans
- 21 fresh English fish from the fish shop
- 22 a toy for the little boy (a blue or yellow ball)
- 23 something for Mr Smith (it's his birthday on Thursday)
- 24 a small cheap television for the garage

2. Result Interpretation Sheet

RESULTS SHEET AND FINDINGS from *List of likely errors*

In any of the three columns, place a cross against the sound where there may be difficulty.

SOUNDS	(Diagnostic page Test B)	Diagnostic Test A	Findings from <i>List of likely errors</i>
1 /i:/ (sheep)	3	1a	
/tʃ/ (chip)	120	1b	
2 /ʃ/ (ship)	7	2a	
/f/ (fan)	131	2b, 2c	
3 /e/ (pen)	11	3a	
/g/ (girl)	101	3b	
4 /æ/ (man)	15	4a	
/dʒ/ (jam)	124	4b	
5 /ɑ:/ (heart)	23	5a, 5b	
/t/ (table)	89	5c	
6 /v/ (van)	135	6a, 6b	
7 /ɒ/ (clock)	29	7a	
/ŋ/ (ring)	168	7b, 7c	
8 /ɔ:/ (ball)	174	8a	
/p/ (pen)	81	8b	
9 /ʊ/ (book)	36	9a	
/k/ (key)	97	9b	
10 /u:/ (boot)	39	10a	
/r/ (rain)	176	10b	
11 /ʌ/ (cup)	19	11a	
/h/ (hat)	147	11b	
12 /n/ (nose)	165	12a	
/aʊ/ (house)	63	12b	
13 /ə/ (camera)	48	13a	
/ð/ (the feather)	155	13b	
14 /ɜ:/ (girl)	43	14a, 14b, 14c	
/d/ (door)	93	14d	
15 /eɪ/ (male)	54	15a	
/s/ (sun)	107	15b	
16 /əʊ/ (phone)	66	16a, 16b	
/j/ (yellow)	143	16c	
17 /aɪ/ (fine)	57	17a	
/w/ (window)	139	17b	
18 /ɪə/ (year)	70	18a	
/b/ (baby)	85	18b	
19 /eə/ (chair)	73	19a	
/m/ (mouth)	162	19b	
20 /z/ (zoo)	110	20a	
21 /ʃ/ (shoe)	114	21a	
22 /ɔɪ/ (boy)	60	22a	
/l/ (letter)	172	22b	
23 /θ/ (thin)	151	23a, 23b	
24 /ɜ:/ (television)	117	24a	