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The Effect of Multimedia Videos in Reducing English Consonant Sequence Clusters Errors among 9th-Grade Students in the Northern Region of Jerash District: An Experimental Study

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the phonological consonant sequence clusters errors in the process of learning English as a second language among 9th-grade students in Jerash District. The participants' speech was recorded using a high-quality recorder before it was transcribed. The study sample consisted of ten students; five of them were males and five of them were females. It was found that most of the phonological sequence clusters errors committed by the 9th-grade students were represented by inserting a short vowel between the last two consonants of the morphological words and geminating the fricative consonant sound. As a remedial plan for those errors, the participants were exposed to an American language pronunciation by watching native speakers pronouncing the same words to improve their consonant sequence clusters errors. It was concluded that the phonological sequence clusters errors committed by the students were significantly reduced after they were exposed to the authentic language pronunciation.

***Keywords*:** multimedia videos, phonology, consonant sequence clusters, Jerash district

1. Introduction

Observably, phonological consonant sequence clusters errors in learning English occur between the end of the first syllable and the beginning of the second syllable of the same word pronounced by English-language learners. Also, they occur in the morphological words when a certain suffix is added to them like the word "finish + ed" /fɪnɪʃt/ with the result that a short vowel is inserted between the last two consonants, pronouncing it as /fɪnɪʃid/. Students' consonant sequence clusters errors emerged when they are requested to read a specific text, answer the teacher's questions, and perform their paired dialogue in front of the class. Most of their consonant sequence clusters errors are represented by geminating a fricative consonant sound and inserting a short vowel between the last two consonant sounds in the morphological words. English-language teachers may utilize many techniques, methods, and even technological devices to reduce English-

language learners' phonological clusters errors. They may expose the students to an authentic language pronunciation model pronounced by native speakers and transcribe the correct pronunciation on the board.

1.1. The Research Question

This study aimed to answer the following question:

Do English-language learners improve their phonological consonant sequence clusters errors when they are exposed to an authentic language pronunciation?

1.2. The Rationale of the Study

The error in pronouncing consonant sequence clusters between the two syllables of the same word as well as in the morphological words motivates phonological researchers to examine that phenomenon. Also, this error motivates them to utilize suitable techniques to provide a remedial plan for such an error.

1.3. Review of Related Literature

Generally, the importance of phonological errors has been recognized by a number of scholars, especially those who concentrate on language learning. Therefore, this section is intended to review some studies that have dealt with teaching phonology which I aim to tackle in my research paper.

Alice Chan (2010) investigated Cantonese ESL learners' acquisition of English obstruent, either nasal onsets or obstruent liquid onsets. Also, he investigated their acquisition of two-member onsets and three-member onsets manipulating the independent variables, Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH), (Eckman 1977). In addition, the Interlanguage Structural Conformity Hypothesis (ISCH) was used in Chan's study (Eckman et al., 1989). Chan collected his study sample from twelve learners. The participants' speech was recorded using a high-quality mini-disk recorder and transcribed by two raters.

The results of the study showed that the implicational relationships between the different categories of onset clusters and interlanguages are born out. Also, the study results revealed that, the inherent difficulty of a segment resulting from the phonotactic constraints of a learner's mother tongue remains the most crucial factor contributing to the overall level of difficulty of an onset cluster.

Jane Setter (2008) examined consonant clusters and phonotactics in the English spoken by Hong Kong Cantonese speakers, i.e. the number of consonants produced in syllable onsets and codas, and the make-up of syllable onsets and codas in terms of consonantal combinations. Jane's study tried to answer the following questions:

• How do consonant clusters in HKE differ from BrE and the L1?

• What are the patterns of phonotactics in two-consonant clusters in HKE?

The data of the study were collected from twenty Hong Kong Cantonese speakers 10 female and 10 male recorded over a three-year period, from 1996 to 1999. Participants were all students in their third and final year of study at a university in Hong Kong at the time of data collection. It was

found that Hong Kong English speakers produced fewer syllable types and fewer consonant clusters in comparison with speakers of British English. Further analysis of the content of Hong Kong English, two-consonant syllable onsets and codas, revealed that there were differences from Cantonese, which is the speakers' L1.

Katie Alcock (2006) investigated the spelling of consonant clusters in Kiswahili. Once the children learn to spell a certain word, they tend to omit one consonant of a cluster for initial clusters, the second consonant, and for medial nasal clusters. The data of the study were collected from ninety–three children at schools in the third and fourth grades. All children had previously been undergone Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT Spelling). It was found that consonant clusters consisting of a nasal consonant first and another consonant second were harder to spell than words with either type of consonant alone. Overall, this increased difficulty was due to spelling errors in the nasal consonant rather than the other consonant.

2. Methods

2.1. Statement of the Problem

While the researcher was teaching English language, he noted there were some phonological errors committed by 9th-grade students. The phonological errors committed by the students were incorrect pronunciation of sequence clusters. Students pronounced the word **"excite" /Ik'saɪt**/ as **/Iks'saɪt**/; where they geminated the fricative phoneme /s/. Another error was a morphological error, such as **"finished" /fɪnɪʃt/**. The students pronounced it as **/fɪnɪʃɪd/**; where they inserted a short vowel between the last two consonants. These phonological errors committed by students motivated the researcher to conduct this study, appropriating the multimedia video as an independent variable to measure to what extent that device reduces those phonological errors.

2.2. Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to investigate phonological errors in pronouncing consonant sequence clusters among the 9th-grade students, in the North region of Jerash city in Jordan.

2.3. Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of ten subjects from the 9th-grade, five of them were female, and five of them were male.

2.4. Data Collection

The data collection method of this study was based on eliciting different speech styles of each participant employing four different tasks, namely, reading single words aloud or morphological words, reading complete sentences, reading certain passages, and free conversations.

2.5. Data Analysis Methods

The participants' speech in each of the four tasks was recorded using a high-quality video recorder. The participants' speech containing consonant sequence clusters errors was transcribed for analysis.

2.6. Research Procedures

1- The group subjects pronounced the collected data as an oral pre-test.

2- The researcher transcribed the subjects' speech containing consonant sequence clusters errors pronounced by the subjects.

3- The collected data were pronounced by two English native speakers; one is a male and the other is a female.

4- The researcher videoed the English native speakers' speech.

5- Subjects watched the video over three weeks: three days per week and an hour per day. After that, the subjects repeated the pronunciation of the collected data as a post-test.

6- The researcher transcribed the subjects' speech containing consonant sequence clusters after watching the video and analyzed their speech to measure to what extent their speech improved.

3. Findings

This experimental study concluded that most students' consonant sequence clusters errors were exemplified by inserting a short vowel between the last two consonants in the morphological words and geminating the fricative consonant sound. Their consonant sequence clusters errors occurred in the four different speech styles, namely, reading single words or morphological words, reading complete sentences, reading certain passages, and free conversations. After the subjects experienced the video pronounced by American native speakers, they rarely committed consonant sequence clusters errors in the four different speech styles. For example, they did not geminate the fricative consonant sound as well as they did not insert a short vowel sound between the last two consonants in the morphological words. The research subjects showed a pleasant desire to watch a video pronounced by American native speakers to reduce their English consonant sequence clusters errors. Also, it was concluded that exposing English-language learners to authentic language pronunciation, such as watching an English video, can reduce phonological consonant sequence clusters errors among them. In addition, the result of this study answered the researcher's question positively, where the subjects in this study improved their phonological consonant sequence clusters errors.

3.1. Materials

Pre-test

Table **1** shows the groups of words pronounced by the subjects, including the consonant sequence clusters errors.

	Female Subjects		**Male Subjects**
Subjects1,2,3,4,5	exclude /ɪk**s's**klu:d/	Subject 1,2,3,4,5	exclude /ɪk**s's**klu:d/
	excite /ɪk**s's**aɪt/		excite /ɪk**s's**aɪt/
	extend /ɪks'tend/		extend /ɪks'tend/
	school /ɪs 'ku:l/		school /ɪs 'ku:l/
	expensive /ɪk**s's**pensɪv/		expensive /ɪk**s's**pensɪv/

	finished /fini**ʃid**		finished /fini**ʃid**
	walked / wɔ:**kıd/**		walked / wɔ:**kıd/**
	notes /nəʊ**tıs**/		notes /nəʊ**tıs**/
	used /ju:**zıd**/		used /ju:**zıd**/

Post-Test

Table **2** shows the groups of words pronounced by the subjects after experiencing the American native speakers' speech

	Female Subjects		**Male Subjects**
Subjects1,2,3,4,5	exclude /ık'sklu:d/	Subject 1,2,3,4,5	exclude /ık'sklu:d/
	excite /ık'saıt/		excite /ık'saıt/
	extend /ık'stend/		extend /ık'stend/
	school /sku:l/		school /sku:l/
	expensive /ık'spensıv/		expensive /ık'spensıv/
	finished /finiʃt/		finished /finiʃt/
	walked / wɔ:kt/		walked / wɔ:kt/
	notes /nəʊts/		notes /nəʊts/
	used /ju:zd/		used /ju:zd/

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