COMMON ERRORS IN PRONOUNCING FINAL CONSONANTS OF ENGLISH-MAJORED SOPHOMORES AT TAY DO UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

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Abstract:

It is not deniable that pronunciation is considered one of the most crucial parts of learning English helping learners enhance their communication in both speaking and listening comprehension. To reach a level of a clear and precise pronunciation has never been an effortless task; however, it is a far more problematic one for English majored students regardless of their learning years. For this reason, the study entitled "Common Errors in Pronouncing Final Consonants of English-Majored Sophomores at Tay Do University" was implemented with the aim at investigating the errors that English-majored students encountered in pronouncing final consonants. 80 English-majored sophomores from course 13 at Tay Do University were selected to participate in the study. Questionnaires and recording tests were delivered to the participants for collecting data and getting more information. The collected data from the two instruments mentioned above were all analyzed afterward. The findings of the research revealed that sophomores of English major often mispronounced the final consonants, particularly /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ in two main mistakes, including omission and substitution. The results of this study may also be useful for those who are interested in this field.

Keywords: common errors; pronouncing final consonants; English-majored sophomores

1. Introduction

This chapter mentions (1) the rationale, (2) the significance of the study, and (3) the organization of the thesis.

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1.1. Rationale

Pronunciation is the most important and difficult issue that non-native English speakers have to face when studying English. Improper pronunciation can lead to negative impression, misunderstanding and ineffective communication. Although many Vietnamese people begin their English education very early at schools, they cannot pronounce English properly because of some certain reasons. When people have imprecise pronunciation, it is easy for the listeners to misunderstand or comprehend conversely. For this reason, it is not easy for those who want to be good at pronunciation because the sound systems of the mother tongue and foreign language are different in many aspects.

Bintuki (2008) argued that almost all of the second language learners believe that pronunciation is the main difficulty when speaking English. Since the systems of final consonants are different between Vietnamese and English. As Nguyen (as cited in Ngo, 2005; Tran, 2002) showed that although the Vietnamese language only has six final consonants such as /p, t, k, m, n, ŋ/, they are not often produced sounds. While English has the variety of more complex final consonants /p, b, f, v, s, z, tʃ, dʒ, ʒ, ʃ, θ, ð,…/ and they may be articulated in English. The amount of research about the pronunciation problems of second language learners is growing so far, for both international and national studies. For instance, Nguyen (2007) researched the differences in Vietnamese and English final consonants which led to the difficulties of Vietnamese in pronouncing English final consonants. Al-Aqlobi (2013) investigated the differences in pronouncing and perceiving the final consonant clusters between English and Arabic language. In recent years, Perozzo and Alves (2014) analyzed how Southern Brazilian EFL learners perceive the distinctions concerning place of articulation in unreleased voiceless stops /p/ /t/ and /k/ in word-final position in English. Nguyen (2017) proved whether English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University often make mistakes in pronouncing /s/, /z/ and /iz/ of the ending sounds.

However, there has not been many researches done on this problem. That is the cause this study investigates on common errors with final consonants, specifically, pairs of the ending sounds /s/ vs /z/, /s/ vs /ʃ/ and /f/ vs /v/. Thus, this paper found out whether students often make mistakes with these final consonants and some common errors in pronouncing final sounds. This research desires both students and teachers to realize the differences between Vietnamese and English language soon. And they must attempt to find an effective solution for themselves to deal with the influences of the mother tongue on their English pronunciation.

1.2. The significance of the study

After investigating common errors with final consonants, the findings of the study were hoped that the students may reduce the mistakes of their pronunciation as well as in their communication. And the students would be able to pronounce three pairs of ending consonants /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ more exactly so that they could have full confidence to say it out loud.

Besides analyzing the causes, it also helped teachers who teach English pronunciation to understand the matter and quickly apply more practice in their classroom routine well. Therefore, students might succeed in reaching better effects in their learning and teachers may achieve particular goals of their education.

1.3. The organization of the study

The research is made up of 5 main chapters as follows.

- Chapter 1 - Introduction provides the rationale, significance and organization of the study.
- Chapter 2 - Literature Review covers the theoretical background of pronunciation, consisting of the concepts of pronunciation, the importance of pronunciation, the errors in pronouncing final consonants and the previous study.
- Chapter 3 - Research Methodology indicates the study's method employed in this thesis including such features as research design, participants, instruments and procedure. Beside, research aims, research questions and hypothesis are also listed here.
- Chapter 4 - Results and Discussion report the findings of the research to figure out the participants' common errors in pronouncing final consonants. Then, the discussion will follow to wrap up this chapter.
- Chapter 5 - Conclusions, Implications, Limitations and Recommendations give the conclusions, implications reflect on the limitations of the study and put forward recommendations for further research.

2. Literature review

This chapter describes in detail (1) the definitions of pronunciation, (2) the importance of pronunciation, (3) the errors in pronouncing final consonants, and (4) the previous studies.

2.1. Definitions of pronunciation

Pronunciation is a key to success of communication process. Without accurate pronunciation, messengers received will be misunderstood or meaningless. Pronunciation is defined in many various related studies.

First of all, pronunciation is "*the way a word or a language is spoken, or the manner in which someone utters a word. If one is said to have "correct pronunciation", then it refers to both within a particular* dialect", according to Wikipedia. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8th end (2008) made clear pronunciation is "*the way in which are language or particular word or sound pronounced*". The Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary also stated that pronunciation is the way in which a word or letter is said, or said correctly, or the way in which a language is spoken. Meanwhile, Hoang (2016) defined that pronunciation is a method of producing sounds so that the speaker can express ideas and feelings with other people. Cook (1996 as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016) defined

pronunciation as the production of English sounds. Pronunciation is learnt by repeating sounds and correcting them when produced inaccurately. When learners start learning pronunciation, they make new habits and overcome the difficulties resulting from the first language. According to Yates (2002 as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016), pronunciation is the production of sounds that is used for making meaning.

Furthermore, Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre, 2002 stated, "*Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language*". Pronunciation is an essential element to master in order to speak the language as mentioned by Chitravelu, 2005; "*A very important part of learning the spoken language is the learning and teaching of pronunciation skills. It is necessary to teach pronunciation beginning from Year 1 to help students perceive as well as produce the sounds of the English Language*". Besides, Willing (1993) said, "*Mastering the sounds and pronunciation of the target language is the high priority for the speakers of English*".

Moreover, pronunciation has been described as the "Cinderella" area of the language learning because pronunciation is forgetful by teachers like "Cinderella" who is also neglected from the social life by her stepsisters in the famous fairy tale (see Çimenli, 2015). In another research, Chavangklang (2013) also agreed that pronunciation is awarded as one of the main subjects of L2 (second language), students are still difficult to deal with English pronunciation although they have studied English for many years.

In addition to many studies, pronunciation is the production of a sound system which does not interfere with communication either from the speakers' or the listeners' viewpoint (Paulston and Burder, 1976). Pronunciation is the way of uttering a word in an accepted manner (Otlowski, 1998). Richards and Schmidt (2002) stated that pronunciation is the way a certain speech sounds in the month, pronunciation stresses more on the way of sounds are produced by the hearer.

To sum up, these definitions illustrated that pronunciation is an important tool in communication. Pronunciation helps learners have a clearer and better understanding when they are in communicating with native speakers, foreigners and English learners and it supports learners improve the other English competences effectively.

2.2. The importance of pronunciation

To every English-speaking learner, the first point they need to concern is pronunciation. They have to know the way to pronounce the words accurately before they dive into other skills. Therefore, pronunciation is one of the most important things that learners have to master in order to communicate appropriately and fluently. Ha (2005) claimed that many foreigners comment that only a small number of Vietnamese people have the ability to speak English intelligibly in communication. Similarly, Burns (2003) claimed: "*Clear pronunciation is essential in spoken communication. Even where learners produce minor*

inaccuracies in vocabulary and grammar, they are more likely to communicate effectively when they have good pronunciation and intonation".

Good pronunciation skills are a key element to every ESL (English as a Second Language) student's ability to communicate in English (Stead, 2010). Thus, good pronunciation skills and communication ability are closely linked. Pronunciation is an integral part of communication as implied by Hinofotis and Baily (1980:124-5), "*Up to a certain proficiency standard, the fault which most severely impairs the communication process in EFL/ESL learners is pronunciation, not vocabulary or grammar*".

Moreover, pronunciation also influences to listening skill. To improve English listening skills, pronouncing the words correctly is necessary. That requires a systematic knowledge of vocabulary, the progress in practicing pronunciation, the stress of words and the intonation of sentences. The word in erroneous pronouncing will make listeners confused when they hear from a native speaker. That misunderstanding leads to a result that you do not understand the meaning of a whole sentence. "*Pronunciation is an essential part of language in a direct connection with four language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) because the main purpose of language is considered as communication in the target language*" (Çimenli, 2015).

In conclusion, no one can deny the importance of pronunciation in acquiring foreign language. It is vital to proper communication because the incorrect use of pronunciation inevitably leads to the message being misunderstood by the recipient. Like some other languages, English pronunciation training is the first important aspect that any learners have to master in order to speak like a native speaker. As Ly (as cited in Hinofitis and Baily, 1980) stated, "*Pronunciation is considered one of the most important aspects of second language acquisition because it affects learners' communication competence*". Besides, Jones (1950) provided the two concepts in pronunciation as a good speech and a bad speech. He defined a good speech as a way of communication which is sensible and easy to understand to all people while a bad speech is a way of speaking which has a difficulty understanding for most people. From that point, the research will show a clearly intelligible pronunciation which brings some useful things and bad consequences of communication breakdown.

2.2.1. The advantages of pronunciation competence to other fields

Getting an accurate and fluent pronunciation achieves some interests. First, it creates a positive impression, Shak (2016) said that for university graduates, the obvious pronunciation is an important thing to make sure of their success in finding a job during interviews. Employers will have a bad impression and right away refuse to accept their employment applications unless they make a good impression to the employers by showing their professional language. Second, listening comprehension skills will be enhanced. According to Wei and Zhou (as cited in Ueno, 1995) "*pronunciation instruction may facilitate listening comprehension ability*". Therefore, listening videos, radios or conversations will become easier; otherwise, it is really difficult for listeners to find out the main ideas in the text. O'Neal (2015) suggested that if the speakers pronounce a word

or express their feelings, and the listeners cannot realize the pronunciation, then the pronunciation is impossible to understand to the listeners; if the speakers pronounce a word or express their feelings, and the listeners can understand the pronunciation, the pronunciation is intelligible to the listeners. Finally, practicing pronunciation could improve English speaking skills. Although perfect speaking is dependent on many aspects, such as vocabulary, grammar, fluency, etc. pronunciation experience is not less important than them. Good speaking will reflect how speakers tried their best in pronunciation and it plays an important role in being more confident of speaking in English. From pronunciation practice every day, it supports not only in learning new words but also in developing fluency in speaking skills.

2.2.2. The consequences of mispronunciation

Pronunciation is not an easy skill to master especially for L2 speakers of the English Language, Fraser (2000) observed that many learners of English as a second language have "*major difficulties*" with English pronunciation even after years of learning the language. Some of the likely reasons for mispronunciation are reading difficulties, nonstandard spellings, local or regional mispronunciations and hearing problems. All of these can cause people to say words differently from the standard pronunciation. Thus, mispronunciation could lead to serious consequences.

The first is miscommunication, if the pronunciation is not correct, the speaker will not make the listeners understand what they want to say because listeners may pay attention to the pronunciation right away without interesting in perfect vocabulary and grammar. Wei and Zhou (2002) agreed that people are for sure easy to communicate with natives or non-native speakers by intelligible pronunciation and the main aim of learning English is that everyone may be able to communicate with native speakers or non-native ones.

Misunderstanding is the second consequence. English is a vast language; many words could be spoken in the same way but mean different things. And then there are words that are often mispronounced and mistaken to mean something else entirely from what was originally intended. This often leads to misunderstandings. On the other hands, vocabulary knowledge is meaningless unless people pronounce words exactly and no one understands the words they use. Therefore, Yates (2002) explained, "*learners with good pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect*". In English, there are some vocabularies that have similar sounds but different meanings, thus mispronunciation can lead to serious consequences.

Mispronouncing for a long time could lead to a bad habit in using English. Many L2 learners believed that they could communicate in English because they are able to learn and practice with teachers, English users and other learners who are not in a professional English pronouncing training. Moreover, because of the non-native environment, the teachers and learners may listen to many pronunciation errors for years so they may understand their limited pronunciation. As Wei and Zhou (2002) conclude,

"a language teacher's pronunciation is served as a model for the students. The students have to imitate his or her pronunciation otherwise the teacher will correct the students' pronunciation." (p.9). For these reasons, if they do not recognize their mistakes timely manner, they will continue to misconceive for a long time.

In conclusion, because of the importance of pronunciation above, people should not ignore learning pronunciation and just communicate in the classroom. They had better concern phonetic transcription, intonation and practice it whenever they have the opportunity to use English.

2.3. Errors in pronouncing final consonants
2.3.1. Definitions of consonants

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic (1989), consonants were *"speech sounds made by completely or partly stopping the flow of air breathed out through the mouth"*. In English phonetics and phonology (Peter Roach, 2009), the term consonant could be defined as: *"sounds in which there is obstruction to the flow of air as it passes the larynx to the lips"*. The production of sounds, consonant was defined: *"Consonant sounds are the sounds, in the production of which one articulator moves towards another or two articulators come together obstructing the air stream and the air stream can't get out freely."*

According to Cambridge Dictionary *"Consonant is one of the speech sounds or letters of the alphabet that is not a vowel. Consonants are pronounced by stopping the air from flowing easily through the mouth, especially by closing the lips or touching the teeth with the tongue"*. There are 24 English consonant phonemes described on the table below.

Table 1: Chart of English consonants phonemes (Roach, 2009)

Manners of articulation	Places of articulation									Work of vocal cords
	Bi-labial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Apico-alveolar	Post-alveolar	Alve-palatal	Fronto-palatal	Dorso-velar	Glottal	
Plosive	p b			t d				k g		voiceless voiced
Nasal	m			n				ŋ		voiced
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z		ʃ ʒ				voiceless voiced
Liquid				l						voiced
Affricate						tʃ dʒ				voiceless voiced
Glides					r		j	w	h	voiceless voiced

2.3.2. Definitions of final consonants sounds (ending sounds)

To every English learner, the word "ending sound" is pretty popular in speaking. To understand easily, "ending sounds" are sounds that occur at the end of the word. It refers to the consonant sounds as the word can end with one or more consonant sounds (consonant clusters). Ending sounds are called Codas: *"The coda is the final consonant or consonant cluster."* (Barbara and Brian, 1997). According to Rachael-Anne Knight (2003), there are 4 consonants in a coda. If there are no consonants at the end of the word, it has

a zero coda. A single consonant is called the final consonant. Any consonant except "h, r, w and j" may be a final coda.

English includes 20 final consonants are classified into three categories: work of vocal cords, manners and places of articulation. Cummins (1998) also stated that almost every English consonant appears word-finally, except for /h/, /r/, /w/ and /j/.

Table 2: Classification of English final consonants (Roach, 2009)

Manners of articulation	Places of articulation							Work of vocal cords
	Bi-labial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Apico-alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Fronto-palatal	Dorso-velar	
Plosive	p b			t d			k g	voiceless voiced
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	voiced
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			voiceless voiced
Liquid				l				voiced
Affricate					tʃ dʒ			voiceless voiced

For example, as Knight (2003) final consonant sounds in English are listed as below:

/p/ - sheep, stop, cheap

/b/ - transcribe, crab

/t/ - start, smart, seat, meat, wet

/d/ - ride, sad, bread, road,

/k/ - pick, speak, peak

/f/ - leaf, belief, roof, half, sniff

/v/ - leave, arrive, live, love, five

/θ/ - earth, health, worth

/ð/ - breathe, clothe, with

/s/ - stress, goes, rice, bus, six

/z/ - these, plays, buzz, prize

/tʃ/ - teach, watch, much

/dʒ/- bridge, large, village

/m/- come, some, warm, time

/n/ - than, man, sun, tin, cone

/ŋ/ - sing, spring, wrong, wing

/l/ - pool, smile, veil, call, girl

/ʒ/ - message, garage, massage

/g/ - beg, dog, clog, bag

/ʃ/ - crash, wash, rush

When there are two or more consonants standing at the end of the word, the terms "pre-final" and "post-final" consonants are used.

Pre-final includes: /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /s/

Post-final includes: /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /θ/

Two consonant clusters:
Pre-final: /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, s followed by a final consonant
Consonant plus post-final /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /θ/
Example: help, bank, books, blind etc.

Three consonant clusters:
Pre-final plus final plus post-final (e.g.: stopped, speaks)
Final plus post-final plus post final /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /θ/ (e.g.: next, thousands)

Four consonant clusters:
Most are pre-final plus final plus post-final (e.g. twelfths, prompts)
Occasionally there is one final and three post final consonants (e.g. sixths, texts...).

2.3.3. Common ending sound errors

According to Ha (2005), ending sound errors can be defined as "*the inaccurate pronunciation of the final consonant in a word*". Treiman (1989) also gave out the classifications of ending sounds errors. They are: Cluster reduction, Cluster Simplification, 12 Epenthesis, Coalescence, Omitting nasal and liquid sounds and phonetically possible spelling. In his research, ending sound errors were divided into 3 groups:

- Reduction is omitting the final consonant or one element of a cluster.
- Insertion is inserting a consonant to the ending of word.
- Substitution is replacing an English consonant by a phonetically similar of Vietnamese sound.

A common error that ESL speakers make when speaking English and learning English pronunciation is to leave out consonant sounds at the end of words. The reason for this is some languages have different rules for using final consonants and in many languages, there are fewer final consonants used than in English. Vietnamese speakers of English have a number of problems with pronouncing final consonants. Based on Avery and Ehrlich's statement, "*Vietnamese has no voiced stops at the ends of words*". Similarly, Ha (2005) argued that the way Vietnamese speakers pronounce the ending sounds is completely different from English speakers. Le (2014) agreed that some students do not completely pronounce final consonants due to the influences of Vietnamese structure.

In addition, Nguyen (as cited in Ngo, 2005; Tran, 2002) showed that although the Vietnamese language only has six final consonants such as /p, t, k, m, n, ŋ/, they are not often produced sounds. For example, /p/ (pháp/lap), /t/ (cắt/cut), /k/ (rác/luck), /m/ (làm/mom), /n/ (sơn/son) and /ŋ/ (phông/song). While English has the variety of more complex final consonants /p, b, f, v, s, z, tʃ, dʒ, ʒ, ʃ, θ, ð,…/ and they may be articulated in English. Vietnamese learners of English encounter problems with words final fricative consonants /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/ and /z/. Vietnamese speakers can pronounce fricatives at the beginning of English words. However, fricatives do not occur in word-final position in their mother tongue. Thus, omission of a fricative at the end of words usually occurs

when they speak English. The word *beef* may be pronounced like /bi:/, *month* as /mon/, *five* as /fai/, *importance* as /im'pɔ:tən/ (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992).

However, this study only researched the common errors of three pairs of specific final consonants pronouncing nearly identically that Vietnamese English-majored sophomores are often omissive or confused. Moreover, this study analyzed obviously three main kinds of English ending sound errors including reduction, insertion and substitution as Treiman had just pointed out above.

2.3.3.1. Errors with final consonants /s/ and /z/

Roach (2009) stated that /s/ and /z/ are alveolar fricatives, with the same place of articulation as /t/ and /d/. The air escapes through a narrow passage along the center of the tongue, and the sound produced is comparatively intense. Jones (1950) written that the sound /s/ was a voiceless alveolar fricative with a small hole in the mouth for the air to escape through. This sound is pronounced by the tip of the tongue down near the lower teeth. The manner of articulation depends largely on the shape of the individual speaker's teeth and palate. He also says that the sound /z/ is voiced or partially voiced alveolar fricative, in initial and final positions the voicing is generally only partial. The sound /z/ differs from /s/ solely in being pronounced with weaker breath force.

**Figure 1:** Place of articulation of /s/ and /z/ consonants
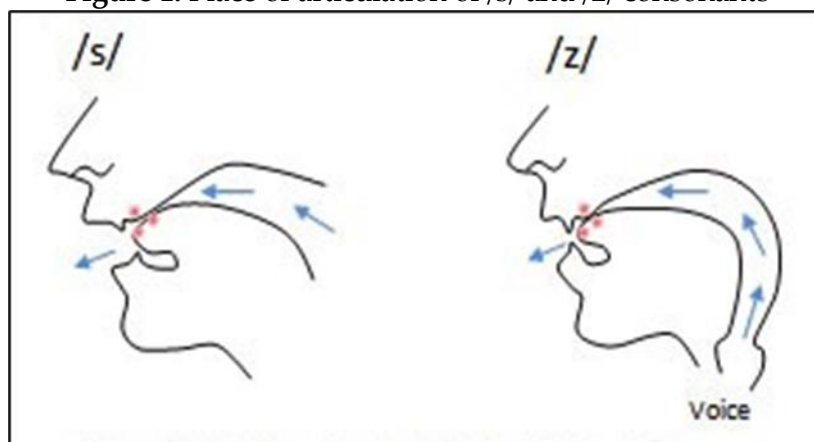
Vietnamese speakers often get confused between /s/ and /z/ because they basically could not distinguish the difference between these two sounds. Most of them replace /s/ for /z/ regularly, so that a word such as *peas* is pronounced as *peace* and *prize* is pronounce as *price*. In conversational situations, the /s/ sound may present two types of problem. The first problem is that in the spelling of some words, the /s/ sound is omitted. The second problem that many speakers encounter is the redundancy of the /s/ sound. As mentioned above, the /s/ and /z/ sounds do not occur at the final position in Vietnamese words, but for English words, they do (Duong, 2008).

2.3.3.2. Errors with final consonants /s/ and /ʃ/

Duong (2008) claimed that when learners make a mistake, they fail to make /ʃ/ palatal. The feature that makes /ʃ/ different from /s/ is that while /s/ is alveolar with the tongue touching the inside of the lower front teeth, the blade touching the inside of the upper teeth and the air escapes through a narrow passage along the center of the tongue, and the sound is produced comparatively tense, /ʃ/ is alveo-palatal, the place of articulation is partially palatal and partially alveolar. The tongue is in contact with an area slightly further back than that for /s/ and the air escapes through a passage along the centre of the tongue as in /s/.

Figure 2: Place of articulation of /s/ and /ʃ/ consonants
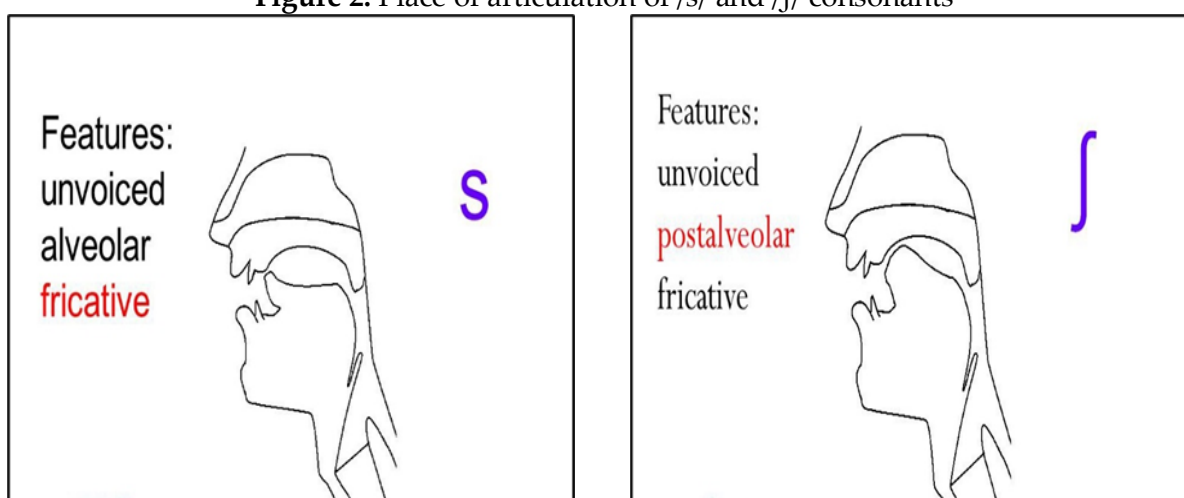
/ʃ/ is often pronounced as /s/ due to the failure in distinguishing the difference between the two sounds and the negative influence of the mother tongue, the learners are too much affected by the way they pronounce the Vietnamese /s/, thus they do not attempt to pronounce these two sounds differently although they are well aware of the difference. Examples, fish /fiʃ/ is often pronounced incorrectly as /fis/. The same mistakes occur with push, finish, astonish, flash etc. Learners fail to distinguish between a voiceless alveo-palatal fricative /ʃ/ and a voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ (Duong, 2008).

2.2.3.3. Errors with final consonants /f/ and /v/

Roach (2009) written that /f/ and /v/ are labiodental described with the lower lip is contact with the upper teeth. The fricative noise is never very strong and is scarcely audible in the case of /v/. Specifically, the voiceless sound /f/ is produced by stopping and releasing air between the bottom lip and the front side of the top teeth. The sound /v/ is produced in almost the same way as the /f/ sound but it differs from /f/ sound because it is voiced.

Figure 3: Place of articulation of /f/ and /v/ consonants
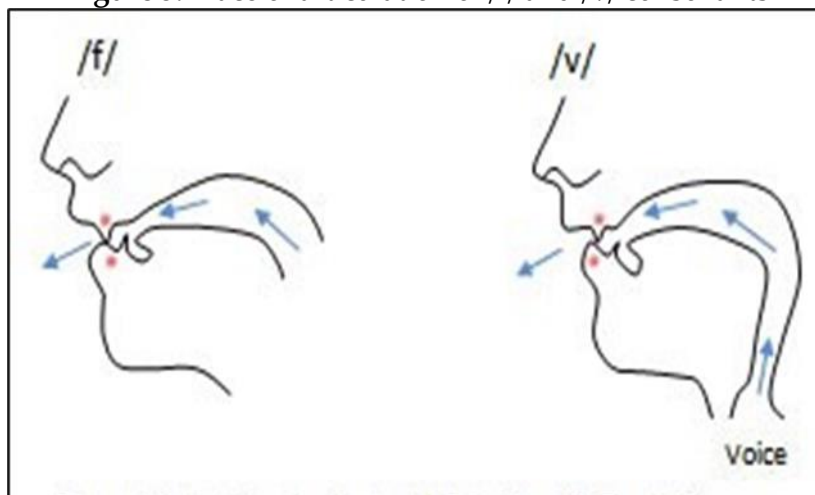
Vietnamese people are able to recognize that the voiceless stop /f/ is pronounced completely differently from the voiced stop /v/ in initial places of words. However, in the final positions they are relatively identic in pronunciation. As such, these consonants often provoke confusion for learners, English learners frequently mistake the ending voiced sound /v/ to voiceless stop /f/. For example, *half* might sound like *halve* (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992).

2.4 The previous studies

Recently many papers were conducted to investigate the pronunciation problems of EFL/ESL learners in universities and schools.

Nguyen (2007) showed the differences in Vietnamese and English final consonants which led to the difficulties of Vietnamese in pronouncing English final consonants. The data of the research was collected from five people of various Vietnamese accents, after recording them by reading loudly a paragraph on the paper they sent to the researcher by E-mail. The results of the paper stated that they often omitted the ending sounds that were strange or difficult for them and added schwa in final clusters like "lives" turned into /lɪvəz/, "leaves" become /liːvəz/ or they reduced and moved the final consonants towards their first language. Besides, two of the recordings were not good quality because of background noise, thus it was very hard to identify exactly.

Al-Aqlobi (2013) investigated whether or not Saudi ESL learners have difficulties in pronouncing and perceiving the final consonant clusters of English words are non-existent sounds in the Arabic language in the coda position. Eleven participants were recruited for this study by pronouncing 14 words to elicit their pronunciation of the final consonants of English words. Their participation was elicited using production and perception. The findings showed that students faced difficulties in pronouncing and perceiving English word final consonant clusters. Inside them, the most difficult cluster for the participants is [vz] as "*sleeves*". In addition, the researcher expected that the reason related to similarity for the difficulty of the cluster [mp]. Because [p] was similar to the

Arabic sound [b], participants would have a difficulty in pronouncing clusters with [p] as in *"shrimp"*.

Perozzo and Alves (2014) investigated how Southern Brazilian EFL learners perceive the distinctions concerning place of articulation in unreleased voiceless stops /p/ /t/ and /k/ in word-final position in English. Thirty-two undergraduate students of English, taking their first semester in the English course at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), took part in this study. All participants filled in a student information questionnaire and also a consent form which is conducted on the online perception tests. The results show that: the final segments /p/ and /t/ are perceived more accurately than the final segment /t/; there were greater levels of accuracy in both tasks when the nuclear vowel was lax; and the level of proficiency of the participants was not crucial to ascertain perceptual accuracy.

Nguyen (2017) investigated whether English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University often make mistakes with –s/-es ending consonants so that the researcher find some common errors in pronouncing these sounds and give causes of these errors so that the students avoid making mistakes in pronouncing /s/, /z/ and /iz/. The participants in this study were 50 English – majored sophomores at Tay Do University, they were randomly selected to take part in the study. There are three main data collection instruments in the research including questionnaire, recording and interview. The researcher investigated the main reasons that led the students to make mistakes are no existence of the final sounds in Vietnamese lacking attention to practicing the final consonants effectively.

Despite a variety of pronunciation topic, there were not many researchers who pay attention to the common errors with final consonants of Vietnamese English-majored Sophomores. Although they are students of English linguistics, surely that they have not focused on pronunciation especially the final sounds. Therefore, the investigator would like to research this aspect to make it more clearly.

3. Research methodology

This chapter shows in detail (1) the research aims, (2) the research questions and (3) the hypothesis. Furthermore, it also mentions (4) the design of the research, (5) the participants, (6) the instruments and (7) procedures.

3.1 Research aims

This research aimed to find out some common errors in pronouncing three pairs of ending consonants /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ of English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University and the researcher could investigate the causes of these errors so that the students could avoid making mistakes in pronouncing those ending sounds.

3.2 Research questions

This study was undertaken with the purpose of dealing with the three following research questions:

1) Do the English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University encounter problems in pronouncing final consonants?
2) What are English – majored sophomores' errors in pronouncing the final consonants /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/?
3) What are causes of English – majored sophomores' errors when they pronounce the final consonants?

3.3 Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University could have mistakes in pronouncing final consonants consisting of /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ and the causes they faced while they pronounced those final consonants.

3.4. Design

This research was a descriptive quantitative study. The participants were the English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University. The reliability and validity of the research results were based on the instruments. The data from the participants were collected through the questionnaire and the pronunciation test by recording. The collected information of these two instruments was employed to investigate common errors with final consonants of English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University as well as their reasons of these errors.

3.5. Participants

Because there were over 130 students in course 13 at Tay Do University, so the researcher chose nearly two thirds of 130 students so that the result was more precise. There were 80 participants in this study who are English-majored sophomores. In fact, they were selected randomly, including both males and females. Their English level was the immediate and they studied in the different classes. 20 students came from English 13A, 30 students came from in English 13B and 30 students came from in English 13C . Most of them had the age of 20 and others were from 21 years old to 22 years old. They speak Vietnamese as their mother tongue and English is considered as their foreign language. In addition, they have learnt English at least 9 years. They came from different places both countryside and city. Questionnaire and recording test were implemented in order to get information about errors students usually face in pronouncing final consonants.

3.6. Instruments

There were two main data collection instruments in the current research. Questionnaire and recording test were applied.

3.6.1. Questionnaire

Based on the previous studies about pronunciation problems of learners, the questionnaire was designed by the researcher. The aim of using questionnaire was to find causes of errors in pronouncing three pairs of ending consonants /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/. Eighty participants took the questionnaire with the guidance of the researcher. The questionnaire comprised 29 questions in total (see appendix A) and was divided into two parts described as follows.

Part 1 consisted of the first 8 questions (numbered from 1 to 8) which investigated the students' background and their opinion related to pronunciation. In this part, students were required to choose the answer that best suits their opinion. In some cases, they would give their specific answers (question 1) and choose more than one answer (question 2 and question 7).

In part 2, there were 21 statements (numbered from 9 to 29) designed in form of the five-degree Likert-type scale (strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree and strongly disagree). Students could tick on the appropriate column next to each statement provided. Statements 9 and 10 aimed to investigate students' perspectives toward pronunciation and its importance. Statement 11 to 15 demonstrated the difficulties and disadvantages while students were pronouncing the ending sounds in order to identify students' attitudes toward the way they pronounce the final consonants. Then, the statements from 16 to 25 were employed to get more insights into students' problems resulting in three pairs of ending sounds /s/ and /z/, **/s/** and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/. Four final statements mentioned the influences of students' individual or their environment. All the information was collected and then analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

3.6.2. Recording test

A recording test was used to evaluate the participants' abilities in pronouncing three final consonants pairs /s/ vs /z/, /s/ vs /ʃ/ and /f/ vs /v/ which provided their common errors for the researcher (see appendix B). The recording was divided into two parts. The first part was a list consisting of 15 pairs of words. Students read respectively five minimal pairs for each pair of the ending sounds. The position of two words in a pair were swapped so that the students would not be able to know the exact position of the final consonant of the five given pairs. There are three sentences in the second part, three minimal pairs which had differing final consonants were put into those three sentences in the same order of the ending sound pairs as part 1. The words containing the ending consonants were set in those sentences as nouns, adjectives or verbs. The process of the recording carried out on 15 participants in 80 students who were chosen for doing the questionnaire before. All they were in three English class 13A, 13B and 13C, five people in each class. Those fifteen participants were chosen randomly, and this test was conducted in a closed room without any other noisy sounds. The researcher not only recorded but also listened and followed carefully during their pronouncing process. In addition, the researcher invited a native friend, Simon Wilms who was from the USA and had American accent, he helped the researcher to check and find students' errors thoroughly. Under the good

equipment condition and the native speaker's enthusiastic help, the study's results were more accurate and convincing.

3.7. Procedures

In this part, the process of carrying out the research was presented. The study lasted about 14 weeks and was divided into 3 steps as listed in the following table:

Duration	Activities
The first four weeks	- Determining the research topic and writing the outline. - Searching for materials to support for the research.
From the 5th week to the 8th week	- Designing the questionnaire and the recording test. - Delivering the questionnaire and the recording test.
The last six weeks	- Counting, synthesizing and analyzing the collected data. - Completing the thesis.

4. Results and Discussion

Chapter 4 indicates the results of the study basing on the data collected from the questionnaire and the recording. The findings show the statistical evidence that reveals students' common errors in pronouncing final consonants. Then, the discussion will follow to wrap up this chapter.

4.1. Results

This part showed the results of the whole research. The final findings were drawn for analyzing the data that the researcher collected from 80 English majored sophomores mentioned in the previous chapter. The results included 2 sections, namely the results from questionnaires and the results from recording tests.

4.1.1. Results from questionnaires

Thanks to 80 questionnaire papers, the researcher got a lot of valuable information from participants. The results from questionnaires were divided into 2 major parts, embracing students' attitude toward the pronunciation skill and students' common errors of English final consonants with the principle influencing factors.

4.1.1.1. Students' attitude

The very first question was to investigate the participants' background of learning pronunciation. Apparently, 100% of students (80/80) did learn the pronunciation course since the beginning of their first semester in the first year, particularly 3 modules. For this reason, it could be concluded that they practiced various sorts of pronouncing tasks fully provided by their teachers in class.

A. Important factors in speaking those students take interest

The second question was to show the important factors that students take interest in speaking English, including 5 crucial elements: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, intonation and students' other choices.

**Figure 4**: Important factors in speaking that students take interest
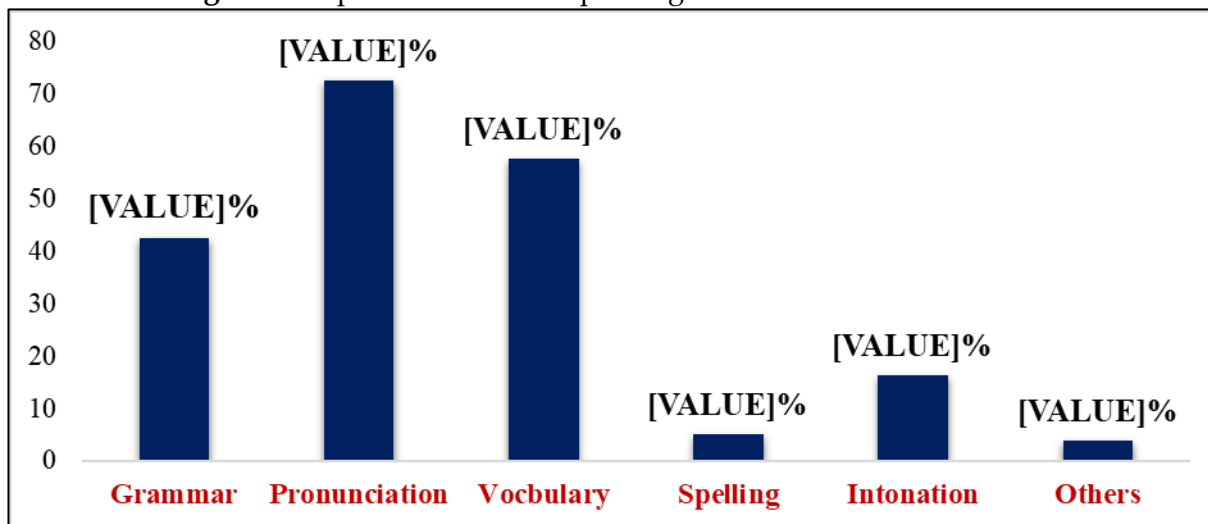
In this question, a student could choose multiple answers that appropriate to them. As can be seen from Figure 4, the chart showed three proportions which were more than a half of percentages, there were grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary with 42.5%, 72.5% and 57.5% respectively. However, the highest rate of pronunciation element asserted that pronunciation was extremely crucial in English speaking skill, constituting 72.5%. On the contrary, under 20% participants chose spelling getting 5% and intonation making up 16.25% as main factors in speaking. Furthermore, 3.75% students said that fluency issues were also necessary for speaking skill. In general, the data indicated that a large partial sophomores believed pronunciation was the majority in speaking.

## B. The role of pronunciation

Referring to Figure 5, it was not difficult to realize that the number of students agreeing with the overwhelming effect of pronouncing in speaking reached 100%. Specifically, 67 in the total of students admitted that pronunciation was very important, accounting for 83.75%. The remaining percentage proved that pronouncing skill is important with 13 students (16.25%). In short, this question was again affirmed that the role of pronunciation is very important for English-majored students.

Figure 5: The role of pronunciation
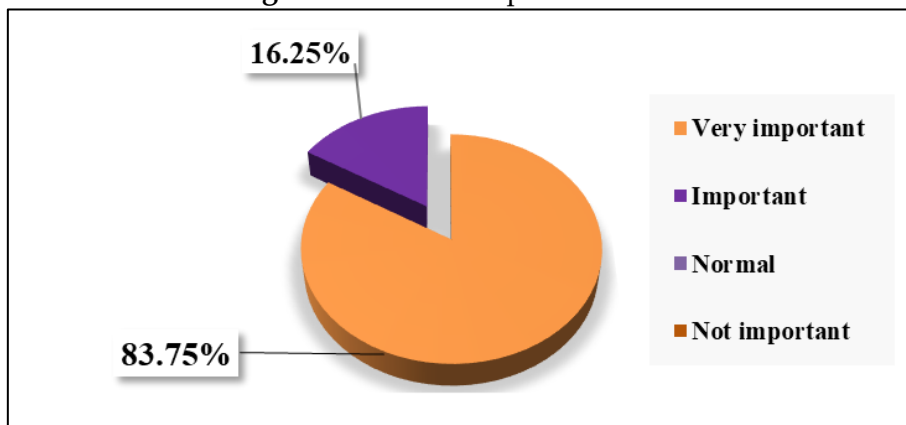
## C. Students' interest in pronunciation

Figure 5: Students' interest in pronunciation
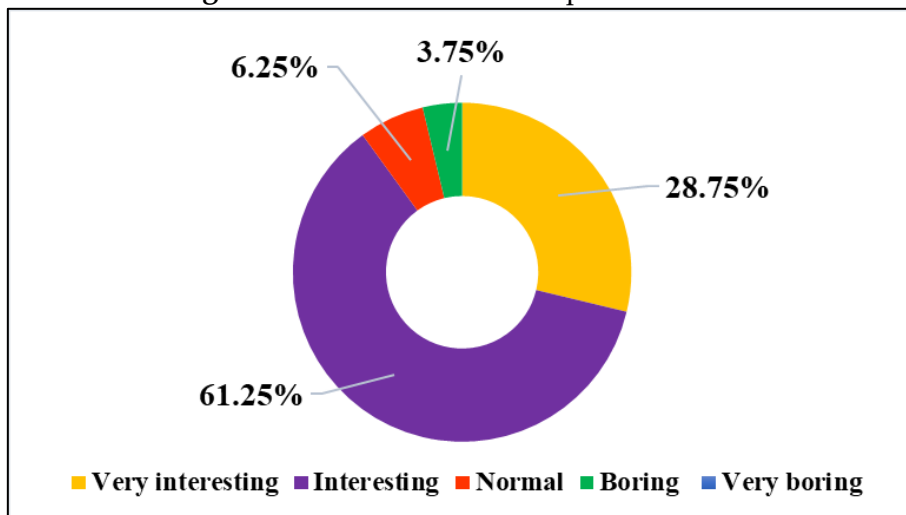
The chart of Figure 6 pointed up that almost participants were interesting in pronunciation. The number of 49 in 80 students were very interesting wining the largest rate 61.25% while 23 others pay a very good attention to this skill with 28.75%. Five others (6.25%) saw that it is a normal subject which they were not focus on very much. The rest of participants, inversely, felt boring with this subject that only reached 3.75% of the rating. In brief, there was a crowded part of students feeling excited about pronunciation courses.

## D. The frequency of making pronouncing mistakes

Figure 6: The frequency of making pronouncing mistakes
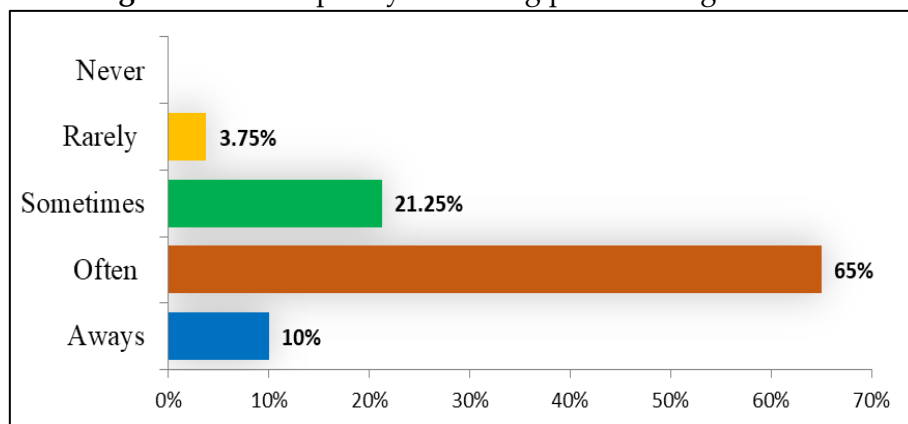
After the researcher mentioned to the frequency of making pronouncing mistakes, there were three-fourths of participants confessed that they got trouble in pronouncing skill. In detail, 8/80 students supposed they always get pronouncing mistakes, accounted for 10%. Likewise, 65% with 52 people thought that they often also face with this problem. Some of them said they met pronouncing obstacle moderately through 17 students (21.25%) of "sometimes" ratio and 3 others rarely faced to it, obtaining 3.75%. The number above proved that many English sophomores were facing to pronouncing barrier.

E. Students' self-assessment on pronunciation skill

Figure 7: Students' self-assessment on pronunciation skill
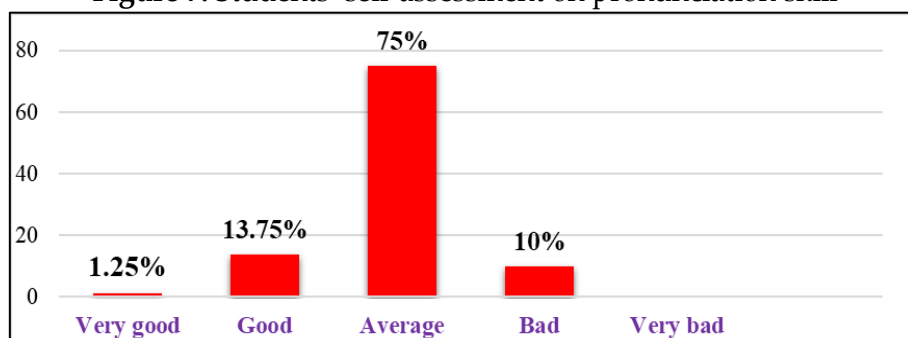

Mentioning to above chart, it was not difficult to realize that the number of students possessing "average" pronunciation skill was the highest rate with 75% (60/80). The next was "good" with 13.75% (11/80). The percentage of participants whose pronunciation skill was "very good" was remarkably less than any of the two mentioned above as it accounted for 1.25% (1/80). Surprisingly, there are up to 8 students (10%) confessed that their pronunciation ability was bad. Besides, there was no one admitting that they was "actually bad" on this field. Generally, it could be deduced that only 15%, ("very good" ones and "good" ones, combined) felt confident whenever confronting

pronunciation tasks given by teachers in class. This denoted the remainders had still been striving for their pronunciation competence improvement.

F. Errors in pronunciation

Figure 8: Some common errors in pronunciation
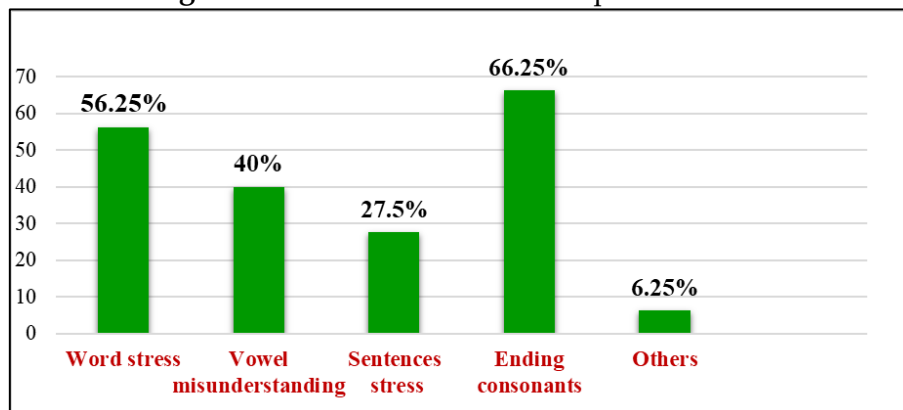
As the statistics presented, word stress, vowel misunderstanding, sentences stress and ending consonants were students' four primary problems that led to their unnatural pronouncing. However, over a half of the percentage chose word stress (56.25%) and ending consonants (66.25%) proving the importance of these two elements in pronunciation competence, especially is the ending consonants. Moreover, vowel misunderstanding was pay attention by the pretty great number of participants, reaching 40%. Following the vowel misunderstanding was sentences stress which students also focus on improving, with 27.5%. In addition, there were other errors that 6.25% students pointed out that they were usually deal with such as breathlessness when pronouncing a long word and difficulty in pronouncing two final consonants consecutively in a word. Totally, the most common errors that students usually deal with was final consonants in English speaking.

Basing on the question above, the researcher asked one more question about the frequency that students encounter the final consonant error. The researcher received four different proportions corresponding with four levels including always (16.25%), usually (reached the highest rate with 60%), sometimes (22.5%) and seldom (1.25%). It proved that a significant number of students regularly had trouble in pronouncing ending sounds.

G. Students' awareness toward pronunciation and its importance

Looking at the table below, it was not a surprise when 100% (80/80) of students gave satisfactory feedback for statement 9. In particular, 48.75% (39/80) of respondents strongly approved the idea and 41 participants, constituting 51.25%, said "agree". Simultaneously, there was no one who showed hesitation or objection toward this statement. Consequently, it could be said that translation was not an effortless task for

students as it involved comprehensive expertise in both the speaking and the listening as well.

Table 3: Students' awareness toward pronunciation and its importance

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. Pronunciation is one of important factors in the process of acquiring a second or foreign language.	48.75%	51.25%	0%	0%	0%
10. You concentrate on other skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) more than learning pronunciation.	8.75%	47.5%	26.25%	16.25%	1.25%

Besides, although the participants assured that pronunciation was the important skill, in the statement 10, more than a half of proportion of participants said that they focused intensively on 4 main skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) rather than learning pronunciation with 8.75% (7/80) of "strongly agree" and 47.5% (38/80) of "agree". Nevertheless, 21 out of 80 participants (26.25%) were in neutral state and 14 remained students (17.5%) gave disagreement and had a positive attitude toward the pronunciation skill. Obviously, the majority of students did neglect the pronunciation role in the studying second or foreign language.

4.1.1.2. The common errors of pronouncing ending sounds and influencing factors
A. The effect of two different language cultures

Table 4: The effect of two different language cultures

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. You feel difficult to pronounce the ending sounds because Vietnamese people do not have to pronounce them.	23.75%	45%	23.75%	7.5%	0%

This statement had moderately high rate in the "strongly agree" choice with 19 people (23.75%) and "agree" choice with 36 people (45%). Totally, there were 68.75% respondents asserted that it was difficult to pronounce the ending sounds because the difference between Vietnamese pronunciation and English pronunciation while 19 others had no idea for this effect, accounting for 23.75%. Conversely, 6/80 respondents (7.5%) believed that it was not a serious influence.

B. Student's pronouncing mistakes in words and in sentences

Table 5: Student's pronouncing mistakes in words and in sentences

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12. You often encounter obstacles in pronouncing English final consonants when they are in sentence.	22.5%	60%	12.5%	5%	0%
13. You usually get trouble pronouncing the ending sounds in separated words.	13.75%	52.5%	22.5%	10%	1.25%

From the response from Table 5, statement 12 and 13 bearded out a large percentage that students often encounter obstacles in pronouncing English final consonants in sentence with 82.5% and in word with 66.25%. In particular, they faced more difficult with pronouncing final consonants in sentences, 18 students (22.5%) strongly agreed with it and 48 students (60%) chose the agree level for their difficulty. Besides, 10 other people cannot be certain so that they kept the neutral point (12.5%). Only 5% with 4 people disagreed with statement 12. To the statement 13, it had a lower rate than statement 12 because pronouncing a word can be easier with 13.75% (11 students) who picked "strongly agree" and 52.5% (42 students) voted "agree". In addition, there were 22.5% selected "no idea" with 18 respondents. 9 others getting 11.25% believed that they were able to deal with pronouncing separated words uncomplicatedly. To sum up, due to the less concentration on pronunciation, more than two-thirds of 80 participants encounter the pronouncing ending sounds problem.

C. The subjective influencing factors of imprecise pronouncing ending sounds

Table 6: The subjective influencing factors of unprecise pronouncing ending sounds

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14. Because of your mother tounge influence, you rarely pronounce English ending sounds.	23.75%	48.75%	10%	13.75%	3.75%
15. You are not confident enough to speak the ending sounds out loud.	15%	40%	25%	15%	5%
16. You think that it is very important to pronounce precisely the ending sounds because the listeners can understand clearly the meaning of a word or a sentence.	16.25%	61.25%	22.5%	0%	0%

As can be observed from Table 6, in statement 14, there were 72.5% students claimed that mother tongue influence created an unmodified habit when they speak English. In there, 23.75% (19/80) and 48.75% (39/80) were respectively illustrated for strongly agree level and agree level while 17.5% of students had a contradictory opinion. Specifically, 11 participants asserted that mother tongue did not influence too much on people's voice and the way their pronounce, equivalent to 13.75% and 3.75% with 3 remainders strongly agree with that point. Meanwhile, the rest of them 10% (8/80) had no comments. Therefore, mother tongue is one of the factors influencing directly on pronouncing final consonants.

In the statement 15, lacking of confidence in speaking was the reason making people felt embarrassed to say out loud. It was proved through the number of 40% of students (32/80) who agreed with the statement and 15% (12/80) also strongly agreed with it. In the meantime, 12/80 (15%) students disclaimed this idea with 4 students (5%) strongly disagreed. Still, 20 remainders (25%) did not take any side. In conclusion, lacking of self-confidence created gradually for students the shyness in speaking.

Move to statement 16, there was no rejection that it is very important to pronounce precisely the ending sounds because the listeners can understand clearly the meaning of a word or a sentence. Next, in succession, there were 16.25% of students (13/80) strongly agreeing, 61.25% (49/80) agreeing and 22.5%, equivalent to 18 respondents showed hesitation. In summary, pronounce correctly the ending sounds were completely essential in understanding clearly the meaning of a word or a sentence.

D. Students' challenges regarding pronouncing /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/

Table 7: Students' challenges regarding pronouncing /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17. It is hard to distinguish the ending sounds of minimal word pairs. (Ex: advise /z/ - advice /s/)	18.75%	66.25%	10%	5%	0%
18. You find that these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ are easy to mistake when pronouncing.	28.75%	52.5%	11.25%	7.5%	0%
19. You feel lazy to pronounce correctly these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/, because these pairs are relatively similar.	16.25%	50%	17.5%	11.25%	5%
20. You rarely care about how to pronounce exactly these final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/,	10%	33.75%	25%	25%	6.25%

/f/ and /v/ because they do not adversely affect speaking skill.					

Table 7 instructed 4 statements related to students' challenges regarding pronouncing /z/, **/s/,** /ʃ/**,** /f/ and /v/. The 17th sentence took a general look of the difficulty in distinguishing the ending sounds of minimal word pairs such as advice-advise, proof-prove and gas-gash. Over 80% of students, 18.75% (15/80) strongly agreed and 66.25% (53/80) agreed with the statement. The residual with 10% (8/80) had no idea, 5% (4/80) gave disagreement for this sentence and no one put the choice on strong disagreement. Hence, it came to the conclusion that English majored sophomores often faced the difficulties of discrimination the ending sounds a in minimal word pair.

For statement 18's result, 23 participants (28.75%) totally approved, 52.5% (42/80) of students gave approval and 11.25%, equivalent to 9 respondents showed hesitation. Still, there were 6 students (7.5%) giving objection. Thus, a significant percentage of agreement above demonstrated students' confusion of recognizing these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/.

Next, statement 19 described the wrongly personal judgment in the differences of these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/. More than 60% of students (16.25% (13/80) and 50% (40/80) combined) successively showed strong concurrence and assent to the opinion that they felt lazy to pronounce correctly these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/, because these pairs are relatively similar. Besides, 17.5% (14/80) were caught in the middle and 13 remainders (16.25% including both strong disagreement and disagreement) had a correct awareness that three pairs above were not similar. Statement 20 was also toward the participants' personal consciousness, there were 43.75% who neglected how to pronounce exactly these final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ divided into two stages, the absolute concurrence with 10% (8/80) and concurrence with 33.75% (27/80). However, 25% (20/80) of disagreement and 6.25% (5/80) of strong disagreement proved that they did focus on the way to pronounce exactly these ending sounds. Still, 20 others taken 25% did not lean to any side. These two statements reflected the fact that it was very few students caring about the way to pronounce correctly these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/.

E. Common errors related to the final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/

Table 8: Common errors related to the final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21. You usually omit these final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ when you speak fast.	17.5%	73.75%	8.75%	0%	0%
22. You will pronounce /s/ in place of all three ending consonant sounds /s/, /z/, /ʃ/.	21.25%	37.5%	20%	17.5%	3.75%

23. You will pronounce /f/ instead of two ending sounds /f/ and /v/.	12.5%	57.5%	17.5%	12.5%	0%

Continuing with students' problems related to the final sounds /z/, **/s/,** /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/, Table 8 consisted of 3 statements. First of all, for the statement 21, over 90% of participants, particularly 14 of them (17.5%) utterly approved and 59/80 (73.75%) of sophomores gave agreement toward the fact that they usually omit these final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ when they speak fast. The remaining was made up of 8.75% (7/80) of students having no idea and no one disapproved this statement.

The next one was statement 22 whose results revealed that approval was given by nearly three-fourths of respondents. To be more specific, 21.25% (17/80) gave strong agreement and 37.5% (30/80) showed their concurrence. On the contrary, 16 students, corresponding to 20% stayed hesitated and the residual 17.5% (14/80) disagreed and 3.75% (3/80) strongly disagreed with the statement. Through the findings from this statement, it led to the conclusion that having the replacement of /s/ sound instead of three these ending consonants /z/, /s/, /ʃ/.

Now turning to the last statement in the table, statement 23. There were 56 respondents encountered with pronouncing /f/ instead of two ending sounds /f/ and /v/. In detail, 10 students (12.5%) showed the definite agreement while 57.5% (46/80) of students chose the concurrence. Also, 14 people, attainting 17.5%, pick "no idea" for their answer and 10 others (12.5%) disagreed. Those numbers of the percentage illustrated that /f/ was used commonly incorrectly in every situation.

Thus, it could be noticed that students frequently kept blunder in using /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ in ending sound positions. As a consequence, their pronunciation inevitably became misunderstanding and incorrect for listeners.

F. Students' personal difficulties in learning /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/

Table 9: Students' personal difficulties in learning /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
24. You confuse about these ending consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ because of lacking knowledge of these consonants.	17.5%	46.25%	20%	11.25%	5%
25. You have no effective methods of practicing the way to pronounce these final consonants /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/.	11.25%	47.5%	26.25%	10%	5%

Starting with statement 24 from table 9, 14 out of 80 participants (17.5%) strongly agreed and 37 others (46.25%) approved that they lacked knowledge of applying these final consonants /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ in communication. The residual consisted of 20% (16/80) hesitations and particularly 9 students (11.25%) and 4 students (5%) showing disagreement and strong disagreement respectively.

Down to statement 25, nearly 60%, successively 11.25% (9/80) and 47.5% (38/80) of students entirely concurred and assented that they have no effective methods of practicing the way to pronounce these final consonants /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/. At the same time, 26.25% of sophomores (21/80) leaned to no side. 10% (8/80) and 5% (4/80) of participants belonged to disagreement and strong disagreement.

All in all, it could be implied that the misunderstanding of wrong pronouncing these final consonants /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ originated from students themselves. Specifically, the main part of sophomores did not have an effective plan and method to improve their pronunciation.

G. The objective influencing factors of imprecise pronunciation

Table 10: The objective influencing factors of unprecise pronunciation

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26. You just have a little time to practice pronunciation in class.	23.75%	60%	16.25%	0%	0%
27. You have very few chances of talking with the English native speakers.	37.5%	43.75%	10%	8.75%	0%
28. Teacher do not have enough time in class to fix ending sound mistakes word-by-word for one-by-one student.	26.25%	58.75%	10%	5%	0%
29. The current pronunciation learning program is not really effective for students.	12.5%	28.75%	40%	13.75%	5%

Observing the last table, it was recognizable that students have to face to objective influencing factors toward problems with regard to imprecise pronunciation.

In statement 26, more than 80% admitted that they did not have enough time to practice pronunciation in class. Concretely, 19 respondents (23.75%) strongly agreed and 48 respondents (60%) concurred with the statement. Other remainders (16.25%) had neutral opinion.

For statement 27's result, there were 37.5% (30/80) of "strongly agree" and 43.75% (35/80) of "agree" approving the supposition that they have very few chances of talking with the English native speakers. Besides, there were 10% (8/80) participants occupied the middle ground and 7 people had chances to communicate with foreigners or native speakers, so their percentage reached 8.75%.

Statement 28 mentioned to the factor that teacher do not have enough time in class to fix ending sound mistakes word-by-word for one-by-one student. Most of sophomores approved with this statement, accounting for 85% (68 participants). Distinctively, 21

people (26.25%) utterly approved and 47 others (58.75%) of sophomores gave agreement toward this fact. Moreover, 4 people pointed up that they did not agree with it, obtaining 5%. Then, 10% with 8 students gave "no idea" choice.

To the final statement, under 50% state that the current pronunciation learning program is not really effective for students. In particular, 12.5% (10/80) picked the strong agreement, 28.75% (23 people) agreed. There were up to 32 students chose the neutral choice, achieving 40%. In contrast, 11 sophomores with 13.75% did not accept and 4 remainders with 5% strongly disagreed.

As a result of these four statements, it was easily visible that external factors such as lacking of time, having very few chance to practice and having less opportunity to fix mistakes had negative impact of in improving pronunciation skill. Besides, it also showed the result that the pronunciation program was gradually developed better.

4.1.2. Results from recording tests

As soon as 80 participants performed the questionnaires, the researcher carried out a pronunciation test to collect specific errors in 15 participants who chosen randomly from 80 participants of questionnaire survey. This test would support the researcher to clarify detail errors from 3 final consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ thoroughly. The recording paper was designed with 15 word pairs in part 1 and 3 sentences in part 2 (appendix B). Specifically, there were 5 word pairs and one sentence for each ending consonant pair.

Part 1 of the recording was an easy level, the researcher required the recorders to speak slowly and carefully each word in order to perform clearly the final sounds /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/. The level was lifted harder in part 2, the words having ending sounds were put into sentences. Therefore, students were requested to relax and read them out loud quite slowly, fluently and naturally.

The process occurred in a quiet classroom with the aim to listen clearly their final sounds and analyze easily the data after. After listening and analyzing the recordings carefully and with the native speaker's assistance, the researcher found out that each student could make many kinds of pronouncing mistakes during reading the recording test. and the results analyzed from this category are performed below.

4.1.2.1. Errors of ending sounds /s/ and /z/

**Figure 9**: Errors of ending sounds /s/ and /z/ in pronouncing word by word
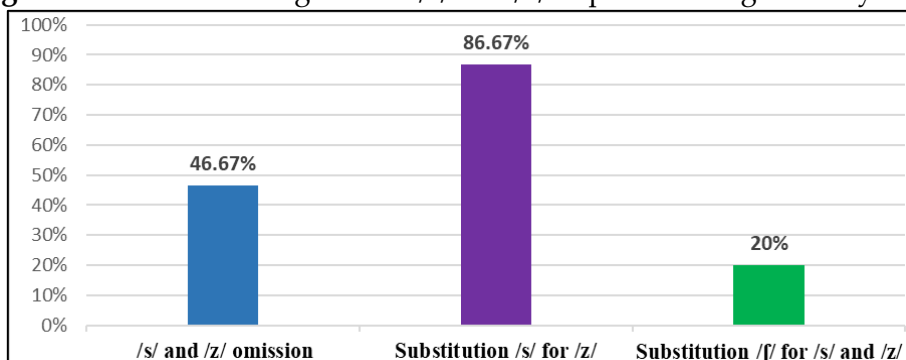
As can be seen from Figure 10, there were 86.67% of the participants who encountered substitution /s/ for /z/, and 46.67% had omission errors in pronouncing word by word with the final consonants /s/ and /z/. Surprisingly, there were 20% (3 students) recorders replacing the sound /s/ and /z/ into the sound /ʃ/ many times when they were pronouncing the word such as **"Rise"**, "Advise", "Loose", "Lose", and "Dose". Disappointedly, there was one of these three students who pronounced all those words with the final consonant /ʃ/. During the students read out loud five word pairs, the researcher found out that 2 pairs "Eyes – Ice" and " Loose – Lose" were very easy to make mistakes. Specifically, they could not realize the sound /z/ at the end of "Eyes" and "Lose", so 13 participants pronounced them as the sound /s/ carelessly. In contrast, 2 recorders finish this part perfectly without having any faults of /s/ and /z/ ending consonants.

A. Errors in pronouncing in sentence

Piece – peas

"I split the peas, and then I put these peas on every piece of a chocolate cake. Each piece is put ten peas on."

Figure 10. Errors in pronouncing ending sounds /s/ and /z/ in sentence
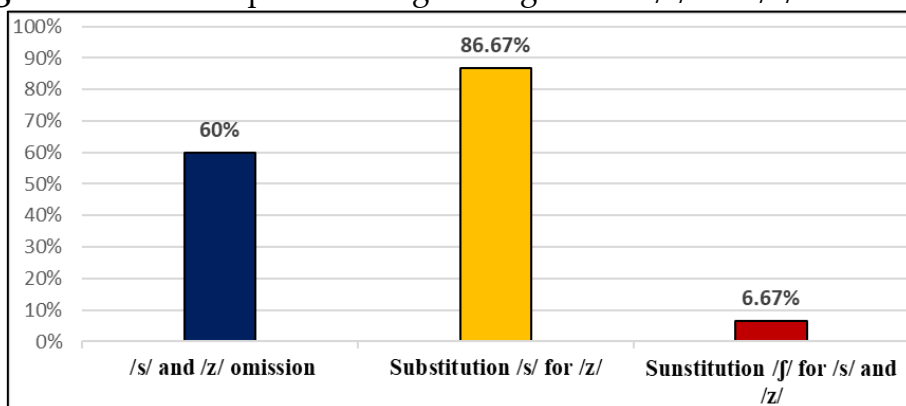
In this sentence, only one student read correctly the whole sentence. It was no surprise that a large percentage of recorders (86.67%) superseded /z/ to /s/ for almost the words "peas", and also the words "these" and "is" in the sentence. The omission mistake also increased from reading word by word to sentence, 60% students did not pay attention to pronounce the final sounds in the sentence, especially in the positions "…put *these peas* on every *piece* of..." and in this position "Each *piece* is…", they just focused on the consonant /z/ in the word "is", so they missed *piece*'s ending sound. 6.67% expressed for substitution /ʃ/ for /s/ and /z/, it illustrated that they were more careful in reading /s/ and /z/ consonants in the second time.

In short, students basically did not pay attention to the difference between /s/ and /z/ ending sounds. Therefore, their carelessness led them to the omission mistake easily. In addition, they made a very high rate of substitution error, particularly the replacement from /z/ to /s/. The result also proved that most of the students met both omission errors and substitution errors.

4.1.2.2. Errors of ending sound /s/ and /ʃ/
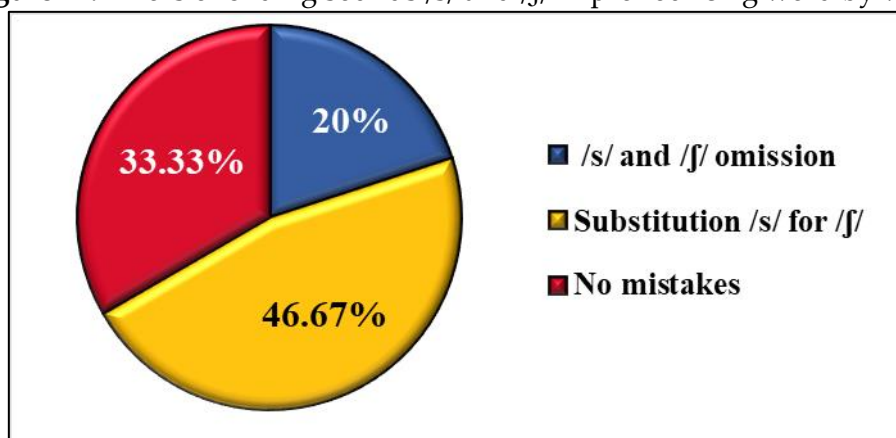**A. Errors in pronouncing word by word**
Plus - Plush
Gas - Gash
Push - Puss
Crash - Crass
Moss - Mosh

Figure 11: Errors of ending sounds /s/ and /ʃ/ in pronouncing word by word

As shown in Figure 12, the pie chart proved that 66.67% recorders could not finish this part without mistakes. Because all words had the letters /s/, /ss/ or /sh/ at the end, so students had less omission error. However, it still had 20% participants forgetting pronouncing /s/ and /ʃ/. Besides, there were 46.67% students who changed the sound /ʃ/ into the sound /s/ with all the words having ending sound /ʃ/. The 33.33% reminders pronounced precisely 10 words above.

B. Errors in pronouncing in sentence

Ass - ash

"An ass sees a piece of ash flying in space and the ass tries to catch the ash piece by his mouth."

There were 26.67% students having no errors of the words "ass" and "ash". Also, the rate 26.67% belonged to omission errors group, reading to fast was the reason of this error. 46.66% recorders could not build the sound /ʃ/ in their mouth when they were saying, so they replaced them into the /s/ sound.

Figure 12: Errors in pronouncing ending sounds /s/ and /ʃ/ in sentence
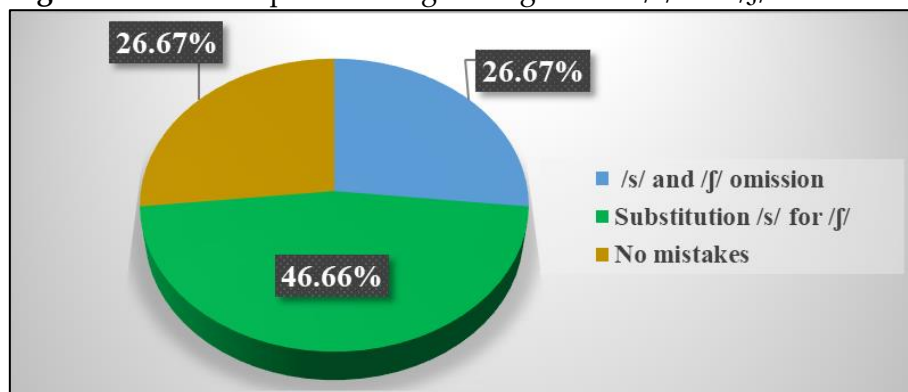
In conclusion, there still were 2 main errors in this stage, omission and substitution. Thanks to the appearance of the final letters /s/, /ss/ or /sh/, participants could reduce the omission fault. Nevertheless, high rate students did not recognize the pronouncing rules of /s/ and /ʃ/, so substitution was always a major error.

4.1.2.3. Errors of ending sound /f/ and /v/
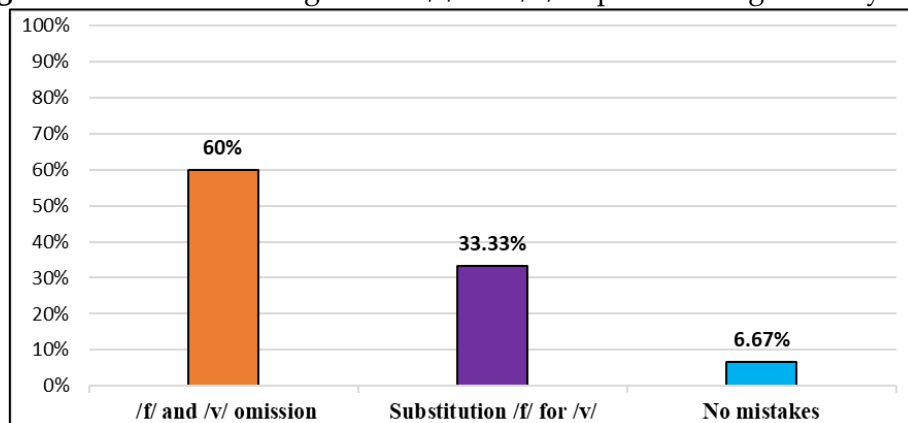## A. Errors in pronouncing word by word

Prove - Proof

Safe - Save

Live (n) - Life

Believe - Belief

Staff – Starve

Figure 13: Errors of ending sounds /f/ and /v/ in pronouncing word by word

In this section, the number of omission errors went up significantly in reading 10 words above, equivalent to 60%. Obviously, /f/ and /v/ were the most difficult ending sounds for the recorders to pronounce. The substitution fault was a half compared to the omission fault, although the participants could realize a final consonant at the end of each word, 33.33% were still wrong in distinguishing /f/ and /v/ sounds so they pronounce both words of each pair in the same way. In contract, there were the only one person with 6.67% did well this part.

B. Errors in pronouncing in sentence

Safe - save

"The woman is safe after the firefighters save her from a fire. After that, they immediately run into the fire building to save other lives and keep them in the safe place."

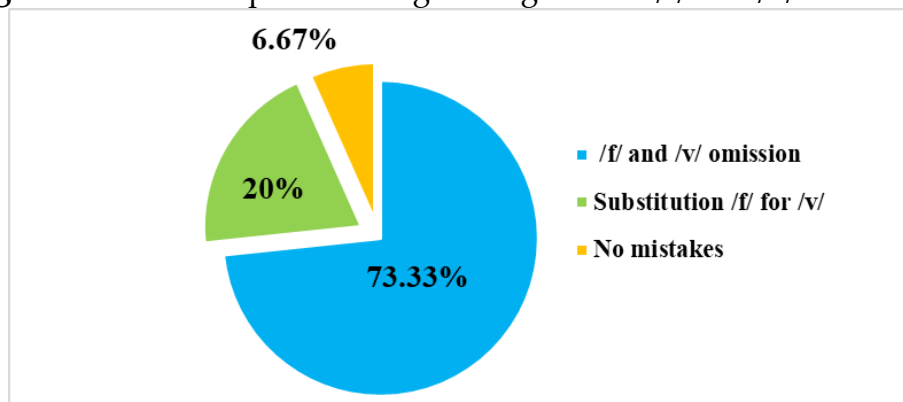**Figure 14:** Errors in pronouncing ending sounds /f/ and /v/ in sentence

Figure 15 illustrated clearly the largest percentage of omission error (73.33%), it increased more than pronounce word by word. The students even did not concern with the difference between "fe" and "ve" of the words "sa*fe*" and "sa*ve*". The 20% others could not make voiced sound for *"save"*, so they substitute /f/ in both words. Like the previous part, there was only 1 person (6.67%) who has done this sentence completely.

To sum up, /f/ and /v/ were consider as two challenging final consonants, the evidences were the results of 2 parts above. As can be seen, omission error occupied considerably more than substitution error from 2 to 3 times. Therefore, students should draw more attention to these 2 sounds.

4.2. Discussion

The purpose of the research was to investigate whether the majored students at Tay Do University would make mistakes in pronouncing the ending sounds so that the researcher looked at common errors with final consonants of English-majored sophomores and analyzed to find causes of these errors. After undergoing the thorough analysis of the questionnaires and the recording tests, it was apparent that students' principal problems causing unprecise pronunciation in three ending sound pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/. To clarify specifically these errors, the researcher would like to recall them one by one as follows.

First of all, according to the data analysis, although the participants interest in the importance of pronunciation which is an indispensable part of learning and participating in communication, they reported that they often pay no attention to pronounce the final consonants. Therefore, making mistakes with ending sounds /s/ and /z/ was very popular for English learners. As a matter of fact, students did not draw any attention to two these consonants, it led to the omission error creating for listeners the serious misunderstanding. Many students could mark the sound /s/ when they speak, on the other hand, they were not able to distinguish the different pronouncing form between the sound /z/ and /s/ or even the sound /ʃ/. Therefore, substitution was one of two errors which reached the highest rate of /s/ and /z/ sounds. However, the researcher did not find out any mistakes relating to insertion error.

Second, through the recording test, students proved that pronouncing /s/ and /ʃ/ was not easy although 2 sounds considered almost dissimilar. Even though over one third students did not admit this error in questionnaires, a considerable proportion of participants substituting /s/ for /ʃ/ in the recording test clarified that error for those ones. In contract, students improved the omission fault when reading the sound pair /s/ and /ʃ/ with the result was low percentage for this fault. Like the first pair, it was not insertion mistake in this part.

Third, most of the students did not reach the accuracy of pronouncing /f/ and /v/. This sound pair was being paid less attention but had the highest proportion of errors. In fact, it was a challenge for students to identify and perform /f/ and /v/ so omission error accounted for the largest number of the charts. To the participants who were pretty good in pronunciation, could not avoid from pronouncing /f/ instead of /v/ so the substitution fault still appeared in this pair.

Fourth, as can be seen in questionnaire analyzing section, there are 2 main factors caused those pronunciation errors. The first was the subjective influencing factors, the students feel difficult to pronounce the ending sounds because they had to face with their negative personal effects such as their mother tongue made them foreign with those

sounds, lacking of confidence affected directly on their good pronunciation and the underestimating the importance of pronunciation made them encountered many difficulties in communication. However, all those influences could be improved by themselves. The second factor was the objective influence, the participants admitted that the pronunciation time in class were not enough to practice so the lecturers just had a little time to fix ending sound mistakes word-by-word for one-by-one student. Moreover, the second-year students rarely had chances of talking with the foreigners or English natives.

In conclusion, the research's outcome figured out the fact that sophomores could not break through numerous barriers of pronouncing final consonants. This denoted that students paid special attention to other English skills rather than pronunciation, thus they could not express precisely their mean for their listeners. The results of the current study shown that the omission errors and the substitution errors were two potential errors in pronouncing final consonants and students did not deal with the insertion error.

5. Conclusions, Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions, implications, limitations and puts forward recommendations for further research.

5.1 Conclusions

Pronunciation is an incredibly vital task since it inevitably involves two other main skills including listening comprehension and speaking. Certainly, when engaging in communication, the naturalness, clearness and preciseness of pronunciation should be given top priority so that the listeners could receive easily and accurately. This research has identified, analyzed and synthesized errors of pronouncing the English consonants /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/. According to the data analysis, omission and substitution were two main types of the errors. Students did not pronounce consonants which appeared in the final words. Besides, students pronounced words including required five consonants incorrectly by replace other consonants; for example, the sounds /z/ and /ʃ/ was substituted by the sound /s/.

Moreover, the results shown in two sections of the errors of the sound pair /s/ and /z/, and the sound pair /s/ and /ʃ/ revealed that the students performed the substitution errors more than the omission errors, but the last pair of /f/ and /v/ demonstrated conversely that the proportion of omission mistakes was higher than substitution mistakes significantly. From this finding, it supported the researcher's hypothesis that the substitution was the most common errors with the final consonants /s/, /z/, and /ʃ/ while omission was the most serious errors with the ending sounds /f/ and /v/. Finally, regarding two major influencing factors (subjective and objective elements) led to the difficulties in pronouncing final consonants which English major sophomores at Tay Do university had to deal with.

5.2. Implications

Investigating common errors with final consonants /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ helps the students identify their problems in pronunciation of these sounds and quickly find some effective ways of solving these problems for themselves. Although these errors in pronouncing final sounds do not influence very much on intelligibility, sometimes the interlocutor, especially a native speaker confuses the way pronunciation and the meaning of words. For this reason, there were three implications that the researcher would like to refer. Firstly, students themselves ought to defeat the anxiety and the self-doubt in pronunciation on the purpose of getting out of making mistakes and unnaturalness in speaking. Secondly, students should create their own appropriate conditions to practice pronunciation frequently by spending time for practicing in quiet and convenient places where they could get into the practice comfortably, learning more pronunciation knowledge from friends and lecturers in order to fix their errors correctly. Moreover, it would be best to create for themselves more chances to approach the native voices. For examples, many internet resources would help them for this section such as movie webs, English talking videos and pronunciation videos. Communicating with foreigners and native speakers in person was also one of the best choices. Since then, they are used to pronounce English final consonants more easily and clearly. Finally, it is hoped that this study would be of helpfulness for pronunciation teachers to get more insights into their students' problems and therefore make appropriate adjustments toward their teaching method.

5.3. Limitations

In spite of the fact that carrying out this research was a wonderful experience for the researcher, there remained some inevitable restrictions. First, in view of the time limitation, the researcher could not cover deeply the errors of the other sounds in pronouncing aspect. Second, the unenthusiastic cooperation of a few students in the questionnaire led to the results were not accurate utterly, some students only answered the questions perfunctorily. Third, the recordings' process did not have good quality because the speakers read with a fairly low volume, therefore, all the final consonants are very hard to recognize exactly. The last one was the most difficulty of this investigation, since Coronavirus disease 2019 occurred at the time this research was conducting, so the data collection process met many obstacles and interruptions. However, the researcher truly hoped that, in its scope, the current paper would be of usefulness for English majored sophomores at Tay Do University in their pronunciation learning process and for those having a strong interest in English pronunciation.

5.4. Recommendations

Basing on the limitations mentioned above, the further research should address two following issues. First of all, this research subject ought to expand with a larger scale in order that the research would be more dependable and convincing. Actually, researcher could select not only English majored students, but also other major students at Tay Do

university or even people in different schools who are about to approach the practice of pronunciation. Second, during the progression of the study, the investigator recognized that besides the errors of above final consonants, some other final sounds were also pronounced wrongly by these students such as /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /θ/ and /ð/. This finding would pave the way for further researchers to develop their pronunciation studies.

Conflicts of Interest Statement

The authors whose names are listed immediately below certify that they have NO conflicts of interest, authorship, and disclosures in publication. They confirm that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere, nor is it currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire for Students

My name is Diep Hong Ngoc and I am currently a senior majoring in English at Tay Do University. This questionnaire is designed for my B.A thesis entitled "*Common Errors in Pronouncing Final Consonants of English-Majored Sophomores at Tay Do University*". I will greatly appreciate if you spend your valuable time on helping me answer the following questions by circling the answer(s) and *checking* (✓) the number in the column that best suits your opinion. Your answer will be very helpful and important to my research. Once again, thank you so much!

A. Personal Background

Student's full name:

Age:................

Class:.. 　　Gender: Male ☐ 　　　Female ☐

I have been studying English for .... years

Part 1: Please read the following questions carefully and choose the appropriate answer(s) for each question. Give specific answers if needed.

1. How many modules of practical pronunciation did you learn?

.... modules

2. Which factors do you consider the most important in English speaking?

☐ Grammar 　　　　　　☐ Vocabulary

☐ Pronunciation 　　　　☐ Spelling

☐ Intonation 　　　　　　☐ Others

3. How important is pronunciation in speaking English?

    A. Very important

    B. Important

    C. Normal

    D. Not important

4. How do you think about pronunciation?

    A. Very interesting

    B. Interesting

    C. Normal

    D. Boring

    E. Very boring

5. How often do you make pronunciation mistakes when speaking English in class?

    A. Always

    B. Often

    C. Sometimes

    D. Rarely

    E. Never

6. How do you evaluate your pronunciation skill?
  A. Very good
  B. Good
  C. Average
  D. Bad
  E. Very bad

7. Which pronunciation mistakes do you tend to encounter when speaking English? (more than one is acceptable)
  A. Word stress
  B. Vowel misunderstanding
  C. Sentence stress
  D. Ending consonants
  E. Others

8. How often do you encounter the problems mentioned above?
  A. Always
  B. Usually
  C. Sometimes
  D. Seldom
  E. Never

Part 2: Please check (✓) only one column for each statement in the following table, according to the 5-degee Likert-type scale, namely
(1) Strongly agree
(2) Agree
(3) No idea
(4) Disagree and
(5) Strongly disagree

Statements	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
9. Pronunciation is one of important factors in the process of acquiring a second or foreign language.					
10. You concentrate on other skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) more than learning pronunciation.					
11. You feel difficult to pronounce the ending sounds because Vietnamese people do not have to pronounce them					
12. You often encounter obstacles in pronouncing English final consonants when they are in sentence.					
13. You usually get trouble pronouncing the ending sounds in seperated words.					
14. Because of your mother tounge influence, you rarely pronounce English ending sounds.					
15. You are not confident enough to speak the ending sounds out loud.					

16. You think that it is very important to pronounce precisely the ending sounds because the listeners can understand clearly the meaning of a word or a sentence.					
17. It is hard to distinguish the ending sounds of minimal word pairs.					
18. You find that these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ are easy to mistake when pronouncing.					
19. You feel lazy to pronounce correctly these consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/, because these pairs are relatively similar.					
20. You rarely care about how to pronounce exactly these final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ because they do not affversely affect speaking skill.					
21. You usually omitt these final sounds /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ when you speak fast.					
22. You will pronounce /s/ in place of all three ending consonant sounds /s/, /z/, /ʃ/.					
23. You will pronounce /f/ instead of two ending sounds /f/ and /v/.					
24. You confuse about these ending consonant pairs /s/ and /z/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/ because of lacking knowledge of these consonants.					
25. You have no effective methods of practicing the way to pronounce these final consonants /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /f/ and /v/.					
26. You just have a little time to practice pronunciation in class.					
27. You have very few chances of talking with the English native speakers.					
28. Teacher do not have enough time in class to fix ending sound mistakes word-by-word for one-by-one student.					
29. The current pronunciation learning program is not really effective for students.					

Thank You for Your Help!

Appendix B: Pronunciation Test for Students

My name is Diep Hong Ngoc and I am currently a senior majoring in English at Tay Do University. This questionnaire is designed for my B.A thesis entitled "*Common Errors in Pronouncing Final Consonants of English-Majored Sophomores at Tay Do University*". I will really appreciate if you spend your valuable time on helping me do the test below by pronouncing the 30 following words in three pairs of final sounds and three sentences containing three minimal pairs. Your participation will be very helpful and important to my research. Once again, thank you so much!

Pronounce Three Lists of The Voiced and Voiceless Final Sound Pairs Below:

I. Word by Word
1. /s/ vs /z/
Rice - Rise
Eyes - Ice
Advice - Advise
Loose - Lose
Doze - Dose

2. /s/ and /ʃ/
Plus - Plush
Gas - Gash
Push - Puss
Crash - Crass
Moss - Mosh **3. /f/ and /v/**
Prove - Proof
Safe - Save
Live (n) - Life
Believe - Belief
Staff - Starve

II. Sentences
1. Piece - peas
I split the peas, then I put these peas on every piece of a chocolate cake. Each piece is put ten peas on.

2. Ass - ash
An ass sees a piece of ash flying in space and the ass tries to catch the ash piece by his mouth.

3. Safe - save

The woman is safe after the firefighters save her from a fire. After that, they immediately run into the fire building to save other lives and keep them in the safe place.

Thank You for Your Help!