



English Consonants

Lecture 5

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What is a consonant sound?

- A consonant is generated by shaping, stopping or blocking the air stream as it passes through the nose or mouth.
- The position of the articulators will affect the sound of consonants.
- A consonant sound can be **voiced** or **voiceless**.

- The Plosive Stops:

The air is stopped and then released.

These sounds are the same in Spanish, but in English they have more force. Be careful with spelling!

Point of articulation	Lips together	Tongue in back	Tongue tip behind upper teeth
vl	/p/	/k/*	/t/
vd	/b/	/g/	/d/

/k/ = kite, cat, chemistry, back



The Nasals: Sound is blocked in the mouth and resonates in the nasal cavities.

Point of articulation	Lips together	Tongue behind teeth	Tongue back of mouth
vd	/m/	/n/	/ŋ/

PRACTICE:

whim	win	wing
some	sun	sung
rum	run	rung
bam	ban	bang

Say these sentences.



- (1) Liz was sipping some soda.
- (2) Some pieces of ice fell into her eyes.
- (3) Her sight became fuzzy.



Sibilant sounds: Air is pushed through a narrow opening in the teeth.

/s/

- voiceless
- familiar sound
- Spelling:
 - "s" – see
 - "c" – cell
 - "x" – fix
 - "ss" – kiss
 - "ce" – face
 - "sc" – science
 - "z" – waltz

/z/

- voiced
- unfamiliar sound
- similar to s in *desde*
- Problems:
 - eyes vs. ice
 - prize vs. price
- Spelling:
 - "z" – zero
 - "x" – xerox
 - xylophone
 - "s" – has, as, is, was



Practice:

/s/

Sue

face

race

peace

cease

place

/z/

zoo

phase

raise

peas

seize

plays

- Sue went to the zoo.
- Put ice in your eyes.
- The baby will lose his loose teeth.

Testing Drill

A. Identify as **same** or **different**. (1-6)

~~B. Which word do you hear?~~

1. (price / prize)

2. (bus / buzz)

3. (spice / spies)

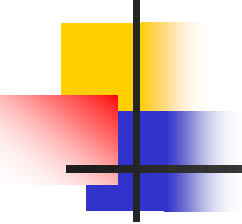
4. (niece / knees)

c. **True** or **False**?

1. (sip / zip)

2. (price / prize)

3. (sink / zinc)



Fricatives: Articulators come close together but do not stop the flow of air completely; the air is squeezed out causing friction

/ f /

- Voiceless
- Familiar sound in Spanish
- Spellings:
 - " f " – fat
 - "ph" – phone
 - "gh" – laugh
 - "lf" – half

/v/

- Voiced
- Unfamiliar
- If you mispronounce,
/v/ will sound like /b/
very vs. berry
(Spanish: tubo=tuvo)



Practice:

/f/

safe

leaf

half

belief

/v/

save

leave

have

believe

/f/

face

fear

ferry

/v/

vase

veer

very

/b/

base

beer

berry

Say these sentences.

- Victor has a marvelous beard. (2)
 - His beard is black and very big. (2)
- But sometimes Victor dribbles beer
on his beard! (2)



Fricative: Place your tongue between the teeth and push the air out.

/ θ /

- Voiceless sound
- Spanish: equivalent to "ceceo castellano" ("zapato")

Problems:

- /s/ instead of / θ /
thank → sank
- / t / instead of / θ /
thank → tank

PRACTICE: Place your tongue BETWEEN your teeth for /θ/ and BEHIND your teeth for /s/ and /t/

/θ/	/s/	/θ/	/t/
thank	sank	thank	tank
thin	sin	thin	tin
think	sink	thought	taught
bath	bass	bath	bat
thin	author	teeth	
thank	nothing	both	
thought	birthday	month	



Fricative: Place your tongue between the teeth and push the air out.

/ð/

Voiced sound

Spanish: lado nada

Problems: /d/ instead of /ð/

they → day

breathe → breed

Pronounce:

the other bathe

this mother clothe

they father smooth

those brother breathe



Repeat this tongue
twister.

She sells seashells by the seashore.
/s/

No Spanish equivalent. A fricative sound produced with the tongue behind and pushing the air through the teeth. So say ssshhh!

Spellings: "sh" – shelf "ti" – option

"ci" – special "ss" – tissue

"ch" – chef, machine, Chicago

Less frequent: "s"- sugar "ce"- ocean "xi"-anxious



Listen to these words. Write the
one that is not pronounced

1. crush cash catch crash
2. chef chief chute
chiffon
3. machine parachute mustache
kitchen
4. China Russia Chicago
Michigan
5. musician physician chemist
electrician



The voiced counterpart of /S/
is /z/.

This sound is completely unfamiliar.

Spelling: "su" – measure

"ge" – garage

"si" – decision

"zu" - seizure



The problem with /S/ is that Spanish speakers substitute it with /tS/:

shoe→chew share→chair

/tS/ - similar in Spanish: chico, muchacho

Spellings: "ch" – chew, richer, speech

"tu" – future, natural,

picture

"tch" – kitchen, patch

"t" – righteous

"ti" – question, digestion

Practice:

/s/

/tʃ/

shoe

chew

ship

chip

wash

watch

cash

catch

Please wash the dog.

Please watch the dog.

Too much milk makes
mushy mashed
potatoes.

Which word is different or
all they all the same?

1. A B C D
2. A B C D
3. A B C D
4. A B C D
5. A B C D
6. A B C D
7. A B C D
8. A B C D



FINAL PRACTICE: Choose the most logical response.

1. (rope/ robe)
 - A. I'm going to tie the dog.
 - B. I want to cover myself.
2. (write/ride)
 - A. In my diary.
 - B. In the park on my bike.
3. (gold/cold)
 - A. It was full of ice.
 - B. It was very expensive.



FINAL PRACTICE: Choose the most logical response.

4. (fan/van)

- A. I need more room for the family.
- B. The weather is very hot.

5. (b / v)

- A. Yes, it's spelled v-e-r-y.
- B. Yes, it's spelled b-u-r-y.

6. (boat/vote)

- A. Yes, I watched the elections on the T.V
- B. Yes, it's in the water.



FINAL PRACTICE: Choose the most logical response.

7. (tanks/ thanks)

A. He was watching a war movie.

B. He was very appreciative.

8. (team/theme)

A. Yes, they play very well.

B. Yes, it's about love.

9. (niece/knees)

A. Yes, she's very pretty.

B. Yes, they're very ugly.



FINAL PRACTICE: Choose the most logical response.

10. (price/prize)

A. A trip to Europe.

B. Twenty five dollars.

11. (wash/watch)

A. My dog makes it very dirty.

B. It's my favorite T.V. show.

12. (chopping/shopping)

A. She is preparing a salad.

B. She is buying Christmas gifts.



References:

Fromkin, V. et al. 1988. *An Introduction to Language*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Mcmahon, A. 2002. *Introduction to Phonology*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press .

Santiago , Shirley de Jiménez.
Pronunciation: Consonants.

A traditional Japanese garden scene. In the upper left, a thatched pavilion (kiosko) sits on a grassy slope. The garden is filled with meticulously maintained, rounded green bushes and scattered rocks. In the lower center, a small dark wooden structure is visible near a pond. To the right, a stone waterfall cascades down a rocky slope. The background shows more lush greenery and some trees with autumn-colored leaves. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

Thank you.