

**THE ARTICULATION OF THE
ENGLISH CONSONANTS BY THE UKWUANI L1 SPEAKERS OF
ENGLISH AS L₂**

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Abstract

This study is focused on the articulation of the vowel phonemes of English by the Ukwuani L₁ speakers of English as L₂. The general objective of the study is to find out exactly objective how the group of L₂ speakers of English in the study articulate the English vowel and to find out any non compliance with the R.P. standard of pronunciations. The objective of the study also include the finding out of the possible consequences on the spoken English of the L₂ English speakers being investigated and state the difficulties they are likely to encounter while speaking English. The research method adopted are observation of the respondents, analysis of the data, the respondents are randomly selected from different of communities of Ukwuani nation. These differences are brought about by differences in the number and distribution of phonemes in the two languages. This work among other advantages further improves the spoken English of the Ukwuani people.

Introduction

English is an international language. In fact, the most international of all languages. ‘It is a member of the Indo-European family of languages called West Germanic’, as Oyeleye (2003:1) recalled. Three major periods can be identified within the evolution and development of the English language: old English, middle English and modern English periods as Jowitt (2009:12) and Umera-Okeke (2009:31-33) observe.

There are three basic categories of English usage: as a native, foreign and second language. There are also circles of World Englishes. The ‘inner circle’, made up of the Anglo Englishes (older Englishes) which includes the U.K, the U.S.A, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The outer (extended) circle which contains the non-Anglo Englishes (NEs, New Englishes) is one of the categories. The expanding circle involves the countries that recognize the importance of English as an international language, though they were not colonized by the members of the inner circle.

English has a very high degree of global importance. The importance of the English language will therefore be examined in the following section.

It is the official language of Britain, the U.S and most parts of the common wealth countries. Osakwe (2011:9) notes that ‘English is the mother-tongue of hundreds of millions of people in Britain, the U.S, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.’ The importance of a language is not only determined by the number of its speakers and the size of its territory, it is also determined by the importance of its speakers. It is strongly believed among scholars that the following factors must have contributed to the growing importance of the English language.

- i. English is the unquestioned language of international business, trade and commerce.
- ii. English-speaking U.S.A emerged as the prominent country of influence and power in world affairs and
- iii. English is the dominant language of research and academic enterprise.

Osakwe (2011:10) affirms that:

English is superlatively outstanding: not by size of vocabulary (although large), or other linguistic or aesthetic criteria, but on political, economic and demographic realities.

It is the major lingua franca in Nigeria hence Osakwe (2005:12) asserts that:

Of all the items of merchandise that sailed in within the cultural cargo, the most important was the English language ... English ... became the living instrument and vehicle for conveying and preserving the cultures of both its home and host communities.

From the above facts about English, we can submit that it is of unparalleled relevance and inevitable to Ụkwụ̀nị people who are among the many linguistic groups in Nigeria. It is worthwhile then to examine Ụkwụ̀nị.

It is one of Nigeria’s indigenous languages. Ụkwụ̀nị is a member of the Benue Congo family of languages, i.e. the Kwa group (Osakwe (2010:12). Williamson (1990:139) describes Ụkwụ̀nị as a language in its own right. According to her, ‘Ụkwụ̀nị is a minority language which forms a cluster with Igbo and other languages.’ Ụkwụ̀nị is also classified as a member of the Igboid languages. They include Igbo proper, Ikwerre, Ika, Izii-Ikwo-Ezza-MgboOgba and Ụkwụ̀nị...’ Ụkwụ̀nị people share boundaries with the Isoko, the Urhobo, the Ika, the Igbo and the Ijaw people.

It is spoken as a mother tongue in Orogun, Delta State as well as in Ndoni, River State all the speakers understand one another, there are however, dialectical varieties indicative of the speakers’ geographical locations.

Ukwuani plays some useful roles for its native speakers as it is part of their culture which is very important to mankind. This usefulness will therefore be examined in the next section.

Though a local and a relatively minority language, Ukwuani is very important to the citizens of the Ndokwa nation. Through the language, their rich cultural heritage is preserved. It also serves as their mark of identity and distinction besides its communicative function which is highly important. With the aid of Ukwuani language, the Ndokwa nation is able to hand down its rich cultural heritage from generation to generation as well as preserve it.

The observation made by Agbedo (2007:151) on Ukwuani while discussing language wars in Nigeria' forms part of the related literature in it. He claims that Ukwuani, Ika and Enuani language communities in Delta state speak dialects of Igbo language. Following Emenanjo he states that: Nigerian languages which hitherto had regional, local or limited significance have now been either demoted for [from] the regional languages or promoted from erstwhile local language to state importance.

Agbedo substantiates the above claim by pointing out that with the creation of South Eastern region in 1967 and Cross River State in 1976, Efik became a language of wider communication (LWC). The fortune of Efik dwindled as a result of the creation of AkwaIbom State in 1987 as Ibibio became the language of wider communication in the new state. Furthermore, the scholar in question states that:

Igbo lost its status as the language of wider communication (LWC) in the old Eastern region and suffered what Emenanjo termed 'linguistic balkanization or atomism since Ikwerre and Echie, which are originally lects of Igbo were suddenly accorded major independent language status in Rivers State.

Similarly, Agbedo(2007:151) asserts that in Delta state:

The three lects of Igbo: Enuani, Ndokwa [Ukwuani] and Ika were recognized as discrete languages on their own just as Okpe, UvwieandOvwihanlects of Urhobo were being treated as languages different from Urhobo.

From the above claims, it would appear as if Ukwuani is actually a dialect of Igbo but this is not the fact. To start with, Williamson classifies Ukwuani as a minor language which forms a language cluster with Igbo and other languages.

Perhaps, the submission of Emenanjo (2006:45) on the determination of what language is will end the controversy on whether Ukwuani is a language or a dialect.

The word 'language' has indeed a very wide usage. But in a very special way, the word, 'language has a political aspect to it.

It also has religious, ethnic ... and other non linguistic features which sometimes may hold the ace to the definition of what is a language.

Emenanjo (2006:45) further states that:

‘A language is a dialect with a navy, an army, an anthem, a constitution of its own, a flag and seat at the United nations.’

Shaw as Emenanjo (2006:45) recalls, sarcastically observes that:

Norwegian and Swedish are really mutually intelligible languages.

But they are now two different languages because Norway and Sweden are two different countries.

- i. /p/ the set of L₂ speakers of English in question are able to pronounce this consonant according to the RP standard. The problem they often encounter with this consonant is their inability to differentiate between the aspirated [p^h] and the unaspirated [p]. Another problem is that as a letter, ‘p’ is not pronounced in the phonology of English in some words. E.g cupboard /kʌbɔd/ and receipt /risi:t/. Some Ukwuani people pronounce the above words as:
Cupboard /kɔpbɔd/ and receipt /risipt/risipt/ which are wrong since Ukwuani language is completely phonetic. It does not have words with silent letters.
- ii. /b/ RP and popular Ukwuani English (henceforth PUE) pronunciations of /b/ coincide. However, PUE pronunciation has some difficulties with /b/ as this researcher observed. This occurs in the phonological environment where /b/ does not occur. For instance, after /m/ at the end of words such as comb /kɔm/, lamb /laem/ and thumb /θʌm/. This researcher discovers that some Ukwuani speakers of English as L₂ pronounce the above words wrongly as comb /komb/, lamb/laemb/ and thumb /tɔmb/. /b/ is also not found in subtle /sʌtl/ but investigation reveals that the Ukwuani pronounce it wrongly as subtle /sɔbtul/.
- iii. /t/ This consonant is pronounced by the Ukwuani’s almost in the same manner as it is pronounced in RP. ‘If ‘t’ appears as a letter, it is not pronounced in the following words. Mortgage /’mɔ:gidʒ/,waistcoat /’weiskɔut/, fasten /fa:sn/ etc. Ogbulogo (2006). Many Ukwuani English speakers as observed are ignorant of the fact the /t/ is not pronounced in the above environments. Furthermore if /t/ or /d/ precedes ‘ed’ where it (ed) serves as a past tense indicator, the ‘ed’ is usually articulated /id/ as in wanted /wʌntid/ and mended /mendid/. Some English as a second language users being discussed here are not aware of the above pronunciation rules and some of them consequently produce some RP non compliant pronunciations as follows.

RP	UE
Mortgage /'mɔ:gidʒ/	*/mɔtgedʒ/
Waistcoat /'weiskəʊt/	*/westkəʊt/
Fasten /'fa:sn/	*/fæstin/
Wanted /'wɔntid/	*/wɔnted/
Mended /'mendid/	*/'mended/ etc

- iv. /d/ RP and UE pronunciations of the above consonant agree. However, in RP, if 'd' appears as a letter in some words, it is not pronounced at the level of phonology in such words. Examples are: handsome /'hænsəm/ handkerchief /'hæʃkətʃif/ or /'hækətʃi:f/ and Wednesday /'wenzdei/ or /'wenzdi/. It is observed that many Ukwuani English speakers as L₂ are oblivious of the above pronunciation conventions in English and so produce the following non RP standard forms.

RP	UE
Handsome /'hænsəm/	*/handsɔm/
Handkerchief /'hæʃkətʃif/	*/handkatʃif/
Wednesday /'wenzdei/	*/wɛnɛzde/or /wednesde/

- v. /k/ RP and UE pronunciations of this consonant coincide. /k/ is not pronounced at the initial position of words before /n/ E.g knight /nait/, know /nəʊ/, knot /nɔt/ etc. RP has aspirated [k^h] and unaspirated [k] as observed in kite [k^hait] and sky [skai] while UE does not have such allophones of /k/. Nevertheless, observations show that the Ukwuani do not have any significant problem with this consonant.
- vi. /g/ RP and UE pronunciations of /g/ coincide. There is no restructuring of any form. /g/ is not pronounced before /n/ in the initial and terminal positions of words. E.g gnash /næʃ/ and design /di'zain/. It is also not pronounced before /m/ at the end of words. E.g paradigm /'pærədaim/. U.E has little or no problems about these conventions.
- vii. /f/: RP and UE pronunciations of /f/ coincide. No restructuring is observed in this consonant.
- viii. /v/ pronouncing this consonant is not a problem in UE since /v/ is in the sound inventory of the Ukwuani. No restructuring is observed.
- ix. /s/ The pronunciation of this consonant in RP and UE agree. It is however observed that Ukwuani L₁ speakers of English as L₂ sometimes find it difficult keep /s/ and /z/ apart in some contexts. E.g

RP	UE
Price /praiz/	*/praiz/

Prize/prai:z/	*/prai:z/
Cease /si:s/	*/siz/
Seize /si:z/	*/siz/

x. The pronunciations of /z/ in RP and UE agree but the Ükwüanış sometimes use it where /s/ should have been used as illustrated above. Another common example is:

RP	UE
Increase /inkri:s/	*/inkriz/

Furthermore, the Ükwüanış have the problem of contrasting /z/ and /s/ in various phonological environments. In RP, there are certain linguistic conventions that usually guide the language user on the choice of /z/ or /s/ in various contexts.

The pronunciation of ‘s’ (whether it serves as a plural indicator, a genitive or a third person singular present indicator maintains basically the same rule. After a voiced sound, it is voiced, that is it is pronounced /z/ whereas after a voiceless sound, it is voiceless, that is, it is pronounced /s/. Voiced sounds, are made up of all voiced consonants and all vowels. This is why ‘boys’ (plural), boy’s (genitive singular and boys’ (genitive plural) are all pronounced /bɔiz/. Similarly, girls, girl’s and girls’ are also pronounced /gɜ:lz/ but parents, parent’s and parents’ are pronounced /‘peərənts/. Based on the above rule also, ‘plays’ is pronounced /pleiz/ while ‘rides’ is pronounced /raidz/ but ‘walks’ is pronounced /wɔ:ks/ in RP.

Consequent upon the fact that it is impossible to pronounce /s/ or /z/ immediately after one of the four consonants (/s/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ,) in the same syllable, if a word terminates in one of these four sounds, the ‘s’ or ‘es’ ending is usually pronounced ‘/iz/’, this is why ‘witches’ and witch’s are pronounced /‘witʃiz/’, both adding ‘/iz/’ to their basic forms irrespective of the difference in their spellings. More examples of plural words, with /iz/ ending are: losses /‘lɔsɪz/, roses /‘rɔsɪz/, ashes /‘æʃɪz/, size /‘saɪz/, wishes /‘wɪʃɪz/ and fetches /fetʃɪz/

Most irregular plural nouns with ‘s’ at the end also terminate with /z/ rather than /s/ e.g

- Wives /waɪvz/
- Calves /ka:vz/
- Halves /ha:vz/
- Loaves /ləʊvz/ etc

‘s’ is pronounced /z/ if it occurs at the end of plural words as a plural indicator e.g.

Toes /təʊz/, tomatoes /tə'ma:təʊz/ potatoes/pɒ'teɪtəʊz/ /s/ and /z/ are usually used to differentiate between word classes in RP. Many of Ukwuani L₁ speakers of English as L₂ do not comply with the above linguistic conventions on the distribution of [s] and [z] for noun and verb respectively as they are ignorant of the rules. Consequently they produce RP non compliant words. In such lexical items, /s/ is used for the articulation of nouns while /z/ is used for the articulation of verbs and adjectives. E.g

Nouns

Device /divais/

Advice /ɒd'vais/

Excuse /ik'skju:s/

House /haus/

Noun

Close /kləʊs/

Other lexical items in which /z/ could be confused with /s/ include:

Diffuse /di'fju:s/

Race /reis/

Price /praɪs/

Rice /raɪs/

Face /feɪs/

Course /kɔ:s/

Verbs

Devise /di'vaɪz/

advise /ɒdvaɪz/

excuse /ik'skju:z/

House /haʊz/

adjective

close /kləʊz/ etc.

Defuse /di:'fju:z/

Raise /reɪz/

Prise/Prize /praɪz/

Rise /raɪz/

phase/feɪz/

cause /kɔ:z/ etc

This researcher's field experience indicates that many Ukwuani L₁ speakers of English as L₂ know next to nothing about the above rules of phonology and linguistic conventions of English with respect to the distribution of /s/ and /z/ in utterance. Consequently, the following non RP compliant pronunciations are observed in the spoken English of many of Ukwuani people. The Ukwuani-ness in the below words is that they use [s] where the RP, English would be [z] and they pronounce the word 'price' [praɪs] instead of [praɪz].

RP

Boys /bɔɪz/

Girls /gɜ:lz/

Wives /waɪvz/

Wishes /'wɪʃɪz/

Losses /lɒsɪz/

House /haʊz/ (verb)

Price /praɪs/

Lose /lu:z/

UE

*/bɔɪs/

*/ges/

*/waɪfs/

*/wɪʃɪs/

*/lɒsɪs/

*/haus/

*/Praɪz/

*/lus/

Cause /kɔ:z/

*/kɔs/ etc.

xi. /θ/ This consonant is not in the phoneme inventory of Ʋkwụanị. Consequently, it is restructured, /t/ by most speakers of Ʋkwụanị English. This gives rise to the following non RP standard pronunciations as observed by the present researcher.

R P

Thing/θiŋ/

Thirst/θɜ:st/

Thin /θin/

UE

*/tiŋ/

*/test/

*/tin/

From the above observations, it is clear that many Ʋkwụanị L₁ speakers of English as L₂ cannot keep thirst /θɜ:st/ and Test /test/apart/. For them both are pronounced ‘/ test/’.

xii. /ð/ This consonant is also absent in the phoneme inventory of Ʋkwụanị. It is therefore restructured /d/ by the set of L₁ speakers of English as L₂ under study. Consequently, the following non-standard pronunciations are noticed among the Ʋkwụanị.

R P

UE

They/ /ðei/

*/de/

Tithe /taið/

*/tait/

It is observed that in Ʋkwụanị English (UE), the differences between ‘tight’/tait/ and ‘tithe’/taið/ as well ‘they’ /ðei and ‘day’/ dei/ are neutralized.

xiii. /ʃ/ RP and UE pronunciations coincide An Examination of Ʋkwụanị English however reveals that the Ʋkwụanịs often confuse /ʃ/ with /tʃ/ with respect to distribution. Investigation of the phonology of English indicates that: combinations such ‘tio’ and ‘-tia’ can be pronounced ‘/ʃ/’ as in nation /’neiʃn/ and diction /’dikʃn/. However, if the ‘-tio’ or ‘-tia’ comes after ‘s’, it is pronounced ‘/tʃ/’ as in question /’kwestʃɒn/, digestion/dai’dʒestʃɒn/ and suggestion /sə’dʒestʃɒn/. This investigator’s interactions with some Ʋkwụanị people reveal that many of them are ignorant of the above rules of English phonology and consequently violate it hence they pronounce the affected words wrongly as shown below.

RP	UE
Question/'kwestʃɒn/	*/Kwesʃn/
Digestion/daɪdʒestʃɒn/	*//dadʒesʃn/
Suggestion/sə'dʒestʃɒn/	* /sɔdʒesʃn/
Exhaustion/ɪg'zɔ:stʃɒn	*/egzɔʃ/no /

xiv. /ʒ/ This consonant actually exists in Ukwuani language. Speakers of Ukwuani English are able to pronounce it. This investigator however, discovers that many Ukwuani L₁ speakers of English 'as' L₂ are not able to place it where it should be in some words as shown below.

R P	UE
Persuasion /pə'sweɪʒn/	*/pəsueʃn/
Occasion/ə'keɪʒn/	*/okeʃn/
Erosion/i'rəʊʒn/	*eroʃn/
Decision/ di'siʒn/	disiʃion/
Intrusion/in'tru:ʒn/	*/intruʃn/

The inability of some Ukwuani to place /ʒ/ in the above words can be traced to the difference between the phonotactics of English and Ukwuani. /ʒ/ occurs in the terminal syllables in the above words but in Ukwuani" /ʒ/ does not occur in the terminal syllable. It occurs in the initial and the medial syllables as can be seen in Ukwuani, words such as:

Ozhi/ Òʒ'i/ 'message' / 'mesɪdʒ/ and zhi/ʒ'ɪ/ 'borrow' /'rɔbrɔu/

xv. /h/ This consonant can be pronounced by the Ukwuani. It is however, sparingly used in Ukwuani. /h/ is not pronounced in some English words in the initial and medial positions of words even if it appears in the orthography of such words. This rule or linguistic convention actually makes it difficult for some Ukwuani to pronounce such words correctly in connected speech. Ukwuani phonology fully corresponds with its orthography. There are no silent letters in the language. Some Ukwuani are not able to pronounce the following words with silent 'h' correctly as the present research finds out.

R P	U E
Honest/'hɒnɪst/	*/hɔnest/
Honour/'hɒnə(r)/	*/hɔhə/
Vehicle /'vi:ðkl/	*/vehikul/
Annihilate/ə'naiəleɪt/	*/anihilet/

etc.

xvi. /tʃ/ This consonant is in Ukwuani. It can also be pronounced by the Ukwuani. The problem however, lies in the distribution pattern of the sound in Ukwuani and English. While /tʃ/ is mostly found in terminal syllables in English, it is always found in the initial and medial syllables in Ukwuani. This

is why some ʘkwuani are not able to use it in ‘question’ ‘/’kwestʘn/’ rather, they use a similar sound to replace it and pronounce it ‘question’ /kwestiʘn/. Other instances of this wrong substitution have been explained under /ʘ/.

xvii. /dʒ/ The RP and UE pronunciations of this consonant coincide. ʘkwuani people are able to pronounce /dʒ/ correctly in words. Research however, reveals some contexts in which some ʘkwuani are not able to pronounce the consonant properly, and by implication, the words they appear in. Such phonological environments or contexts include.

R P	UE
Gensture/dʒestʘ/	*/gestʘ/
Sponge/spʌndʒ/	*/spʘnts/
Education/edʒu’keiʘn/	*/edukeʘn/etc.

The present researcher also observes that /dʒ/ is wrongly used in the word ‘guitar’/ gita: (r)/ by the ʘkwuani. Consequently, they produce a non RP compliant pronunciation as shown below

R P	UE
Guitar/gita:/	*/dʒetæ/

xviii. /l/: This consonant is well pronounced in U.E. However, the less educated ʘkwuani speakers of English as L₂ often experience difficulties in applying this sound appropriately. For one, ‘l’ as letter of the English orthography is not pronounced in some contexts. The less educated ʘkwuani are ignorant of the above fact. Investigations show that they (the less educated ʘkwuani people) produce the following non standard pronunciations because of their ignorance.

R P	UE
Calm/ka:m/	*/kalm/
Calf / ka:f/	*/kalf/
Could / kud/	*/kuld/
Half / ha:f	*/halm/ etc

Another problem encountered by many ʘkwuani L₁ speakers of English as L₂ is that they are not aware of the existence of the allophones of /l/ that is the clear [l] and the dark [ɫ]. Consequent upon their ignorance of the allophones of /l/, they neutralize the difference between the clear [l] and the dark [ɫ] in the word ‘lull’ so that they will pronounce it * [lʌ], which is not RP standard.

xix. /j/ RP pronunciation of /j/ and that of popular ʘkwuani English (PUE) coincide. Research however indicates that the average ʘkwuani speakers of English as a second language do not use this consonant appropriately as they often fail to insert it /j/ in the necessary phonological environments. Research indicates that in RP, /j/ is usually inserted in the following phonological

environments even if the letter that stands as its orthography is not in the words concerned.

- i. Between /g/ and /u:/ in argue /'a:gju:/,
- ii. Between /p/ and /u:/ in pew /pju:/
- iii. Between /f/ and /u:/ in few /fju:/
- iv. Between /t/ and /u:/ in tune /tju:n/
- v. Between /b/ and /u:/ in beauty /'bju:ti/
- vi. Between /k/ and /u:/ in cue /kju:/
- vii. Between /k/ and /uɔ/ eruc ni /kjuɔ/
- viii. Between /d/ and /u:/ in duel /dju:ɔ l/
- ix. Between /g/ and /u/ in regulator /'regjuleitɔ/
- x. Between /θ/ and /u:/ in matthew /'mæθju:/
- xi. Between /s/ and /u:/ in sue /sju:/ also, /su:/
- xii. Between /p/ and /uɔ/ in pure /pjuɔ//
- xiii. Between /d/ and /uɔ/ in during /'djuɔriʒ/
- xiv. Between /g/ and /ɔ/ in regular /'regjɔlɔ/
- xv. Between /g/ and /u/ in regulation /regju'leiʃn/

The present researcher discovers that many Ukwuani L₁ speakers of English as L₂ are ignorant of the above rule of insertion of /j/ in the above phonological environments. Consequently, they do not observe the rule. They often produce the following internationally unaccepted pronunciations of English words because of their ignorance of the rule in question.

RP	UE
Tune /tju:n	*/tun/
Few /fju:/	*/fiu/
Cure / kjuɔ/	*/kiɔ/
Pure / pjuɔ/	*/piɔ/
Sue /sju:/also/su:/	*/su/
Regular /'regjɔlɔ /	*regulæ/
etc.	

xx. /w/ RP and UE pronunciations coincide. There are some phonological environments where 'w' appears as a letter in words and it is not pronounced in such words. The set of speakers of English as a second languages being studied (some of them) are not able to observe the above RP pronunciation convention.

This often results in the production non RP standard pronunciations as shown below.

R P	UE
Sword/sɔ:d/	*/swɔd/
Whore/hɔ:/	*/wɔ /
Owl/aul/	*/owl/

xxi. /r/ RP and UE pronunciations of the consonant do not coincide. The allophone of /r/ observed in UE is the type whereby the tongue tip is curled up back behind the alveolar ridge. The articulation is retroflexed. This allophone of /r/ is transcribed /ɻ/. Following this observation, many Ükwüanị speakers are not able to pronounce the RP /r/ appropriately. The following non RP standard pronunciations are observed among many Ükwüanị L₁ speakers of English as L₂.

RP	UE
Rain/rein/	*/λen/
Fry /frai/	*/flai/
Rat/ræt/	*/'λat/ etc

This allophone of /r/ used by many speakers of UE is found in some varieties of American English (AME).

xxii. /m/ The pronunciation of this consonant in RP and UE agree. Its distribution in the two languages also agree. Both languages have the sound in the initial, medial and terminal positions. The only little difficulty that may be experienced by UE speakers is the fact that /m/ is not pronounced at the initial position of ‘mnemonic’ /ni'mɒnik/ and Mnemosyne/nɪ:'mɒzɪni/. Many Ükwüanị speakers of English as L₂ are not able to pronounce the above words correctly as Ükwüanị orthography has no silent ‘letters’. This study discovers that the set of L₂ speakers of English language articulate the /m/ in the initial position of the above words.

xxiii. /n/ RP and UE Pronunciations coincide. An ‘n’ in writing is silent after ‘m’ at the end of a word as observed in hymn /him/, condemn /kɒnd'em/, damned /dæmd/etc.

/n/ is however pronounced in the derivatives ‘damnation’ /dæm'neiʃn/ and ‘damnable’ /dæmnəbl/. The interaction of this investigator with the set of L₂ speakers of English in question shows that a good number of them are ignorant of the silent letter in the words illustrated and consequently do not observe them. This also occasions some mistakes in pronunciations such as:

RP	UE
Damned /dæmd/	*damned/dæmnd/

xxiv. /ʃ/ No restructuring of this consonant is observed but the problem of some Ükwüanị L₁ speakers of English as L₂ has with this sound is its being inserted in some contexts unnecessarily. This consonant does not occur in the initial position of English words but it occurs in the initial position of Ükwüanị words. Based on the above facts, it is observed that some Ükwüanị speakers of English make the following pronunciation mistakes.

RP	UE
Talking /tɔ:/kiʃ/	*/tɔlkiʃ /
Running /'rʌnɪʃ/	*/rʌnɪʃ/
Length/leʃθ/	*/lent/
Sing/siʃ/	*/sing/
Singer/'sɪŋɔ/	*/Singa/
Think/θɪŋk/	*/tɪŋk/
Thing /θɪŋ/	*/tɪn /

Following the above wrong distribution of the consonant /ʃ/, some Ukwuani speakers of English as L₂ neutralize the difference between thing /θɪʃ/ and tin/tin/as illustrated above.

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