

University of Basrah  
College of Arts  
Dept., of Translation

Course Title: English Phonetics  
and phonology  
Level: One (Morning Studies)

# Consonant Sequences

By

Lect. Israa Mahmood Salman

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# What is meant by Consonant sequences or clusters?

When there are two or three or four consonants with no vowel between them such a sequence is called consonant sequences or consonant cluster.

**Consonant Sequences** are of three types: initial sequences, medial, and final sequences.

# Initial Sequences

- At the beginning of English words , **there may be either two or three consonants in sequence.**
- **1- Sequences of two consonant initially**
- **These are of two types:**
- **1- When /s/ followed by one of / p, t ,k , f, m, n, w, j /. For example,**
- spy-stay-sky-sphere-small-snow-sleep-swear-suit.
- /s/+/w/= swear
- Give example of two initial consonant sequence start with (s+ p)
- **2-One of / p ,t, k, b, d, g, f, ʃ , θ, v , m, n, g/ followed by one of /l, r, w, j/.**
- **/p/ followed by /l, r, j / as in ( plat-pray-pure)**

# Initial Sequences

- /t/ followed by /r, w, j/ as in ( try-twice-tune)
- /k/ followed by / l, r, w, j/ as in ( climb-cry- quite-cure)
- /b/ followed by /l, r, j/ as in (blow-bread-beauty).
- /d/ followed by /r,w, j/ as in (dress- dwell-duty)
- /g/ followed by /l, r/ as in (glass-green)
- /f/ followed by /l, r, j/ as in (fly-from-few)
- /θ / followed by /r, w / throw, thwart
- /ʃ/ followed by /r/ shriek
- /v/ followed by /j/ view
- /m/ followed by /j/ as in music
- /n/ followed by /j/ new
- /h/ followed by /j/ huge

# Sequences of three consonants initially

**They include / spr , str , skr ,spj , stj , skj, skw/.**

- They are a combination of /sp/ type sequence and /pr/ type.
- The /s/ at the beginning is cut off by the following stop , and during the following consonant is fully prepared. Examples,
- spread-straight-stupid-square-spurious

# Final Sequences

Sequences of consonants at the ends of words are more varied than at the beginning because /s/ or /z/ have to be added to most nouns to give their plural forms as in ( cats-dogs-facts) and /t/ or /d/ have to be added to most verbs to form their past tense as in ( wished-raised-risk) .Also, / θ/ is used to form nouns as in (strength-breadth) and numerals like (fifth).

## Final sequences include the following types:

- stop+ stop: kept-act-robbed-dragged-actor-red coat( see page 69)
- stop+ nasal: button-garden-written-hidden-pardon)
- /t/ or /d/ +/l/:( muddle-little-battle)titled-titles)
- consonant+/s, z, t, d/(( snakes-hens-loved-used-judged)
- consonant+ / θ/(( eighth-breadth-tenth-health-width-thirteenth-twelfth)
- /l/ + consonant: ( help-milk-shelf-bulge-films)
- nasal + consonant: ( want-jump-thank)

# Longer Sequences

- In phrases , one word may end with a consonant sequence and the next word may begin with one, so that longer sequences such as / / ŋkskl/ as in ( the bank's closed). They include the following sequences:
- -Three consonants( help me –nice tune)
- -Four consonants (long street-fifth floor)
- -Five consonants( milk's free-bent screw)
- -six consonants ( hinged screen-twelfth street)
- -seven consonants ( she tempts strangers)
- **(For more see page 77 on your textbook)**

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