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## **Silent Letters: Challenges and Instructional Strategies for Malayali Learners of English**

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### **Abstract:**

Silent letters are a significant challenge for Malayali learners of English because of the phonological differences between Malayalam and English. Malayalam spelling has a strong correspondence with pronunciation, but English spelling does not always correspond with pronunciation. Some English letters in writing are not pronounced. This unphonetic nature of English leads Malayali learners to pronounce silent English letters the same way they pronounce Malayalam letters, which affects their speech intelligibility. This article reflects on the challenges Malayali learners encounter with silent letters, analyses the linguistic and educational factors influencing their pronunciation, and proposes teaching strategies to help them recognize and omit them. These strategies enable students to pronounce more effectively and express themselves in English.

**Keywords:** Gemination, Intelligibility, Implication, Negative Language Transfer, Phonology, Phonetic Transcription.

### **Introduction**

Silent letters are a significant challenge for non-native speakers, especially those whose first language (L1) has different phonological rules. Malayalam, the first language of Malayalis, generally corresponds its spelling with pronunciation. Malayali is the demonym for a native of Kerala, India. The phonetic nature of Malayalam contrasts with the unphonetic nature of English, where silent letters can be found in many common words. Malayali learners of English often

mispronounce words because they pronounce every English letter the same way they do in their first language. Negative language transfer can cause mispronunciations, making it harder for Malayali learners to communicate clearly with native English speakers. Mispronouncing silent letters prevents the natural flow and rhythm of communicative English, affecting clarity and understanding. The difficulty with silent letters is further worsened by limited exposure to native pronunciation models and instructional practices without focusing on them. Learners may continue to apply more straightforward pronunciation rules of Malayalam to English without proper instruction. Over time, it reinforces inaccurate sound patterns in Malayali learners. This article reflects on the challenges Malayali learners encounter with silent letters, analyses the linguistic and educational factors influencing their pronunciation, and proposes teaching strategies to help them recognize and omit them. These strategies enable students to pronounce more effectively and express themselves in English.

### Understanding the Problem

Silent letters are a significant challenge for Malayali learners of English because of the phonological differences between Malayalam and English. Malayalam spelling has a strong correspondence with pronunciation, but English spelling does not always correspond with pronunciation. Some English letters in writing are not pronounced. This unphonetic nature of English leads Malayali learners to pronounce silent English letters the same way they pronounce Malayalam letters. For example,

- “A” is silent in words such as basically /'beɪsɪkli/, commentary /'kɒməntri/, dictionary /'dɪkʃənri/, elementary /,eli'mentri/, hereditary /hə'redɪtri/, miniaturist /'mɪnɪtʃərɪst/, monetary /'mɒnɪtri/, nuisance /'nju:sns/, plantain /'plæntɪn/, quay /ki:/, teetotaler /,ti:'təʊtəl(r)/, restaurant /'restɒrnt/, secretary /'sekɹətɹi/, separate /'seprət/, stationary /'steɪʃənri/, soya bean /'sɔɪ bi:n/ and soya sauce /,sɔɪ'sə:s/.
- “B” is silent in words such as bomb /bɒm/, climb /klaɪm/, comb /kəʊm/, crumb /krʌm/, debt /det/, doubt /daʊt/, dumb /dʌm/, lamb /læm/, limb /lɪm/, numb /nʌm/, womb /wu:m/, plumber /'plʌmə(r)/, succumb /sə'kʌm/, thumb /θʌm/ and tomb /tu:m/.
- “C” is silent in words such as czar /zɑ:(r)/, indict /ɪn'daɪt/, indictable /ɪn'daɪtəbl/, indictment /ɪn'daɪtmənt/, victualler /'vɪtlə(r)/, victuals /'vɪtlz/, and yacht /jɒt/. “C” is also

silent in the consonant cluster “ck”. For example, back /bæk/, lick /lɪk/, neck /nek/, knock /nɒk/, pack /pæk/, pick /pɪk/, and sack /sæk/.

- “D” is silent in words such as adjust /ə'dʒʌst/, adjourn /ə'dʒɜ:n/, adjudicate /ə'dʒu:dɪkeɪt/, badge /bædʒ/, bridge /brɪdʒ/, budge /bʌdʒ/, budget /'bʌdʒɪt/, dodge /dɒdʒ/, dredge /dredʒ/, edge /edʒ/, fridge /frɪdʒ/, gadget /'gædʒɪt/, ledger /'ledʒə(r)/, wedge /wedʒ/. hedge /hedʒ/ and judge /dʒʌdʒ/.
- “E” is silent in words such as ardent /'ɑ:dnt/, atheist /'eɪθɪst/, blaspheme /blæs'fi:m/, bizarre /br'zɑ:(r)/, belle /bel/, baste /beɪst/, bathe /beɪð/, breathe /bri:ð/, cache /kæʃ/, camera /'kæmrə/, clementine /'klemənti:n/, détente /,dei'tɑ:nt/, difference /'dɪfrəns/, different /'dɪfrənt/, eaten /'i:tn/, eleven /ɪ'levn/, entente /ɒn'tɒnt/, entr'acte /'ɒntrækt/, evening /'i:vnɪŋ/, every /'evri/, general /'dʒenrəl/, govern /'gʌvn/, heaven /'hevn/, interest /'ɪntrəst/, literature /'lɪtrətʃə(r)/, locale /ləʊ'ka:l/, louche /lu:ʃ/, mystery /mɪstri/, meme /mi:m/, morale /mɔ're:l/ or /mə're:l/, modern /'mɔ:dn/, niche /nɪtʃ/ or /ni:ʃ/, note /nəʊt/, royale /rɔ'ja:l/, seven /'sevn/, seventy /'sevnti/, several /'sevrəl/, soothe /su:ð/, steppe /step/, temperature /'tempɪrətʃə(r)/, vineyard /vɪnjəd/ and vegetable /'vedʒtəbl/.
- “G” is silent in words such as bologna /bə'lɒŋjə/, champagne /ʃæm'peɪn/, cognac /'kɒnjæk/, cologne /kə'lɒŋ/, ensign /'ensən/, lasagna /lə'zænjə/, paradigm /'pærədɑɪm/, phlegm /flem/, poignant /'pɔɪnjənt/, soignee /'swɑ:njeɪ/ and vignette /'vɪn'jət/. “G” is also silent in the consonant cluster “gh”. For example, daughter /'dɔ:tə(r)/, drought /draʊt/, neighbour /'neɪbə(r)/, plough /pləʊ/, and thought /θɔ:t/.
- “H” is silent in words such as annihilate /ə'naiəleɪt/, exhaust /ɪg'zɔ:st/, exhibit /ɪg'zɪbɪt/, Fahrenheit /'færənhaɪt/, heir /eə(r)/, hombre /'ɒmbrei/, honest /'ɒnɪst/, honor /'ɒnə(r)/, hour /'aʊə(r)/, meh /me/, messiah /mə'saɪə/, nihilism /'naɪlɪzəm/, yacht /jɒt /nihilist /'naɪlɪst/, thyme /taɪm/, vehement /'vi:əmənt/ and vehicle /'vi:əkl/.
- “I” is silent in words such as bargain /'bɑ:gən/, bougainvillea /,bu:gən'vɪliə/, business /'bɪznəs/, ciabatta /tʃə'bætə/, connoisseur /,kɒnə'sɜ:(r)/, croissant /'krwæsp/, cruise /kru:z/, foreign /'fɔrən/, fountain /'faʊntən/, fruit /fru:t/, heifer /'hefə(r)/, leisure /'leʒə(r)/, loggia /'ləʊdʒə/, memoir /'memwɑ:(r)/, mountain /'maʊtən/, parliament /'pɑ:ləmənt/, plagiarism /'pleɪdʒərɪzəm/, plait /plæt/, region /'ri:dʒən/, tortoise /'tɔ:təs/, reservoir /'rezəvwa:(r)/, nuisance /'nju:sns/, suit /su:t/ and sovereign /'sɒvrɪn/.

- “J” is silent in words such as hallelujah /ˌhælɪˈluːjə/, mojito /məʊˈhi:təʊ/ and marijuana /ˌmæərəˈwɑ:nə/.
- “K” is silent in words such as knife /naɪf/, knit /nɪt/, knock /nɒk/, knee /ni:/, know /nəʊ/ and knot /nɒt/.
- “L” is silent in words such as almond /ˈɑ:mənd/, bouillabaisse /buːjəbeɪs/, tortilla /tɔːˈti:ə/, salmon /ˈsæmən/bouillon /buːjɒn/, colonel /ˈkɜ:nəl/ and psalm /sɑ:m/,
- “M” is silent in words such as mnemonic /nɪˈmɒnɪk/ and mneme /ˈni:mi:/.
- “N” is silent in words such as Autumn /ˈɔ:təm/, bouffant /ˈbu:fɒ/, column /ˈkɒləm/, condemn /kənˈdem/, coq au vin /ˌkɒk əʊˈvæ/, en route /ˌɒːr u:t/, damn /dæm/, hymn /hɪm/, en bloc /ˌɒːblɒk/, en masse /ˌɒːmæs/, en passant /ˌɒːpæsəʊ/, solemn /ˈsɒləm/, en suite /ˌɒːswi:t/, en bloc /ˌɒːblɒk/, en passe /ˌɒːpɑ:sei/ and penchant /ˈpɒʃəʊ/.
- “O” is silent in words such as catholic /ˈkæθlɪk/, chocolate /ˈtʃɒklət/, comfortable /ˈkʌmfətbəl/, contemporary /kənˈtempərəri/, damson /ˈdæmzən/, favorite /ˈfeɪvərɪt/, foetus /ˈfi:təs/, history /ˈhɪstri/, jeopardy /ˈdʒepədi/, laboratory /ləˈbɒrətəri/, tortoise /ˈtɔ:təs/ leopard /ˈlepəd/, luncheon /ˈlʌntʃən/, ouija board /ˈwi:dʒə bɔ:d/ and pigeon /ˈpi:dʒɪn/.
- “P” is silent in words such as coup /ku:/, corps /kɔ:(r)/, cupboard /ˈkʌbəd/, psalm /sɑ:m/, raspberry /ˈrɑ:zbəri/ and receipt /riˈsi:t/.
- “R” is silent in words such as aren’t /ɑ:nt/, car /kɑ:(r)/, carpenter /ˈkɑ:pəntə(r)/, carpet /ˈkɑ:pɪt/, comfortable /ˈkʌmfətbəl/, monarchy /ˈmɒnəki/, ordeal /ɔːˈdi:l/ or /ˈɔ:di:l/, per capita /peˈkæpɪtə/, per diem /ˌpɜ:ˈdi:em/, tour de force /ˌtuə dəˈfɔ:s/ and percentage /peˈsentɪdʒ/.
- “S” is silent in words such as apropos /ˌæprəˈpəʊ/, bourgeois /ˈbʊəʒwɑ:/ or /ˌbʊəˈʒwɑ:/, chassis /ˈʃæsi/, corps /kɔ:(r)/, debris /ˈdeɪbri:/ or /ˈdebri:/, demesne /dəˈmeɪn/, faux pas /ˌfəʊˈpɑ:/, Metis /meɪˈti:/, precis /ˈpreɪsi:/, rendezvous /ˈrɒndɪvu:/, vis-à-vis /ˌvi:s əː vi:/ and viscount /ˈvaɪkaʊnt/.
- “T” is silent in words such as ballet /ˈbæleɪ/, bouffant /ˈbu:fɒ/, bouquet /bʊˈkeɪ/, buffet /ˈbʊfeɪ/ or /ˈbʌfeɪ/, cabaret /ˈkæbəreɪ/, cachet /ˈkæfeɪ/, chalet /ˈʃæleɪ/, Christmas /ˈkrɪsməs/, christen /ˈkrɪsn/, crochet /ˈkrəʊʃeɪ/, croissant /ˈkrwæsəʊ/, croquet /ˈkrəʊkeɪ/, depot /ˈdepəʊ/, debut /ˈdeɪjbu:/ or /ˈdebju:/, denouement /ˌdeɪˈnu:məʊ/, entrepot /ˈɒntrəpəʊ/, gilet /ˈʒɪleɪ/ gourmet /ˈgʊəmeɪ/, moisten /ˈmɔɪsn/, tourniquet /ˈtuənikeɪ/ and tout cour /ˌtuːˈkɔ:(r)/penchant /ˈpɒʃəʊ/, petit-bourgeois /ˌpeti bʊəʒwɑ:/, rapport /ræˈpɔ:(r)/, ricochet

*'rikəfeɪ*, *sobriquet* /'səʊbrɪkeɪ/, *soften* /'sɒfn/, *soi-disant* /,swɑ: di:'zɒ/, *sorbet* /'sɔ:beɪ/ and *tarot* /'tærəʊ/.

- “U” is silent in words such as *awful* /'ɔ:fl/, *baguette* /bæ'get/, *biscuit* /'bɪskɪt/, *beautiful* /'bjʊ:tɪfl/, *circuit* /'sɜ:kɪt/, *faithful* /'feɪθfl/, *guitar* /gɪ'tɑ:(r)/, *mindful* /'maɪndfl/, *harmful* /'hɑ:mfl/, *milieu*/mi:'ljɜ:/, *naturally* /'nætʃrəli/, *wonderful* /'wʌndəfl/ //wʌndəfl/, *painful* /'peɪnfl/, *playful* /'pleɪfl/, *restaurant* /'restɒrnt/ and *successful* /sək'sesfl/.
- The silent “W” is silent in words such as *bowl* /bəʊl/, *drawer* /drə:(r)/, *Greenwich* /,ɡrenɪtʃ/, *whole* /həʊl/, *snowy* /'snəʊi/and *sword* /sɔ:d/, *rowan* /'rəʊən/, *rower* /'rəʊə(r) and *rowing* /'rəʊɪŋ/.
- “X” is silent in words such as *roux* /ru:/, *faux* /fəʊ/, *faux pas* /,fəʊ 'pa:/ and *Sioux* /su:/.
- “Y” is silent in words such as *martyr* /'mɑ:tə(r)/, *martyred* /'mɑ:təd/, *martyrdom* /'mɑ:tədəm/, *prayer* /preə(r)/, *says* /sez/, *vinyl* /'vaɪnl/ and *zephyr* /'zefə(r)/.
- “Z” is silent in words such as *chez* /ʃeɪ/, *laissez-faire* /,leseɪ 'feə(r)/ and *rendezvous*/'rɒndɪvu:/.

Malayalam also features gemination (doubling of consonants), which significantly impacts pronunciation. Gemination is a phenomenon in phonology where two identical consonants co-occur in a word and are pronounced with stronger articulation than regular consonants. In English, when words contain geminated consonants, one consonant is pronounced, and the other is silent. However, Malayali learners of English tend to pronounce letters like p, b, t, d, k, g, j, d, f, v, s, z, l, m, and n with a stronger emphasis or double articulation when they appear in these geminated positions. This doubling of consonants is influenced by the fact that Malayalam often uses gemination as a distinctive feature. Consequently, words such as *abbey* /'æbi/, *abbot* /'æbət/, *chubby* /'tʃʌbi/, *occur* /ə'kɜ:(r)/, *succor* /'sʌkə(r)/, *succumb* /sə'kʌm/, *zucchini* /zʊ'ki:ni/, *budding* /'bʌdɪŋ/, *kidding* /'kɪdɪŋ/, *teddy bear* /'tedi beə(r)/, *boffin* /'bɒfɪn/, *coffin* /'kɒfɪn/, *cuff* /kʌf/, *muffin* /'mʌfɪn/, *puffer* /'pʌfə(r)/, *stuffy* /stʌfi/, *baggage* /'bæɡɪdʒ/, *beggar* /'begə(r)/, *bigger* /'bɪɡə(r)/, *boggy* /'bɒɡi/, *luggage* /'lʌɡɪdʒ/, *hajj* /hædʒ/, *alley* /'æli/, *ballad* /'bæləd/, *bullet* /'bʊlɪt/, *bullying* /'bʊlɪŋ/, *college* /'kɒlɪdʒ/, *drilling* /'drɪlɪŋ/, *hallelujah* /,hæli'lu:jə/, *killer* /'kɪlə(r)/, *killing* /'kɪlɪŋ/, *nullify* /'nʌlɪfaɪ/, *pulling* /'pʊlɪŋ/, *seller* /'selə(r)/, *silly* /'sɪli/, *spelling* /'spelɪŋ/, *villain* /'vɪlən/, *villa* /'vɪlə/, *village* /'vɪlɪdʒ/, *yellow* /'jeləʊ/, *mummy* /'mʌmi/, *summer* /'sʌmə(r)/, *summary* /'sʌməri/, *runner* /'rʌnə(r)/, *running* /'rʌnɪŋ/, *inner* /'ɪnə(r)/, *puppet* /'pʌpɪt/, *supper* /'sʌpə(r)/, *barrack* /'bærək/, *barrage* /'bærɑ:ʒ/, *bass* /beɪs/, *chassis* /'ʃæsi/, *massage* /'mæsɑ:ʒ/.

massacre /'mæsəkə(r)/, message /'mesɪdʒ/, bottle /'bɒtl/, bottom /'bɒtəm/, butter /'bʌtə(r)/, button /'bʌtn/, cottage /'kɒtɪdʒ/, cutting /kʌtɪŋ/, lettuce /'letɪs/, potting /'pɒtɪŋ/, bevvy /'bevi/, divvy /'divi/, navy /'nævi/, glowworm /'gləʊwɜ:m/, pizza /'pi:tʃə/, paparazzi /,pæpə'rætsi/, and paparazzo /,pæpə'rætsəʊ/ are pronounced with stronger consonant stress, which may impact their intelligibility.

### **Key Challenges**

Malayali learners of English often struggle with silent letters in English because English is unphonetic. Since Malayalam is phonetic, learners apply the phonetic rules to English. The negative language transfer often results in the unnecessary articulation of silent sounds, such as pronouncing the 'l' in 'salmon' or the 'b' in 'plumber'. The difficulty with silent letters is further worsened by limited exposure to native pronunciation models and instructional practices without focusing on them.

### **Implications**

The paper reflects some implications for teachers to improve pronunciation instruction and intelligibility among Malayali learners of English. First, teachers can use contrastive analysis to show how English and Malayalam pronunciation differ, especially regarding silent letters. Teaching students about English phonetic symbols can also help them understand which letters are silent and which are pronounced. Listening practice with native English speakers is recommended to hear authentic pronunciation and get used to which sounds are silent in English. Repetitive drills are so helpful for reinforcing pronunciation patterns, especially with words that contain silent letters. Word searches and crosswords can help the students understand silent letters. Finally, teachers can address gemination, or the habit of overemphasizing double consonants, which is common in Malayalam but not common in English. Teachers can guide students in recognizing the English standard for these sounds and gradually help them reduce this extra emphasis. Altogether, these instructional implications are aimed at enhancing pronunciation and intelligibility.

## Strategies

Teachers should devise some strategies so that learners can identify and omit silent English letters. Such strategies can help learners improve their pronunciation and fluency. Teachers can start by using contrastive analysis to highlight specific differences between English and Malayalam pronunciation and focus on silent letters, which is uncommon in Malayalam. This approach involves comparing English words that contain silent letters with similar Malayalam words that typically pronounce all letters. For example, educators can show how the letter “b” in “plumber” and “bomb” is silent in English but would be pronounced if such words existed in Malayalam. Teachers can further illustrate these patterns using lists of commonly used English words with silent letters and examples of how such letters change the pronunciation rules compared to Malayalam.

Visual aids can significantly improve their understanding of silent letters. Visual aids such as flashcards with phonetic transcriptions can help with silent letters. For example, showing the word "knife" with the phonetic transcription /naɪf/ emphasizes the silent 'k' and helps learners visualize the difference between spelling and pronunciation. This visual comparison helps the students understand the difference between spelling and pronunciation. Explain that some words in English are pronounced differently from how they are spelled because of changes that happened over time. Sometimes, English words were borrowed from other languages and kept their original spellings, even if their pronunciation changed or stayed the same. This way, students can understand why English pronunciation does not always correspond with spelling.

Repetition and feedback help students become comfortable and confident with words that include silent letters. This practice also helps them remember silent letters and improve spoken fluency. Through repeated practice, learners move from making a conscious effort to speak accurately to speaking more naturally and automatically. Teachers can also have the students practice these words in sentences or short dialogues to reinforce the role of silent letters in English.

Activities such as word searches, where learners look up words with silent letters in the pronouncing dictionary and pronounce them correctly, can make learning enjoyable and memorable for students. In English, silent letters often appear in certain letter combinations. Teachers can help students learn these patterns by introducing and exemplifying them. For example, “A” is silent in “EA” words like bean, bread, dead, head, heat, lead, meant, peace, seat, spread, stead, and teacher. “A” is silent in “OA” words like boar, board, boast, boat, coat, foam,



goad, goal, goat, moan, moat, road, roam, and soap. “H” is silent in “WH” words like what, when, which, and why. In “LM,” “LF,” and “LK” words like almond, alms, balk, balm, calm, palm, psalm, salmon, folk, calf, half, self, shelf, chalk, stalk, talk, walk, and yolk, “L” is silent. “B” is silent in “MB” and “BT” words like bomb, climb, comb, crumb, dumb, lamb, limb, numb, plumber, succumb, thumb, tomb, womb, debt, doubt, and subtle. “C” is silent in “SC” words like crescent, miscellaneous, muscle, scene, scent, science, and scissors. “G” is silent in “GN” words like align, gnash, gnat, gnaw, gnome, resign, and sign. “H” is silent in “HO” and “HE” words like hour, honest, honor, and heir. “K” is silent in “KN” words like knee, knife, knight, know, knot, knave, knew, knowledge, and knitting. “N” is silent in “MN” words like autumn, condemn, column, hymn, solemn, and damn. “P” is silent in “PS” and “PN” words like psychology, pseudonym, psoriasis, psychic, pseudo, psalm, pneumatic, and pneumonia. “S” is silent in “IS” words like aisle, Island, islander, isle, and islet. “S” is silent in “ST” words like bristle, bustle, nestle, castle, whistle, hustle, listen, jostle, and wrestle. “W” is silent in “WR” words like write, writer, wrist, wreck, wrench, wrap, wrath, wraith, wring, wrong, writhe, wreath, wreath, and wrestle. “U” is silent in “GU” and “QU” words like guess, guarantee, guardian, guest, guide, guitar, guilty, guard, quit, quiet, question, queen, quality, quay, quarter, and quote. Engaging students in activities like using these words in sentences or doing word searches to find such silent-letter combinations in the dictionary can make learning fun.

Exposure to authentic English audio resources is important in helping learners recognize and adapt to silent letters in natural speech. Teachers can give students plenty of opportunities to practice listening by using resources such as podcasts, audiobooks, and recorded conversations. These resources offer demonstrations of natural pronunciation and reinforce correct auditory patterns, making it easier for learners to hear and model how native speakers handle silent letters. Listening exercises encourage students to distinguish between sounds that are pronounced and those that are silent. It helps the learners improve their listening skills and spoken English.

Teach Malayali learners that gemination is the doubling of consonant letters, which is common in Malayalam but not common in English. Explain that in English, even if a consonant is doubled in spelling (e.g., bullet, yellow, summery, and running), it is pronounced as a single sound. Teachers can provide examples of such words and demonstrate their correct pronunciation. Conduct simple pronunciation drills with these words and encourage learners to practice speaking them naturally. Use audio recordings or online resources to help learners identify and imitate the

correct pronunciation. Give feedback to help them avoid gemination and encourage them to use these words in everyday sentences to build confidence and accuracy.

Finally, another valuable teaching point is having students understand that the silent "E" at the end of many words often makes the preceding vowel long. For example, in words like gate, kite, name, and tape, the "E" is silent but changes the pronunciation of the preceding vowel. Have the students practice minimal pairs like bit and bite, can and cane, cap and cape, cub and cube, cut and cute, hat and hate, rid and ride, rip and ripe, shin, shine, tap and tape, and win and wine to reinforce the concept. Though dropping the final "e" is common in many cases, there are exceptions to the rules where the final "e" is retained. For example, final "E" is pronounced in words such as *attache* /ə'tæʃeɪ/, *canape* /'kænəpeɪ/, *resume* /'rezju:meɪ/, *epitome* /ɪ'pɪtəmi/, *forte* /'fɔ:teɪ/, *anemone* /ə'neməni/, *recipe* /'resəpi/, *lethe* /'li:θi/, *karate* /kə'rɑ:ti/, *karaoke* /,kæri'əʊki/, *Panache* /pə'nɑ:ʃ/, *sesame* /'sesəmi/, *finale* /fi'nɑ:li/, *café* /'kæfeɪ/, *cliché* /'kli:ʃeɪ/, and *hyperbole* /haɪ'pɜ:bəli/. The words where the 'e' is pronounced at the end are imported from foreign languages, mainly Greek and Japanese. Similarly, have the learners understand that "R" is silent in British English when it comes at the end of words or before a consonant, as in *far* /fɑ:(r)/, *sir* /sɜ:(r)/, *war* /wɔ:r/, *start* /stɑ:t/, and *cart* /kɑ:t/.

## Conclusion

Silent letters are a significant challenge for Malayali learners of English because of the phonological differences between Malayalam and English. Malayalam spelling has a strong correspondence with pronunciation, but English spelling does not always correspond with pronunciation. Some English letters in writing are not pronounced. This unphonetic nature of English leads Malayali learners to pronounce silent English letters the same way they pronounce Malayalam letters. This unphonetic nature of English needs to be clarified for learners through pedagogical strategies. These strategies can help learners improve their pronunciation and intelligibility.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Further research is needed to understand better how proper pronunciation instruction affects speech intelligibility among Malayali learners of English. Studies should explore factors

like the influence of native language interference, exposure to native pronunciation, and the impact of writing systems across languages.

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