

## 4 Consonant sequences

In chapter 3 we saw how single consonants are made, and sometimes how a sequence of two consonants should be said (e.g. /pr, kr, tr/ p. 62), but there are many other cases where two or three or four or even more consonants follow one after the other. Some examples are: ski:m scheme, kri:m cream, skri:m scream, neks necks, nekt next, teksts texts.

Some languages (e.g. Russian, German) have many consonant sequences, and speakers of these languages will not have any difficulty in pronouncing most of the English ones. But other languages do not have sequences of consonants at all, or only very few and very short ones (e.g. Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Swahili, Yoruba, Tamil), and speakers of these languages (in which two consonants are usually separated by a vowel) may have difficulty in stringing together two, three or four consonants with no vowel between them. This chapter is to help you, if you have this kind of difficulty.

### 4.1 Initial sequences

At the beginning of English words there may be either two or three consonants in sequence.

#### Sequences of two consonants initially

These are of two main kinds:

1 /s/ followed by one of /p, t, k, f, m, n, l, w, j/, e.g. in spy, stay, sky, sphere, small, snow, sleep, swear, suit.

2 One of /p, t, k, b, d, g, f, θ, ʃ, v, m, n, h/ followed by one of /l, r, w, j/. Not all of these sequences are found (e.g. /pw, dl/ do not occur). The full list is:

/p/ followed by	/l, r, j/	play, pray, pure
/t/	/r, w, j/	try, twice, tune
/k/	/l, r, w, j/	climb, cry, quite, cure

/b/	/l, r, j/	blow, bread, beauty
/d/	/r, w, j/	dress, dwell (rare), duty
/g/	/l, r/	glass, green
/f/	/l, r, j/	fly, from, few
/θ/	/r, w/	throw, thwart (rare)
/ʃ/	/r/	shriek
/v/	/j/	view
/m/	/j/	music
/n/	/j/	new
/h/	/j/	huge

Start with /sp/: say a long /s/, then gradually close the lips for /p/ until they stop the /s-/sound. Keep the /s/ going right up to the moment *after* the lips are closed, and you will not put a vowel between the two consonants. Be careful to start with a long /s/ and do not put a vowel before it. Do this many times until you are sure that there is no vowel sound either before the /s/ or after it. Now add the vowel in words such as:

**Q100** spaɪ spy      spɜː spur      spɪə spear      speə spare

Do not say əspaɪ or səpaɪ. Start with /s/ and halt it by closing the lips.

/st/ and /sk/ are begun by making a long /s/ and halting it by raising the tongue-tip (for /st/) or tongue-back (for /sk/) to cut off the friction. Try:

**Q101** steɪ stay      stɑː star      stɔː store      stɪə steer  
skaɪ skv      skɑː scar      skɔː score      skeə scare

Do not say əsteɪ or səteɪ, etc.

In /sf/ (which is rare) the long /s/ is ended by the lower lip moving up to the upper teeth for /f/:

**Q102** sfɪə sphere      sferɪkəl spherical

In /sm/, the /s/ is continued until the lips meet for /m/, and in /sn, sl/, until the tongue-tip touches the alveolar ridge. (Those of you who have trouble with /l/ and /r/ must be careful not to pronounce sri:p for sli:p *sleep* (see p. 61).)

**Q103** smaɪl smile      sməʊk smoke      smel smell      smɪə smear  
snəʊ snow      snɔː snore      sneɪk snake      snæk snack  
sləʊ slow      slaɪ sly      slɪp slip      slæk slack

In /sw/ the lips become rounded during the /s/ (be careful not to pronounce /sv/) and in /sj/ the /i:/, which is the beginning of the /j/-glide, is reached during the /s/, so that in both cases the glide starts as soon as /s/ ends. Try:

swi:t sweet	swet sway	swɒn swan	swu:p swoop
sju:t suit	sju: sue	əsju:m assume	pəsju: pursue

In the second group of sequences, the second consonant is most often formed whilst the first one is being pronounced. For example, in /pr/ or /pl/ the tongue is placed in the exact position for /r/ or /l/ whilst the lips are still closed for the /p/, so that as soon as they are open the /r/ or /l/ is heard. In the following examples start with a long first consonant, and during it place the tongue (and for /w/ the lips) in position for the second consonant; then, and only then, release the first consonant:

pleɪ play	preɪ pray	pjʊə pure	traɪ try
twɑ:s twice	tju:n tune	klaɪm climb	kraɪ cry
kwaɪt quite	kjʊə cure	bləʊ blow	bred bread
bju:tɪ beauty	dres dress	dwel dwell	dju:tɪ duty
glɑ:s glass	gri:n green	flaɪ fly	fɾɒm from
fju: few	vju: view	mju:zɪk music	nju: new

In /θr/ and /ʃr/ the second consonant cannot be prepared during the first. Be sure first of all that you can pronounce each one separately; say one, then the other, several times. Then smoothly and continuously make the tongue glide from one to the other so that there is no sudden change between them; try the following, very slowly at first, then gradually quicker:

θrəʊ throw	θri: three	θred thread	θru: threw
ʃri:k shriek	ʃred shred	ʃrɪl shrill	ʃru:d shrewd

### Sequences of three consonants initially

These are /spr, str, skr, spj, stj, skj, spl, skw/ and are a combination of the /sp/ type of sequence and the /pr/ type. The /s/ at the beginning is cut off by the following stop, and during the stop the following consonant is fully prepared. Try the following examples very slowly at first; cut off the /s/ by the tongue or lips and, whilst holding this stop, get the third consonant ready, then release the stop straight into the third consonant:

<u>sp</u> red	spread
<u>str</u> ait	straight
<u>sk</u> ru:	screw
<u>spjuəriəs</u>	spurious

The sequence /spj/ is rare.

<u>stju:</u> pid	stupid
<u>skjuə</u>	skewer
<u>splend</u> id	splendid
<u>skweə</u>	square

#### 4.2 Final sequences

Sequences of consonants at the ends of words are more varied than at the beginning mainly because /s/ or /z/ have to be added to most nouns to give their plural forms, as in *kæts* *cats*, *dɒgz* *dogs*, *fækts* *facts*, *fi:ldz* *fields*, etc., and /t/ or /d/ have to be added to most verbs to form their past tense, as in *wɪʃt* *wished*, *reɪzd* *raised*, *rɪskt* *risked*, *plʌndʒd* *plunged*, etc. Also /θ/ is used to form nouns like *streŋθ* *strength* and *bredθ* *breadth* and numerals like *fɪfθ* *fifth* (and all these can have plurals – *streŋθs*, *bredθs*, *fɪfθs*!).

#### Stop + stop

When one stop consonant is immediately followed by another, as in *kɛpt* *kept* and *ækt* *act*, the closure of the speech organs for the second consonant is made whilst the closure for the first consonant is still in position. In the sequence /pt/ this is what happens: the lips are closed

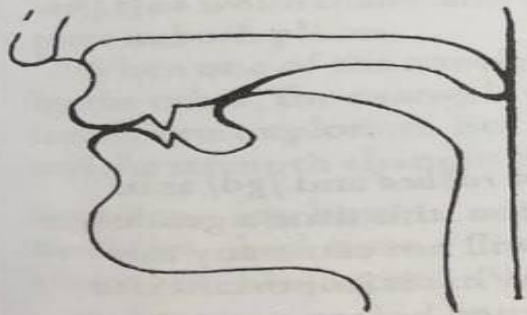


Fig. 25 Double closure in /pt/

for /p/ and air is compressed as usual by pressure from the lungs; then, with the lips still closed, the tongue-tip is placed on the alveolar ridge ready for /t/, so that there are two closures, see Figure 25. Then, and only then, the lips are opened, but there is no explosion of air because the tongue closure prevents the compressed air from bursting out of

the mouth; finally, the tongue-tip leaves the alveolar ridge and air explodes out of the mouth. So there is only one explosion for the two stops; the first stop is incomplete.

Figure 26 shows a similar position for the sequence /kt/. First the back of the tongue makes the closure for /k/, then the tip of the tongue makes the closure for /t/, then the back of the tongue is lowered with-out causing an explosion, and finally the tongue-tip is lowered and air explodes out.

Start with *kept*. First say *kep* and hold the air back with the lips, don't open them. Now put the tongue-tip in position for /t/ (lips still closed). Now open the lips and be sure that no air comes out, and then lower the tongue-tip and allow the air out. Do this several times and be sure that the lips are firmly closed (we do not say *ket*) and that the tongue-tip is ready to hold back the breath before you open the lips. Then do the same with *ækt*, and be sure that although /k/ is properly formed, its ending is, as it were swallowed, so that there is no explosion until the /t/ is released.

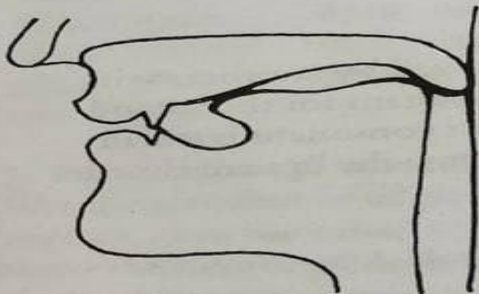


Fig. 26 Double closure in /kt/

Now do exactly the same for /bd/ as in *rɒbd robbed* and /gd/ as in *drægd dragged*. Again there is only one explosion, this time a gentle one for the /d/. If you do make two explosions it will not cause any misunderstanding, but it will sound un-English. What is important is to be sure that the first consonant is properly formed before you take up the position for the second. If you say *rɒd* instead of *rɒbd* or *dræd* instead of *drægd*, you will be misunderstood.

This 'missing explosion' happens whenever one stop consonant (except /tʃ/ and /dʒ/) is followed immediately by another (including /tʃ/ and /dʒ/), not only at the end of words but also in the middle of words, as in *æktə actor*, or between words, as in *red kəʊt red coat*. Here are some examples for practice:

<b>Q.180</b>	slept rʌbd tɒp dɒg raɪp təmə:təʊ grɛɪt keə kwɔɪt gʊd blækba:d klʌb taɪ bɒb gʊdwaɪn bæd kəʊld aɪd gəʊ pɪgteɪl lektʃə bɪg dʒəʊk	slept rubbed top dog ripe tomato great care quite good blackbird club tie Bob Goodwin bad cold I'd go pigtail lecture big joke	fækt drʌgd ʃɒp gɜ:l eɪtpəns hɒt bɑ:θ θɪk pi:s blæk dɒg sʌbkɒnʃəs red pɜ:s gʊdbaɪ bægpaɪps bɪg bɔɪ ɒbdʒɪkt tʃi:p tʃi:z	fact drugged shop girl eightpence hot bath thick piece black dog subconscious red purse goodbye bagpipes big boy object (n.) cheap cheese
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When /p/ is followed by /p/, or /t/ by /t/, and so on, there is again only one explosion, but the closure is held for double the usual time.

Examples:

<b>Q.181</b>	slɪp pɑ:st lʊk keəfəlɪ mæd dɒg	slip past look carefully mad dog	wɒt taɪm bɒb beɪts bɪg gɜ:l	what time? Bob Bates big girl
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**Q.182** For /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ the friction part of the sound is never missing, so in wɪtʃ tʃeə *which chair?* and la:dʒ dʒʌg *large jug* the /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are complete in both places.

When one of the strong/weak pair /p, b/ or /t, d/ or /k, g/ is followed by the other, for example in wɒt deɪ *what day* or bɪg keɪk *big cake*, the.c. is only one explosion, but the closure is held for double the usual time and the strength changes during this time. Other examples are:

<b>Q.183</b>	hɪp bæʊn bed taɪm blæk gəʊt	hip bone bed-time black goat
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If three stop consonants come together, as in strɪkt peərənt *strict parent*, there is still only one explosion, that of the third consonant. What usually happens is that the first consonant is formed and held for longer than usual, the second consonant disappears altogether, and the third is formed and exploded normally. We might write *strict parent* as strɪk: peərənt, where /k:/ represents an unexploded /k/ held for longer than usual. Other examples are:

### Consonant sequences

aɪ slept bædli	I slept badly
hi: lægd bihaɪnd	he lagged behind
kəlækt penɪz	collect pennies
ðeɪ rɒbd kɑ:z	they robbed cars

/pt/ and /kt/ can be followed immediately by /s/ in words like *əksept*s *accepts* and *fækt*s *facts*. In these sequences /p/ and /k/ are not exploded but the /t/ explodes straight into the /s/. Be sure to form the first stop firmly. Other examples are:

ɪntəʁəpt	interrupts
kɒntækt	contacts
rækt	reacts

ədɒpt	adopts
prətekt	protects

### Stop + nasal

When /t/ or /d/ are followed by a syllabic /ŋ/, as in *bʌtŋ* *button* and *gɑ:dŋ* *garden*, the explosion of the stop takes place through the nose. This *nasal explosion* happens in this way: the vocal organs form /t/ or /d/ in the usual way, with the soft palate raised to shut off the nasal cavity and the tongue-tip on the alveolar ridge, but instead of taking the tongue-tip away from the alveolar ridge, but instead of taking we leave it in the same position and lower the soft palate, so that the breath explodes out of the nose rather than out of the mouth. Figure 27 shows

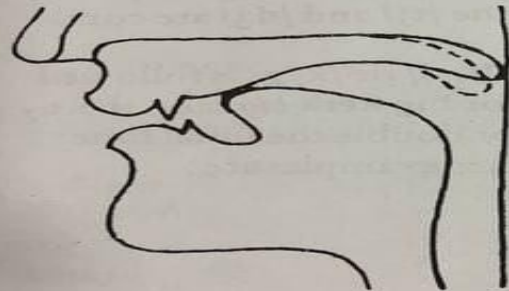


Fig. 27 Nasal explosion in /tŋ/

that this is the simplest way of passing from /t/ or /d/ to /n/, since the tongue position is the same for all three consonants and the only difference is in the raised or lowered position of the soft palate.

Make a /t/-sound and hold the breath in the mouth, don't let it out; then send all the breath out sharply through the nose (just as in the

exercise described on p. 16) whilst still holding the tongue-tip firmly against the alveolar ridge. Do this several times without allowing the tongue-tip to move at all and feel the air bursting out behind the soft palate. Now start the voice vibrating for /n/ as the soft palate lowers and again do this several times without moving the tongue-tip. Now do the same thing for /dn/, with the voice vibrating through both /d/ and /n/ but the tongue-tip firmly on the alveolar ridge all the time. The effect in both /tn/ and /dn/ is to make the explosion of the stop much less clear than when it bursts out of the mouth; if you do make the explosion by taking the tongue-tip away from the alveolar ridge or if you put the vowel /ə/ between the /t/ or /d/ and the /n/ it will sound rather strange to English ears, but you will not be misunderstood. Try these other similar words:

rɪtŋ written  
 hɪdŋ hidden  
 sɜ:tŋ certain  
 pɑ:dŋ pardon

brɪtŋ Britain  
 bɜ:dŋ burden  
 fraɪtŋ frighten  
 wʊdŋ wooden

Both /tŋ/ and /dŋ/ may be followed by /s/ or /z/ or /t/ or /d/, in words like ɪmpɔ:tŋ importance, kɜ:tŋz curtains, ɪmpɔ:tŋt important and fraɪtŋd frightened. When the third consonant is /t/ or /d/ the tongue does not move at all – the soft palate is simply raised again to make the stop complete. For /s/ or /z/ the tongue-tip is lowered very slightly from the alveolar ridge to make the necessary friction. Try the following:

pɪtŋs pittance  
 pɑ:dŋd pardoned  
 wʊdŋt wouldn't  
 gɑ:dŋz gardens

ɔ:tŋt oughtn't  
 rɪdŋs riddance  
 bʌtŋz buttons  
 ʃɔ:tŋd shortened

In words where the /n/ is not syllabic, such as braɪtŋɪs brightness and gʊdŋɪs goodness, the explosion is also nasal, and this is also true when the stop is found at the end of one word and the /n/ at the beginning of the next, as in leɪtŋ nɑɪt late night and bædŋnju:z bad news. Try the following examples, and be sure that the tongue-tip stays firmly on the alveolar ridge through both /t/ and /n/:

waɪtŋɪs whiteness  
 sædŋɪs sadness  
 ət nɑɪt at night  
 gʊd nɑɪt good night

wɪtŋɪs witness  
 kɪdŋɪ kidney  
 wɒt nekst what next?  
 red nəʊz red nose



pɑ:t'nə partner  
stɑ:t'nəʊ start now

laʊdnɪs loudness  
bred naɪf bread knife

Nasal explosion also happens when /m/ follows /t/ or /d/: the soft palate is lowered whilst the tongue-tip is firmly on the alveolar ridge and the lips are then quickly closed for /m/. It is usually more difficult in this case to keep the tongue-tip position until after the breath has exploded through the nose, so you must take care to hold it there. Try the following:

ʌt'məʊst	utmost	æt'məsfɪə	atmosphere
ɪksaɪt'mənt	excitement	əd'maɪə	admire
əd'mɪt	admit	ɒd'mənt	odd.nent
ə bɪt mɔː	a bit more	waɪt maɪs	white mice
eɪt mən	eight men	sæd mjuːzɪk	sad music
ə gʊd mənɪ	a good many	bɾɔːd m'aɪndɪd	broad-minded

When you can do this well, you will not find much difficulty with /p, b, k, g/ followed by /m/ or /n/, in words like heɪp'nɪ *halfpenny* or sɪknɪs *sickness*, or in phrases like teɪk maɪn *take mine* or bɪg mæn *big man*, where the explosion is also nasal. The secret is to hold the stop until the breath has exploded through the nose and only then to change the tongue or lip position for the nasal (if any change is needed). Try the following:

raɪp'nɪs	ripeness	tɒp'məʊst	topmost
ək'nɒlɪdʒ	acknowledge	fræg'mənt	fragment
stɒp nəʊ	stop now	help miː	help me
dɑːk naɪt	dark night	teɪk maɪn	take mine
klʌb nɒtɪs	club notice	bɪg nəʊz	big nose
bɪg maʊθ	big mouth		

/t/ or /d/ + /l/

/t/ and /d/ are made with the tongue-tip on the alveolar ridge and the sides of the tongue firmly touching the sides of the palate; /l/ is made with the tongue-tip touching the alveolar ridge, but the sides of the tongue away from the sides of the palate so that the breath passes out laterally. The simplest way to go from /t/ or /d/ to /l/ is to leave the tongue-tip on the alveolar ridge and only lower the sides, and that is what we do. It is called *lateral explosion*.

Make the closure for /d/ and hold it; then immediately change to /l/

but be sure that the tongue-tip does not leave the alveolar ridge even for a moment. If you find this difficult try *biting* the tip of your tongue so that it cannot move and then changing to /l/, until you have got the feeling of the breath exploding over the lowered sides of the tongue; then try it with the tongue-tip in its normal position. Do this several times, and then try the same action for /t/. When you are satisfied that the tongue-tip does not move, try the following:

mɪd  middle	mʌd  muddle
bæt  battle	lɪt  little

The plural ending /z/ and the past tense ending /d/ can be added to /t/ and /d/. For /t|d/ and /d|d/, as in bɒt|d *bottled* and mʌd|d *muddled*, the tongue-tip does not move at all; the sides are lowered for /t/ and raised again for /d/. For /t|z/ and /d|z/, as in bɒt|z *bottles* and ni:d|z *needles*, the tongue-tip is lowered slightly from the alveolar ridge to give the necessary friction at the same time as the sides are raised to touch the sides of the palate, which they must do for /z/. Try the following:

hʌd d huddled	kɜ:d d curdled
mɒd z models	ped z pedals
tʌt d titled	mɒt d mottled
tʌt z titles	bæt z battles

In all the examples above /t/ is syllabic (see p. 56), but in words such as sæd|ɪ *sadly* and θɔ:t|ɪs *thoughtless* and in phrases like bæd lʌt *bad light* and streɪt laɪn *straight line*, where the /t/ is not syllabic, the explosion takes place in the same way, with the tongue-tip kept firmly on the alveolar ridge. Try the following:

bæd ɪ badly	ni:d ɪs needless
hɑ:t ɪs heartless	leɪt ɪ lately
ət lɑ:st at last	ʃɔ:t lʌɪf short life
red lʌɪt red light	ɡʊd lʌk good luck

Notice, by the way, that in changing from /n/ to /l/ in words like tʃæn| *channel* and mæn|ɪ *manly* and in phrases like ɡri:n li:f *green leaf*, the tongue-tip also stays on the alveolar ridge whilst the sides of the tongue are lowered. Try the following:

pæn  panel	fɪnlənd Finland
tʌn  tunnel	tɜ:n left turn left
ʌn les unless	wʌn les one less

Try also the following:



pænlz panels  
tʃænlɪd channeled

tʌnlz tunnels  
tʌnlɪd tunneled

Consonant + /s, z, t, d/

Because of the way in which regular plurals are formed in English there are very many sequences of a consonant followed by /s/ or /z/, for example lips *lips*, bɜ:dz *birds*, sneɪks *snakes*, henz *hens*. And because of the way in which regular past tenses are formed there are also very many sequences of a consonant followed by /t/ or /d/, for example, kɪst *kissed*, lʌvd *loved*, lɑ:ft *laughed*, ju:zd *used*.

When you make these sequences, be sure always to form the first consonant firmly and then to put the tongue into position for the /s/ or /z/ or the /t/ or /d/ whilst you are still continuing the first consonant. For example, in kʌps *cups* the lips are closed firmly for /p/ and then behind them the tongue-tip is placed in position for /s/, so that when the lips are opened for the release of /p/ the /s/ is heard immediately. The sounds flow into each other; there must never be an interval or hesitation or vowel between them. Try the following:



kʌps cups  
wi:ks weeks  
dʒɒbz jobs  
dæmz dams  
egz eggs  
sɒŋz songs  
lɑ:ft laughed  
wɒʃt washed  
pru:vd proved  
si:md seemed  
geɪzd gazed  
bæŋd banged

kæts cats  
lɑ:fs laughs  
gʊdz goods  
tɜ:nz turns  
draɪvz drives  
welz wells  
mɪst missed  
wɒtʃt watched  
brɪ:ðd breathed  
əʊnd owned  
dʒʌdʒd judged  
fɪld filled

Seven of these sequences /ps, ks, nz, ft, st, nd, ld/ occur in words which are not plurals or past forms; these sequences may then have yet another consonant added to them to form plurals and past forms, for example fɪkst *fixed* or gests *guests*. For these the tongue-tip must be either raised to make contact with the alveolar ridge to make /t/ or /d/, or it must be lowered slightly from the alveolar ridge to make the friction of /s/ or /z/. Be sure that the first two consonants are firmly but smoothly formed before adding the third. Try the following:

<b>Q</b>	læpst	lapsed	brɒnzɪd	bronzed
	tækst	taxed	lɪfts	lifts
	rests	rests	fɪ:ldz	fields
	bendz	bends		

**Q** The sequence /ksts/ occurs in the word teksts *texts*; the last /s/ is again added by lowering the tongue slightly from the /t/ position to give the /s/ friction.

**Q** Also, the more common word sɪksθ *sixth* has /θ/ added to /ks/. This needs a smooth but definite movement of the tongue-tip from its position close to the alveolar ridge to a position close to the upper teeth; this will not be difficult if you have mastered the exercises on pp. 33-4.

### Consonant + /θ/

**Q** The consonants /t, d, n, l/ are followed by /θ/ in the words ertθ *eighth*, brɛdθ *breadth*, tɛnθ *tenth* and helθ *health*. Normally /t, d, n/ and /l/ are made with the tongue-tip on the alveolar ridge, but when followed by /θ/ they are made with the tongue-tip touching the back of the upper teeth. It is then pulled away slightly to give the dental friction of /θ/.

In the words fɪfθ *fifth* and lɛŋθ *length* the tongue-tip is placed in position for /θ/ during the previous consonant, so that again there is no gap between them. There are only a few other words like these – wɪdθ *width*, hʌndrɛdθ *hundredth*, nainθ *ninth*, θɜ:ti:nθ *thirteenth*, etc., welθ *wealth*, streŋθ *strength*. Practise these and those given above until you can go smoothly from the first consonant to the /θ/.

**Q** All of these words may then have a plural /s/ added, giving ertθs *eighths*, brɛdθs *breadths*, etc. The added /s/ should not be difficult if you have mastered the exercises on p. 34. The secret is a smooth but definite movement of the tongue-tip from the dental position of /θ/ to the alveolar position of /s/. Practise the plurals of all the words given above.

Notice also the word twɛlfθ *twelfth*, where /fθ/ has /l/ before it. Make sure that the /l/ is properly formed, and then during the /l/ raise the lower lip up to the upper teeth for /f/ and then go on to /θ/. This word also has the plural form twɛlfθs. Once again move the tongue-tip smoothly but firmly from the /θ/ to the /s/ position.

### /l/ + consonant

Various consonants may follow /l/; we have already dealt with /lz/, /lθ/ and /ld/ on p. 74 and the remainder are not very difficult if you have

mastered /l/ by itself. Before any consonant the /l/ will be dark (see p. 55) and the following consonant is formed whilst the /l/ is being pronounced. Try the following:

help help      fɒlt fault      milk milk      ʃelf shelf  
els else      wɛlf Welsh      ʃelv shelve      bʌldʒ bulge  
film film

Plural and past forms lengthen some of these sequences as before. Try:

helps helps      helpt lielped      belts belts      milks milks  
milk<sup>t</sup> milked      ʃelvz shelves      bʌldʒd bulged      filmz films  
film<sup>d</sup> filmed

#### Nasal + consonant

On earlier pages we have dealt with nasal consonants followed by /z/, /d/ and /θ/. Other sequences in which a nasal consonant is followed by another consonant are found in words like *sens sense*, *pʌntʃ punch*, *rɪvɛndʒ revenge*, *wɒnt want*, *dʒʌmp jump*, *θæŋk thank*. In all these cases the vocal organs are in exactly or almost exactly the same position for the nasal as for the second consonant; in *sens* the tongue-tip is lowered slightly at the same time as the soft palate is raised to give the /s/ friction; in all the other cases the tongue and lips remain in the same position in passing from the nasal to the following consonant. Be sure that the nasal consonant is firmly formed and not replaced by nasalizing the previous vowel (see p. 50).

In the word *traɪəmf triumph* the /m/-sound may be formed with the lower lip against the upper teeth, rather than with the two lips, but it is not necessary to do this unless you find it helpful.

There are plural or past forms of all the examples given above, e.g. *senst sensed*, *pʌntʃt punched*, *rɪvɛndʒd revenged*, *wɒnts wants*, *dʒʌmpt jumped*, *dʒʌmps jumps*, *θæŋkt thanked*, *θæŋks thanks*, *traɪəmfz triumphs*. Remember that with /pt/ and /kt/ the first stop is not exploded (see p. 67). Practise at these examples until you get a smooth change between the consonants.

#### 4.3 Longer consonant 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/ <sup>5</sup> quite commonly occur, for example in *ðə bæŋks kləʊzd the bank's closed*. As always there is a smooth passage from each consonant to the

next, with no gap. If you have mastered the initial and final sequences, the only difficulty will be to pass smoothly from the last consonant of the final sequence to the first of the initial sequence, with no vowel or interval between. This is done, as before, by putting the vocal organs in position for the following consonant during the previous one. The examples below will give you practice in sequences of increasing length.

Three consonants

<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Q</span> best mæn	best man	pəhæps nɒt	perhaps not
fɪks ðɪs	fix this	help mi:	help me
θæŋk ju:	thank you	tʃeɪnʒ wʌn	change one
wɒtʃ kɪkɪt	watch cricket	tɔ:l tri:	tall tree
nais tju:n	nice tune	laʊd kraɪ	loud cry
lɒŋ skɜ:t	long skirt	peɪdʒ twenti	page twenty

Four consonants

<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Q</span> nekst sʌndɪ	next Sunday	twelfθ naɪt	twelfth night
bɒtld waɪn	bottled wine	hi: θæŋkt ðəm	he thanked them
vɑ:st skerl	vast scale	ðætʃ tru:	that's true
streɪndʒ dri:m	strange dream	fɪfθ flɔ:	fifth floor
smɔ:l skweə	small square	lɒŋ stri:t	long street
bɪg splæʃ	big splash	gʊd stju:dnt	good student

Five consonants

<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Q</span> milks fri:	milk's free	prɒmpt stɑ:t	prompt start
mɪkst swi:ts	mixed sweets	plɑ:nts ʃrɪv!	plants shrivel
bent sprɪŋ	bent spring	ækt stju:pɪdli	act stupidly
bent skru:	bent screw	ðætʃ splendɪd	that's splendid

Six consonants

<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Q</span> nekst sprɪŋ	next Spring	hɪndʒd skri:n	hinged screen
hi: θɪŋks streɪt	he thinks straight	aɪ helpt stjuət	I helped Stuart
ə fenst skweə	a fenced square	twelfθ stri:t	Twelfth Street

Seven consonants

<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Q</span> ðə teksts stju:pɪd	the text's stupid
ʃi: tempts streɪndʒəz	she tempts strangers

4.4 Exercises

- 1 Does your language have sequences of two, three, four or more consonants? If so, list the ones which are similar to English sequences.
- 2 Does your language have stop + stop sequences? Practise again the examples on p. 69.
- 3 Be sure that you can distinguish the following: spy, espy; state, estate; scape, escape; support, sport; succumb, scum; polite, pligat; terrain, train; below, blow; strange, estrange; ascribe, scribe; esquire, squire; astute, stewed; ticket, ticked; wrapped, rapid, wrap it.
- 4 Does your language have nasal explosion (p. 70) or lateral explosion (p. 72)? Practise those examples again.
- 5 Practise again all the other examples in this chapter, being very careful to follow the instructions given. Finish with the longer sequences on p. 77.