

Consonant Combinations in Annang and English Languages: Initial Clusters in Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This survey takes a look at consonant combinations in Annang and English in the perspective of initial clusters. It is also targeted at exposing the similarities and differences that exist between the two languages in this regard. The population comprises government owned post-primary and tertiary institutions across Akwa Ibom State. Convenience sampling technique is used to select three secondary schools and two tertiary institutions from Akwa Ibom State. Questionnaire forms the major instrument for data collection. Respondents are randomly sampled and administered the instrument across the selected institutions. Frequency counts and simple percentage are used to analyse the data. Findings reveal among others that in Annang, the plosives /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, do not form clusters at initial positions, whereas in English there are clusters beginning with plosives: bleed / breed, train / drain. Consequently, the students should be interested in the study of both English and their natural languages. This will enhance their understanding of the permitted sound combinations in each language.

Keywords: *Consonant combinations, Annang language, English language, initial clusters*

INTRODUCTION

What actually gives a word meaning is its sound. According to Udonata (2001) Language and grammaticality are inseparable and the entire process has been summed up by Riemsdijk and Williams (1986) cited in Udonata (2001) that we may thus regard a sentence as consisting of three things: its sound, its meaning, and its syntactic structure. A grammar, then, is the rules for the formation of syntactic structures and associated sounds and meanings, and a language is the set of all such triples defined by the grammar: $L = \{ \dots (\text{sound, syntactic structure, meaning}) \dots \}$

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In any language, whether it has a well-structured word system or not, it is governed by the sound system which when heard, imports sense and meaning. In Annang language, this fact is not an exemption. In fact, this is what makes a language unique. This sound system is classified basically into Vowels and Consonant sounds. Since speech sounds are used to convey meaning, sound systems cannot be fully understood unless they are studied in a wider linguistic context (Hyman, 1975). The author argues that a learner of a language must master not only the production and perception of these sounds, the learner must also take into account when these sounds can be used.

As indicated in an Online source, (<http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-consonant->), the English language is made up of many different sounds: vowels, consonants, long vowels and short vowels. Sometimes sounds blend together as is the case with consonant blends. This enhances effective communication. Communication emphasizes message transaction, which lead to value exchange among language users. As every student of semiotics knows, language is more than a tool of communication it is a symbol of identity and a description of the culture and thought pattern of a people (Annang Writers 2018). When there is a lost in meaning or understanding due to wrong consideration of words, this could constitute what is referred to as noise in communication. According to Undonsek (2002), noise is the technical name for any form of obstacle that interferes with communication. He groups noise into three: physical, sychological or linguistic. Linguistic noise according to Udonsek (2002) refers to one's proper use of language of communication. He further grouped linguistic into three categories namely: semantic, grammatical and phonological. According to the mobile version of the Arcus Dictionary, phonology is the study of the sound system of a given language and the analysis and classification of phonemes. This work therefore takes a look at the consonant aspect of the sound system.

Annang Initial Consonant Clusters

Annang society is patriarchal. Individuals locate their place in the social world from the *Idip*, literally translated as “womb”. Thus a brother/sister from the same *Idip* means that they can trace their origin to the same mother or father. Since polygamy is practised in the Annang society, those who can so trace their ancestry to the same parents form *Ufok* (literally a house or compound). Several *ufoks* make up *Ekpuks* or extended family and several *Ekpuks* (extended families) make up “*Idung*” (meaning village) and several villages make up the “*abie*” or clan. It is observed that within the Annang enclave, there are dialectal variations

where sure word like “*abie*” (clan) is pronounced “*awio*”. However, this work is not tuned in this direction. This arrangement is made complete with a defined language which is made manifest in its sound system. In Annang initial consonant clusters, there are twenty-one consonants. Of these, thirteen are voiced: /b, d, g, n, m, r, nw, K, ô, w, G/; eight are voiceless: /p, t, k, kp, kw, f, s, t+/. The study made use of the following consonants; /m, t+, ô, p, kp, kw, n, s, b, t/. The analysis that follows shows the distributional pattern of each of the consonants employed in this study.

/m/ is a bilabial nasal as in:

Mbang	mbáô	check
imam	/I mám	laughter
nam	/nám/	(do it)

/t+”/ is a palate-alveolar affricate as in:

choro/sorro	/t+”r”/	(get up)
echang	/ét+”áô/	(staff)

/ô/ is a velar nasal as in:

nkene	/ôkéné/	<u>basket</u>
ayang/ajang	/áyáô/	<u>broom</u>

/p/ is a bilabial plosive as in:

dep	/dép/	<u>buy</u>
tappa/tabba	/táppá/	<u>scoop</u>

/kp/ is a labio-velar plosive as in”

kpeke/paké	/kpéké/	(cut off)
ekpe	/ékpé/	<u>lion</u>

/kw/ is a labio-velar plosive as in”

kwat	/kwât/	<u>scrape</u>
ukwak	/ú k w â k/	(iron rod)

/n/ is an alveolar nasal as in:

Nsia	/n s Í a /	<u>intestine</u>
ban	/ b á n/	<u>sharpen</u>
ubuene/uwene	/u b ú e n e/	<u>poverty</u>

/s/ is an alveolar fricative as in:

sak/chak	/sák /	<u>laugh</u>
nsu	/n s ú /	<u>falsehood</u>
/b/ is a bilabial plosive as in”		
bat	/b â t/	<u>count</u>
iba	/I b á/	<u>pant</u>
dib	/dÍb/	<u>conceal</u>
/t/ is an alveolar plosive as in”		
tuuk	/t ú u k/	<u>touch</u>
ukut	/u k ú t/	<u>misfortune</u>
item	/Í t é m/	<u>advice</u>

English initial consonant clusters

According to <https://www.teachingenglish.org>, a consonant cluster in a word is a group of consonants with no vowels between them. The longest possible cluster in English is three consonant sounds at the start, such as ‘splash’, and four at the end, as in ‘twelfths’. For example, the tongue twister ‘The sixth twisty crisp’ has several consonant clusters in it, making it difficult to pronounce. In the classroom, consonant clusters cause problems for learners whose first language does not allow so many consonants together without intervening vowel sounds (<https://www.teachingenglish.org>). Consonant clusters otherwise called consonant blends are a collection of two or three different consonant sounds that are each heard when the word is pronounced. For example, the word “drink” has both letters “d” and “r” as consonants. When this word is pronounced, you can clearly hear the sounds of both of these letters, making it a consonant blend (<http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-consonant>). Initial consonant clusters are the complex sounds that are found at the beginning of English words. They are called clusters because each of the sounds in a cluster can be heard. Initial consonant clusters in English are formed by juxtaposing one or more stop consonants with one of three continuants: -l, -r, or s- (<http://www.lupinworks.com/os/spelling/initial.html>).

In English initial consonant clusters, there are twenty-four consonant sounds. These may be classified as voiceless and voiced depending on whether or not there is a vibration of the vocal cords at the time of production. The voiceless consonants are: / p, t, k, f, θ, t+”, s, +”, h/, the voiced consonants are: /b, d, g, r, ð, z, ó, É, m, n, Ɔ,l, r, j, w/.

METHOD

This study adopts the survey research design to explore the consonant combinations in Annang and English Languages in the perspective of the initial clusters. The population of the study comprises post-primary to tertiary institutions across Akwa Ibom State. For the sake of this study, convenience sampling technique was used to select three secondary schools and two tertiary institutions from Akwa Ibom State. Questionnaire forms the major instrument for data collection. One hundred respondents are randomly sampled and administered the instrument across the selected institutions. Frequency counts and simple percentage are used to analyse the data. Two groups of data relating to initial clusters in Annang and English featured in this study. They are ill formed items in Annang and English. Twenty consonant sounds selected from Annang and English were used in the test items. The sounds consisted of voiceless as well as voiced consonant sounds. Respondents were required to identify ill formed items against the back-ground of other items that were well formed in each number. The sounds were so structured that respondents could easily recognize the allowed combinations among the deviant structures. The test on ill formed items in Annang consisted of the following sounds which featured in the initial clusters; / m / mkparawa, /t+”/ chsan , /ô/ Nkhene, /p/ psbat, /kp/ kpman, Kw/ kwnna: /n/ Nszek, /s/ sbeet /b/ Bpat and /t/ Tmem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is clear from the data above that the level of complexity of the test items was within the comprehension of respondents. Surprisingly, some respondents in an effort to identify ill formed clusters ended up with the well formed ones. Test on initial clusters in English featured the following consonant sounds which also occurred in the corresponding lexical items,: /s/ Sbray, /k/ olrean, /t+”/ chzurch, /p/ pmlant, /t/ Trdance, /f/ Frlop, /b/ Brzuisse, /è/ Tgdrew, /z/ zhbra, and /d/ Drfft.

In spite of the deviant sequences involved in the above data, some respondents chose correct sequences of word combinations in place of ill formed ones. The decision to test respondents on ill formed initial consonant clusters was informed by the understanding that if respondents could recognize permitted vowel combinations in Annang and English, they could as well do so when deviant initial consonant clusters are used. Respondents were tested on ill formed initial clusters in both Annang and English. Twenty consonant sounds selected from

both Annang and English featured in the test for initial clusters. We noticed that performance under all formed items in Annang was not very encouraging. The percentage of respondents who could not identify impossible clusters appears higher in Annang than in English. Summaries of findings presented in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that respondents had problems recognizing ill formed items in Annang and English.

Annang Initial Clusters

With reference to Annang, we are aware that the nasals/ m,n, ô/ can occur with other classes of consonants word initially especially with plosives and fricatives.

<u>Mb-</u>	mbat	/m b á t /	-	-	<u>dirt</u>
<u>mf-</u>	mfono/mfana	/m f ú n ú /	-		<u>trouble</u>
<u>mkp –</u>	mkpasi	/m k p á s Í /	-		seed

Nevertheless, at this position there is a restriction, on /ô, l, n, k, r, t and so there are no clusters such as mô, ml, mn, mk, mr, mt, etc., in Annang, its alveolar counterpart / n/ can enter into the following combinations at initial positions:

<u>nt</u> -	ntuen	/ntuen/	-	pepper
<u>ns</u> -	nsim	/ s Í m /	-	tail
<u>nt+”</u> -	ncha	/nt+”a /	-	game
<u>nd-</u>	ndo	/n d ò /	-	sear
<u>ny-</u>	nyak	/ n y á k/	-	(leave me)

There is a constraint where i/r, p/ b, m, ô, are involved, eventhough/ n/ is as flexible as / m/.

The velar nasal / ô / can occur initially as:

ô <u>kw-</u>	nkwana	/ ôk w a n a /	-	<u>crooked</u>
ô <u>w-</u>	nwed	/ ôw è d/	-	<u>book</u>
ô <u>s-</u>	nsin	/ ô s Í ɔ /	-	<u>Palate</u>
ô <u>k-</u>	nkon	/ ôk”ô/	-	<u>leaf</u>

Generally / ô / cannot cluster with the plosives / p, b, t, d/ and does not occur word initially with any known Annang vowel. The stop- fricative clusters are not very popular in Annang, we notice that/ p, b, t, s/ cannot be followed by another consonant at initial positions. They can only be preceded by a nasal consonant at this position:

Mpò/mkpo	-	<u>thing</u>
Mbúk/mmok	-	<u>news</u>
ntò	-	<u>children</u>
nsèk	-	<u>Premature</u>

The voiceless palate- alveolar affricate / t+ʰ/ cannot combine with another consonant word initially but it can be preceded by the velar nasal / ŋ /: nchoon / ŋ t+ʰ ɔ ɔ ŋ / -(mature). It is not a freely moveable consonant in Annang. For the labio – velar plosives / kp / and / kw / we noticed that by virtue of their compositions they cannot occur with other consonants word initially, even financially, they are rather restricted plosives and cannot combine with fricatives, liquids or semi vowels. With the exception of the nasal consonants / m, n, ŋ / discussed already, all other consonant sounds in Annang do not form initial clusters.

Results of our investigation (Table 1) reveal that the worst item in the analysis of Annang initial clusters was recorded in the item involving the /t+ʰ/ consonant. The percentage of performance stood at 46% as against 80% in the English test item. The level of performance also varied among respondents. A very unimpressive performance was recorded by respondents from the University of Uyo whereby only ten out of thirty recognized chian as an ill formed word/ option. Respondents from the secondary especially those from Community Secondary School, Nkek in Ukanafun, and Okon Secondary Commercial School in Essien Udim, performed significantly better.

This is because the sound / t+ʰ/ which occurred in the ill formed sequence/ item chsan (Table 3), is more frequently used by the communities where the above mentioned secondary schools are located, so it was possible for information from these communities to recognize the structure as ill formed. Another reason is that options, A, B, C, (the well formed items) Ncha (game), chák (laugh), and uchóró (festival) appear deceptively to be ill formed. It is only respondents who are familiar with the correct sequence/ t+ʰ/ who will recognize the impossible cluster contained in chsan, because of the presence of /s/, after /t+ʰ/. Informants who chose any of the above options may have been confused about the requirements of the question. The majority of other responses tilted toward the well formed words Nchá and chá. This shows that most informants are not aware of the existence and combinatorial possibilities of the affricate/ t+ʰ/ in Annang.

Other test items of obvious difficulty under ill formed clusters in Annang were: / n/ nsz , (Nszek) and /p/ psb (psbat). The actual clusters in each of these test items are shown in table 8. Our investigation reveals that respondents could not recognize Nszek as an item with ill formed initial clusters. The nsz initial clusters do not exist in Annang, and not even in English. The nsz clusters occurred with well formed ones: ny- nyák (leave me), nt-nták (reason), nd – ndó (scar). Surprisingly enough, responses of those who missed the ill formed clusters varied

between Nyák and Nták. These words occur frequently in Annang vocabulary and their well formedness can be easily determined by their pronunciability. There is no obstruction as we perceive in nsz. We know that in a normal pattern of distribution /s/ cannot occur with /z/ in the same word position. Moreso, there is no /z/ in Annang, it means that respondents are not aware of these constraints in Annang.

A number of our informants from the secondary schools did not recognize the /psb/ cluster in psbat as ill formed. Rather their attention was drawn to pèkè (cut off) and Ekpát (log) which are well combined. The confusion here is that these words can also be combined as Ekpát and kpèkè. The absence of the labio-belar plosive /kp/ may have confused the respondents and prompted them to regard these other options as ill formed. However the clusters /psb/ are rare in Annang. It is highly impossible as can be seen from the resulting lexical time psbat.

The performance involving /m/ in mkp was very impressive (73%). The mkpr initial cluster does not occur in Annang, in English and actual cluster does not exceed three initial sequences. Those who missed recognizing mkpr as ill formed were careless since the other items juxtaposed with mkprawa are well formed and contain actual initial sequences mb, mkp, mf which are of common occurrence in Annang. It is also true that in Annang we cannot have three initial clusters without the intrusion of a vowel: mkparawa.

The error noticeable about the nkh clusters in Nkhene can be traced to poor perception by our informants. The presence of /h/ at this initial sequence of nk makes it ill formed. We are conscious of the fact. That /h/ occurs only in CVCV structures: Fèhè (run) sèhè (thrive). But not word initially. Our informants may have regarded the structure Nkhene as another Annang word Nkènè (basket) which they are familiar with but whose phonetic content they do not know and cannot recognize.

The performance involving the plosive-related clusters kpm and kwn stood at 70% and 55% respectively. These initial combinations are very chaotic. The sound /k/ does not combine with /m/ word initially in Annang. Respondents who chose other options as ill formed were not certain about the composition of the well formed words which they regarded as ill formed. The same thing could be said about kwn. This cluster does not occur in Annang. Respondents chose kwan (scrap) and kwoi (peel) as ill formed. It is evident that they lack the basic knowledge of the allowed combinations of common core expressions in Annang.

The clusters /sb/, /bp/, and /tm/ also proved difficult for respondents to recognize as ill formed in Annang. The percentage performance of 50%, 55% and 50% attest to this. These clusters are not present in Annang. Those who missed the ill formed sequence for the well formed ones were either confused or were not familiar with the spelling or phonetic realizations of the well formed words that occurred in these items. Respondents' errors could be traced to the occurrence in Annang of actual words: pát (push aside), bát (count) and Tem (cook). It means that our informants do not know enough about Annang to be able to recognize when deviant forms are introduced into the language.

English Initial Clusters

The study made use of the following consonant sounds in the discussion of initial clusters in English: /s, k, t+, p, t, f, b, è, z, d,/. English is among languages that allow only severely restricted combinations word initially. A great majority of English words however can occur in all word positions, and some can also occur initially without restrictions.

It is revealed from the study that the combinatorial possibilities of the affricates are more restricted than those of simple stops. At initial position, affricates cannot form clusters with any other consonant, whereas a simple stop, /s/ for instance; can be followed by at least a /t/ as in stream – strÉ:m/. Moreso, the phoneme /t/ is not as frequent in distribution as /s/ which can occur with other consonants at initial positions in a number of allowed sequences. The following three initial /s/ sequences are common to English.

<u>str</u>	-	strike
<u>skr</u>	-	scrape
<u>spl</u>	-	splash
<u>skw</u>	-	squeeze
<u>stl</u>	-	steward
<u>spj</u>	-	spurious
<u>skj</u>	-	skew
<u>spr</u>	-	spring

Apart from the three member clusters shown above, there are also two consonant initial clusters involving the English /s/.

The following are examples:

<u>Sp</u>	-	speak
<u>sl</u>	-	slap

<u>sk</u>	-	skip
<u>sn</u>	-	snore
<u>st</u>	-	stick
<u>sm</u>	-	smell
<u>sw</u>	-	sweet

It can be seen from the above examples that /s/ is a very flexible consonant in English. The /s/ clusters whether final or initial, consist of a stop /p, t, or k/, preceded by /s/.

The various /s/ initial sequences above can be summarized thus:

Fricative	l	Nasal	-	-	small/snail
Fricative	i	plosive-	-	-	<u>spit/still</u> : sp st
Fricative	i	plosive /p/ t			liquid /l – r/ spleen/spring
Spl/spr					

In spite of its flexibility, some /s/ clusters are not possible in English. Certain restriction occur in the fricative plus fricative clusters: sf, sv, and in the fricative plus plosive plus liquid clusters: Skl. These clusters are difficult to pronounce even though their constituent consonant are familiar. That is why there are no sq, sv, sd, sb, sd, sz, sf/ clusters word initially in English.

It is further observed that the voiceless labio-dental frication /f/ is capable of displaying only a limited number of clusters:

<u>fl</u>	flip	/flɛ/
<u>fj</u>	fuse	/f j u:z /
<u>fr</u>	frown	/fra un/.

The /f/ sound cannot be classified with either nasals or plosives /b, d, g/

The plosives /p, b, k,/ and /t, d,/ occur and contrast in their choice of liquids.

The /p/ phoneme combines freely with /- r/:

<u>pl</u>	-	play
<u>pr</u>	-	pray

/b/ combines with /j, r, l /:

<u>bj</u>	-	beauty
<u>br</u>	-	brim
<u>bl</u>	-	black

/k/ combines with/ l, r /:

<u>kl</u>	-	class
<u>kr</u>	-	crass

The sounds /td/ tend to discriminate in their choice of liquids. Generally they cannot occur with other classes of consonants. At initial positions /t-d/ can only combine with /r/: tr-true, dr – drew. In English /td, dl/ initial clusters do not exist. Among the nasal: /ð/ contrasts with /m/ and /n/, /ð/ cannot occur word initially, /m/ and /n/ can combine to form actual cluster:

mj music mju:zIk'/
nl new /nju:/, but not with other consonants.

Clusters involving the voiceless dental frication /θ/ are relatively few in English especially word initially. Nevertheless, a two – member sequence is possible with word initially:

thr - thrill /θrI l /
thw - thwart /θw'':t/

No initial clusters are possible with /z/. For instance, English does not have any zr, zs, zb, zt, zd clusters. The /z/ sound is a highly restricted consonant word initially, unlike its voiceless counterpart /s/. From the phonetic content of the lexical items discussed above. It is obvious that between the fricatives /s/ and /f/ there is a considerable degree of differences in occurrence. With the exception of a few impossible clusters involving the affricates /s/ can occur with almost all classes of consonant; and whereas /f/ can take both /l/ and /r/ word initially. fly, fry, /s/ is restricted to /i/ alone: sleep.

With the exception of klr in clean and zh in the zhebra structure where performance was low respondents performed better in the ...I initial clusters in English than in Annang. However most of our informants could not recognize the deviant structures in zebra and a lot more failed to do so in cclean. Although there are cl and cl clusters initially in English, clean and crash for example, there are no instances where /l/ and /r/ would cluster together. The problem in this item may be explained phonologically: it may be as a result of a possible interference of the L₁ on the L₂. The findings of this study reveal that those who missed the car clusters were mostly respondents from community secondary school, Nkek in Ukanafun.

Among Annang-English bilinguals from this area, /l/ and /r/ are used in free variation; udua/ula (market). Also the tendency is for them to pronounce /l/ as /r/, so cclean must have been rendered as crean /kri:n/, not minding the presence of /l/ in the same segment. For the zhebra clusters, we may observe that the strangeness of the word zebra to most of our informants had influenced their choice of well formed items in place of zhebra. They were not certain about the correct spelling.

The above average performance (80%) in the recognition of /t+ʒ/ in Chzurch can be traced to the fact that the word occurs often in the vocabulary of our informants. The 20% of respondents who missed the correct options, varied their responses between chill and chat. These structures are well formed and the error of poor recognition of chzurch maybe due to respondents limited word stock or their poor knowledge about English phonotactics. We are aware that in English /ls/ does not form a cluster. So the occurrence of /z/ makes it ill formed.

It was surprising to observe that most of our polytechnic informants could not recognise Thdrew as an ill formed word with the èdr/ sequence. Our knowledge of phonotactics disallows the occurrence of the Thdr/èdr/ clusters word initially. The voiceless fricative /è/ is a rather rigid consonant besides /r/. the presence of /d/ in the èdr cluster makes it ill formed. Respondents who failed to recognize this fact in preference to Thwart and Thrift did so out of ignorance. It is possible to observe that respondents may have regarded these two options as computer terms of German or Russia origin.

Informants who missed /frl/ in frlop did not consider the fact that a cluster cannot take both /l/ and /r/ in the same environment. Also students' pronunciation may have been a factor that influenced their choice: Flip in place of the ill formed item. The word Flop can be rendered as /fl p/ and /frp/ by some Annang – English bilinguals.

Respondent recognised pmlant with a minimum of difficulty. Those who chose other options plight and pure as ill formed may have done so due to inconsistency in their spelling habits or poor perception of the demand of the question. The structure pmlant may have been confused with plant. It is also possible to say that some respondents are more used to saying prant instead of plant. Forty percent of our informants could not recognize the ill formed sequence in the structure Drifft. Poor attention may have been the cause of the error in selecting Dwarf as ill formed. They are not familiar with this word and the segments involved. The ill formed sequence drfft could have been mistaken for Drift. English does not permit a four sequence cluster as in Drfft. The presence of a vowel is indispensable here.

The presence in Annang of /l/ and /b/ may have facilitated the average performance in items involving /trd/: Trdance and /brz/ Brzuisse. However some respondents failed to recognize these structures as ill formed and the fact that there is an opposite between t/d and b/z in English. They can never occur together word initially. Poor exposure to a wide range of English lexical items could have prompted some of our informants to select Trunk and Brim respectively as ill

formed. These structures contain the tr and br clusters which occur frequently in English. The sbr sequence in sbray also attracted a poor response from our informants who failed to recognize it as an ill formed cluster. Those who preferred sprout and snore did so as a result of their poor knowledge of English words. The spr and sn initial clusters occur in a number of English words. Respondents who missed sbray may have regarded it as spray (but whose spelling they could not ascertain). It was revealed from the investigation that respondents from secondary schools tended to perform poorly in number of test items on initial clusters. This goes to confirm the view that much is not done on the area of phonotactics in the secondary schools. Respondents who failed to recognize ill formed sequences in Annang and English portray their lack of basic knowledge in Annang and English word combination especially in Annang.

Similarities and Differences between initial Clusters in Annang and English

From our analysis it is observed that both Annang and English employ voiceless and voiced consonant sounds in their sound inventories. These sounds occur in their sound inventories. These sounds occur in the two languages: p,b,t,d,k,f,s,m,n, ô,w,h,t+’/. But the way these sounds are organized to form words differ in the two languages too.

In Annang for instance, the voiceless and voiced plosives /p,b/ cannot be followed by other consonants at initial positions and then occur in free variation as dép/déb (buy). In English /p,b/ are distinct phonemes that carry distinctive implications. These sound can combine with liquids at initial positions as in

Plan	/plYen/
Prick	/prÉk/
Bloom	/blu:m/
Broom	/bru:m/

The alveolar plosives /t,d/ also exist in free variation in Annang: édét / édéd (teeth). At initial position these sounds cannot combine with any class of consonants. In English /t,d/ can cluster with /r/: try/dry. There are no /tl/ or /dl/. Clusters in English. The velar plosive /k/ occurs word initially in Annang and English. In Annang it cannot combine with another consonant but in English kl and kr are actual clusters as in clash and crash. In Annang, the fricatives /f,s/ cannot occur with other consonants at initial positions. The reverse is the case in English where /f/ can cluster with /l/ and /r/ as in flesh and fresh: /s/ can combine with a wide range of initial obstruents as /p,t,k,j/ to form sp, sk, st, stj clusters. However, sd, sz sb or sg are not present in English.

The nasals are the only consonants in Annang that are capable of exhibiting initial clusters, especially with plosives:

mb - mbók (please)
nd - ndík (fear)
ôk - ôkáô (rib)

There are no known cases of initial nasal clusters in English. Clusters involving nasals only occur at morpheme junctions as mpl – ample /Yempl/,ôgl – English /ÉgÉ+”/.

The semi-vowel, /h/ does not begin a word in Annang neither does it form a cluster. But in English it can combine with /j/ as in humility /hju:mn ÍÍtÍ/. In Annang the affricative /t+”/ is not very popular. It is used mostly by Annang speaking people of Ukanafun and in free variation with /s/ as in /t+” at/ and /sat/ (select). The sound /t+”/ is incapable of combining with other consonants either in English or in Annang.

Most words in Annang begin with vowels; in English they begin with consonants. The following consonants are largely peculiar to English: /g, v, è, ð, z, r, s, ’I, h, j, d’/. The velar plosives /k, g/ occur in English but only /k/ is popular in Annang. In English /g/ can form consonant clusters at initial positions with liquids: gl glide, gr grind. There is a consonant where other consonants occur. The sounds /v, ü, r, l/ cannot form clusters at initial positions in English but /l/ may be preceded by a number of plosive: bl – blood, kl – clap, pl – play, gl – glass. There is an opposition between /l/ and the affricates. The fricatives /f – v/ are present in English but at initial positions /f/ occurs mainly with liquids: flee:/fli:/ and free /fri:/.

Concerning the fricatives /è, ð/, we observed that /è/ can combine with /r/ word initially: thrust:/èrÉst/, but /ð/ cannot form a cluster at this position /z,+”, ’/ occur only in English while /s/ can form a cluster with /r/ as in ahred, /z/ and /’/ are incapable of combining with other consonants /z/ for example can only combine with vowel; zoo, zeal, zone, zero; it occurs at syllable points as in zigzag.

The following consonants do not occur in English: /kp, kw, n, G, nw, ny, nk,/. In Annang /kp/ is realized as one sound but in English it is realized as /k/ and /p/. The /kp/ and /kw/ phonemes in Annang can be preceded by nasal consonants mkp – mkpo (a thing) and nkw – nkwana (crooked). In Annang, final stops are unreleased thus resulting in the weakening of /t/ to /n/ it cannot begin or end a word; it occurs intervocalically: akworo iko á k w ” n Í k ó (preacher). Another sound which is peculiar to Annang is /G/, a sound adopted from the English /g/. The sound /G/ has undergone the process of weakening of final stops

in Annang. Example, ufok-ibok /u f ó G Í b ” k/. Word initially, the /nw/ and /nk/ clusters are not popular in Annang. They only occur with vowels as in: nwed (book) nkéné (basket). The semi vowel /j/ does not occur in Annang. Its counterpart /y/ occurs but cannot form a cluster word initially, medially or finally.\

Table 1: Recognition of ill formed initial clusters in Annang

Initial clusters	Number able	Percentage	Number not able	Percentage
mkpri-	73	73	27	27
tʃs-	46	46	54	54
ɛkh-	58	58	42	42
psb-	49	49	51	51
kpm-	70	70	30	30
kwn-	55	55	45	45
nsz-	48	48	52	52
sb-	50	50	50	50
bp-	55	55	45	45
tm-	50	50	50	50

Source: Survey 2018

Table 2: Recognition of ill formed initial clusters in English

Initial clusters	Number able	Percentage	Number not able	Percentage
sbr-	58	58	42	42
clr-	45	45	55	55
tʃ z-	80	80	20	20
pml-	75	75	25	25
trd-	64	64	36	36
frl-	50	50	50	50
brz-	62	62	38	38
θdr-	55	55	45	45
zh-	48	48	52	52
drft-	60	60	40	40

Source: Survey 2018

Table 3: Recognition Test: Initial in Annang

Ill formed sequences	Resulting/potential/ Impossible lexical items	Well formed sequences	Actual lexical items	Meaning
sbr-	mkprawa	MKP-	mkparawa	Boys
tfs-	chsan	Ts-	chan	Let's go
ɛkh-	Mkhene	ɔk-	nkene	Basket
psb-	psbat	p-	pat	Push away
kpm-	kpman	kp-	kpan	Rebuke
kwn-	kwnna	kw-	kwanna	Gesticulate
nsz-	Nszek	ns-	nsek	Premature
sb-	sbeet	s-	seet	Be revived
bp-	Bpat	b-	bat	Count
tm-	Tmem	t	tem	Cook

Source: Survey 2018

Table 4: Recognition Test: Initial Clusters in English

Ill formed sequences	Resulting/potential/ Impossible lexical items	Well formed sequences	Actual lexical items
sbr-	Sbray	Spr-	Spray
Clr-	Clrean	cl-	clean
t ʃz	Church	tʃ-	Church
pml-	Pmlant	pl-	Plant
trd-	Trdance	tr-	Trance
Frd-	Frdlop	Fl-	Flop
brz-	Brzuisse	br-	Bruise
Odr-	Thrdrew	Or-	Threw
Zh-	Zhebra	z-	Zebra
drft-	Drfft	dr-	Drift

Source: Survey 2018

CONCLUSION

Generally it is observed that whereas English allows consonant clusters of about three sequences word initial: str apl Annang and Ibibio rarely have a cluster of more than two initial sequences: tid, nk, mb. The English /ô/ does not occur initially and after /i:, ʔ:, u:, Y/ Only nasal clusters are common to Annang among other consonants. The sounds which occur in both Annang and English are more liberally distributed in English than in Annang. This seems to explain why some sounds which occur as separate phonemes in English tend to occur in free variation in Annang. More so, initial clusters in English are often derived by inflectional

changes involving word roots. Initial sequences like /km,kf,+”p/ are very rare in English. It was further revealed that in Annang the plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/, do not form clusters at initial positions, whereas in English there are clusters beginning with plosives: bleed/breed, train/drain.

The fricatives cannot form initial clusters in Annang but they do in English: stream/free. The only class of consonants that form initial clusters in Annang is the nasal ndap, mbok, mfin. Among the fricatives, only the voiceless counterpart /t+”/ occurs in Annang and is highly infrequent but the /kw/ and /kp/ phonemes are largely peculiar to Annang. Following the dynamics of the two languages in focus, and from the way Annang and English are combined, it is possible to say that what has been found out in the study was expected. Annang – English bilinguals are likely to experience problem of pronunciation in the course of learning. In conclusion, parents, especially the literate ones should encourage their children to use acceptable pronunciation/combination of the sounds of English language. Also, the students should be interested in the study of both English and their natural languages. This will enhance their understanding of the permitted sound combinations in each language.

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