

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF AKWA IBOM STATE

Ekeruke, Sediong Imo

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the pronunciation of English words by selected secondary school students in Ika Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. It focuses on the segmental phonology of English language. This study assessed the errors made in the area of sounds articulation and identified the sounds of English that pose problems to the students. It also suggested ways by which they can improve upon their performance in English pronunciation. The method of data collection was a reading test administered by the researcher to 60 students in 6 schools using the random sampling technique. This study used the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis propounded by Robert Lado in 1957 as its Theoretical Framework. From the analysis, the performance of students in some of the English Vowels was poor in some schools. The most problematic aspects were the English Diphthongs and Triphthongs as the schools with the highest percentage had only 62% and 24% respectively. For instance, while some long vowel sounds were shortened, some were replaced with another. Not much problem was recorded for the English Consonants except for the articulation of the interdental fricatives, /ð/ and /θ/ and some fricatives such as /z/ and /ʒ/. This paper recommended that Annang speakers of English should make a conscious effort to articulate the English sounds properly. This paper concluded that students should pay more attention to oral English the same way they do to other aspects of English. Good language laboratories should be built and furnished for secondary schools to aid in oral English learning.

Key Words: *English pronunciation, Diphthong, Triphthong, Articulation, Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis.*

INTRODUCTION

The English language is a language spoken by most countries of the world. Due to the movement of the English language from one region to another, the language possesses what can be referred to as "local colouration" as it changes its form in the segmental and the non-segmental phonology. The phonological aspect of a language pays attention to the sound pattern/system of a language. Languages are made up of speech sound systems which are governed by rules that occur in a language, the rules about where speech sounds can occur in a word, how these sounds can be combined to form words, and how they are pronounced in words and their relationship to one another in the system. Many of these rules are violated due to the spread of English to different parts of the world, giving it an identity which is peculiar to the new environment (Utin, 2023)

Countries around the world that speak English as their second or official language have a lot of people who desire to speak the language with correct pronunciation (Okono, 2023), in terms of appropriate articulation of the English vowels and consonants. Ika is one of the Local Governments in Akwa Ibom State which uses Annang language. It should be noted that the part of the State where this study is set is not a well-developed region and that has a way of affecting the language used, thereby posing a big problem to the second language learners. By that, it means they learn the target language against the background of their mother tongue in which they already have a high level of competence. According to Richards (1971, p15), second language learning is characterised by various problems, some of which are: inter-lingual problems, intra-lingual errors, hypothesising of false concept and over generalisation.

A good number of Annang speakers of English have put in their efforts to improve their pronunciation of English words, but considering the similarities and the differences among English sounds and that of Annang, there have always been some problems, Enang & Urujian (2013), Udoka, Enang & Utin (2018), Enang & Utin (2021) and Utin (2023). These problems may be in the

aspect of phonology, syntax, morphology and even semantics. Some of these problems are interference in the pronunciation of English segments. This sometimes hinders communication (Utin, 2016) as unreleased plosives, tend to affect meaning depending on where they occur. There is also the issue of outright replacement of an English sound with another and lots more. These problems are caused by factors such as the environment where a speaker finds him/herself, unspecialised teachers teaching English in secondary schools and variation in the sound system of the two languages Utin (2023), Enang & Utin (2023). For instance, the sound system of Annang does not have sounds like the voiced labiodental fricative /v/, the voiced palato alveolar fricative /z/ and the palatal semi vowel /j/. Also, most times, the voiced alveolar liquid roll /r/ is replaced with the voiced alveolar liquid lateral /l/. These factors have really contributed to the poor performance in the English pronunciation.

This study examines the pronunciation of English Consonants and Vowels by selected secondary school students in Ika Local Government Area, identify the sounds of English that pose problems to the students as well as suggest ways by which they can improve their performance in English pronunciation.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used for this study consists of a reading test and an interview. For the purpose of accuracy, a reading passage was given which tested for segmental elements - Monophthongs, Diphthongs, Triphthongs and Consonants. The words in which the researcher looked out for were listed on the researchers' slip and notes were taken while each subject was reading. Questions were also asked in regards to how often they are being taught oral English. A tape recorder was used and a slip to indicate the number of students who were able to articulate each sound properly. A total number of sixty (60) students were tested in the six schools. Ten from each school, comprising five males and five females each.

In the aspect of computing, the recorded were listened to for at least five times, and the total number of students who were able to articulate the target sounds properly was subtracted from the number of students who were not able to articulate the words properly.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the Contrastive Analysis Theory, propounded by Robert Lado in (1957). Contrastive analysis hypothesis is an area of comparative linguistics which is concerned with the comparison of two or more languages to determine the differences or similarities between them, either for theoretical purposes or purposes external to the analysis itself. The main idea of contrastive analysis, as propounded by Robert Lado in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), was that it is possible to identify the areas of difficulty a particular foreign language will present for native speakers of another language by systematically comparing the two languages and cultures.

The theory has as its claim that the errors and difficulties encountered in the process of language learning and use of foreign language are from the interference of the mother tongue. The theory further has it that a foreign language is mainly based on learning to overcome these problems and difficulties. The theory also states that in the event of the structure of the target language (LE), being at variance with that of L1, it implies that some difficulties in learning and errors in performance should be expected. The theory further states that where the structure of the first language is similar to that of the foreign language, no difficulty should be expected; but when there exist much dissimilarities between the structure of the first language and that of the second language, there is bound to be some difficulties. In a nutshell, what the theory of Contrastive Analysis does is to predict the possible difficulties and errors embedded in language learning by a particular group of people, and supply the materials needed to teach the second language.

Presentation of Data
Performance of Subject in English Monophthongs

Table 1

S/N	Sounds	words	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6	
			Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able
1	/i:/	Piece	6	4	3	7	5	5	3	7	7	3	7	3
2	/i/	With	9	1	10	0	10	0	8	2	7	3	9	1
3	/e/	Well	10	0	9	1	10	0	9	1	4	6	8	2
4	/æ/	Character	8	2	6	4	7	3	4	6	6	4	6	4
5	/a:/	Dark	5	5	6	4	7	3	2	8	2	8	4	6
6	/ɔ/	Clock	7	3	5	5	8	2	7	3	4	6	6	4
7	/ɔ:/	Wall	5	5	6	4	7	3	3	7	7	3	5	5
8	/ʊ/	Would	6	4	7	3	8	2	8	2	8	2	4	6
9	/u:/	Loose	8	2	7	3	9	1	4	6	4	6	5	5
10	/ʌ/	One	2	8	1	9	2	8	1	9	0	10	1	9
11	/ɜ:/	Furniture	1	9	0	10	2	8	1	9	1	9	2	8
12	/ə/	Debtor	1	9	0	10	1	9	0	10	0	10	1	9
TOTAL			68	52	61	60	76	45	50	70	50	70	58	62
PERCENTAGE			57	43	50	50	63	37	41	58	41	58	48	51

Performance of Subject in English Diphthongs

Table 2

S/N	Sounds	words	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6	
			Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able
1	/eɪ/	Survey	1	9	0	10	0	10	2	8	1	9	0	10
2	/aɪ/	Pile	3	7	5	5	4	6	3	7	5	5	4	6
3	/ɔɪ/	Noise	8	2	7	3	9	1	8	2	9	1	8	2
4	/əʊ/	Go	1	9	0	10	0	10	1	9	0	10	0	10
5	/aʊ/	House	10	0	10	0	9	1	10	0	10	0	10	0
6	/ɪə/	Gear	7	3	7	3	8	2	9	1	8	2	9	1
7	/ɛə/	Bare	1	9	1	9	2	8	3	7	2	8	4	6
8	/ʊə/	Moor	0	10	0	10	1	9	0	10	0	10	2	8
TOTAL			31	49	30	50	33	47	36	44	35	45	37	43
PERCENTAGE			38	61	37	62	41	58	45	55	43	56	46	53

Performance of Subject in English Triphthongs

Table 3

S/N	Sounds	words	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6	
			Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able
1	/aɪə/	Fire	4	6	3	7	4	6	3	7	2	8	3	7
2	/eɪə/	Layer	3	7	3	7	2	8	4	6	2	8	1	9
3	/aʊə/	Hour	2	8	2	8	3	7	2	8	2	8	1	9
4	/ɔɪə/	Royal	1	9	0	10	0	10	0	10	1	9	1	9
5	/əʊə/	Lower	2	8	1	9	2	8	0	10	1	9	0	10
TOTAL			12	38	9	41	11	39	9	41	8	42	6	44
PERCENTAGE			24	76	18	82	22	78	18	82	16	84	12	88

Performance of Subject in English Consonants

Table 4

S/N	Sounds	words	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6	
			Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able	Able	Not Able
1	/p/	Appraise	10	0	10	0	10	0	9	1	10	0	10	0
2	/b/	Business	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	9	1
3	/t/	Debt	8	2	19	0	10	0	9	1	8	2	10	0
4	/d/	Desk	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0
5	/k/	Accent	1	9	0	10	0	10	1	9	0	10	0	10
6	/g/	Growth	10	0	10	0	10	0	9	1	9	1	10	0
7	/f/	Phantom	8	2	7	3	7	3	8	2	6	4	7	3
8	/v/	Value	10	0	9	1	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0
9	/θ/	Thief	2	8	3	7	2	8	1	9	0	10	2	8
10	/ð/	Either	1	9	0	10	0	10	2	8	0	10	0	10
11	/s/	Central	10	0	10	0	10	0	9	1	10	0	10	0
12	/z/	Boys	0	10	0	10	1	9	0	10	2	8	0	10
13	/ʃ/	Condition	8	2	9	1	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0
14	/ʒ/	Pleasure	3	7	2	8	2	8	1	9	0	10	1	9
15	/h/	House	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	9	1
16	/tʃ/	Church	10	0	10	0	10	0	9	1	10	0	10	0
17	/dʒ/	Judge	10	0	10	0	8	2	10	0	10	0	10	0
18	/m/	Lamb	2	8	3	7	1	9	3	7	2	8	2	8
19	/n/	Knab	4	6	3	7	5	5	3	7	5	5	2	8
20	/ŋ/	Lung	10	0	10	0	9	1	10	0	10	0	10	0
21	/l/	Blade	9	1	10	0	10	0	9	1	8	2	9	1
22	/r/	Credit	8	2	10	0	9	1	8	2	10	0	10	0
23	/j/	Young	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0
24	/w/	Wide	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0
TOTAL			174	66	176	64	174	66	171	69	187	53	171	69
PERCENTAGE			72	27	73	26	72	27	71	28	77	22	71	28

Data Analysis

Monophthong can be said to be a single vowel sound, which when produced there exist no obstruction. It can also be referred to as Pure Vowel. There are twelve pure vowels (Okono,2023) of English and they're conventionally numbered. In this category, the English Vowel system has four front Vowels, three central Vowels, four back Vowels and one is nearer to back than front. In the test for Monophthongs, 57% in School 1 were able to articulate the sounds properly, while 43% were not able to articulate. They had much difficulty in the long sounds. For instance, 6 subjects shortened the long sound /i:/as in 'piece', transcribed as /pi:s/. 5 subjects also shortened the long sounds /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/ in words like 'dark' and 'wall' transcribed as /dɑ:k/ and /wɔ:l/ respectively. School 1 also had difficulty in sounds like /ʌ/, /ɜ:/ and /ə/. 8 subjects out of 10 replaced vowel number 10 /ʌ/ as in /wʌn/ with vowel number 6 /ɔ/ which pronounces the word 'one' wrongly as /wɔn/. 9 subjects replaced the sound /ɜ:/ in a word like 'furniture' transcribed as /'fɜ:nɪtʃə/ with the sound /ɔ:/, resulting in a wrong pronunciation as /'fɔ:nɪtʃɔ/. 9 subjects also replaced the sound /ə/ with /ɔ/ in a word like 'debtor', transcribed as /'det.ə/. In school 2, 50% were able to articulate the sounds, while the remaining 50% were not able to articulate. They had just the same difficulty as school 1. None of the subjects could realise the sounds /ɜ:/ and /ə/ in the words 'furniture' and 'debtor', rather, they replaced the sounds with /ɔ:/ and /ɔ/ respectively. In addition, this school also had a problem in vowel number 6 as 5 subjects lengthened the sound as though it was a long sound. This was realized in the word 'clock', transcribed as /klɔk/. They pronounced it as /klɔ:k/. In school

3, 63% could articulate the sounds and 37% could not articulate them properly. They had no special problem except the same sounds which had been problematic to the other schools. In school 4 and 5, only 41% could articulate the sounds properly and 58% could not articulate them properly. In addition to the aforementioned sounds which had been problematic to all subjects, schools 4 and 5 had a difficulty in sounds like /u:/ and /æ/ as 60% of subjects in the schools shortened the /u:/ in the word 'loose' /lu:s/ and lengthened the /æ/ in the word 'character' /'kærəktə/. Lastly, in school 6, only 48% could articulate the sounds and 51% could not articulate the sounds properly. It is generally noted that the English monophthongs which pose more difficulty to all the schools are /ʌ/, /ɜ:/ and /ə/.

Diphthongs are sounds made through the combination of two Monophthongs but realised as one long sound. It should be noted that the first sound marks the place of departure while the second sound marks the direction of movement. There are eight Diphthongs. They are not conventionally numbered. In the aspect of diphthongs, 31% could pronounce the words appropriately, while 61% could not pronounce them properly. This category of the vowel has caused a lot of difficulty for the subjects. As shown in the data collected, all the schools had difficulty in the realization of the following sounds: /eɪ/, /əʊ/, /ɛə/ and /ʊə/. For instance, in school 1, only 1 subject could pronounce the word 'survey' /'sɜ:veɪ/ properly, while 9 subjects replaced the diphthong /eɪ/ with a single sound /e/, thus making it /'sɜ:ve/. Again, 1 subject could pronounce the word 'go' properly. The rest replaced the diphthong /əʊ/ with an Annang vowel /o/. In the pronunciation of the word 'bare', only 1 subject could articulate the diphthong /ɛə/ while others replaced it with a single sound /ɜ:/. Furthermore, none of the subjects could pronounce the word 'moor' /mʊə/ properly. Everyone in school 1 replaced the last sound /ə/ with vowel number 6 /ɔ/, resulting in a wrong pronunciation /mʊɔ/. In school 2, only 37% had it correct while 62% could not articulate the sounds properly. They had difficulty in the same sounds which were difficult to the first school. For instance, no subject was able to pronounce the word 'survey' /'sɜ:veɪ/ correctly; they all replaced the diphthong /eɪ/ with a single sound /e/. The same happened to all the schools. In addition to the aforementioned difficult sounds, 5 subjects were not able to pronounce the word 'pile' /paɪ/ properly. They rather replaced the diphthong /aɪ/ with the long sound /I:/ which resulted in a wrong pronunciation /pi:I/. This same challenge occurred in schools 3, 5 and 6. The diphthong /iə/ seems to be a difficult one for them also as 3 subjects substituted the sound /iə/ with the long sound /ɜ:/. In school 3, 41% could pronounce the words correctly, while 58% could not. In school 4, 45% had it correct while 55% could not. In school 5, 43% could pronounce the words correctly while 56% could not. Lastly, in school 6, 46% pronounce the words correctly while 53% could not. With this, it is seen that the articulation of diphthongs is highly problematic among students in secondary schools. Generally, it could be noted that all the schools had difficulty in the diphthongs like /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /əʊ/, /ɛə/ and /ʊə/.

Triphthong can be referred to as three sounds articulated as one long sound. It can also be said to be the putting together of three pure vowels to have one long vowel sound called Triphthongs. There are five Triphthongs in the English sound system. As illustrated in table 3, this part of the segmental recorded the highest number of failure and blunder. In school 1, only 24% could realise the targeted sounds properly, while 76% could realize them. They had difficulty in almost all the English Triphthongs except the sound /aɪə/ which they had less problem. In school 1, about 4 respondents were able to articulate the sound properly as in the word 'fire' /'faɪə/. The remaining 6 subjects could not articulate the sound properly as some replaced the last sound with /a/, thus resulting in a wrong pronunciation as /faia/; 2 subjects out of the 6 replaced the whole sound with the long /a:/, resulting to a wrong pronunciation /fa:/. This difficulty extended to all the six schools. In schools 2 and 4, only 18% could realize the sounds properly, while 82% could not realize. In school 3, only 22% had it correct, while 78% could not pronounce the words correctly. School 5 had only 16% able to pronounce the words, while 84% could not pronounce them. In school 6, 12% could pronounce the words correctly, while 88% could not pronounce them correctly. Notably, the Triphthong /aɪə/ has less problem compared to the other four Triphthongs. For instance, in the word

'layer', /leɪə/, 80% of almost all the schools replaced the last pure vowel with the sound /a/, thus resulting in a wrong pronunciation as /leia/. 85% of the subjects in all the schools replaced the sound /aʊə/ (as in a word like 'hour' /'aʊə/) with the long sound /a:/, thus making a wrong pronunciation as /a:/. Furthermore, 90% of the respondents could not articulate the triphthong /ɔɪə/ found in a word like 'royal' /'ɔɪəl/. Rather, they replaced the first pure vowel /ɔ/ with the Annang vowel /o/; and the last pure vowel /ə/ is replaced with the vowel /a/, thus resulting in a wrong pronunciation as /roial/. In the pronunciation of the word 'lower' /'ləʊə/, 90% of the respondents articulated the triphthong /əʊə/ as /oʊa/, thus resulting in a wrong pronunciation. Generally, this aspect of the vowel is seen as the most problematic aspect to the secondary school students in Ika.

Consonant sounds are sounds produced either as the result of partial or total obstruction of breath of air from the vocal tract. In other words, they are sounds which are not vowels. There exist twenty-four (24) consonant sounds in English. As illustrated in table 4, this has recorded the best performance in this study. In schools 4 and 6, 71% were able to pronounce the words correctly, while only 28% were not able to pronounce correctly. In schools 1 and 3, 72% were able to articulate the sounds, while 27% could not articulate them. School 2 recorded 73% of subjects able to articulate the sounds, while 26% could not articulate them properly. Lastly, school 5 recorded 77% subjects able to articulate the sounds, while 22% could not articulate them correctly. In this category, the subjects did not have much difficulties except in few sounds. Notably, in all the schools, 98% of the subjects did not know that when we have two letter 'c' as in a word like 'accent', the realization becomes /k/. All the subjects could not articulate the sound /k/ in the pronunciation of the word 'accent' except two subjects. They also had difficulty in sounds like /θ/, /ð/, /ʒ/ and /z/. They replaced the sounds /θ/ and /ð/ with the sounds /t/ and /d/ in the pronunciation of words like 'thief' /θi:f/ and 'either' /'i:ðə/ respectively. Most of them could not also know how to articulate the sound /ʒ/ as in a word like 'pleasure' /'pleʒə/, rather, they replaced it with the sound /ʃ/. They also could not know that when letter 's' is preceded by a voiced sound, it becomes /z/. For that reason, they could not pronounce the word 'boys' /bɔɪz/ properly, rather they replaced the sound /z/ with the sound /s/. A little problem was also recorded on words that begin with 'kn' as in a word like 'knab'. Most of them could not pronounce it appropriately. Generally, this aspect was less problematic.

Discussion of Data

Monophthong

In natural languages, sounds are traditionally said to be either vowel or consonant. Vowel sound of English is a syllable speech sound realised without any obstruction in the vocal tract. It can also be said to be a single sound or monophthong articulated at any point at the mouth cavity without any audible obstruction due to the presence of what is called vowel limit. The pure vowels have 5 long sounds and 7 short sounds and they are conventionally numbered. It should be noted that the tongue and the lips are the two major organs for vowel production. The three parameters for the description of vowels are: the place of articulation, the manner of articulation and the shape of the mouth. Just as English has sounds, so is Annang. The table below shows the Annang vowel sounds.

Table 7 showing the Annang Vowel Sounds

SN	Sound Symbols	Illustration in Annang Words	Illustration in English word
1	/i:/	Uchid	Cover
2	/i/	Ini	Time
3	/e/	Ebe	Husband
4	/a/	Chak	Laugh
5	/a:/	Ilad	mad person
6	/ɔ/	Ekpó	Rat

7	/o/	Agwo	Human
8	/ʊ/	Uwem	Life
9	/u:/	Ukud	Affliction
10	/ʌ/	Unwana	Bright

It can be seen in the table above that there exist some dissimilarities between the vowel sounds of English and that of Annang, thus affecting their pronunciation in a little way.

Considering the performance of subjects in English Monophthongs in table 1, about 70% could not articulate vowel number 1 /i:/ correctly. They all shortened the sound, thereby creating no difference between vowel number 1 and vowel number 2. Therefore, the first problem realised in this category is the inability of the students to differentiate between a short sound and long sound. The same thing happened as evidenced in the realization of vowel number 4 /æ/ as in "character" and vowel number 5 /a:/ as in "dark". 80% of the subjects replaced a long sound with a short sound, thereby making it problematic. Again, there exist a total replacement (by 85% of the subjects) of vowel number 10 /ʌ/ as in /ʌv/ with vowel number 6 /ɒ/ thereby changing the transcription to /ɒv/. Also, 90% of the subjects replaced vowel number 12 /ə/ as in /dɒktə/, /dɛtə/ with vowel number 6 /ɒ/ thereby having transcriptions like /dɒktɒ/, /dɛtɒ/. 70% of the respondents substituted vowel number 3 /e/ as in "Well" with vowel number 11 /ɜ:/ thereby changing the transcription from /wel/ to /wɜ:l/.

Diphthong

A diphthong can be said to be a double sound or the combination of two pure vowels realised as one long sound. It is a sound realised through gliding from one vowel tongue position to another. The first sound often marks the starting point while the second marks the direction of movement. There are eight (8) diphthongs in English. Those diphthongs which glide to /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ are referred to as close diphthongs, while those which glide to /ə/, are referred to as centring diphthongs.

From the analysis done in table 2, it is noted that most of the diphthongs are not articulated. There exists a problem of realising diphthongs while reading, especially the second sound of every diphthong. For instance, 100% of the Subjects failed to realize the last sound in /eɪ/ as found in the word "survey". Rather they realise it as /sɜ:ve/. The same thing happens in the realisation of /bɛə/ and /mʊə/ as they realised it as /bə/ and /mʊ/ respectively. Again, almost 100% of the Subjects replaced the sound /əʊ/ as in "go" with /ʊ/. These problems might have been caused by the way they were taught at the elementary stage.

Triphthong

A Triphthong is realised through the combination of three pure vowels. Triphthong is realised with a careful production. These pure vowels are simultaneously produced in one syllable. As the vowel glides from one position to another, they become weaker towards the end.

As showed in the analysis in table 3, this aspect of vowels became more challenging to the Subjects. For instance, 90% of the Subjects replaced the last sound in /aɪə/, /eɪə/ and /aʊə/ with the sound /a/. And the triphthong /ɔɪə/ was realised as /ʊia/ while the word /ləʊə/ is realized as /lʊə/.

English Consonant Sounds

A consonant is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. There are 24 sounds in English sound system which are further classified as 15 voiced and 9 voiceless consonant sounds. It is said to be voiced when there is a vibration in the vocal cord and it is voiceless when the air passes freely without any vibration of the vocal cord. The three parameters for which consonant sounds are classified are the place of articulation, manner of articulation and the state of glottis.

Classification according to place of articulation consists of 4 Bilabials, 2 Labiodentals, 3 Velar, 2 Dentals, 7 Alveolar, 4 Palato Alveolar, 1 Palatal and 1 Glottal. This can be seen at a glance thus in the following figure. **Bilabial** - /p, b, m, w/; **Labiodental** - /f, v/; **Dental** - /ð, θ/; **Alveolar** - /t, d, s, n, l, r, z/; **Palatal** - /j/; **Palatal alveolar** - /ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/; **Velar** - /k, g, ŋ/; **Glottal** - /h/.

Classification according to manner of articulation consists of 6 plosives (stops), 9 fricatives, 2 affricates, 3 nasals, 2 liquids and 2 semi-vowel. This is seen thus: **Plosives** - /p, b, t, d, k, g/; **Fricatives** - /f, v, ð, θ, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/; **Affricates** - /tʃ, dʒ/; **Nasals** - /m, n, ŋ/; **Liquids** - /l, r/; **Semi-vowel** - /j, w/.

Classification according to the state of glottis consists of 15 voiced and 9 voiceless sounds. The information is shown below.

Voiced - /b, d, g, v, z, ʒ, ð, dʒ, m, n, ŋ, l, r, j, w/

Voiceless - /p, k, t, f, θ, s, ʃ, h, tʃ/

It should be noted that in Annang sound system, not all English consonants are present. This may be accountable for the reason why subjects made lots of blunders. The Annang consonant sounds are shown in the table below:

Table 8 showing the Annang consonant sounds

SN	Sound Symbols	Illustration in Annang Words	Illustration in English word
1	/kp/	Mkpa	Death
2	/b/	Bat	Count
3	/d/	Ndó	Marriage
4	/f/	Ufan	Friend
5	/g/	Gwakngwed	tear (a) book
6	/h/	Ubóhó	Freedom
7	/k/	Akai	Forest
8	/l/	Kulelebe	do not scratch
9	/m/	Mbat	Mud
10	/n/	Nek	Dance
11	/ŋ/	Ñkañ	Charcoal
12	/p/	Etop	News
13	/r/	Kufre	Do not forget
14	/s/	Esañ	Staff
15	/t/	Itiat	Stone
16	/w/	Agwo	Human
17	/tʃ/	Echid	Heart
18	/dʒ/	chak imam	Laugh
19	/ŋ/	Inyang	River

While testing for English consonant sounds, many Subjects found it problematic especially following the fact that not all consonants of English are found in the daily language of Annang speakers as found in the table above. For instance, 95% of the Subjects replaced the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ with /t/ and /d/ respectively. This may be because such sounds do not exist in their sound system especially as they are taught to use their mother tongue for day-to-day communication. 100% of the Subjects do not know that the sound /s/ changes its form if it is preceded by a voiced sound. For instance, in the word "boys", 100% of them failed to articulate the last sound as /z/. They do not also know that if the bilabial plosive /b/ is preceded by a bilabial nasal /m/, that the /b/ will be unreleased. About 80% do not know how well to articulate the word "debt". Also, the word "pleasure" seems to be so difficult for about 70% of the Subjects. They do not also

know that when the letter "c" and "c" is put together, it produces the sound "k" as found in the word "accent" transcribed as /æksənt/.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The paper examined the speech production of Secondary School students in Ika Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The study however, following the findings, the researcher had observed that sounds such as the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, voiced labiodental fricative /v/, palatal alveolar fricative /ʃ/, voiced alveolar fricative /z/ and palatal semi-vowel /j/ are not present in the Annang sound system; thereby posing some difficulties for the respondents while articulating them. It is also seen that some sounds like the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are replaced by /t/ and /d/ respectively. It is also realised that some sounds are often omitted while pronouncing some words. The research also showed that secondary school students in Ika Local Government Area do not realise the English Diphthongs and Triphthongs in their daily readings. The English Triphthongs are highly problematic as none of them could articulate them when having them in words. In the aspect of English Diphthongs, many of the diphthongs were replaced with other sounds while some were not realised.

From the findings, it has been shown that dissimilarities between the two sound systems (English and Annang) are responsible for the deficiency in pronunciation encountered by the secondary school students of Ika Local Government Area. Added to that, is the fact that the everyday language used by the students is vernacular, thereby causing some form of struggle trying to speak in English. There is also the problem of mother tongue interference and this has caused a good level of problem on English pronunciation. The uncivilised nature of the Local Government has also contributed to the poor performance of the students. Lack of good and professional English teachers to teach English Language in secondary schools has also posed a problem as to why the students struggle to flow well in English. It is for these reasons that the paper recommends that secondary school students should make conscious effort to pronounce the English words correctly. Modern language laboratories to be built and furnished, and specialists should be given to use the facilities on the students properly.

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