

Ant/Lin 322. Problem Set 3: English Consonant Clusters.

Assume that the following is the phonemic system of English:

		English Phonemic System: Consonants				
		labial	dental	alveolar	palatal	velar
o b s t r u e n t	stops	p		t	č	k
		b		d	ǰ	g
	fricatives	f	θ	s	š	h
		v	š	ð	ž	
r e s o n a n t	nasals	m		n		
	laterals			l		
	glides	w		r	y	

There are very strong constraints on clusters (groups) of English consonant phonemes. The exercises below are intended to illustrate this. If you use reference works, please identify them properly. If you work together, let me know.

1. Word-initial bi-consonantal clusters. Consider English words beginning with two consonants followed by a vowel:  $C_1C_2V$ . For each cluster that you can think of, put an X in the matrix below:  $C_1$  is given on the vertical axis (the left margin);  $C_2$  on the horizontal axis (across the top). For each cluster, give an English word, in ordinary spelling, that illustrates it. One cluster is identified as an example. You can assume that if a sound isn't listed in the table, it doesn't occur in clusters. Hint: The number of clusters is on the order of 20.

		$C_2$																	
		p	b	t	d	k	g	f	v	θ	s	z	ʃ	m	n	r	l	w	y
$C_1$	p															X			
	b																		
	t																		
	d																		
	k																		
	g																		
	f																		
	v																		
	θ																		
	s																		
	z																		
	ʃ																		
	m																		
	n																		
	r																		
	l																		
	w																		
y																			

/pr/: prune

2. Word-initial triconsonantal clusters. Make a list of possible word-initial clusters consisting of any three consonants. For each give an example of an English word that contains it. Hint: the number of different clusters is on the order of 7–8.

3. Generalizations. Give three generalizations (rules) about the clusters you've identified in the exercises above. For example: "All triconsonantal clusters begin with /s/."