

Cross-Dialectal Study of Issues in Dagbanli Phonology

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Abstract : The study is a cross-sectional investigation of issues in Dagbanli Phonology, a Mabia language spoken in the Northern Region of Ghana. The issues investigated and assessed for the purpose of Dagbanli phonology are the status of the velar fricatives [x, χ] and the flap [r] across Dagbanli dialects. The ethnographic approach is employed to solicit the primary data from bucolic Dagbanli speech communities. The descriptive method is engaged for the analysis of the primary data available. The investigation reveals that the dialects have the velar fricatives [x, χ] confined to specific segmental contexts with a particular inventory structure. The flap[r] is noticed to occur mostly in intervocalic but entirely missing in Dagbanli indigenous words in word-initial. The velar fricatives [x, χ] and the flap[r] are observed to be non-contrastive and only suffice as dialectal allophones in the language. The paper shows evidence of coalesce of non-coronal labial /m/ and coronal fricative /s/ to produce dorsal fricative [x] in intervocalic and coalesce of stem final stop /g/ and suffix onset fricative /s/ to yield the dorsal fricative [x], a finding which shows the status of the segment [x] in Dagbanli phonology. The paper concludes that the segments [x], [χ] and [r] are positional variants of /g+s/ or /m+s/, /g/ and /d/.

Keywords : Dagbani, phonology, dialect, segment, fricatives, coalesce

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