

The Phonemic Inventory of Tenyidie Affricates: An Acoustic Study

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Abstract : Tenyidie, also known as Angami, is spoken by the Angami tribe of Nagaland, North-East India, bordering Myanmar (Burma). It belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language group, falling under the Kuki-Chin-Naga sub-family. Tenyidie studies have seen random attempts at explaining the phonemic inventory of Tenyidie. Different scholars have variously emphasized the grammar or the history of Tenyidie. Many of these claims have been stimulating, but they were often based on a small amount of merely suggestive data or on auditory perception only. The principal objective of this paper is to analyse the affricate segments of Tenyidie as an acoustic study. There are seven categories to the inventory of Tenyidie; Plosives, Nasals, Affricates, Laterals, Rhotics, Fricatives, Semi vowels and Vowels. In all, there are sixty phonemes in the inventory. As mentioned above, the only prominent readings on Tenyidie or affricates in particular are only reflected through auditory perception. As noted above, this study aims to lay out the affricate segments based only on acoustic conclusions. There are seven affricates found in Tenyidie. They are: 1) Voiceless Labiodental Affricate - / pf /, 2) Voiceless Aspirated Labiodental Affricate- / pfh /, 3) Voiceless Alveolar Affricate - / ts /, 4) Voiceless Aspirated Alveolar Affricate - / tsh /, 5) Voiced Alveolar Affricate - / dz /, 6) Voiceless Post-Alveolar Affricate / tʃ / and 7) Voiced Post- Alveolar Affricate- / dʒ /. Since the study is based on acoustic features of affricates, five informants were asked to record their voice with Tenyidie phonemes and English phonemes. Throughout the study of the recorded data, PRAAT, a scientific software program that has made itself indispensable for the analyses of speech in phonetics, have been used as the main software. This data was then used as a comparative study between Tenyidie and English affricates. Comparisons have also been drawn between this study and the work of another author who has stated that there are only six affricates in Tenyidie. The study has been quite detailed regarding the specifics of the data. Detailed accounts of the duration and acoustic cues have been noted. The data will be presented in the form of spectrograms. Since there aren't any other acoustic related data done on Tenyidie, this study will be the first in the long line of acoustic researches on Tenyidie.

Keywords : tenyidie, affricates, praat, phonemic inventory

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