

Consonantal system in Datooga

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It is the point at issue in Datooga phonology whether voiced oral stop consonants contrast distinctively with voiceless stop consonants, although Hieda (2000) proposed that Datooga has no distinctive contrast between voiced and voiceless stops. The issue was not settled because Hieda (2000) postponed deciding that Datooga has a glottal stop as a phoneme. According to Hieda (2000), Datooga oral stops phonetically pronounced [-voiced] in word-final position, and after or before oral stops and fricatives; on the other hand, they are pronounced [+voiced] in word-initial position, next to nasals, a lateral, and a trill, and in intervocalic position.

Some researchers think there are exceptions to Hieda (2000). For instance Datooga and Tatooga are recorded as names of the language in previous literature. The phonetic representations [datɔːga] and [tatɔːga] are derived from the phonemic forms /tattɔka/ and /ʔtattɔka/ respectively, which are different linguistic forms. The glottal stop of the latter form in the initial position is a morpheme which functions as exclamation in Datooga. There are cases that voiced and voiceless stops seem to contrast at morphological boundaries (for instance, [abuusa] 'Sweep! sg.' and [opuusa] 'Sweep! pl.' Barabaiga dialect). The plural imperative prefix consists of a vowel and a glottal stop while the singular imperative prefix consists of only a vowel. The imperative forms are analyzed into /a-puusa/ 'Sweep! sg.' and /ɔʔ-puusa/ 'Sweep! pl.', which are pronounced [abuusa] and [opuusa] respectively. In conclusion Datooga has no distinctive contrast between voiced and voiceless stops, provided that it has a glottal stop as a consonantal phoneme.