

Rachael Degenshein, Dartmouth College, USA
Dholuo Interdentals: Fricatives or Affricates?

This study examines the manner of articulation of <th, dh> in Kenya Dholuo based on acoustic data. These segments have received various descriptions in the literature. Data from two native speakers were analyzed. I test the hypothesis that <th, dh> exhibit positional variants, realized as affricates word-initially and in the onset of a stressed syllable, and are more fricative-like word-medially and in the onset of an unstressed syllable. The acoustic parameters measured are closure duration and duration of the release burst. The hypothesis is supported by the results. Both speakers show a significant effect of word and stress position:

- (i) longer closure duration word-initially than medially, with more frication during closure word-medially, suggesting incomplete constriction;
- (ii) longer closure in pre-stress position than in unstressed position.

Independently of the position effect, significant inter-speaker variability was also found. Dholuo interdentals are therefore best described as affricates with differences in articulation in prosodically stronger (word-initial, pre-stress) vs. weaker positions (word-medial, unstressed).