

Acoustic Analysis of Plosives in Dawoodi: A severely endangered language of Northern Pakistan

Zafeer Hussain Kiani, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

This study is an analysis of phonemes in Dawoodi (previously known as Domaaki), a severely endangered language of Northern Pakistan. There are hardly 18 to 20 persons who can fluently speak Dawoodi. These speakers are residing in two villages of Hunza namely Mominabad and Nagar. For the present analysis, the Indo-Iranyan Swadesh wordlist was recorded from six (i.e. 3 male & 3 female) speakers. The recorded wordlists were transcribed with the assistance of a native language consultant in IPA. There were certain consonants which were apparently found contradictory to the existing literature on Dawoodi. The data showed the presence of dental plosives along with their alveolar counterparts which were not reported in the previous literature. The target words containing dental and alveolar stops were analyzed in Praat software to verify their existence by examining the acoustic features. The acoustic analysis also confirmed the presence of both types of plosives in Dawoodi. However, the alveolar plosives were found only in word initial position and were found to be replaced with retroflex plosives at word medial and final position. This was further analyzed through palatography of the target sounds by two native speakers. The results of palatography also confirmed the existence of dental and alveolar plosives where alveolar plosives were found only at word initial position.

Keywords: Dawoodi, Acoustic Analysis, Palatography, Dental Plosives, Alveolar Plosives