

Examining the Phonological Processes Concerned When Akan Personal Names Are Anglicized

Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the phonological processes involved when Akan personal names are anglicized and the implication it has on the Akan names and naming system. The study has become necessary because several Akan personal names are losing their original meaning due to the process of being 'foreignized'. We, however, know that personal names are not just arbitrary labels but sociocultural tags that have sociocultural functions and meanings. The change has led to the dilution or obliteration of Akan literature and culture. When Akan personal names are anglicized, they do not provide any sociocultural, linguistic, or typological information of the bearer, rather, a sound that does not have any meaning to the bearer. This means that the sociocultural power in the name has been taken away. Therefore, this paper examines the phonological changes that Akan personal names undergo when they are anglicized and their implication for the endangerment of the Akan names and naming system. Some of the phonological processes involved in the selected anglicized Akan personal names include tonal shift, re-syllabification, consonant doubling, consonant substitution, vowel substitution, epenthesis, contraction, deletion (vowel, consonant, and syllable), substitution and epenthesis, /g/ and /h/ addition, [r-h] addition, substitution and contraction, etc. Findings reveal that these anglicized names are not pronounced with Akan tone by some bearers and educated elites and this affects the meaning and the socio-cultural value in it.