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A grammar of Tafi

This book presents the first comprehensive description of Tafi, one of the fourteen Ghana-Togo Mountain (GTM) languages, spoken by approximately 4,400 people in the southeastern part of Ghana. The description consists of thirteen chapters and is based on a corpus gathered during two fieldwork periods totalling fifteen months in the Tafi area.

This work contains analyses of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language. Aspects of pragmatics, including utterance particles, conversational routines, interjections, and ideophones are described. The language has a nine-vowel system with a robust root controlled Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) harmony and a complex tonology. The noun class system and its agreement systems display change in progress. This study also accounts for several distinctive features of the language such as a small class of underived adjectives and a set of derived adjectives by verb reduplication; two adpositional classes and their grammaticalization histories, and a rare split possessor system where singular kin possessors are marked differently from other possessors (including plural kin). The form, function and meaning of several grammatical constructions are also covered: serial verb constructions with features marked on the first verb, split predicate constructions for some modal and aspectual meanings and a medio-passive construction for predicating properties of undergoers as well as topic and focus constructions. The influence of Ewe, the dominant lingua franca, on the structures in Tafi is noted and the distinctions between Tafi and its closest neighbour Nyagbo are highlighted. A selection of glossed and translated texts from the database representing narrative folktales, proverbs, riddles and procedural genres is also included.

A grammar of Tafi is of interest to specialists in African linguistics, linguistic typology as well as contact linguistics. It contains valuable information for comparative studies on the Ghana-Togo Mountain languages, Kwa languages and ultimately on Niger-Congo languages.

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