



Phonetics and Phonology of Mwaghavul Language: A Brief Survey

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ARTICLE'S INFO

Article No.: 012323011

Type: Research

Full Text: [PDF](#), [HTML](#), [PHP](#), [EPUB](#)

Accepted: 26/01/2023

Published: 31/01/2023

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Keywords: Phonetics,
Phonology, Mwaghavul
Language

ABSTRACT

This discussion began by looking at the Mwaghavul people, their linguistic classification according to Blench, (2012) and revisiting the general orthography of Mwaghavul and its implication on the phonemic system of the language. I then finally, proceeded to describe the phonetic characterization of the sound-system of Mwaghavul.

INTRODUCTION

This work an overview of the phonetics and phonology of Mwaghavul. Mwaghavul is a member of the Chadic family in the Afroasiatic phylum, which includes languages that are spoken in Africa and Asia. Newman (1977) regards the Chadic language family as a constituent member of the Afroasiatic phylum.

According to Heine and Nurse(2000, p.80), the Chadic phylum has an estimated number of 140 languages spread out in three directions from the LakeChad on which the family name is based and spoken in parts of Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Central

African Republic and Niger. The widely spoken and the best known Chadic language is Hausa.

"No complete phonology or orthography of Mwaghavul has ever been published, although the sketch accompanying Jungraithmayr (1963) provides a basic overview of the sound-system" (Dapiya, et al, 2010).

Here, the phonetics and phonology of Mwaghavul language shall discussed with examples with reference to the earlier work on Mwaghavul phonology started by Dapiya et al, (2013), published by the Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee (MBTC).

The phonetic characterization methodology adopted resembles to that of Mphande (1989) for ChiTumbuka.

The Mwaghavul People

The Mwaghavul people were once among the inhabitants of the Lake Chad area before they migrated southwards together with their kin, the Ngas, Tal, Mupun, Goemai and other Chadic speakers presently inhabiting the Jos Plateau. These migrations from Borno probably occurred from between 1100 and 1350 AD. The reasons for the migrations included the desiccation of the Lake Chad area and socio-political instability occasioned by the wars of expansion of the second Kanem-Bornu Empire. As the Mwaghavul and other Chadic groups reached the Bauchi plains, they parted ways, with each group climbing the Plateau in a different direction and at a different period.

The Mwaghavul people mounted the Jos Plateau from the East through Ngas land perhaps arrived on the Plateau earlier than the other groups because they had horses. They then settled at Ngung, which lies between Ngas and Mupun territories. At Ngung, they constituted themselves into two families: the *Diko*, who was the senior, and the *Difiri*, who was junior. From Ngung, the dispersal of the Mwaghavul on the Plateau occurred with its people migrating and settling temporarily in places like Muduut (Shendam), Kofyar, Difiri, Fwam and Mwanwo (Dikibin), before further dispersing to establish the present village settlements. By 1700, most of the village settlements had established substantial forms of socio-economic and political structures, centred on the *Mishkagham* institution (Lohor, 2013).

Presently, the Mwaghavul people are found in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State. Mwaghavul land comprises the following initial Districts: Jipal, Chakfem, Mangun, Ampang West, Kerang,

Pushit, Panyam, Kombun and Mangu. Large populations of the Mwaghavul people are also found among the Goemai and Kofyar people in the Plateau lowlands as well as in Lafia, Gwantu, Saminaka, Pambegwa and Zaria, where they have established a number of farm settlements in these areas.

Classification of the Mwaghavul Language

As mentioned earlier, Mwaghavul is a member of the Chadic family in the Afroasiatic phylum, which includes languages that are spoken in Africa and Asia. Newman (1977) regards the Chadic language family as a constituent member of the Afroasiatic phylum. According to Heine and Nurse (2000, p.80), the Chadic phylum has an estimated number of 140 languages spread out in three directions from the Lake Chad on which the family name is based and spoken in parts of Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic and Niger. The widely spoken and the best known Chadic language is Hausa. The Chadic sub-group is divided into four thus: West Chadic, Central Chadic (Bui Mandara), East Chadic and Masa (Heine & Nurse 2000). The Mwaghavul language belongs to the West Chadic family, which is further divided into 'A' and 'B'. Mwaghavul still falls under group 'A' of the West Chadic, alongside Ngas, Mupun, Miship, Bole etc. (Heine & Nurse, 2000).

According to Blench (2012), Mwaghavul belongs to the West Chadic sub-branch under the Bole-Ngas sub-group of the Ngas group proper. An alternative spelling for the language is *Mwahavul* while the Hausa settlers gave the name *Sura* to the Mwaghavul people. The chart below shows the distribution of West Chadic languages under the Afroasiatic phylum, indicating the Mwaghavul language.

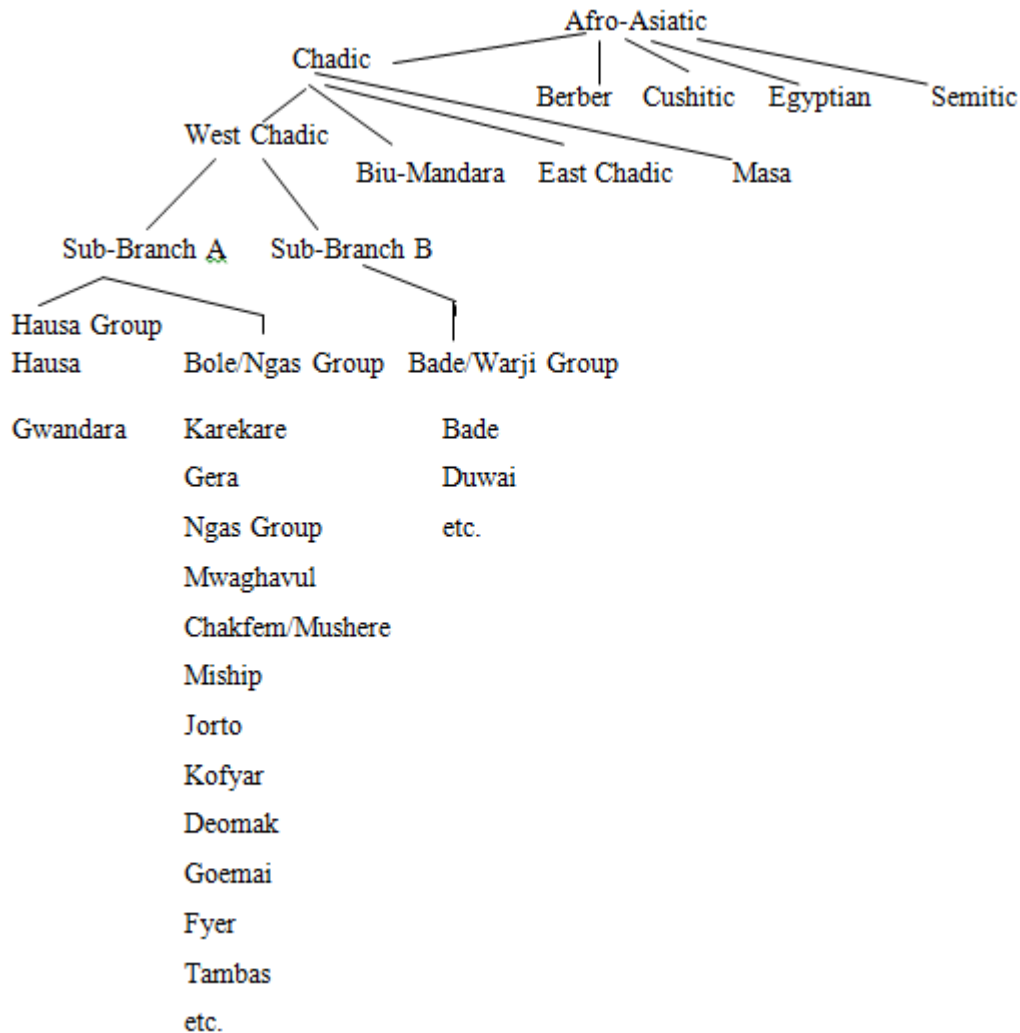


Fig. 1: Blench's (2012) classification of Afroasiatic languages

Blench states further that Mupun, often considered a distinct language, is very close to Mwaghavul and the division may be more ethnic than linguistic. The closest relatives of Mwaghavul are Jipal-Cakfem, Mushere and Miship while the language falls within the same group as Ngas and Goemai. The Mwaghavul are known as 'Sura' in much of the older literature. Mwaghavul is bordered by Plateau (i.e. Benue-Congo) languages to the north and west, notably Berom and Izere.

Mwaghavul (under the name *Sura*) was first described in modern linguistic terms by Junggrathmayr (1963/4). Frayzyngier (1991, 1993 cited in Blench (2011)) has published a dictionary and grammar of the neighbouring Mupun language. Scripture portions were first published in the 1920s and there is an active literacy programme championed majorly by the Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee who has authored the Mwaghavul Orthography. Roger Blench has also written seminal papers on the language and co-authored

(alongside Dapiya, N.F. and Bess, J) the soon to be released *Mwaghavul Dictionary*.

Mwaghavul Orthography

The orthography used in this study is the Current Official Orthography adopted for translation purposes by the Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee. This is both graphemic and phonemic and I will deviate from it only when its symbols – monographemic or digraphemic – are at variance (phonemically) from those of the IPA Chart (2005).

Consonants Orthography

Note that the orthography used for consonants in this study is that of the IPA Chart 2005¹.

¹-For instance, Mwaghavul Orthography (2013) as well as Dapiya, et al (2010), both realized the palatal approximant

The following consonants in Mwaghavul need special symbols:

/b/	-	a voiced bilabial plosive
/d/	-	a voiced alveolar plosive
/y/	-	a voiced velar fricative
/ɲ/	-	a voiced palatal nasal
/ŋ/	-	a voiced velar nasal

Though Mwaghavul has no phonemic consonant clusters, the Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee (MBTC) (2013) observes that when [ng] sound occurs in word-initial position, it forms the only noticeable consonant cluster as shown in the examples below:

(1)	<i>ngarvip</i> /ngàrvip/	'book'
	<i>ngul</i> /ngúl/	'maybe'
	<i>ngaa</i> /nga:/	'adultery'

Dapiya et al (2010), posits that Mwaghavul has palatalized and labialized consonants in contrast with their normal forms, while adding that the language admits homorganic nasals² for some consonants. Mwaghavul also permits word-final approximants in a few words such as:

(2)	<i>tidiw</i> /tid ^y u/	'hunting expedition of Kombun Community in Mangu Local Government Area.'
	<i>liliw</i> /lii ^y u/	'lightning'

Mwaghavul Orthography (2013) realized the velar fricative /ɣ/ as [gh] wherever it occurs in writing. Similarly, the following consonants will be represented by their respective graphemes as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Mwaghavul Special Consonants Orthography:

IPA Phoneme	Mwaghavul Orthography
/tʃ/	C
/ɣ/	Gh
/dʒ/	J
/ŋ/	***ng ³
/ʃ/	sh
/ʒ/	zh

Consonant Clusters Orthography

The only consonant clusters in Mwaghavul result from the phonological processes of Pre-

/j/ as [y] phonetically; this is clearly at variance with the IPA Chart 2005.

-Except in some cases, where this grapheme occurs word-initially, then it is realized phonetically as /ɲ/

Nasalization, Labialization and Palatalization. In this study, we shall represent pre-nasalization as [ʰ] or [ʰ]⁴; labialization with [ʷ] and palatalization as [ʲ], as in the following examples:

(3)	<i>mbii</i> / ^ʰ bi:/	'a thing'
	<i>bwan</i> /b ^ʷ án/	'to beat thoroughly'
	<i>kyák</i> /k ^ʲ ák/	'to pick or gather'

However, as observed by the Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee (MBTC) (2013), when [ng] occurs word-initially, it is realized as a consonant cluster, as in the following examples:

(4)	<i>ngarvip</i> /ngàrvip/	'a book'
	<i>ngumaar</i> /ngùmá:r/	'a farmer'
	<i>ngul</i> /ngúl/	'maybe'

Vowels Orthography

Both Dapiya, et al (2003) and MBTC (2013) agree that there are six (6) vowels in Mwaghavul; that is, the cardinal vowels and a central vowel /i/. Phonetically, the mid-vowels are /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ which do not in any way contrast /e/ and /o/, and are therefore, realized as [e] and [o] in orthographic practice.

There are no nasalized vowels or diphthongs in the language, while the long vowels are the product of phonological rules in the language. We shall concern ourselves here with just the long vowels and the high central vowel /i/.

As observed in Dapiya et al (2010), words with high central vowel /i/ often have variants with the back vowel /u/; for example:

(5)	<i>ngiris</i> ~ <i>ngúrús</i>	'cartilage'
	/ ^ʰ grís/ / ^ʰ gúrús/	

This may be evidence that the /i/ is gradually assimilating to a back vowel.

Vowel Length: We will represent length as sequences of two identical short vowels. This decision is predicated upon the observed tonal system of the language. More so that the language permits no more than two successive vowels; vowel length in Mwaghavul is phonemic as shown in the contrasts below:

Table 2: Illustrating Mwaghavul Vowel Length

Short Vowels		Long Vowels	
sám	'sharpen'	sáám	'to sleep/lie down'
kin	'uncle'	kiiin	'salt'
tɔk	'to greet'	tɔok	'neck'

-However, this must conform with the Homorganic Nasal Rule which states that the place of articulation of the initial sound in a segment is assimilated by the last sound in a prefix.

Tonal Orthography

High tone in this study is indicated by acute accent [´] over the vowel, and a low tone by a grave accent [˘]. Mid tone is left unmarked. The tone marking appears on the distinctive contrast, rather than on absolute values of high or low. In this study, we shall adopt [H] for high tone, [L] for low tone and [M] for mid tone while glide tones will be marked according to their respective tones following the convention given above.

Sound Pattern of Mwaghavul

There are discrepancies in the number of consonants in Mwaghavul as observed in the works of

Dapiya et al (2010) and Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee (2013) who gave the number of consonants as twenty-seven (27) and twenty-five (25) respectively. Whereas, both inventories agree on the twenty-five (25) consonants identified by the MBTC (2013), Dapiya et al (2010) added two more consonants to their inventory thus: /ʔ/ and /ɲ/. Furthermore, we observe that the palatal approximant /j/ wasn't realized in either inventories even though the sound actually exists in the language; rather, Dapiya et al (2010) realized the sound as a palatal lateral approximant /ʎ/.

Following Dapiya et al (2010), we shall adopt twenty-seven (27) as representing the consonants phonetically in the language.

Table 3: Mwaghavul Consonants Chart

	Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labio-Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d			k g		[ʔ]
Implosive		ɓ	ɗ					
Nasal	m			n	[ɲ]	ŋ		
Fricative		f v		s z	ʃ ʒ	χ		h
Affricate						tʃ dʒ		
Approximant					j		w	
Trill			r					
Lateral/Approx.			l					

Each individual consonant is further substantiated with various examples below that illustrate its presence in three separate environments: *word-initial, intervocalic and word-final*.

Table 4: Environments of Occurrence of Mwaghavul Consonants

Grapheme	Phoneme	Word-Initial	Word-Medial	Word-Final
[a]	/a/	<i>àm</i> /àm/ 'water' <i>ár</i> /ár/ 'road, way'	<i>kás</i> /kás/ 'to abuse' <i>ran</i> /ran/ 'to write'	<i>lá</i> /lá/ 'to take' <i>saa</i> /sa:/ 'to cut'
[b]	/b/	<i>bóng</i> /bɔŋ/ 'farmland'	<i>ribet</i> /ribet/ 'to wish, desire'	----
[b̥]	/b̥/	<i>book</i> /bɔ:k/ 'mud'	<i>#ben</i> /tibɛn/ 'wooden handle of a hoe'	----
[c]	/tʃ/	<i>ceen</i> /tʃɛ:n/ 'to drive, pursue'	<i>kucet</i> /kùtʃet/ 'kitchen'	----
[d]	/d/	<i>dang</i> /dan/ 'tail'	<i>tiding</i> /tídiŋ/ 'deaf and dumb'	----
[d̥]	/d̥/	<i>d̥el</i> /d̥ɛl/ 'to enter, pass'	<i>d̥iides</i> /dí:dɛs/ 'big one'	----
[e]	/ɛ/	----	<i>fet</i> /fɛt/ 'to sweep'	<i>se</i> /sɛ/ 'to eat'
[f]	/f/	<i>fee</i> /fɛ:/ 'to clean, drag'	<i>kufurum</i> /kufùrùm/ 'knee'	---- ⁵
[g]	/g/	<i>guk</i> /gùk/ 'to get worse'	<i>kigong</i> /kigɔŋ/ 'shoulder'	----
[gh]	/ɣ/	<i>ghii</i> /ɣi:/ 'goat'	<i>koghorong</i> /kɔɣɔrɔŋ/ 'hero'	----
[h]	/h/	<i>hop</i> /hɔp/ 'to borrow'	<i>d̥iihai</i> /dí:hái/ 'glory'	----
[i]	/i/	<i>ii</i> /i:/ 'yes'	<i>pit</i> /pit/ 'to put out, to switch off'	<i>d̥iici</i> /dí:tʃi/ 'different'
[i̥]	/i̥/	<i>irap</i> /irap/ 'dust'	<i>kin</i> /kin/ 'maternal uncle'	<i>ghii</i> /ɣi:/ 'goat'
[j]	/dʒ/	<i>jaal</i> /dʒa:l/ 'to belch'	<i>cijeng</i> /tʃidʒɛŋ/ 'heel of the foot'	----
[k]	/k/	<i>kaa</i> /ká:/ 'head'	<i>yaksi</i> /jàksi/ 'now'	<i>bak</i> /bak/ 'to throw'
[l]	/l/	<i>la</i> /lá/ 'to take, have'	<i>kiling</i> /kiliŋ/ 'to hear, listen, heed'	<i>gul</i> /gúl/ 'maybe'
[m]	/m/	<i>maa</i> /mà:/ 'to be fed up, exhausted'	<i>kimuur</i> /kimù:r/ 'wooden ladle'	<i>bam</i> /bam/ 'to help'
[n]	/n/	<i>na</i> /ná/ 'to see, look'	<i>randong</i> /randɔŋ/ 'cow'	<i>kyeen</i> /kʷɛn/ 'future, ahead'
[ng]	/ŋ/	<i>ngàn</i> /ŋàn/ 'snake'	<i>d̥engnaan</i> /d̥ɛŋna:n/ 'heaven, the skies'	<i>song</i> /sɔŋ/ 'branches'
[o]	/ɔ/	<i>or</i> /ɔr/ 'shout'	<i>pikom</i> /pikɔm/ 'edge'	<i>po</i> /pɔ/ 'mouth'
[p]	/p/	<i>paa</i> /pá:/ 'to cover, close'	<i>lupar</i> /lùpàr/ 'nursing mother'	<i>fulup</i> /fulup/ 'to abuse, insult, rebuke'
[r]	/r/	<i>raa</i> /ra:/ 'to weave, knit'	<i>karshak</i> /kárʃàk/ 'admonishment'	<i>maar</i> /má:r/ 'farm'
[s]	/s/	<i>saam</i> /sa:m/ 'to sleep'	<i>tisek</i> /tisek/ 'chain'	<i>pas</i> /pas/ 'arrow'
[sh]	/ʃ/	<i>sham</i> /ʃam/ 'to go down, get off'	<i>sushii</i> /sùʃi:/ 'to run'	<i>mish</i> /miʃ/ 'husband'
[t]	/t/	<i>taa</i> /tá:/ 'to fall, drop'	<i>lutuk</i> /lùtúk/ 'market'	<i>fwat</i> /fʷat/ 'ash'
[u]	/u/	<i>ushira</i> /úʃirá/ 'to lease part of one's farmland to another person'	<i>lung</i> /lún/ 'to swim'	<i>muluu</i> /mùlú:/ 'pumpkin'
[v]	/v/	<i>vilak</i> /vilak/ 'to work lazily'	<i>laarvul</i> /la:rɔvul/ 'twenty'	----
[w]	/w/	<i>waa</i> /wà:/ 'to go home'	<i>tuwoor</i> /tuwɔ:r/ 'to intimate'	----
[y]	/j/	<i>yen</i> /jɛn/ 'drug, medicine'	<i>ziyaal</i> /zijá:l/ 'woven cloth'	----
[z]	/z/	<i>zok</i> /zɔk/ 'to hide something'	<i>zonzon</i> /zɔnzɔn/ 'to walk aimlessly'	----
[zh]	/ʒ/	<i>zhak</i> /zàk/ 'contemptuous remark'	<i>wuzhii</i> /wúʒi:/ 'a shrub'	----

-A Loan word from Hausa, which also means 'the continuous recognition of the original owner over what belongs to him'.
⁵ *Nzhitaa* /ⁿʒitá:/ 'pepper' with the [ŋ] prenasal does not belong to this category as exemplified in MBTC (2013).

Consonant Clusters

ngingaa /ŋjə̀:/ 'a specie of birds'

Mwaghavul does not admit consonant clusters, except for the [ŋg] sound in initial position. For example;

- (6) *ngarvip* /ngàrvip/ 'a book'
- ngumaar* /ngùmá:r/ 'farmer'
- ngul* /ngúl/ 'maybe'
- ngaa* /ngá:/ 'adultery'

However, the MBTC (2013) observes that in rare cases, [ŋg] in initial position is realized as /ŋ/ as in the examples below:

- (7) *ngaa* /ŋa:/ 'everlasting'
- ngaa-ngaa* /ŋa:ŋa:/ 'everlastingly' (ideophone)

Generally, elsewhere in the language, some consonants can increase their phonetic inventory through the process of palatalisation, labialisation or pre-nasalisation. In this section, we shall examine and illustrate with examples, how these phonemic contrasts affect the consonants in the language.

Palatalised Consonants or C^y Clusters

Contrary to the position of Dapiya et al (2010), Palatalisation is a common feature in Mwaghavul and is used by the language to form phonemic contrasts as shown in the table below:

Table 6: Mwaghavul Palatalised Consonants

[b ^y] Consonant Clusters	Transcription	Gloss
<i>byagas</i>	/b ^y agas/	'to mangle, destroy'
<i>byan</i>	/b ^y án/	'to beat thoroughly with bare hands'
[d ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>dyagap</i>	/d ^y agap/	'excessive application of ointment'
<i>dyágáp</i>	/d ^y ágáp/	'to blink'
[t ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>tyoop</i>	/t ^y oop/	'to mix up'
[f ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>fyaat</i>	/f ^y a:t/	'to rekindle light'
<i>fyeel</i>	/f ^y é:l/	'light, not heavy'
[v ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>vyang</i>	/v ^y an/	'onee-eyed person'
[k ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>kyak</i>	/k ^y ák/	'to pick'
<i>kyeen</i>	/k ^y é:n/	'usefulness'
[g ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>gyar</i>	/g ^y ar/	'very, extremely'
<i>gyet</i>	/g ^y et/	'last year'
[m ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>myaal</i>	/m ^y a:l/	'dry tears'
<i>myas</i>	/m ^y as/	'to drink plenty water'
[n ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>nyagas</i>	/n ^y agas/	'to refuse absolutely'
<i>nyang</i>	/n ^y an/	'to disagree, object'
[l ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>lilyu</i>	/lil ^y ú/	'rainbow'
<i>Lyap</i>	/l ^y ap/	'to look, see'
[r ^y] Consonant Clusters		
<i>ryang</i>	/r ^y án/	'welfare, health and peace'
<i>ryee</i>	/r ^y é:l/	'to consider carefully'

-It is interesting to note that though Dapiya et al (2010) admits that in Mwaghavul, palatalization does not occur before the high vowels /i/, /i/ and /u/; however, they contradicted themselves in the Trial version of the Mwaghavul Dictionary by transcribing the following words thus: *nyik* /n^yik/ 'to concentrate', *nyim* /n^yik/ 'traditional dress made of grass or raphia palm'. These two words contain the palatal nasal /ŋ/ in word-initial position and should be transcribed thus: /ɲik/ and /ɲim/ respectively.

Labialised Consonants

Dapiya et al (2010) posits that labialized consonants in Mwaghavul only occur before low central and front vowels and never before /i/, /i/, /o/ and /u/. However,

older orthographic practice tended to insert a medial /-u-/ between the initial consonant and the semi-vowel /w/, thus *luwaa* 'meat' instead of *lwaa* 'meat'.

Table 7: Mwaghavul Labialised Consonants

[b ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>bwaan</i>	/b ^w á:n/	'to beat thoroughly with a stick'
<i>bwen</i>	/b ^w ɛn/	'to expose'
[β ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>βwagal</i>	/β ^w agà/	'lukewarm (water)'
<i>βweng</i>	/β ^w ɛŋ/	'to support'
[d ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>dwang</i>	/d ^w án/	'self-centred person'
<i>dwat</i>	/d ^w at/	'diminutive, dwarf'
[d̪ ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>d̪wang</i>	/d̪ ^w án/	'to be sour'
<i>d̪wat</i>	/d̪ ^w at/	'narrow entrance or place'
[t ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>twaar</i>	/t ^w à:r/	'side buds'
<i>twagam</i>	/t ^w agam/	'to disappear'
[k ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>kwaar</i>	/k ^w a:r/	'to scrape, clean up'
<i>kwee</i>	/k ^w ɛ:/	'chicken'
[g ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>gwat</i>	/g ^w át/	'winner, victor'
<i>gwom</i>	/g ^w ɔm/	'food, porridge'
[f ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>fwaat</i>	/f ^w a:t/	'piece of cloth'
<i>fwor</i>	/f ^w ɔr/	'to follow after'
[v ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>vwagap</i>	/v ^w agàp/	'to mess things up'
<i>vwen</i>	/v ^w ɛn/	'to choke, strangle'
[s ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>Swa</i>	/s ^w a/	'to run'
<i>swap</i>	/s ^w ap/	'to share, give freely'
[m ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>mwaan</i>	/m ^w a:n/	'to walk, travel'
<i>mwol</i>	/m ^w ɔl/	'half-brother, cousin'
[n ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>nwagap</i>	/n ^w agap/	'to squeeze'
<i>nwee</i>	/n ^w ɛ/	'no'
[p ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>pwan</i>	/p ^w an/	'to eject'
<i>pweer</i>	/p ^w ɛ:r/	'to expose, to dry'
[l ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>lwaa</i>	/l ^w a:/	'meat'
<i>lwaghas</i>	/l ^w ayas/	'to rub'

[r ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>Rwa</i>	/r ^w a/	'to embed'
<i>rwang</i>	/r ^w àŋ/	'a trouble-maker'
[c ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>cwat</i>	/t ^w at/	'to hit'
<i>cwel</i>	/t ^w é/	'to miss a target narrowly'
[j ^w] Consonant Clusters		
<i>jwaan</i>	/dʒ ^w a:n/	'to tempt someone'
<i>jweet</i>	/dʒ ^w ɛ:t/	'to catch someone red handed'

3.3.3 Prenasalised Consonants

Prenasalisation occurs when a consonant sound is briefly preceded by a corresponding nasal called a prenasal. MBTC (2013) observes that in Mwaghavul, words beginning with vowel sounds are often preceded by a glottal stop instead of prenasals. The Mwaghavul

prenasals are homorganic and are identified are /m/ - before bilabials, /ŋ/ - before velars, and /n/ - before all other sounds. Dapiya et al (2010) adds that initial nasals in Mwaghavul have a wide variety of meanings, hence, it becomes necessary to distinguish specific usages.

Table 8: Mwaghavul Prenasalised Consonants

Prenasal	Prenasalised Consonants	Examples
[m]	/b/	mbii / ^m bì:/ 'thing'
	/b̄/	m̄bam / ^{m̄} bam/ 'to help'
	/m/	mmak / ^m mak/ 'able, ability'
	/p/	mpet / ^m pét/ 'broom'
[n]	[c] /tʃ/	nciwe /tʃiwe/ 'wild beast'
	/d/	nding / ⁿ din/ 'stone'
	/d̄/	nd̄ogom / ^{n̄} d̄ogom/ 'to bow'
	/f/	nfut / ⁿ fùt/ 'mosquito'
	/g/	ngak / ⁿ gàk/ 'big'
	[gh] /ɣ/	ngir / ⁿ ɣir/ 'thorn'
	/h/	nhap / ⁿ hàp/ 'coin'
	[j] /dʒ/	njeer / ⁿ je:r/ 'sugar-cane'
	/k/	^ɔ nkaa / ⁿ ka:/ 'about, at'
	/l/	nlang / ⁿ lan/ 'ant'
	/n/	nnos / ⁿ nos/ 'fool, foolish'
	/r/	nryeem / ⁿ r̄ɛ:m/ 'vicious animal'
	/s/	nseet / ⁿ sé:t/ 'to sell or buy'
	[sh] /ʃ/	nshii / ⁿ ʃi:/ 'honey, bee'
	/t/	nttit / ⁿ tí:t/ 'to be similar or equal'
	/v/	nvwet / ⁿ v̄wét/ 'to throw away'
	/w/	nwum / ⁿ wum/ 'burial'
	[y] /j/	nyagal / ⁿ jágál/ 'to get up, stand'
	/z/	nzeltet / ⁿ zeltét/ 'scorn'
	[zh] /ʒ/	nzhitaa / ⁿ ʒità:/ 'pepper'

-This can also be contrasted with phonetically with *kaa* /ká:/ 'head'

Both Dapiya et al (2010) and MBTC (2013) agree that there are six vowels in Mwaghavul.

Table 9: Mwaghavul Vowels Chart

Degree	Front	Central	Back
Close	i	ɨ	u
Half-Open	ɛ	ɔ	
Open		a	

All vowels in the language have long and short counterparts in most positions, but there are no nasalized vowels. For example;

(8)	/a/ <i>lá /lá/</i> 'obtain' <i>sám /sám/</i> 'sharpen' <i>mar /mar/</i> 'swelling'	/aa/¹⁰ <i>làà /lá:/</i> 'child' <i>saam /sa:m/</i> 'to asleep' <i>máár /má:t/</i> 'farm'
	/i/ <i>shit /ʃit/</i> 'grass or fodder' <i>dí /dí/</i> 'to be there' <i>cin /tʃin/</i> 'to do'	/ii/ <i>shíít /ʃi:t/</i> 'pounding' <i>díi /dí:/</i> 'the one that is' <i>ciin /tʃi:n/</i> 'to lack'
	/u/ <i>đu /đu/</i> 'to smell' <i>fur /fur/</i> 'outside' <i>pus /pùs/</i> 'to kick or hit'	/uu/ <i>đuu /đuu/</i> 'a crowd, many' <i>fúúr /fú:r/</i> 'grass with white flower' <i>púús /pú:s/</i> 'sun, day'
	[o] /ɔ/ <i>tok /tɔk/</i> 'to greet' <i>kok /kk/</i> 'wall' <i>lok /lɔk/</i> 'to soak'	[oo] /ɔɔ/ <i>took /tɔ:k/</i> 'neck' <i>kook /kɔ:k/</i> 'song, dance' <i>look /lɔ:k/</i> 'to make bald'
	/ɨ/ <i>kin /kin/</i> 'uncle' <i>gít /git/</i> 'small piece of meat'	/iɨ/ <i>kíin /ki:n/</i> 'salt' <i>gíit /gi:t/</i> 'hill, mountain'
	/ɛ/ <i>wet /wét/</i> 'to do something continuously' <i>dyes /d^yés/</i> 'bone' <i>ben /bɛn/</i> 'to assume'	/ɛɛ/ <i>weét /wé:t/</i> 'both' <i>dyees /d^yɛ:s/</i> 'sand' <i>been /bɛ:n/</i> 'gourd or calabash'

-Long vowels are represented here by doubling the vowel sounds

Vowel Insertion

In Mwaghavul phonology, there is always the vowel /i/ inserted between any two consonant sequences (the second consonant being mostly /l/ or /r/) within the same syllable. For example:

- (9) *filap* 'to wrest, detach'
kiling 'to hear'
pirep 'to call (plural)'
tireng 'trample (plural)'

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Cite this Article: Poret, GS; Punshak, NL (2023). Phonetics and Phonology of Mwaghavul Language: A Brief Survey. *Greener Journal of Language and Literature Research*, 8(1): 1-11.