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Documenting Luyia Together: Tsootso Talking Wordlist

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This presentation describes research to develop the first talking dictionary of the Tsootso language as part of the ASH Scholars team *Documenting Luyia Together* in 2020. Our efforts contribute to the documentation of Tsootso, a variety of the Luyia language cluster spoken in Kakamega County in western Kenya. Tsootso is much less commonly spoken compared to the largest Luyia languages such as Bukusu and Logoori. Moreover, Tsootso is underdocumented language, with very few prior publications on the language, aside from a handful of publications by Gerard Dalgish in the 1970s, and no published dictionary to date.

Our research builds on a collection of approximately 700 Tsootso words collected in 2019 from two Tsootso speakers as part of the *Luyia-Soga Talking Wordlists* subproject of the ASH Scholars program. The larger aims of this project are to collect comparative vocabulary and information about the sound systems and grammatical systems of the 30+ language varieties of the Luyia and Soga clusters of Bantu languages in western Kenya and eastern Uganda.

Our work focused on the audio recordings collected from two Tsootso speakers. We processed the original interview recordings and created individual sound files for each of the words in the list. In Fall 2020, we have been working to transcribe all of the words in the collection using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This process includes listening to the speaker's pronunciation and identifying the appropriate phonetic symbols to identify the consonants, vowels, and tones in the word. Once the transcription work is complete, we will produce a preliminary study of the Tsootso sound system and the structure of nouns, identifying the different prefixes that mark singular, plural, and gender. Later we will integrate the Tsootso data into a larger database to produce a new classification of languages in the Luyia-Soga region.