Solace Ago Yankson

Language contact and change in linguistically heterogeneous urban communities

The case of Akan in Accra

This dissertation discusses language contact and change in Akan as spoken in Accra, the national capital of Ghana, which is linguistically very heterogeneous. This heterogeneity has resulted from migration of people with different ethnic and linguistic background from all parts of the country. This includes people who speak different varieties of Akan, one of the major indigenous languages of the country. This dissertation, therefore, explores the sociolinguistic profile of Akan migrants in Accra as they come into contact with people with different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and the Akan variety they speak. Do the linguistic and ethnic backgrounds of those they directly interact with in their social network have any influence on this variety? Based on selected lexical, morphosyntactic, and phonological variables, the Akan variety of the Akan migrants in Accra is discussed in the context of New Dialect Formation or Koineisation, a research area that has received little attention on the African continent, although widely explored in Europe and the United States of America. The analysis is based on fieldwork data collected from Akan migrants in Accra in general, Akan second generation migrants in Accra who are ethnically Kwawu and Asante, and residents of Kwawu and Asante rural communities.

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