

CHAPTER I

A.—SOUNDS

THE following sounds are found in the Nzima language :

VOWELS

Phonetic Script.	Gold Coast Script.	Explanation.
i	ĩ	i in <i>machine</i> .
ɪ	ɪ	i in <i>it</i> .
e	ẹ	é in French <i>né</i> .
ɛ	e	e in <i>egg</i> .
a	ǎ	a in French <i>patte</i> .
ɔ	o	ou in <i>ought</i> .
o	ô	ô in French <i>côte</i> .
u	u	u in <i>put</i> .
u	u	u in <i>ruler</i> .

CONSONANTS

Phonetic Script.	Gold Coast Script.	Explanation.
b	b	Practically as in English.
p	p	Practically as in English, save (1) that it is not followed by an aspirate, and (2) that it begins more sharply, especially before the vowels ǎ, ɔ, o, u, u, an effect which may be produced by making as though to speak a k and bringing out a p.
t	t	As in English, but unaspirated.
ɖ	ɖ	As English d.
d	d̂	A peculiar sound: a dental d instead of the alveolar d used in English; that is to say, the tongue touches the teeth all

Phonetic Script.	Gold Coast Script.	Explanation.
		the way round instead of its tip touching the alveole or tooth-sockets or teeth-ridge between the teeth and the hard palate. The effect is that in some words, especially before the vowel <i>i</i> , there is a slight suggestion of an English soft <i>th</i> (as in <i>then</i>) following the <i>d</i> sound.
k	k	As in English, save that it is not followed by an aspirate.
l	l	As in English, often exchangeable with <i>ɹ</i> (<i>r</i>), which see.
g	g	As in English.
tʃ	ky	As <i>ch</i> in <i>church</i> .
dʒ	gy	As <i>j</i> in <i>jam</i> .
tʃʷ	tw	Approximately as <i>ch</i> in <i>church</i> (but palatal rather than alveolar), followed by a rounding of lips as if to whistle.
dʒʷ	dw	Approximately as <i>j</i> in <i>jam</i> (but palatal rather than alveolar), followed by a rounding of the lips as if to whistle.
m	m	As in English.
n	n	As in English.
ŋ	ŋ	As <i>ng</i> in <i>ring</i> , <i>singer</i> (but not <i>linger</i>).
ɲ	ny	As <i>ni</i> in <i>onion</i> .
nl	nl	This represents a sound which may be called either a nasalised <i>l</i> or a lateralised <i>n</i> : sometimes the one and sometimes the other constituent seems to predominate.
f	f	As in English.
v	v	As in English.
s	s	As in <i>sit</i> .
z	z	As in <i>zest</i> .
ʃ	hy	sh as in <i>show</i> .

Phonetic Script.	Gold Coast Script.	Explanation.
ɹ	r	r as in English <i>red</i> . This is sometimes pronounced more like l, varying even in the same word spoken by the same individual, but the sound of the South English untrilled lingual r predominates.
ɽ	ɽ	This is a peculiar sound, which does not occur in Fanti, Twi or Ga, and a special symbol is therefore required. The symbol adopted is that used by the International Phonetic Association for similar sounds. The sound is a "Uvular fricative," and is discussed more fully in the Introduction. It is similar to the Arabic sound represented in Roman characters by gh; to the Danish r; to the r used by natives of Freetown, Sierra Leone, and sometimes also by Parisians. The sound can be produced by making as if to say r very far back in the mouth, almost in the throat, but without raising the front of the tongue. The sound is, however, soft and not harsh, or, in the popular sense of the word, guttural. It may conveniently be practised with the vowel a after it.
h	h	As in the English <i>hat</i> .
w	w	As in English.
j	y	As English y in <i>yet</i> .

NOTE.—When the combination fw occurs in Nzima, the two letters have their ordinary sounds, as in English "of with you," or "trough water," and not the peculiar sound

represented in Twi by fw (or f^w), in Fanti by hw, and in Ga by f. In only one doubtful instance so far have I found this sound in Nzima, viz. in certain tenses of the verb tʃ^wi (twi) to drag, and I have there represented it provisionally by the symbol f used in Ga (see pp. 103, 104, 105, 109). The sound is described by the Rev. C. F. Fleischer in his "New Ga-English Method" as an š (English sh), with which a hasty English w has been united, *i.e.* whilst the tongue produces the sound of š, the lips are put into the position required for pronouncing w, only the voice in it has disappeared, by this the sound of š seems to approach to that of f. Another writer says that it is pronounced by contracting both lips as for whistling.

A PRELIMINARY STUDY
OF THE
NZIMA LANGUAGE

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