

LINGUISTIC TRIGGERS AND STRUCTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF PHONEME INSERTION AND ELISION IN TIV

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Abstract

The Tiv language undergoes phonemic insertion and elision following the phonotactic constraints of Tiv phonology. Despite the frequent occurrence of insertion and elision, the specific linguistic triggers and structural implications for Tiv phonology have not been systematically analysed. The study explores linguistic triggers and structural implications of phoneme insertion and elision in Tiv. The paper aims to examine the phonological processes of insertion and elision in Tiv phonology, identifying and examining factors that trigger insertion and elision in Tiv phonology. The study adopted Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky's Optimality Theory (OT)(1993) and inconsistently employed a descriptive qualitative research design. The study utilised a purposive sample of 30 native Tiv speakers, including linguists and teachers from three local government areas in Benue State. Data were collected through oral interviews, observation of natural speech and the researcher's intuitive knowledge as a native speaker. The findings reveal that phoneme insertion and elision are systematic phonological strategies in Tiv for adapting foreign and native words. The findings also show that the factors triggering insertion and elision include loan word adaptation, linguistic innovation (vowel lengthening) and phonotactic conformity. Based on the findings, the study concludes that insertion and elision are systematic phonological processes in Tiv, primarily driven by the language's preference for open syllables and avoidance of consonant clusters. The study recommends, among others, that language educators and curriculum planners should integrate the study of insertion and elision into Tiv language syllabi at primary, secondary and tertiary levels to enhance students' understanding of Tiv phonology.

Introduction

Language is the fundamental medium for human communication, thought, and cultural preservation. Bamgbose (2019: 8) defined "language as a structured system of sounds,

words, and grammar that allows a community to convey meaning.” This dynamic system also serves as a marker of linguistic and cultural identity. In Tiv, this is particularly evident through phonological processes like insertion and elision, which systematically modify the structure and pronunciation of words. Akere (2021:15) describes this phonological process as patterned alterations of speech sounds governed by linguistic, phonotactic, and morphological constraints. These processes, such as insertion and elision, ensure that Tiv words conform to the language’s phonotactic rules, thereby facilitating smooth speech and contributing to its adaptability and dialectal variations.

Insertion, or epenthesis, is a common phonological process where an extra sound is introduced into a word. Yusuf (2020: 2) asserts that, insertion is the addition of a phoneme to a word in order to satisfy phonotactic constraints or ease articulation. This process occurs in Tiv primarily to resolve complex consonant clusters that violate the phonotactic structure of the language. For instance, when foreign loanwords enter Tiv, speakers often insert vowels to conform to the preferred CVCV (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant-Vowel) syllable structure. A clear example is the insertion of the vowel /i/ in the adaptation of the English word *school*, which becomes *sikuu* in Tiv. Similarly, insertion occurs in native Tiv words to maintain syllable balance, particularly in compound formations and affixation processes. The presence of insertion in Tiv underscores the influence of phonotactic constraints in shaping spoken forms.

Insertion in Tiv phonology occurs due to phonotactic constraints, morphological processes, and loanword adaptation, ensuring that words conform to the language’s syllable structure and phonological rules. Aboh (2018: 9) explains that “phonotactic constraints dictate the permissible sequences of sounds in a language, often necessitating modifications such as insertion to maintain phonological integrity. This principle applies to Tiv, where complex consonant clusters are avoided through vowel epenthesis. For example, the word “bread” has to undergo vowel epenthesis to break English consonant cluster. Therefore, this word becomes “beredi” in Tiv language where /e/ and /i/ are added to the root word to satisfy Tiv Phonotactic constraints.

Elision, on the other hand, is the omission of a sound within a word or phrase, often to facilitate ease of articulation. Okwori (2017: 1) argues that elision is the phonological process whereby

sounds, particularly vowels and consonants, are omitted in rapid or casual speech to enhance fluency and reduce articulatory effort. In Tiv, elision is a frequent phenomenon, particularly in connected speech and fast-paced discourse. Consonant elision often occurs at word-initial positions, medial positions, or word-final positions, especially in casual speech, where speakers omit weak syllables or certain phonemes to achieve a smoother rhythm. For instance, *Ikyarikyase* (tremble) and *kyarkyase* (tremble), a Close front unrounded vowel /i/ is deleted in the spelling. Similarly, vowel elision is evident in phrase-level pronunciation, where unstressed vowels are deleted to maintain speech tempo. These elision patterns indicate the dynamic nature of Tiv phonology, where spoken forms are constantly adjusted for fluidity. For example, letter /i/ in *ityōikyaa* (reason) and *uijuan* (joints) are elided for easy pronunciation thus having new forms as *ityōkyaa* (reason) and *ujuan*.

Elision in Tiv often occurs in fast speech, contractions, and morphophonemic environments, shaping the rhythm and natural flow of the language. Uchenna (2016: 45) asserts that fast speech naturally promotes elision as speakers prioritise speed over full articulation, leading to the systematic omission of certain phonemes. This is particularly evident in Tiv, where frequently used words undergo sound deletion when spoken rapidly. Additionally, elision manifests in contractions, where two words merge, leading to the loss of one or more phonemes. For example, *kwase u dedoo* ('beautiful woman') may contract to *kwasededoo* in rapid speech. Morphophonemic processes also trigger elision, especially in tense and aspect markers, where sound deletion occurs as morphemes interact. These variations in elision suggest that Tiv, like many other languages, exhibits speech economy, where linguistic efficiency takes precedence over full phonetic realisation.

When elision and insertion occur, they result in significant phonological changes, such as vowel deletion, consonant epenthesis, and syllable restructuring. These processes influence the phonetic realisation of words, modifying their pronunciation while often preserving their core meaning. The researcher is, therefore, motivated to carry out a study on insertion and elision in Tiv phonology.

Statement of the Problem

Phonological processes like insertion and elision play a crucial role in shaping Tiv word structure, but their systematic patterns and linguistic implications are underexplored. While insertion ensures phonotactic conformity and aids morphological derivation, elision often modifies syllable structure and influences pronunciation. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, and based on available published works, there is a lack of focused analysis on how these processes interact within Tiv phonology and whether they contribute to morphophonemic changes.

Previous studies on Tiv phonology have primarily focused on a broad range of topics, leaving a gap in the specific investigation of phoneme insertion and elision. For instance, scholars like Aor (2021) have analysed the phonological effects of English loanwords on Tiv grammar, often discussing epenthesis (insertion) and elision (deletion) as a secondary aspect of a larger study on language contact. Similarly, Iorshagher (2022) conducted a comparative analysis of phonological processes in English and Tiv, which did not fully discuss elision and insertion in detail. Consequently, the field still lacks comprehensive studies that systematically identify and analyse the specific conditions, constraints, and motivations behind both insertion and deletion across the entire language. Much of the existing literature, therefore, provides a general overview of Tiv's sound system, leaving the detailed analysis of these specific phonological processes as an area ripe for further investigation.

Furthermore, the Tiv language undergoes phonemic insertion and elision according to the phonotactic constraints of Tiv phonology. Despite the frequent occurrence of these processes, the specific linguistic triggers and structural implications for Tiv phonology have not been systematically analysed. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by providing an analysis of how insertion and elision occur and examining their broader linguistic consequences.

This study aims to examine the phonological processes of insertion and elision in Tiv phonology, identifying and examining factors that trigger it.

Conceptual Review

Language

Language is the foundation of human communication, allowing individuals to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas. Bamgbose (2019: 34) defines language as “a structured system of sounds, words, and grammar used by people within a specific community to communicate meaning.” This definition highlights language as a rule-governed system that enables interaction among a linguistic group. Akere (2021: 23) asserts that “language is an essential tool for cultural transmission and identity formation, providing a means through which societies maintain their traditions and values”. This implies that language is not merely a system of symbols but a key marker of sociocultural identity and collective heritage.

Insertion

Insertion, as a phonological process, refers to the phenomenon where a sound is introduced within a word or between sounds to maintain phonotactic constraints or ease articulation. Adekunle (2018: 47) defines insertion as “the introduction of a segment within a phonological structure to ease pronunciation and preserve phonological harmony”. This perspective highlights how insertion helps maintain the phonological balance within a given linguistic system. Olayinka (2017: 93) describes insertion as “a phonological adjustment mechanism employed to resolve syllabic and articulatory difficulties, often occurring in loanword adaptation”. This underscores the role of insertion in language borrowing, where sounds are added to fit the phonological system of the borrowing language. The role of insertion in phonology extends beyond ease of pronunciation to structural preservation. Ibrahim (2020: 62) asserts that “insertion serves as a repair strategy that enhances phonological well-formedness by preventing consonant clusters that violate a language’s phonotactic rules”. This explanation aligns with the view that insertion is a crucial mechanism for maintaining linguistic coherence.

Elision

Elision is a common phonological process that involves the omission of one or more sounds in speech to facilitate ease of articulation. Adegbite (2019: 5) defines elision as the systematic

deletion of phonemes in connected speech due to linguistic economy, which enhances fluency and rhythm in spoken language. This phenomenon occurs frequently in rapid speech, where speakers tend to omit sounds that might otherwise be pronounced in careful speech. Akinbode (2020: 13) explains that elision is a strategy that native speakers unconsciously employ to maintain phonotactic constraints and optimise syllable structures in their respective languages. The occurrence of elision is language-specific and can be influenced by phonological environments, such as stress patterns and speech tempo.

Elision operates on various linguistic levels, affecting vowels, consonants, and entire syllables. Bello (2018: 34) highlights that vowel elision is one of the most common forms of phonological deletion, occurring in unstressed syllables where vowel sounds are dropped to facilitate speech efficiency. This is evident in languages like Hausa and Zulu, where unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words are commonly omitted in rapid speech. Similarly, Bantu (2021: 7) observes that consonant elision is a frequent process in Bantu languages, particularly in fast speech, where weak consonants such as /h/ and /w/ are regularly deleted at morpheme boundaries to maintain phonological economy. This process contributes to speech fluidity and is often influenced by morphophonemic constraints that dictate the permissible consonant clusters in a given language.

Phonotactic Constraint

Phonotactic constraints are the rules that govern permissible sound combinations in a language, defining which phoneme sequences can form syllables and words. Hall (2016:23) describes phonotactics as “the set of rules which specify the possible sequencing of sounds in a language, as well as the possible syllable structures,” underscoring each language’s unique ‘sound grammar.’ These constraints often trigger insertion, where a sound such as a schwa is added to break up illegal clusters, a process Gussenhoven and Jacobs (2017:59) view as ensuring “the well-formedness conditions on the strings of segments” in words and syllables. Conversely, they also prompt elision, the deletion of a sound to simplify complex or impermissible clusters, a phenomenon Carr (2020) links to the need for easier articulation when phonotactic rules are violated.

Together, insertion and elision operate as repair strategies, preserving both the structural integrity and pronounceability of words within a linguistic system.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Optimality Theory (OT) by Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky, to analyse insertion and elision in Tiv phonology. Optimality Theory emerged in 1993. It explains phonological processes through the interaction of universal, violable constraints categorised into markedness and faithfulness. These constraints are hierarchically ranked, and their interaction determines the optimal surface form of a word. In OT, phonological modifications like vowel insertion or consonant elision occur when markedness constraints outrank faithfulness constraints.

GEN (Generator) takes an input (the underlying form of a word or morpheme) and produces a set of all possible output candidates (surface forms), regardless of whether they are grammatically well-formed. For the input /CV/, GEN might produce outputs like [CV], [CVC], [VC], [C], or even [Ø] (deletion), depending on the language's phonological options. EVAL (Evaluator) assesses the candidate outputs produced by GEN based on the language-specific ranking of constraints (both markedness and faithfulness) in CON. It selects the optimal candidate—the one that best satisfies the ranked constraints, even if it violates some lower-ranked ones. Example: If markedness constraint *NO CODA* (no syllable-final consonants) outranks faithfulness constraint *MAX* (preserve input segments), EVAL will choose a candidate that deletes a coda consonant to satisfy markedness, despite violating faithfulness.

This theory is relevant to this study on insertion and elision in Tiv phonology in that GEN produces all possible surface forms for a given input (e.g., forms with or without inserted vowels or deleted consonants). EVAL then selects the form that best satisfies the Tiv-specific ranking of constraints. For instance, insertion occurs when markedness constraints like *ONSET* (syllables must have onsets) dominate. Also, elision occurs when *COMPLEX* (avoid complex clusters) outranks *MAX* (do not delete). This mechanism helps explain why Tiv speakers insert vowels (to break up illicit clusters) or elide consonants (to avoid marked syllable structures).

Empirical Review

Aor (2021) discusses the phonological implications and functions of English loanwords on the grammar. It has been found out that most English loan-words have no substitutes in Tiv; loan-words have expanded the vocabulary of the Tiv grammar; the original syllabic structure of most loan-words changed from closed to open syllables; and epenthetic letters are added to break consonant clusters, for plurality and as a hiatus repairing strategy. It has been recommended that papers should be churned out in the areas of historical, comparative and contact linguistics.

Aor's (2021) study on English loanwords in Tiv provides a foundational understanding of phonological changes like epenthesis (insertion) and elision, but only within the specific context of language contact. The current study will build on this by systematically analysing the conditions and motivations for insertion and deletion across the entire Tiv language, thereby addressing the gap left by studies that only treat these processes as a secondary part of a broader topic.

Sokpo and Shittu (2017) investigated morphophonemic realisation in Tiv, with a focus on plural formation. The study analysed how morphemes and phonemes in Tiv undergo alternations due to morphological and phonological conditioning. Using selected Tiv words, the research demonstrated that while English typically uses inflectional suffixes to mark plurality, Tiv predominantly uses inflectional prefixes, influenced by either morphological or phonological factors. The study emphasised that allomorphic variation, common in English, is not applicable in Tiv. The study further outlined the rules guiding plural formation in Tiv and revealed the complexity involved in forming plurals in the language. It concluded that a morphophonemic analysis of indigenous languages like Tiv is not only feasible but also essential in understanding their unique linguistic structures. The authors recommended that learners familiarise themselves with these complex morphophonemic processes to better understand and appreciate the Tiv language.

This study relates to previous works by examining phonological alternations in Tiv, but it fills a significant gap by focusing specifically on insertion and elision. While prior research, such as Sokpo and Shittu (2017), linked these

changes to morphological processes like pluralisation, this current study provides a formal, constraint-based analysis within Optimality Theory to explain the phonological reasons for these sound changes, independent of their morphological context.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyse linguistic triggers and structural implications of phoneme insertion and elision in Tiv. The study's population comprised native Tiv speakers, including linguists and language teachers, primarily residing in Makurdi, Gboko and Konshisha Local Government Areas of Benue State, with a purposive sample size of 30 participants. Data was collected through oral interviews, observation of natural speech, textual analysis of Tiv texts and linguistic corpora, and leveraging the researcher's intuitive knowledge as a native speaker. The collected data was analysed using Optimality Theory to identify, classify, and understand the triggers and impact of inserted and elided phonemes on Tiv word structure.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: *Loanword Adaptation*

Original word	Transcription	Tiv loan word	Transcription	Inserted or Elided Phonemes	Glossary	Etymology
Table	/ˈteɪbl/	Tebul	/tebuː/	Inserted /u/	Table	English
Shovel	/ˈʃʌvl/	Shebul	/ʃebuː/	Inserted /e/ /u/	Shovel	English
Bread	/brɛd/	Beredi	/beredi/	Inserted /e/ /i/	Bread	English
diákonos	/ˈdiəkənəs/	Diakon	/diakon/	Elided /ə/, /ə/, /s/	diákonos	Greek
Brush	/brʌʃ/	burôôshi	/burôːʃi/	Inserted /u/, /i/	Brush	English
Jaki	/ˈdʒaki/	Ijaki	/idʒaːki/	Inserted /i/	Donkey	Hausa
Gwaiva	/gwaiva/	Gwava	/gwava/	Elided /i/	Guava	Hausa
Albasa	/albasa/	Alabusa	/alabusa/	Inserted /a/	Onion	Hausa

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 1 shows how Tiv adapts English and Hausa loanwords by inserting vowels and eliding consonants to fit its syllable structure—for example, *table* /ˈteɪbl/ becomes *tebul* /tebuː/, and *bread* /brɛd/ becomes *beredi* /beredi/. Vowel insertion helps break clusters or maintain open syllables, while consonant deletion simplifies complex forms, as seen in *government* /ˈgʌvnmənt/ becoming *gomenti* /gomenti/. Hausa words also adapt similarly: *albasa* becomes *alabusa* (onion) and *danko* becomes *donko* (elastic material).

Table 2: *Linguistic Innovation (Vowel Lengthening)*

Tiv word	Tiv Word Variation	Examples of inserted Phonemes	Tiv Word	Tiv Transcription	Transcription of Tiv Variation	Gloss
Dang	Daang	/æ/ & /a:/	Bad	/dæŋ/	/da:ŋ/	Bad
Eng	Eeng	/e/ & /e:/	Immaculate	/eŋ/	/e:ŋ/	immaculate
Ving	Viing	/ɪ/ & /ɪ:/	Quietness	/viŋ/	/vi:ŋ/	quietness
Bong	Boong	/ɒ/ & /o:/	to open wide	/bɒŋ/	/bo:ŋ/	to open wide
Dông	Dông	/ɔ/ & /o:/	Tightly	/dɔŋ/	/dɔ:ŋ/	tightly
Dang	Daang	/æ/ & /a:/	Bad	/dæŋ/	/da:ŋ/	dang (bad)
Eng	Eeng	/e/ & /e:/	Immaculate	/eŋ/	/e:ŋ/	eng (pure)
Fing	Fiing	/ɪ/ & /ɪ:/	Dizzily	/fiŋ/	/fi:ŋ/	fing (dizzy)
Gbong	gboong	/ɒ/ & /o:/	loud shouting	/gbɒŋ/	/gbo:ŋ/	gbong (noise)
Imagh	Imaagh	/æ/ & /a:/	Building	/ɪmæy/	/ima:y/	imagh (structure)
Iniav	Iniaav	/æ/ & /a:/	Sacrifices	/ɪniæv/	/ɪniɑ:v/	iniav (sacrifices)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 shows that Tiv achieves vowel lengthening by inserting a similar vowel to extend the vowel sound, as in *Dang* /dæK/ becoming *Daang* /da:K/ and *Ving* /vjK/ becoming *Viing* /vj:K/. This process applies across vowel types, including *Bong* /bRK/ to *Boong* /bo:K/, forming clear phonetic contrasts.

Table 3: *Consonant Insertion in Tiv*

Tiv Word	Tiv Word Variation	Inserted Phonems	Gloss
Adiguve	Adigyuve	j	Harp
Ifan	Ifyan	j	curse
Iferor	Ifyeror	j	evil person
Igo	Igyo	j	Pig
Ikua	Ikyua	j	near
Mbaihomov	Mbahyomov	j	enemies
Una	Wuna	w	granary
Mbatomoov	Mbatyomoov	j	Workers
Ihom	Ihyom	j	Enemy
Azer	Adzer	d	Tied
Ioryue	Iorywue	w	People's Hatrid
Ihwa	ihywa	y	hour
Kwande	Kywande	y	name of a Local Govt
Iwen	iywen	y	stone
iwanger	Iywanger	y	light
iwasen	iywasen	y	help
iwua	iyua	y	Gift
iwuese	iyua	y	Praise

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 3 shows that Tiv uses consonant insertion—especially /j/, /w/, and /y/—to modify word forms for smoother pronunciation and phonological variation. For example, *Adiguve* becomes *Adigyuve* and *Ikav* becomes *Ikyav* through the insertion of /j/, while *Una* shifts to *Wuna* with /w/, and *Ihwa* to *Ihywa* with /y/. These insertions occur consistently across word types, suggesting a systematic strategy to enhance fluidity and articulation in Tiv speech. Ayagah and Akpagher (2024) see them as secondary palatalisations.

Table 4: *Vowel Deletion in Tiv*

Tiv word	Variation in Tiv	Examples of Phoneme(s) deleted	Gloss
Ikyarikyase	Ikyarkyase	i	trembling
Ityôikyaa	Ityôkyaa	i	reason
Uijuan	Ujuan	i	joints
Uwegh	Wegh	u	hand
Ikônough	Ikyônogh	u	chair
Tyough	Tyogh	u	head
Uwar	War	u	grave
Uwegh	Wegh	u	hand
Uwo	Wo	u	mountain
takerada	takeda	ra	Book
akaahôngorouh	akaahôngorogh	u	abominable things
Ikônough	kyônogh	i-u	chair/ throne

Source: field work, 2025

Table 4 reveals that Tiv employs phoneme deletion mainly of /i/, /u/, and /c/ (“gh”) to simplify word structures and ease articulation. For example, *Ikyarikyase* becomes *Ikyarkyase* (deletion of /i/), *Uwagh* becomes *Wagh* (deletion of /u/), and *Ityough* becomes *ityogh* (deletion of “i-u”), each showcasing consistent patterns of phonological reduction. These deletions enhance speech fluency and reduce complexity, highlighting a systematic phonological process in Tiv.

Table 5: *Phonotactic Conformity in Tiv*

English Word	IPA	Loan-word	Tiv Transcription	Replaced Phoneme	Phonological Processes (Insertion/Deletion)
Esther	/ˈesθə/	Eseta	/ˈesetæ/	/t/	Insertion of /e/ and /a/ for final syllable; vowel change
Nazareth	/ˈnæzərəθ/	Nasareti	/næsæreti/	/t/	Insertion of /i/ for easier syllabicity
Ruth	/ruːθ/	Rutu	/roto/	/t/	Insertion of final vowel /o/
Seth	/sɛθ/	Setu	/seto/	/t/	Insertion of final vowel /o/
Timothy	/ˈtɪməθi/	Timoteu	/tɪmoteo/	/t/	insertion of final /u/
Matthew	/ˈmæθjuː/	Mateu	/ˈmateuː/	/t/	insertion of /eu/

Table 5 illustrates how English loanwords undergo phonotactic conformity in Tiv through systematic phonological adaptations. A prominent feature of this process is the replacement of the interdental fricative /θ/ absent in Tiv phonology with the alveolar plosive /t/, as seen in the transformations of *Esther* to *Eseta*, *Methuselah* to *Metusela*, and *Matthew* to *Mateu*. In addition to consonant substitution, Tiv speakers frequently insert vowels to conform to the language's dominant CV (consonant-vowel) syllable structure. For example, *Ruth* becomes *Rutu*, *Seth* becomes *Setu*, and *Timothy* becomes *Timoteu*, where final vowels are added to eliminate impermissible consonant-final syllables. Furthermore, some loanwords exhibit both vowel modification and syllable restructuring, as in *Nazareth* becoming *Nasareti*, where the final /i/ facilitates smoother articulation. These phonological changes reflect a consistent strategy of aligning English lexical items with Tiv phonotactic constraints as observed by Ayagah and Akpagher (2024).

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that phoneme insertion and elision are systematic phonological strategies in Tiv for adapting foreign and native words. In line with the first objective, *inserted phonemes* are predominantly vowels such as /u/, /i/, /e/, /o/ , and consonants like /j/ and /w/ added to avoid consonant clusters or to fit Tiv's CV syllable structure (e.g., “table” *tebu*;

“ifero” → *ifyeror*). *Elided phonemes* typically involve the removal of complex or cluster-forming consonants like /v/, /t/, /r/, and /z/ (e.g., “government” → *gomeneti*, “tozali” → *tojì*), further highlighting Tiv’s aversion to complex clusters. These findings align with Olayinka’s (2017: 93) findings when he described insertion as “a phonological adjustment mechanism employed to resolve syllabic and articulatory difficulties, often occurring in loanword adaptation”.

The findings show that the factors triggering insertion and elision include loanword adaptations, linguistic innovation and phonotactic conformity. These findings align with the observations of Ibrahim (2020: 62), who asserted that “insertion serves as a repair strategy that enhances phonological well-formedness by preventing consonant clusters that violate a language’s phonotactic rules”.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that insertion and elision are systematic phonological processes in Tiv, primarily driven by the language’s preference for open syllables and avoidance of consonant clusters. Insertions, especially of vowels like /u/, /i/, /e/, and /o/, help restructure foreign words to fit Tiv’s consonant-vowel (CV) syllable pattern, as seen in forms like *Rutu*, *Setu*, and *Timoteu*. Elision, on the other hand, simplifies complex consonant clusters by removing segments that are phonotactically disallowed, contributing to ease of articulation and syllable conformity. These processes are not random but are guided by phonological rules that reflect the structural and articulatory tendencies of Tiv. Overall, insertion and elision are essential adaptation strategies that maintain phonological coherence when foreign or complex forms enter the language.

Recommendations

1. Language educators and curriculum planners should integrate insertion and elision into Tiv language syllabi to show how phonotactic constraints shape word structure and pronunciation.
2. Linguists and educators should create phonological charts and digital tools illustrating insertion and elision, with examples like /u/, /i/, and /o/ insertion or /v/ and /z/ elision.

3. Scholars should study similar phonological processes in other languages to identify broader patterns and parallels with Tiv phonotactic constraints.
4. Community elders and fluent Tiv speakers should participate in documentation of projects to preserve authentic pronunciation shaped by insertion and elision.

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