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A Comparative Study of Lexical and Phonological Aspects in Afar Dialects

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Abstract

This study was initiated to compare dialects of Afar in phonological and lexical aspects. The study was based on a representative sample of four dialect speakers. These respondents were selected using purposive sampling. The data were obtained through Swadesh words and short story using qualitative technique by using purposive sampling. The finding shows huge phonological variation between Ba'adu and Kilbat dialects. For instance, Kilbat dialect speakers make use of the sound /ɖ/ in a given word, like /ɖi:ni/ 'sleep' while Ba'adu dialect speakers do not use the sound /ɖ/. Instead, they use the sound /d/ as in /di:ni/ 'sleep'. In addition, Ba'adu dialect has 22 consonant sounds with the absence of /ɖ/. On the other hand, the study found lexical difference between Awsa, Ba'adu and Kilbat dialect speakers. Some words by which Kilbat and the other dialect (Awsa, Ba'adu, and Fana) speakers differ are as follow: when Kilbat use the word [bod:a], Awsa, Fan and Ba'adu use the word [satʕakalo] for the equivalent English word 'launch'.

Keywords: Afar, Comparative Study, Dialects, Lexical and Phonological

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The Afars are the most ancient and indigenous people in North East Africa. Their language, which is called Afar-Af, belongs to Cushitic family. Afar-Af first appeared in the literature in the 13th century in the writings of the Arab Geographer Ibn Said (Lewis, 1955: 155). Even though the literature does not reveal the meaning of the term Danakil, it appears more probable that it is the name of one of the clans, Dunkulu, found in northern part of Afar.

The Afars are called Adal by the Amhara, Taltal by the Tigreagns, Danakil (Singular: Dankali) by the Yemeni Arabs and Udali by the Somali, but they call themselves Afar. According to Jamaladin and Hussien (2007: 34), the term Afar is inherited from a clan name called Almafra, found and inhabited in Yemen early days.

The Afars are essentially pastoralist herdsmen living in an infertile and hostile environment of desert, lava streams, volcanoes and salt depression divided into three Sovereign States: Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti (Ayele, 1991: 10). According to Trimingham (1965: 8), although they are

extended over parts of artificial boundaries, they naturally form well defined arid geographical location which has been reinforced by more or less homogenous indigenous sociocultural and political institutions.

Linguistically, Afar people are also mutually intelligible. In Ethiopia, until the recent establishment of the Afar National Regional State under the Federal Government of Ethiopia, they were divided among the administrative provinces (KifleHagersduring the Dargregime) of Tigray, Wallo, Shoa and Western Hararge (CSA, 2007: 5-6).

The present Afar National Regional State, located in Northeastern part of the country, consists of a total area of 85,410 square kilometers and shares borders with the Regional States of Oromia in the south, Amhara in the west,Tigray in the northwest; as well as the sovereign states of Eritrea and Djibouti in the north and east respectively.

Afar-Af is a language consisting of four varieties: Awsa, Ba'adu, Fana and kilbat, Ba'adu (Afar in Ethiopia), Awsa (Afar in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti) Fana (Afar in Ethiopia), kilbat (Afar in Ethiopia and Eritrea). Afar-Af in Ethiopia was written with the Ethiopic or Ge'ez script since around 1849; the Latin script and Arabic script have been used in other areas to transcribe the language. In the 1970s, two Afar intellectuals and nationalists, Dimis and Redo, formalized the Afar alphabet based on the Latin script and they called it ʕafar Afih Fe:ra (Taha, 2015: 45).

There are different varieties within the same language. It is argued that all varieties of a language are equal and none of the varieties are superior or inferior to the other varieties of the same language as far as their linguistic features and functions are concerned. However, in many languages the varieties are associated with prestige, power and prejudice of the society they are serving. It is generally said that societies have positive attitude towards the standard variety and negative attitude towards the non-standard varieties. In addition, the attitudes that speakers hold about the language varieties is reflected in academic setting. For this reason, attitudes towards varieties of a language have been an issue in education contexts. Besides, the attitudes towards language varieties can affect their use in education and can have an impact on students' learning and self esteem Chambers (2008).

Therefore, implementing a language policy that allows the use of vernacular languages as in every society whose language is highly influenced by dialectal variations could have its own challenges. This is due to the fact that every language has its own dialect as mentioned above

which can be greatly affected by dialectal difference at all language levels (phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicology). Thus, the researcher identified the similarities and differences of Afar-Af the case of phonological and lexical aspects.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Dialect differences are an inevitable phenomenon in any given society. Though it is difficult to make a common dialect for a single language, it is possible to minimize the difficulties that may prohibit the standardization of a given language. To that end, it is fundamental to make a research of this type whereby scholars compare different dialects used in different geographical locations (Raymond, 2014).

Dialect difference prohibits the learners of different materials. For instance, the written materials prepared by user of one dialect may create misunderstanding to the user of another dialect of the same language. Moreover, when users of different dialect speakers communicate physically or through phone, each of them may use their own dialects which consequently create misunderstanding/s (Raymond, 2014). Due to differences in dialect, the Afar language has different vocabularies and accents used by members of the society in different parts of the region (Taha, 2015). Some scholars defined that the dialect speakers face various challenges in their learning (Hudson, 2011). For example, dialect speakers face challenges in learning to read in the classroom. This is because the studies are less likely to find predictable features of their dialect in text books (Hudson, 2011).

In addition, Reaser and Adger (2008) stated that African American dialect speakers have more difficulty to read because of dialect differences. In such cases, standard speakers are more likely to have an advantage over the others dialect speakers because many materials used in the classrooms are prepared in a standard dialect and students speaking the standard dialect are familiar with the sounds and vocabulary of the standard dialect. According to this idea, the difference is even observed in schools, colleges and universities. As a member of the staff of the Afar-Af and Literature Department in Samara University, the researcher has observed this fact.

During his stay for two years at Samara University as an instructor, he was able to teach Afar students who came from different areas of the Afar region (different dialect background). When they learn in the same class, some of them were not able to understand the terms used to explain the subject/subjects. This means that if the speaker knows a single dialect used in his/her specific

area, it is only the users of that dialect who gain the knowledge and the remaining dialect speakers cannot understand what he/she meant.

On the other hand, if the teaching materials are prepared by one dialect of Afar-Af, the other people who use other dialects do not understand the document. The consequence of dialect difference even in puzzle also creates endless debate among users; in the same language, different dialect users claim that their dialect deserves respect and is indigenous. Therefore, it is due to these types of debates that misunderstanding and miscommunication exist. These facts encouraged the researcher to work on the comparison of Afar dialects from phonological and lexical points-of-view. To the best knowledge of the researcher, no study had been conducted on this topic. To that end, the researcher is pioneer to assess the comparison of Afar dialects as it is the first of its type.The comparison is made among the Afar dialects used in four different geographical locations of the region, namely Kilbat, Fana, Ba'adu, and Awsa.

1.3. Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to compare phonological and lexical variations of four Afar-Af dialects. The study has the following specific objectives:

- To identify phonological variations in the dialects,
- To reveal lexical differences among the dialects,

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Research Design

The study was exploratory research to uncover new insights regarding the comparative study of lexical and phonological aspects in Afar dialects. Exploratory research is conducted to address an issue or problem where there are few or no earlier studies about a topic and previous theories or ideas do not apply (Lettyann, 2011). The methods of the research was descriptive methods. Thus, the researcher employed this design for better understanding of Afar-Af dialects. The study employed qualitative method since it was conducted to explore the variations of Afar-Af.

2.2. Study Area

This research was conducted in Afar National Regional State, particularly four towns namely, Aysaita, Ab'ala, Bidu and Gawane. Aysaita is the capital Town of Awsirasu (Zone 1) in the Afar region bordered in south by Afambo, in the west by Dubti and it is 65km far away from Samara.

Ab'ala Town is located in the Administrative Zone 2, and is saturated at the base of eastern escarpment of the Ethiopia highlands, bordered in south by Magale wareda.

Bidu wareda, on the other hand, is one of the woredas in the Afar region, which is located in Zone 2. Gawane is a town in north-eastern Ethiopia located in administrative Zone 3 of Afar Region. It is around 120km far from Awash subahkilo.

Unpublished Dialect book titled "Description and Documentation of Afar Dialect" researched and prepared by Afar Language Research and Enrichment Center (2014) indicates that different dialect speakers exist collectively in these areas. Thus, the researcher had selected the four towns based on the aboveinformation.

2.3. Sample Size Determination and Sampling Technique

To collect data, there is no determined sample of participants. However, the researcher collected data from individuals using purposive sampling technique. The researcher purposefully selected matured (variably 20-45 of age) members of selected towns. Both sex (male and female) were study participants without any exclusion criteria, except the age.

In this study, the age of participant matters (i.e. the exclusion of underage) due to that inappropriate language articulation or pronunciation probably happens on excluded age range. As a result, this factor would significantly affect the research result. The researcher used initial subsequent recordings from different people early in field session. All respondents were native speakers of Afar-Af inhabited in the selected districts.

2.4. Data Collection Instruments

The researcher employed elicitation method for data gathering and Swadesh wordlist as the question items in elicitation method. In this regard, the basic vocabulary wordlist was prepared in Afar-Af (taken from two common dictionaries of Afar-af) and short story was provided to participants to identify pronunciation of participants within sentence. The researcher used audio recorder in order to collect data from different informants.

2.5. Methods of Analysis

This study was purely qualitative research until its eternity. In first instance, the utterances of respondents of certain words were recorded using sound recorder. The elicitation from actual speech forms which is recorded from native speakers is sequentially analyzed by comparing the sounds. In doing so, the data obtained from the analyses were transcribed into Afar-Af. After the

transcription, data were coded in lines to show the difference between the dialects. Elaborated interpretation was followed to demonstrate how differences occur.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Phonemic Inventory of Consonants

In the following analysis, a tabular presentation of the phonemic characteristics of Afar language is depicted. This particularly shows the way words are pronounced, how they come out of a mouth and the acknowledgement of the current circumstances are discussed in detail.

The following chart shows the phonomic inventory of consonants in Afar-Af. Afar-Af has 17 consonant phonemicis.

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Table 1: Description of Consonants

Manner of Articulation	Voicing	Labial	Libio dental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Stops	Voiceless			T			K		
	Voiced	B		d	ɖ		g		
Fricatives	Voiced							ʕ	
	Voiceless		f	S				ħ	h
Nasals	Voiced	M		N					
Approximants	voiced	W				j			
Lateral	Voiced			L					
Tap	voiced			r					

As shown in the above table, the unique sounds that all words of Afar language have show that they are attributed to the natural characteristics. This means that, the Afar language, like other languages, have three soud processing situations like, manner of articulations, place of

articulations and voicing as shows on the above. It also shows that is where it is constructed and how it is uttered has the characteristics of making sounds.

3.1.1. Consonant Minimal and Near Minimal Pairs

According to Jones (1998), a minimal pair consists of two words that almost sound the same, differing only by a single phoneme. It means minimal pair is learned to prove that the single phonetic sound in a pair of words is contrasted.

The following lists show some (near) minimal pairs. The words are arranged in a way to demonstrate the phonological opposition between consonants that are phonemes relatively close. The pairs based on their distinctive features of voicing state, manner and place of articulation.

Example of Consonant minimal and near minimal pairs

/b/ and /f/	[bul]	‘keep’
	[ful]	‘pass’
/b/ and /m/	[o:be]	‘ to go dawn’
	[o:me]	‘became bad’
/ b/ and /d/	[bara]	‘night’
	[dara]	‘flowing water’
/t/ and /d/	[tabbo]	‘step’
	[dabbo]	‘migration’
/d/ and /ɖ/	[dagna]	‘shallow’
	[ɖagna]	‘promise’
/s/ and /ɖ/	[saga]	‘cow’
	[ɖaga]	‘abuse’
/l/ and /r/	[lab]	‘male’
	[rab]	‘die’

/k/ and /g/	[kud:a]	‘abscond’
	[gud:a]	‘abdomen’
/ ħ/ and / ʕ/	[hal:a]	‘name’
	[ʕal:a]	‘relation’

On the above discribtion shows that how consonants are compains during the exchanging each other to construct unlike words and senses. So that as showns on the above different consonants exchanges one to another from inialy, midialy and finaly to show different meanings and words.

3.1.2. Phonemic Inventory of Vowels

Afar-Af has ten vowels. Five of them are short vowels and the remaining five are long vowels. To articulate, they need to use height of the tongue as high, mid-high, mid, low and position of the tongue as front, central and backin order to describe the vowels.

Table: 2 Vowel Phonetic Charts

	Front	Center	Back
High	i		U
Mid-high		e	
Mid			O
Low		a	

All vowels can occur at initial, medial and final positions of every word.

/i/: high, front, stretched It is occurs as [i] in initial, medial and final positions.

[inti] ‘eye’ (initial)

[gita] ‘road’ (medial)

[inki] ‘once’ (final)

/u/: high, back, rounded, it occurs as [u] in all positions.

[urru] ‘bojs’ (initial and final)

[guba] ‘ground’ (medial)

[ufuju] ‘breath’ (initial, medial and final)

/e/: mid, front, stretched

[el:e] ‘on it’ (initial and final)

[ɖer] ‘tall/long’ (medial)

[meʕe] ‘good’ (medial and final)

As shown in the examples **/e /** can occur in initial, medial and final of the words.

/o/ mid, back, round

[oklo] ‘female donkey’ (inilial and final)

[bo:l] ‘hundred’ (medial)

[olo] ‘bag’ (initial and final)

As shown in the above discribtion **/o/** mid, back, round, accours at all positions of the words.

/**a**/: Low central, round, phonetically it is realized as **[a]**and it occurs in all positions of the words.

[abba] ‘father’ (initial and final)

[bara] ‘night’ (midail and final)

[fana] ‘mid’ (midial and final)

The above indication of short vowel in Afar language is an indication of how Afar-Af vowel is constructed in the existing words. That is also an indication of the places where vowels come and form in this language.

Vowel Lenghting

/i:/

In Afar-Af, the long high, front, stretched vowel **/i:/** exists at initial, medial and final positions in words.

[i:sa] ‘before’ (initial)

[si:sa] ‘dust’ (midial)

[ʕali:] ‘personal name’ (final)

/u:/

The high, back, round vowe **/u:/** it occurs in all positions.

[u:ʕ]	‘hurl’	(initial)
[ulu:luka]	‘Propaganda’	(initial and midial)
[wadu:]	‘evidence’	(final)

/e: /

It occurs in all positions of the words

[e:bo]	‘Personal name’	(initial)
[we:ʕa]	‘Flood’	(medial)
[le:]	‘Water’	(final)

/**o:/** Mid, back, vowel, it occurs in all positions of the words.

[o:ba]	‘go down’	(initial)
[bo:do]	‘deep’	(midial and final)
[yo:]	‘me’	(final)

/**a:/** high back; it also occurs in all positions of the words.

[a:kama]	‘first’	(initial, medial and final)
[ba:ɖo]	‘earth’	(medial)
[ka:]	‘he’	(final)

We can see in the above examples that Afar-Af long vowels occur in all positions in words.

3.1.3. Minimal Pairs for Vowel Phonemes

The example depicted above shows, how one vowel is place at the place of another vowel generates a word with a meaning and it is also an example that shows how it can claim a position and how the changes between them can bring difference in the meaning of a word.The vowels can occurs contrastively at word initial, medial and final positions.

/u/ and/ i/	[suge]	‘presented’
	[sige]	‘live’

/e/and /a/	[el:e]	‘at here’
	[el:a]	‘having’
/o/ and /a/	[Okme]	‘I ate’
	[acme]	‘I eat’

3.2. Stress in Afar-Af

In Afar-Af, stress occurs in the words of high tone sounds Some words which are formed some way is always takes stress in order to discriminate them.

Example: - [afa] ‘mouth’ [afá] ‘doors’ these words are difficult to differ without stress.

Table 3: Example of stress

Nontress		**Stress**	
[mo:ta]	‘male kid’	[mo:tá]	‘kid’
[gura]	‘left hand’	[gurá]	‘lowland’
[baɖa]	‘son’	[baɖá]	‘daughter’
[sara]	‘cloths’	[sará]	‘graff’
[inki]	‘once’	[ínki]	‘always’
[awka]	‘boy’	[awká]	‘girl’

Based on what the above table indicates, it shows how in Afar language, when a word is pronounced, how the tone is increased and how it is pronounced equally and how the tone is decreased. Because when the (á) mark is placed on top of the vowel/á/, the tone decreases and when the mark is not placed, the tone increases, we can notice that the mark exists in higher tones and it is the foundation of Afar language. This is not the only characteristics of a word but it is one that shows the gender of the words when written in the same way. For example, as shown in the table mo:ta and mo:á are two defferent words because of the stress. The one with the mark shows female gender while the one without the mark shows male gender.

3.3. Phonological comparison of the four dialects

To identify the speech sounds of Afar language through this study, putting the phonemes in place at the beginning was the prior work. By doing so under here presented the similarity and

differences of phonemes observed in the findings of the study in a broad detail and contrasting manner. Analyzing the responses given by the respondents during the study, four different dialects which are presented below are identified in the language. The following table shows the comparison of the four dialects by taking lexical item equivalent to the English word “earth”.

Table 4: The word ‘‘earth” in Afar-Af

No.	Dialects	phoneticTranscriptions	English Translation
1.	Awsa	ba:ro	
2.	Kilbat	ba: ɖo	Earth
3.	Ba’adu	ba:ro	
4.	Fana	ba:ro	

As indicated in table 4 above, it is observed that the word “earth” is not pronounced in the same way at the four dialect levels existing in Afar language. As it is seen under the phonemic transcription column of the above table, the word “earth” is pronounced uniquely in Kilbat dialect than the remaining three dialects. In Kilbat dialect, the last sound /r/ in the word [ba:ro] is substituted by /ɖ/ and pronounced as /baɖo/ which is unique pronunciation in the remaining three dialects.

Table 7: The word “body” in Afar-Af`

No.	Dialects	PhoneticTranscriptions	English Translation
1.	Awsa	Dagara	
2.	Kilbat	ɖagara	Body
3.	Ba’adu	Dagara	
4.	Fana	ɖagara	

According to table 8 above, the word “body” is pronounced differently in the four dialects of Afar-Af. For the same English word, Awsa and Ba’du say [dagara], but Kilbat and Fana dialect users say [ɖagara].

What makes Awsa and Ba'adu different from other dialects is that they use /d/ instead of /ɖ/. On the other hand, Kilbat and Fana dialects take /ɖ/ instead of /d/. Thus, the two groupgs of dialects slightly different sounds in a word for the same meaning. However, it is clear that the meaning of the word [body] is the same in all dialects of Afar-Af.

Phonological Process in Afar-Af

Phonological processes are rules used to simplify pronunciation of words in a language. Use of phonological processes is typically discontinued by the time the child reaches a certain developmental age. The ages by which the child discontinues the use of phonological processes has been shown to vary by languages (So & Dodd, 1995). Adults, however, may not overcome this developmental progression and continue to exhibit phonological process deviations (Selinker & Lamendella, 1980; Wei 2008).

These phonological process simplifications may include syllable structure processes, substitution processes, and/or assimilation processes. Within each of these overall classifications are numerous specific phonological process deviations; such as, epenthesis, final consonant deletion, cluster reduction under syllable structure processes; stopping, fronting, backing under substitution processes; and, voicing, labial assimilation, alveolar assimilation under assimilation processes.

Assimilations of Afar-Af

'Assimilation is a general term in phonetics which refers to the influence exercised by one sound segment upon the articulation of another, so that the sounds become more alike, or identical. The study of assimilation (and its opposite, dissimilation) has been an important part of historical linguistic study. But it has been a much neglected aspect of synchronic speech analysis, owing to the traditional manner of viewing speech as a sequence of discrete words. If one imagines speech to be spoken 'a word at a time', with pauses corresponding to the spaces of the written language, there is little chance that the assimilations (Catford, 1988)'.

According to the above definition the term assimilation usually refers to contextual variability of speech sounds, which is said to be caused by the influence of one sound upon another. It is often defined as a process of replacing one sound (or Changing some properties of a sound) under the

influence of another sound which occurs near To it. It has also been characterized as an adjustment of speech sounds to their environment.

In Afar-Af, there are some words which assimilate because of they appear consecutively during the articulation. So that under here determained some types of assimilation process from the prospective of Afar Af.

Labialization Process in Afae-Af

This discribtion shows that, some words that labialized the processing of the word construction in the Afar-Af. This is like the word ken + buḍa are two words which is compained in the processing this language rule.

[kembuḍa] 'their house'

a. /ken + buḍa/ → [kembuḍa] 'their house'
   i. Phonological process: labializing /n/ (Alveolar → bilabial)
   ii. Phonological rule:

/n/ → [m] / __ + b

Phonological representation: [kembuḍa]

b. /ken mara/ [kem mara] 'their people'
   i. Phonological process: deletion of /n/
   ii. Phonological rule
   /n/→[m] /____+ m

Phonological representation: [kembuḍa]

As shown on the phonological rule this two words are compained words. So during the processing the letter /n/ is become the letter /m/. /n/ alvao-dental and when it compained with /m/ it become deleted and /m/ be come instead of it.

c. [k^wab:a] 'your father'

/ku + ab:a/ → [k^wab:a] 'your father'

a. Phonological Process 1 : assimilation (labialization of /u/)
   Rule 1: /u/ → [w] / __ + (a) b
   Phonological representation: [kwab:a]
b. Phonological process 2: assimilation ([k] becomes labio-velarized)
   Rule 2: [k] → [k^w] / __ w + #
   Phonological representation: [k^wwab:a]
c. Phonological process 3: deletion (deletion of [w])
   Rule 3: [k] → Ø / __ k^w + #

Phonological representation: [k^wab:a]

/k/ → [k^w]

/ku + an:a/ [k^wan:a] 'you aunt'

On the above process we absorved in the Afar-f the word [k^wab:a] is originally two words which are compained by the word [ku + ab:a]. When we say this two words by to gather it can change its shape. It becomes [k^wab:a] and /u/ vowel can deleted \nd its places replaces /k^w/,Because it changes its place of the articulations which were before.

De-lateralization process in Afar-Af

Under this topic the data shows that, some words which are be came De-lateralized in the phonological process in Afar-Af. Example: in the word [ʕafar:e] 'Afar constitution' is shown how it can change its shape because of the compinatins.

[ʕafar:e] 'Afar constitution'

/ʕafar + le/ → [ʕafar:e] 'Afar constitution'

Phonological Process: lateralization /l/

Rule 1: [+ lateral] → [- lateral]

/ l/ → [r] / r + __

Phonological representation [ʕafarre]

Phonological process 2: germination of /r/

Rule: C + C → C:

/r/ + /r/ → [r:]

Phonological representation: [ʕafar:e]

As shown on the above the word [ʕafar:e] is the compinations of the word like the word [ʕafar + le]. But because of two words compination the sound /l/ is deleted and sound /r/ be came gaminated. It was lateral sounds (l) and it became De laiteralezed /r/.

Lateralization process in Afar-Af

In the belew discribtion shown some words that could be lateralized when they compain in the word processing. Example: the word [kel:a:] 'their cattle' is shown how it can change in the processing.

a. /ken + la:/ → [kel:a:] 'their cattle'

Phonological process 1: laterization of /n/

Rule 1:- /n/ → [l] / __ + l

Phonological representation: - [kella:]

Process 2:- Gemination

Rule2: C + C → C:

/l/ + /l/ → /l: /

Phonological representation: [kel:a:]

As shown on the rule the [kel:a:] is the compinatin of two different words. So that, [ken+laa] is two words that is caompain because of the word processing. During that process the letter /n/ is deleted and letter /l/ became gamminated.

Deletion process of Afara-Af

'Deletion is a process of removing or reducing a segment (vowel and/or consonant) when an affix is attached to a root or when a compound is formed by joining two components (Catford J 1988)'. This process happens in the words of Afar-Af. If two words occur consecutively, and contain vowels in word boundary, vowel deletion occurs between the words.

a. Deletion rule

/ le + abba/ → [labba] 'their father,

i. Phonological process
deletion of [e]

ii. Phonological rule
/e/ → Ø / __+ a

Phonological representation [labba]

b. vowel length and Deletion

/le + amo/ [la:mo] 'his hair'

Phonological processes

Process 1: Vowel length

/a/ becomes /a:/

Rule 1:- /a/ → [a:] / e + __

Phonological representation [leaamo]

Process 2:- deletion of /e/

Rule 2:- /e/ → Ø / __ + a:

Phonological representation [la:mo]

/ku + ina/ → [kuuna] 'your mother'

Phonological process 1: vowel length

Process: /u/ → [u:]

Rule 1: lengthening /u/

/u/→ [u:] / __ + i

Phonological representation [kuuina]

Phonological process 2: Deletion

Rule 2: Deletion of /i/

/i/ → Ø / __ + u:

Phonological representation [ku:na]

/ji + urru/ [jir:u] 'my students'

Phonological process: deletion

Phonological rule: deletion of /u/

/u/ → Ø / i + ___

Phonological representation [jir:u]

Insertion process of Afar-Af

Insertion takes place when one or more segments are added to a morpheme or a word.

/ul:a/ + /ina/ → [ul:atina]

[ul;a + ina] → [ullatina]

Phonological process: Insertion (insertion of [t])

Phonological rule: Ø → [t] / a __ + i

[t] becomes inserted as epenthetic to break the vowel sequence created due to the compound word formation as the result of the combination of [ul:a] and [ina]. It is encountered in the first morpheme (it becomes part of a syllable in the first morpheme. This is because, the geminated nature of [l:] influenced it to become its part than compared to the single nasal velar sound [n] in the second morpheme.

3.4. Lexical Variations

Lexical variation refers to the differents words and phrases we use to refer to the same objects or concepts.

Under here presented the similarities and differences of phonemes observed in the findings of the study in a broad detail and complementary approach Below here attempted to comparing how the following words are dialectically similar and differ from one to another by existing of lexical diversity.

Table 23: The word "dinner" in Afar-Af

No.	Dialects	Phonemic Transcriptions	English Translation
1.	Awsa	afḍago	
2.	Kilbat	dira:ri	Dinner
3.	Ba'adu	Afdago	
4.	Fana	afḍago	

As it is pointed out in table 23, the word dinner is exists in similar way both in Awsa and Fana dialect as [afḍago] and here we observe that the sound d found in the word [afdago] in Ba'adu dialect is replaced by the sound /d/ which is the form of /ḍ/ sound produced with the tip of the tongue curled back against the hard plate and slightly push air separating the tip of tongue and the hard plate.

But the speakers of Kilbat or Northern dialect utter the word [dira:ri] to say dinner which is totally different way the word dinner is termed in the other three dialects found in Afar language.

And from this we can infer that the words in Awsa, Fana and Ba'adu dialects resemble one another with slight variation in pronunciation when a sound in a word in one dialect is appeared being replaced with the other sound as in a sound /ɖ/ in the word [afɖago] in Awsa and Fana is replaced by the sound d in Ba'adu dialect. But some words in Kilbat appear totally in a different form that the other three dialects.

From this we can observe that there exists lexical variation among the speakers of the four dialects in Afar language.

Table: 24 the word "lunch'' in Afar-Af

No.	Dialects	PhonomicTranscriptions	English translation
1.	Awsa	satʕakalo	
2.	Kilbat	bod:a	
3.	Ba'adu	satʕakalo	Lunch
4.	Fana	sakʕakalo	

As it is indicated in the table 24, given above the slight variation in the pronunciation of the word lunch is observable due to replacement of the sound /t/ found in the word in dialects of both Awsa and Ba'adu by the sound /k/ in the Fana dialect, thus saying [sakʕakalo] instead of [satʕakalo] which is the common pronunciation in dialects of both Awsa and Ba'adu. However, the word "lunch" is termed as [boda] in Kilbat or northern dialect which is a unique and unfamiliar word by the speakers of the remaining three dialects. Thus, lexically we observe that the sound /t/ found in the word in the dialects of both Awsa and Ba'adu is replaced with the sound /k/ in the Fana dialect.

However, we observe that there a new word "*Boda"* meaning lunch which is totally a different word than "SatʕakaloSatʕakalo" uttered by both dialects of Awsa and Baadu dialects as well as "*SakʕakaloSakʕakalo*" which is said by the speakers of Fana dialect to describe the word lunch.

Table: 25 the word in "breakfast" Afar Af

No.	Dialects	Phonemic Transcriptions	English translation
1.	Awsa	ʕe:rokalo	
2.	Kilbat	mi:di	

3.	Ba’adu	ʕe:rokalo	breakfast
4.	Fana	ʕe:rokalo	

As can be understood from table 25 above, the word “breakfast*”* is existing differently in Kilbat dialect as [mi:di] where as it is pronounced in similar way in the three dialects such as Awsa, Ba’adu and Fana dialects as [ʕerokalo].

Table: 26 the word “morning” in Afar Af

No.	Dialects	Phonemic Transcriptions	English translation
1.	Awsa	ma:ħa	
2.	Kilbat	Subħi	
3.	Ba’adu	ma:ħa	morning
4.	Fana	Dibibiri	

As it is shown in the Table 26, variation is observed in the expressing of the word morning in the Afar language at the four spoken dialects levels. The Kilbat dialect Speakers say [subħi] to describe the word “morning*”*.

Whereas The Awsa and Baadu dialect Speakers term it as [ma:ħa] while the Fana dialect speakers say the word morning [dibibiri] they are saying it in a very a unique way .

Here we can observe that the word morning saying similarly in the two dialects namely Awsa and Ba’adu While it is lexically pronounced differently from these dialects and from each other in the remaining two dialects such as Kilbat and Fana dialects.

Table: 27, the word “fat” in Afar-Af

No.	Dialects	Phonemic Transcriptions	English translation
1.	Awsa	aro:du	
2.	Kilbat	Gabulu	Fat
3.	Ba’adu	aro:du	
4.	Fana	Gabulu	

Table 27 shows how the word “fat” saying differently at the existing dialect levels. The Awsa and Baadu dialect Speakers says it similarly as [aro:du] whereas the Kilbat and Fana dialect speakers says it as [gabulu] .

Table: 28 the word [aloʕo] in Afar-Af

No.	Dialects	Phonemic Transcriptions	English translation
1.	Awsa	aloʕo	last year
2.	Kilbat	aloʕo	to day
3.	Ba’adu	aloʕo	last year
4.	Fana	aloʕo	mid-day

In the Table 28 we can observe that how the word [aloʕo] is exists differently in the four dialect levels in Afar-Af. It is observed from the table 28 given above that the term [Aloqo] is used in the sense “last year” by the Awsa and Ba’adu dialect speakers Where as the Kilbat dialect speakers use it in the sense “to day’’ and the Fana dialect speakers conceive it as “Mid day”.

Table: 29 the word “divorced women’’ in Afar-Af

No.	Dialects	Phonemic Transcriptions	English translation
1.	Awsa	ħabento	
2.	Kilbat	wasifi	
3.	Ba’adu	ħabtento	divorced women
4.	Fana	ħabento	

As can be seen from the Table 29, in Afar-Af the word“divorced woman” has four different words at the four dialect level found in the Afar-Af. In kilbat dialect the divorced woman is called [wasifi] which is totally different word from the other dialects .Whereas the same word

is termed as [ħabento] in the Awsa and Fana dialect and this word is termed as [ħabtento] in the Ba'adu dialect in which the /t/is appeared after the /b/ sound in Ba'adu dialect giving rise to the word [ħabtento].

3.5. Phonological and Lexical Similarities in Four Dialects

Though the four dialects are Afar-Af dialects, the definition given in background described that due to geographical differences each community has its own accent and style. In doing so, to determine the difference between four dialects, they are compared based on phonological and lexical aspect. As a result, the study revealed that the four dialects have tight similarities though they also have some variations. In speaking of their similarity, the four dialect speakers can mostly understand one another's dialect. Thus, the study found that the four dialects inclined to similarity than the difference.

The 200 words provided based on Swedish wordlist are used almost by all dialect speakers. To mention some of them, le [le:] 'water' [ma:ʕo] 'food', [be:ra] 'tomorrow', [saʕa] 'animal', [wadar] 'goats' these all words are used by all dialect speakers. In this regard, in Afar language there are huge similarity and few differences between the four dialects.

Not always but sometimes these three dialects use the /ɖ/ at many words rather than the sound/d/. They don't have much difference phonologically rather than Ba'adu dialect that doesn't have /ɖ/ sound. So that, interms of Phonology Awsa, Kilbatand Fana dialects use the same consonants, we notice as they use all the 17 consonants which are included as Afar-Af sounds.

Lexically also three dialects are more similar rather than kilbat dialect. As shown on chapter five the tables under, 5.1 most of the lexical words are very similar in three dialects except kilbat dialect has defference from others.

3.6. Phonological and lexical Different in four dialects

When we see the difference between four dialects, each dialect speakers have their own distinctive words. Besides, the study depicted that three dialects are closely similar while one dialect is different from the rest. Ba'adu dialect differ from other dialects in the letter /ɖ/, literarily this dialect speakers do not have the sound /ɖ/.

Furthermore, the study also found that Fana dialect and Awsa dialect have difference in a few words; Fana dialect shares some words with Kilbat dialect. For example, the word [ɖagur]

‘protect’ has the same meaning and accent in Kilbat and Fana dialect. Besides, both dialects use this letter /ɖ/ in most words when compare to other two dialects (Ba’adu and Awsa dialect), though Awsa dialect shares /d/ letter in some words. But more than Awsa Fana dialects sheres /ɖ/ sounds. Most of them kilbat dialect sheres /ɖ/ sounds from this three dialects.

On the other hand, Awsa and Fana dialect use the letter /r/ instead of /ɖ/ unlike Kilbat dialect. For example, Awsa and Fana dialect use the letter /r/ in the word [bura] ‘home’ while Kilbat use the letter /ɖ/ in the word [buɖa] ‘home’. Ba’adu also uses the letter /r/ in the word [bura] ‘home’ like Awsa and Fana dialect. This shows the phonological difference among the four dialects. The study identified that the Kilbat uniquely always use the letter /ɖ/ in most words unlike Awsa, Fana and Ba’adu. So we have noticed that, the Kilbat dialect mostly use /ɖ/ sound more than others.

In the other hand the research shows that, the kilbat dailect has words that different lexically than other dialects. For example: - [alʕo] ‘last year’ [subħi] ‘morning’, [dira:ri] dinner’, [mi:d] ‘breakfast’, [wasifi] ‘divorced women’ are a clear proves that Kilbat dialect speakers are different than the other dialects. Because of this, we have seen that it uses /ɖ/ sound more than the others. They use /d/ in the place of / ɖ /and /r/in every word. Lexically kilbat dialect has more different words than the other dialect.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to compare existing dialect of Afar. In this regard, the study used comparative and descriptive research design (triangulated) to identify the difference and similarities among Afar dialects. Thus, this research discovered the differences and similarities among the four dialects spoken in different parts of Afar region.

This study most importantly identified the huge phonological variation between Ba’adu and Kilbat dialects, for instance Kilbat dialect speaker make use of the sound /ɖ/ in a given words, like [ɖi:ni] while Ba’adu dialect speaker do not use the sound /ɖ/ instead they pronounce or use the sound /d/ as in [di:ni].

Besides, when the three dialect speakers use the sound /ɖ/ with certain words, Ba’adu dialect speaker have distinct use of sound /r/ in [bura] and /d/ in [di:ni]. Simply saying, the Ba’adu

dialect speaker do not have the sound “ɖ” which implies out of 22 Afar language alphabets they use 21 sounds only.

Furthermore, Kilbat dialect speaker use the sound /ɖ/ in many words while other dialect speakers use the sound /r/. For example, in Kilbat dialect /ɖ/ is used in the words like buɖa:,ba:ɖo, baɖa while Awsa, Fan and Ba’adu use /r/ instead of /ɖ/ in the mentioned words.

On the other hand, the study found lexical difference between Awsa, Ba’adu and Kilbat dialect speakers. Some words by which Kilbat and other dialect (Awsa, Ba’adu, and Fana) speakers differ are as follow: when kilbat use the word “boda” which mean launch, Awsa, Fan, and Ba’adu use the word “satʕakalo”,

Generally, the study identified that there are lexical and phonological difference and similarities among the four dialects. The study found significant phonological variation between Kilbat and other dialects as well as lexical variation. Among four dialects, two dialects or three dialects mostly share the same pronunciation and lexical meanings (Awsa, Ba’adu and Fana) and in some words Kilbat shares the same lexical mean with Fana dialect speakers. However, each dialect speaker has unique utterance; pitch, tone and style.

4.2. Recommendation

The study focused on examining phonological and lexical variations among the four major dialects spoken within Afar society through a comparative analysis. Since this study is exploratory in nature, the researcher recommends that future studies expand the scope by incorporating morphological and semantic variations. These aspects remain largely underexplored, and further investigation would contribute significantly to a more comprehensive understanding of dialectal diversity in the Afar language.

In addition, further research should be conducted on the comparison between pure and assimilated forms of Afar-Af pronunciation to document linguistic changes and help preserve the authentic pronunciation patterns of the language. Such studies would be valuable in addressing potential pronunciation shifts and supporting language maintenance efforts.

Moreover, curriculum developers, language planners, and educational material designers should take into account the four existing dialects of Afar-Af when preparing textbooks and other

instructional resources. Recognizing dialectal diversity will help minimize communication barriers and promote inclusive language education across different Afar-speaking communities.

To enhance effective communication among Afar communities throughout the region and across the Afar Triangle, the preparation of a comprehensive Afar-Af dictionary is highly recommended. Such a resource would facilitate mutual understanding among speakers of different dialects and serve as an important reference for students, teachers, researchers, and the wider scholarly community in Afar-Af-speaking areas.

Finally, the researcher recommends that members of Afar society develop and maintain positive attitudes toward all dialects of the language. Promoting respect for dialectal diversity can help prevent linguistic prejudice and feelings of inferiority that may arise when one dialect is perceived as superior to another. Encouraging linguistic tolerance and appreciation will contribute to social cohesion and the preservation of the rich linguistic heritage of the Afar people.

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