The Focus of Teaching Geʿez Consonant Sounds in Google Newspaper

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Abstract: *The teaching of Ge ez language has been conducted in the Google Newspaper that has been published in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia; it is a private newspaper which has been permitted to be released according to the Ethiopia press rules and regulations. On the part of the column that is entitled "ማኅበራዊ ፍልስፍና" which is perhaps to mean "Social Philosophy", and it is under this column that one finds the subtopic entitled "ትምህርተ ግእዝ ብሔረ ኢትዮዽያ" that perhaps to mean "Teaching Geʿez and/or Ethiopianism". This section of the newspaper attempts to revive the language skills of-listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Based on the frequency count, percentage, and a two tailed t-test the following argument was developed. Although there is an attempt to revive the Geʿez consonant through the Google Newspaper; nevertheless, little attention has been given to some consonants, or the consonant sounds vary in type. Therefore, the trend of focusing on the consonant sounds in general is not significantly different between months of publication, and the Google Newspaper should focus on sounds based on the gaps expected learners have. Thus, the sound has appeared to show the status of the later language rather than the earliest/the ancient writing system.*

Keywords - *Focus of Teaching, Geʿez Consonant Sounds, Google Newspaper*
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1. INTRODUCTION

Although the popular tradition has yet been considered to be in all walks of life; nevertheless, the text has uniquely been represented for times to come, for that has not been contradictory and/or complex, for that has revealed/has been revealing the author's writing style/conscious effort, for example, in an attempt to revive the Geʿez Language on the Google Newspaper, for that has been helping the school to have to be in a better learning place in order to state and to preserve the tradition-the real in an effort to revive the Geʿez Language.

According to (Shemiles Mazgine: Personal Communication, 2002) the Geʿez Language has been the custodian or the source of our past, for its manuscripts have been written to reflect the language in literature and in others for the purpose of religion, medicine, mathematics, history, and other subjects, for " Our most direct source of evidence for Geʿez phonology is the pronunciation tradition, supplemented by what is known about the phonology of the Ethiopian Semitic Languages still spoken today" (Gene Gragg, 1998), or "Our knowledge of the language derives from the vast literature written in Geʿez". For example, religious texts like the Bible, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, liturgical literature, homiletic, theological, and magical texts, stories of martyrs and saints, religious poetry, hymns in honor of Christ, the Virgin, the martyrs, the saints, and angles as well as secular writings: stories and romances, legal, mathematical, and medical texts (Wolf Leslau, 1989). Thus, it has been crucial to do a research in order to access some information for oneself and

to others interested in the Ge'ez Language, for instance to unravel the mystery contained in some inscriptions.

It has been believed that the establishment for a language has been sounds that in turn have made up a phoneme, along with that makes up a word or words, then it has been to form a sentence or sentences expressing thought while the individual has been speaking or writing began five thousand eras ago.

For that matter, of course, three kinds of writing systems have been practiced, and these have been referred as logographic, syllabic, and alphabetic writing systems. For example, logographic has been in use in the old Chinese writing system, and in case of the syllabic system has perhaps been possible to find out the phoneme only, yet that has perhaps not been possible to point out both the consonant and the vowel signs at the same time, for this has possibly been implemented in case of the latter one that has also referred to be the Greek Alphabet, for its origin has strongly been related to the Greek, and then the Roman has been helping to the wide usage of the language to themselves and to the others, but it has been believed that the Ethiopia's Alphabet has only been that differ in usage/use from the aforementioned people; in fact, unlike the Latin and the Greek that have been using the " the prior syllabic system ("(Ethiopia) Writing System").

Some people argue that Ge'ez to have been originated a language from Southern Arabic since 100 B.C., i.e. before 3000 years from today around in which Yemen has presently been situated resulting from the contact in both parts of the Red Sea during the heyday to share the Axumite civilization; however, it has recently been argued to be originated around here, for some Amharic scholars have believed that the Semitic Language should have been started in Ethiopia and expanded across the Red Sea, for it has been accepted that if a form or forms of a language multiply in a small area a case in point Gurage , Sodo, Silte , etc division taken like an indicator of a long time process, or a language to broke up into and vary from variety to variety resulted from that process of an age old, for that variety, for example, Arabic here Hebrew there, and Akkadian over there hadn't been guarantying for the origin of the language.

Similarly, on the one hand this has been believed to be introduced to the Ethiopia's northern part around two thousand and five hundred eras before by the people of the Semitic Sabean from Southern Arabia. Consequently, the script/The Feedel version has been referred to be Sabean Script written first from right to left, then from left to right written in the modified and in the restricted manner ("(Ethiopia) Writing System").

The Ge'ez Language become a written language only after it look 24 of the 29(please look at Appendix I?) Sabean characters are modified 16 of them into a different look. It also took 2 additional characters from the Greek Script, namely, P and PP (the P as in Abune Petros).... Ge'ez used such a script and writing system between the 4th and 7th century.

On the other hand, great deals of the languages in our country have been the same in the look and quantity of their basic sounds. For instance, if we hadn't taken the case of Oromigna and Amharigna, we wouldn't have found that out of the 27 consonants in Amharic, 23 of them hadn't been used in Oromigna. In the same token, out of the 24 consonants in Oromigna, 23 of them hadn't been found and hadn't been used in Amarigna. If these types of fundamental resemblance hadn't been revealed between and/or among the language, the writing system that had been used by the language couldn't have also been applied by the other effectively and efficiently, for that has been practiced for so long (ibid).

Thus, it has again been crucial to do a research in order to access some information for oneself and to others interested in the Ge'ez Language, for instance to unravel the mystery contained in some inscriptions, or in the attempt event to revive the teaching of Ge'ez language on the Google Newspaper.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Etiopia is also the home of one of the world's earliest civilizations—the Axumite Civilization-whose language was Ge'ez a member of the Semitic Language Family. Traditoinal schoar divide the Ethiopian Semitic Languages into two groups: North and South. The Northern group includes Ge'ez ,Tigre, and Tigrinya while the Southern group comprises of Amharic, Argobba, Harari, Gafat, and the Gurage Languages. Leslau (1958) notes that Ge'ez , which is nolonger spoken, manifests the most archaic features of Proto-Ethiopic. Although Ge'ez ceased to be spoken sometime between the 10th and the 12th centuries, it continued to be the literary language of Ethiopia (Leslau 1988) and service provider in Tewhaido Orthodox Churches.

Although Ge'ez ceased to be spoken before nearly one-thousand years, its numerous text have been well decumentted and are still used especially in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. According to Drewen (1988) the earliest Ge'ez texts date from the 1th century of our era.

According to Gragg (1997), Ge'ez written materials may be classified into three periods. Those of the first period are the Aksumite inscriptions of Ezana some of which are non-vocalized and others vocalized. To this period also belong materials written in Greek and in the Old South Arabian Alphabet. The texts of the second period, per-1000 CE, are essentially religious. These include translation of the Bible and apocrypha, liturgical and patristical materials as well as those on the live of saints and monastic rules. The corpus of the third period, post-1000 CE, includes different geners most of which were translated from Arabic sources which in turn were translations from Greek, Coptic, Syriac and so forth. Other geners of the time were royal chronicles, legal texts, the epic type materials, as KiberNigst 'Glory of Kings' , and magical literature. Bender et al. (1976) state that the Ge'ez manuscripts written after the Aksumite Empire constitute the bulk of literature and the heday was in the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The impact of Ge'ez on modern Ethiopian languages is very significant. Apart from adopting the writting system, especially the modern Ethio-Semitic languages have a lot from Ge'ez especially in terms of lexical borrowing (Bender et al. 1976).

The concern of the present study is to examine Ge'ez language writings in Google Newspaper, particularly those which are meant to teach Ge'ez. The impetus of this research is to see the focus of attention by Google Newspaper in the teaching of Ge'ez for beginners as a way of invigorating the language use thinking that it is the source of literature for other languages such as Amharic. Ge'ez is currently serving more in churches than in any other areas. However, its revival is thought vitally important as it can serve as a base for other languages in many respects. Therefore, its objective is enmeshed with this view of examining the teaching of Ge'ez in Google Newspaper. As sounds are preliminary areas learners should master, our study deals with the consonant and vowel sounds the newspaper has paid attention to in teaching the Ge'ez Language. Hence, this study attempts to respond to the following research questions.

1. What are the foci of Google Newspaper in teaching consonant sounds?

2. Is there a difference in focus of teaching the Geˑez sounds in Google Newspaper at different times?

2.1. Significance of the Study

This study will bring to light a distinctive part or aspect of Ge'ez writing in the Google Newspaper with the intent of its revival. Besides, the findings of the research can add to the existing knowledge about Geˑez and its phonemes. Moreover, it provides some insight into the development of Geˑez in the efforts people are currently making for the revival of the language in Ethiopia.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language revitalization, language revival or reversing language shift, that is, each of these tasks is an attempt by interested parties, including authorities, to reverse the endangerment of a language (Online, "Revival of the Hebrew Language"). As Cooper (1998: 12), pointed out that language revival movement is meant to enable languages to be used for high literary culture. Languages at a stake require intervention to safeguard them from endangerment and/or total demise Schmidt (2006). A case in point is the revival of Hebrew that was almost dead that has revitalized from religious to a national language in Israel (Coulumas, 1997).

Covarrubias (1983) takes four typical ideologies in language planning: linguistic assimilation, linguistic pluralism, vernacularization, and internationalization. He views vernacularization as the revival of an indigenous language and its adoption as an official language. In language planning, government institutions, individuals or groups of individuals can be involved (Apple and Muysken, 1987). They can try to unite people on the language question in multilingual setting, particularly in cases where a minority language is in danger of becoming obsolete. They can publish books in the language they want to revive or maintain, organize cultural events in the language concerned, edit a newspaper, organize language courses etc. An example could be the attempt to revive Geˑez in which this study would also describe to arrive at what efforts have been done so far.

Can we make all languages appear in the media? This is impossible, for it had been life threatening in the recent past in Sirloin. Do we have language policy that involves endangered languages?

Amharic (Amharic: አማርኛ[?] *amar∂ñña*) is a Semitic Language spoken in Ethiopia. It is the second most-spoken Semitic Language in the world, after Arabic, and the official working language of the Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Thus, it has official status and is used nationwide. Amharic is also the official or working language of several of the states within the federal system. It has been the working language of government, the military, and of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church throughout medieval and modern times. Outside Ethiopia, Amharic is the language of some 2.7 million emigrants. It is written using Amharic Fidel, ፊደል, which grew out of the Ge'ez abugida—called, in Ethiopian Semitic Languages, ፊደል *fidel* ("alphabet", "letter", or "character") and አቡጊዳ *abugida* (from the first four Ethiopic Letters that gave rise to the modern linguistic term abugida). Geˑez that was the most developed language and has developed in literature is currently confined to functioning in churches. There is an effort being done by some scholars and proponents of Geˑez to revive it.

3.1.Language Maintenance and Revival

According to (Tsunoda 2001) a language can revive if there is determination and even sacrifice on the part of the community, support from the government, e.g., funding, good documentation of the language, and availability of human resources, e.g., teachers and experts. Although the commitment from the government and the larger community is inconsiderably low, Google Newspaper has devoted a part to teach Ge˙ez. In order to teach a language in it's entirely, focusing on its form, phonetics, semantics, etc. is vitally important. However, the researchers of this study focus on the teaching of the sounds (phonology) in the newspaper.

3.2.Ge˙ez Consonants and Vowels or Phonetics and Phonology

Phonetics is the way the sounds are pronounced. That is how the sounds are articulated. There are 26 essential and four more sounds in Ge˙ez. Studies where made where each of the sounds is pronounced, what quality they have, and how they are described in light of existing literature. A few language teacher have used newspapers from time to time, but a lot of them have not practiced so regularly in order to teach a language like Ge˙ez and others which appears to be at deaths door. There has been different literature like written in Ge˙ez for a number of years. Some of them are available in known libraries like Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) and Museums which are found in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa and a great number of them are elsewhere which need exerting efforts to collect them.

3.2.1. The Pharyngeal sounds [ʔä],[ʕä], [hä], and [ħä]

Speech sounds are divided into two major classes: consonants and vowels. In some languages there is a third classification which is important. The third major class is known as prosody that is called in some languages as tone. Prosody is the supra-segmental feature associated with phonation.

Pitch is a concept related to the frequency of vocal cord. We speak at various pitch levels depending on the kind of utterance we make. Pitch variation is controllable by a speaker. The speaker can control the speech of his/her speech. Changes in pitch are normally produced into two ways. One is by making the vocal tract tense, and the other is by changing pressure. That is the amount of pressure that you apply when you produce sounds. A tone that is a pitch the level at which you produce a certain sound. Sound is vibration. If the vibration is fast, you have a high pitch. If the vibration is small, you have a low pitch. In some languages like Chinese Cantonese could be decisive in causing meaning.

Ge˙ez is originally a consonant based written language. In other words, the consonants were the original symbol for Ge˙ez. The voweling system is a new inclusion, during Aba Sälama, in the systems of writing. Originally, the Semites used the [ʔä] [bä] [gä] [dä].

3.2.2. The Consonant Sounds

Consonants are identified by two parameters which are means of identification. These are point of articulation and manner of articulation. The former refers to the place where the sound is made, but the latter refers to the how of its articulation. This is whether it does explode or not. That is also to mean whether it is frication base or not. Phoneme is the mental conception of the sound –what one has in her/his mind.

If [b] is at the beginning of a word, it is fully articulated, for instance, in the case of Amharic word baläge, but if it is at the end of a word like ləbb, it doesn't explode, so it is a different kind of [b̥], the diacritic is used to indicate that it is a close [b]. In case of the words ʔäddis ʔäbäba, we find light [b] represented like [b̥]. In Gonder, it is pronounced like ʔäddis

Ɂäßäßa, and at this utterance you find labiodentals [ß] which is allophone of /b/ in addition to [b], [ḅ], and[ḇ] ones. So it is clear that one speaks with allophones which are varieties of a sound-the varieties one use in speech organ, or the typical sounds one has in her/his head. When they appear in words they could change their forms. That is phonology. This also appears to be true in Geʻez. The typical sounds (phonetics) in Geʻez phoneme are አ በ ገ ደ etc.

As stated above, this study focuses on the teaching of Geʻez in Google Newspaper.

4. METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from the center of the newspaper found in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. Since the newspaper had been releasing its weekly writing starting from Megabit 2000 E.C. , that had 52 newspapers yearly that amounted to be 190 newspapers up to the writing of this proposal Tir October 2013. Hence, 4 newspapers were taken by using random sampling techniques in order to examine the frequency of teaching the phonology of Geʻez in the newspaper. So, the study was purely document analysis. In the newspaper, the recurrence of consonant and vowel sounds were tallied and changed into percentage to see the focus of the teaching of the language. Besides, a paired sample t-test was also computed to see the difference of focus in different months (June and July, particularly).

5. FINDINGS

Table 1: Frequency of Geʻez Sounds in June 200 E.C.

Geʻez sounds/ Gloss	Frequency		Total	Rank order
	June 10	June 20		
አ [Ɂä]	57 (19.93%)	42 (17.65%)	99 (18.89%)	1
በ [bä]	40 (13.99%)	35 (14.71%)	75 (14.31%)	2
ገ [gä]	13 (4.55%)	3 (1.26%)	16 (3.05%)	10
ደ [dä]	18 (6.29%)	7 (2.94%)	25 (4.77%)	7
ሀ [hä]	1 (0.35%)	5 (2.10%)	6 (1.15%)	12
ወ [wä]	7 (2.45%)	18 (7.56%)	25 (4.77%)	7
ዘ [zä]	2 (0.70%)	3 (1.26%)	5 (9.54%)	13
ሐ [ħä]	1 (0.35%)	4 (1.68%)	5 (9.54%)	13
ኀ [xä]	13 (4.55%)	21 (8.82%)	34 (6.49%)	6
ጠ [t'ä]	-	-	-	-
የ [yä]	6 (2.10%)	3 (1.26%)	9 (1.72%)	11

ከ [kä]	6 (2.10%)	15 (6.39%)	24 (4.58%)	8
ለ [lä]	3 (1.05%)	6 (2.52%)	9 (1.72%)	11
መ [mä]	25 (8.39%)	13 (5.46%)	38 (7.25%)	4
ነ [nä]	24 (8.39%)	18 (7.56%)	42 (8.02%)	3
ሠ [sä[1]]	2 (0.70%)	1 (0.42%)	3 (0.57%)	14
ዐ [ʕä]	-	2 (0.84%)	2 (0.38%)	15
ፈ [fä]	1 (0.35%)	1 (0.42%)	2 (0.38%)	15
ጸ [s'ä[1]]	1 (0.35%)	-	1(0.19%)	16
θ [s'ä[2]]	-	-	-	
ቀ [k'ä]	16 (5.59%)	6 (2.52%)	22 (6.20%)	9
ረ [rä]	7 (2.45%)	29 (12.18%)	36 (6.87%)	5
ተ [tä]	25 (8.39%)	11 (4.62%)	36 (6.87%)	5
ሰ [sä[2]]	18 (6.29%)	4 (1.68%)	22 (6.20%)	9
ጰ [p'ä]	-	-	-	-
ፐ [pä]	-	-	-	-
Total	286	238	524	

The frequency of teaching the sounds indicates that Google Newspaper has devoted to teach አ (99/18.89%) and በ (75/14.31%) much. The ten highly focused sounds in June 2000 are listed as follows.

1. አ---99 (18.89%)
2. በ ---75 (14.31%)
3. ነ---42 (8.20%)
4. መ--- 38 (7.25%)
5. ረ--- 36 (6.87%)
6. ተ--- 36 (6.87%)
7. ኅ--- 34 (6.49%)
8. ደ---25 (4.77%)
9. ወ--- 25 (4.77%)
10. ከ--- 24 (4.58%)

There were also least focused sounds that include:

1. ዐ---0.38%
2. ፈ---0.38%
3. ጸ---0.19%

There were also sounds that were not taught at all.

1. ፀ
2. ፎ
3. ፐ
4. ጠ

Table 2: Frequency of Ge'ez sounds in July 2000 E.C.

Ge'ez Sounds	Frequency		Total	Rank order
	July 4	June 8		
አ	94 (21.51%)	32	126	1
በ	39 (8.92%)	10	49	4
ገ	7 (1.60%)	2	9	18
ደ	15 (3.43%)	7	22	12
ሀ	1 (0.23%)	3	4	20
ወ	14 (3.20%)	10	24	11
ዘ	3 (0.68%)	9	12	15
ሐ	9 (2.06%)	1	10	17
ኀ	27 (6.18%)	-	27	10
ጠ	3 (0.68%)	1	4	20
የ	19 (4.35%)	16	35	7
ከ	14 (3.20%)	17	31	8
ለ	28 (6.41%)	27	55	3
መ	44 (10.07%)	12	56	2
ነ	24 (5.49%)	14	38	6

ሠ	7 (1.60%)	4	11	16
ዐ	8 (1.83%)	-	8	19
ፈ	3 (0.68%)	6	9	18
ጸ	1 (0.23%)	1	2	21
ፀ	-	1	1	22
ቀ	10 (2.29%)	4	14	14
ረ	14 (3.20%)	3	17	13
ተ	24 (5.49%)	6	30	9
ሰ	29 (6.64%)	13	42	5
ኀ	-	-	-	
ጥ	-	-	-	
T o t a l	**437**	**199**	**636**	

The frequency of teaching the sounds indicates that Google Newspaper has devoted to teach ኸ (99 /18.89%) and ሰ (75 /14.31%) much. The ten highly focused sounds in June 2000 are listed as follows.

1 . ኸ --- 1 2 6 (1 9 .8 1 %)   6 . ነ ---- 3 8 (5 .9 7 %)
2 . መ --- 5 6 (8 .8 1 %)   7 . የ ---- 3 5 (5 .5 0 %)
3 . ለ --- 5 5 (8 .6 5 %)   8 . ከ ---- 3 1 (4 .8 7 %)
4 . በ --- 4 9 (7 .7 0 %)   9 . ተ --- 3 0 (4 .7 2 %)
5 . ሰ --- 4 2 (6 .6 0 %)   1 0 . ን ---- 2 7 (4 .2 5 %)

There were also least focused sounds that include:

1 . ዐ ----- 1 .2 6 %
2 . ሀ ----- 0 .6 3 %
3 . ጠ ---- 0 .6 3 %
4 . ጸ ---- 0 .3 1 %
5 . ፀ ---- 0 .1 6 %

There were also sounds that were not taught at all.

1 . ኀ
2 . ጥ

The consonant sounds focused upon in June were not focused upon in July although ኸ and some other sounds are focused in both months.

Table 3: Means and STD's of the sounds focused on in June and July.

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
June	20.6154	26	24.20591
July	24.4615	26	26.88975

The descriptive statistics shows that the The Google Newspaper had more focus in July in teaching more consonant sounds than it taught in June. In other words, the intensity of teaching consonant sounds seems to have increased. However, further statistics was computed to see if the difference were statistically different. See Table 4 for the result.

Table 4: Paired samples t-test of the teaching of consonants in June and July

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
June-July	-3.84615	14.71786	-1.333	25	.195

p> 0.05

As indicated in Table 4 above, the mean difference observed (-3.84615) was not significant, t-value being -1.333 at df=25; p> 0.05. So, Google Newspaper taught the consonant sound giving equal emphasis to the different sounds.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Google Newspaper provides prominence to some consonant sounds which differ in type.
2. Although the consonant sounds focused vary in type, the trend of focusing on consonant sounds in general is not significantly different between months.

Therefore, it was recommended that the Newspaper focus on sounds based on the gaps expected learners have.

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