

Dialectal Variation and Standardization of Kafinoonoo: A Sociolinguistic Survey in the Kafa Zone of Ethiopia

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Abstract— *This study scrutinizes the dialectal variation of Kafinoonoo (also referred to as Kafa), an Omotic language spoken in the Kafa Zone of southwestern Ethiopia. Employing a descriptive survey methodological framework from dialect geography, including guided interviews and semantic domain questionnaires with eleven native speakers from geographically varied locations, the research identifies two primary dialect clusters: a north-western group (Gesha, Saylem, Bitta, Chenna, Shisho-Inde, Gewatta) and a central-south-eastern group (Bonga, Gimbo, Decha, Addiyo, Tello, Chetta). The central-south-eastern variety has been established as the standard language for education, media, and government functions. This paper argues that the privileging of this dialect is not a linguistic inevitability but a sociolinguistic consequence of historical, geographical, and political factors. These include the region's history as the heartland of the Kafa Kingdom, the associated social prestige of its speakers, and post-1991 Ethiopian language policy. A lexicon of 52 key variations provides empirical evidence for the dialectal split, contributing to the understanding of language standardization in under-documented Omotic languages. The findings underscore that successful standardization must be grounded in empirical dialectology while acknowledging the socio-political realities that shape linguistic hierarchies.*

Keywords— *Kafinoonoo, Dialectology, Sociolinguistics, Language Standardization, Language Variation, Omotic Languages, Ethiopia.*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study:

Language is not a monolithic entity but a dynamic, heterogeneous system intrinsically linked to social identity and power. The systematic study of this variation, dialectology, has evolved from its traditional focus on mapping geographical isoglosses to a more nuanced sociolinguistic understanding that views dialects as legitimate, rule-governed varieties, challenging folk perceptions of them as corrupted or substandard forms of a language [2]. Within this paradigm, the process of standardization—the selection, codification, and acceptance of a particular variety for official functions—is recognized not as a neutral linguistic optimization but as a socio-political exercise in "variant reduction" [6]. This process is often driven by a confluence of historical centrality, political power, and social prestige, leading to the "autonomy" of one dialect and the "heteronomy" of others [7].

The Omotic language family, spoken in south-western Ethiopia, presents a critical but under-explored arena for examining these sociolinguistic dynamics. Among these languages is Kafinoonoo (also referred to as Kafa), the mother tongue of the Kafecho people. Kafinoonoo carries a rich historical legacy as the official language of the Kafa Kingdom's council of ministers prior to its annexation by Emperor Menelik II in 1897 [5].

Despite being the dominant language within the Kafa Zone today, it exhibits significant internal dialectal variation, a feature that remains poorly documented and analytically unexplored. Preliminary observations and scant prior research, such as the foundational lexicographical work of Habtewold [5], suggest a tonal system and point to its Omotic affiliation, yet comprehensive dialectological studies are absent from the scholarly record. This gap is particularly pressing in the context of post-1991 Ethiopia's ethnic federalism, which devolved language policy and empowered regional languages like Kafinoonoo

for use in education, media, and administration. This policy shift necessitates robust standardization; however, without a empirical understanding of its dialectal landscape, such efforts risk being arbitrary, politically contentious, or inefficient.

The existing literature on language standardization, largely derived from European contexts, emphasizes models of monocentric (selection from one dialect) or polycentric (levelling of features from several) development [4]. The applicability of these models to contexts like Kafinoonoo, where a standardized form is emerging organically and institutionally amidst significant dialectal diversity, remains an open empirical question. Furthermore, the factors precipitating the apparent hegemony of the central-south-eastern varieties (centered on Bonga) over the north-western clusters are yet to be systematically investigated and theorized.

Therefore, this study is situated at the intersection of descriptive dialectology and the sociolinguistics of standardization. It seeks to move beyond mere description by interrogating the causes and consequences of dialectal variation and selection in Kafinoonoo. By employing the methodological framework of dialect geography within a contemporary sociolinguistic theoretical lens, this research aims to:

1. Empirically delineate the major dialect divisions within Kafinoonoo.
2. Analyze the historical, geographical, and socio-political factors that have led to the privileging of one dialect cluster as the standard.

In doing so, this paper contributes to the broader theoretical discourse on how standard languages are formed in contexts of post-colonial language revitalization and provides an essential empirical baseline for the sustainable and scientifically-informed standardization of an under-documented Omotic language.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

The sustainability and functional elaboration of the Kafinoonoo language face a multifaceted crisis, impeding its effective standardization and utilization across public and private sectors. The core of this problem resides in a critical deficit of empirical, field-based research specifically dedicated to the language's dialectology and standardization processes. This foundational gap is exacerbated by inconsistent language-in-education policies, which have, at times, hindered the language's integration into preparatory school curricula, thereby stunting its intergenerational transmission and academic prestige.

Furthermore, a discernible lack of institutional commitment from zonal government bodies has resulted in inadequate enforcement of existing linguistic rights and policies, preventing the mandated use of Kafinoonoo in official government functions, legal proceedings, and public administration. This institutional inertia is compounded by a severe underdevelopment of pedagogical and literary resources. There is a conspicuous absence of cultivated materials to enhance core linguistic skills such as writing, reading, speaking, and listening, as well as a systematic grammar. The literary and scholarly landscape is similarly barren, with negligible contributions in the fields of Kafinoonoo literature, folklore, descriptive linguistics, and, most pertinently, dialectology.

Consequently, the speech community lacks a unified orthographic and grammatical convention, leading to inconsistencies that threaten the language's vitality and modernization. Therefore, this study is necessitated by the urgent need to systematically identify and categorize the major dialectal variants of Kafinoonoo. A comprehensive dialectal survey is the essential first step toward a scientifically informed and socially equitable standardization process, which is a prerequisite for the language's sustainable development and official implementation.

1.3 Objectives of the study:

1.3.1 The main objective:

The main objective of this particular study is to identify the major Kafinoonoo dialects spoken among Kafecho and to recommend it for public use in Kafa Zone.

1.3.2 Specific objectives:

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Survey the major dialects of Kafinoonoo across all districts of Kafa Zone.
- Categorize and group similar speech varieties into dialect clusters.

- Provide scientific findings and recommendations related to dialectology to the government of Kafa Zone.

1.4 Significance of the study:

The findings of this research are poised to make substantive contributions across academic, educational, and policy domains. Primarily, the study holds significant academic worth by filling a critical gap in the documentation of Omotic languages, a family often underrepresented in linguistic scholarship. It provides a valuable empirical dataset on Kafinoonoo dialectology, which will serve as a primary resource for linguists, sociolinguists, and anthropologists engaged in the study of language variation, contact, and change. The research also establishes a methodological precedent for dialect surveys in similar, under-documented linguistic contexts.

In the educational and pedagogical realm, this study offers an evidence-based foundation for language planners and curriculum developers. By clearly delineating the major dialect clusters, the findings can inform the creation of standardized orthographies, grammars, and textbooks, thereby facilitating more effective mother-tongue education and literacy programs within the Kafa Zone. At the socio-political and policy level, the research provides crucial insights for government bodies and policymakers. It delivers a scientifically-grounded rationale for standardization decisions, potentially mitigating inter-dialectal tensions by demonstrating the historical and sociolinguistic, rather than purely linguistic, basis for selecting a standard variety. Furthermore, by documenting the lexical and grammatical richness of all dialects, the study advocates for a standardization model that centralizes a norm for formal communication while simultaneously recognizing and preserving the value of non-dominant varieties, thus supporting both national integration and local cultural heritage.

1.5 Scope and delimitations:

This study is explicitly demarcated to investigate the dialectal variation of the Kafinoonoo language with the overarching aim of informing its standardization. The geographical scope is confined to the administrative boundaries of the Kafa Zone in Ethiopia, encompassing all its rural districts and urban administrations to ensure a comprehensive spatial representation of linguistic data. The research is delimited in several key aspects. First, the focus is predominantly on lexical and morpho-phonological variations, as these are often the most salient markers of dialectal difference and were the primary data elicited through the research instrument. While syntactic or pragmatic variations may exist, they fall outside the purview of this initial survey. Second, the study employs a qualitative, descriptive survey methodology rooted in dialect geography. It does not utilize quantitative sociolinguistic methods to measure the frequency of variable forms across different social strata, which represents a fertile area for future research. Third, the temporal scope of the data collection was the 2024-2025 academic year, providing a synchronic snapshot of the dialect situation.

Finally, while the study identifies factors influencing standardization, it does not prescribe a detailed implementation plan for language policy. Its primary contribution is to lay the necessary descriptive groundwork upon which such future implementation efforts can be securely built.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Language Variation and Standardization:

Linguistic variation is a fundamental characteristic of all spoken languages, manifesting in the frequency and distribution of variable forms [8]. While early generative grammar often relegated such variation to the realm of "performance" [3], contemporary sociolinguistics posits that probabilistic patterns are integral to linguistic competence and are central to understanding language change [1]. The process of language standardization is fundamentally one of "variant reduction" [6]. A standard language is rarely a pure, monolithic entity derived from a single dialect (monocentric selection). More commonly, it is a composite variety shaped by dialect levelling, koinéization, and the recombination of features from multiple sources (polycentric selection; [4]). This process is driven not only by top-down, institutional intervention but also by bottom-up "acts of identity" [7], where speakers adjust their speech to align with or distinguish themselves from perceived social norms. The concepts of "focusing"—the stabilization of a uniform variety—and "projection"—the identity-motivated linguistic choices of speakers—are pivotal in this context. This study adopts the position that all language varieties, including the standard, are dialects, and that the dominance of one variety over others is a socio-political outcome, not a reflection of intrinsic linguistic superiority.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: The Haugen-Deumert Model and Complementary Lenses:

To analytically frame the interplay between dialectal variation and the standardization of Kafinoonoo, this study employs an integrated theoretical framework centered on the Haugen-Deumert model of standardization, supplemented by concepts of linguistic autonomy/heteronomy and acts of identity.

2.2.1 The Haugen-Deumert Model of Standardization:

Einar Haugen's seminal model conceptualizes standardization as a systematic socio-political process involving four interconnected stages [6]:

- A. **Selection:** The political choice of a particular variety as the basis for the standard, often based on prestige, power, and historical centrality rather than linguistic criteria.
- B. **Codification:** The formal fixation of the selected variety through the development of orthography, grammar, and dictionary.
- Implementation:** The promotion and diffusion of the codified standard through education, government, and media institutions.
- C. **Elaboration:** The functional expansion of the standard to handle modern domains like science, technology, and law.

Ana Deumert's work critically refines this model, emphasizing that standards are often **polycentric constructs** shaped by dialect leveling and the recombination of features from multiple varieties [4]. She highlights the role of **ideology and conflict** in standardization, viewing it as a site of struggle between different interest groups rather than a consensual process. Furthermore, Deumert stresses the **agency** of linguists, writers, and political movements and the **historical contingency** of standardization outcomes.

When synthesized, the Haugen-Deumert Model provides a powerful lens for analyzing Kafinoonoo: **Selection** is understood as the political legitimization of Cluster B's historical prestige; **Codification** is an ongoing, potentially contentious process; **Implementation** is enabled by post-1991 language policy; and **Elaboration** faces challenges of lexical modernization.

2.2.2 Autonomy, Heteronomy, and the Spatialization of Linguistic Power:

To theorize the relationship between the identified dialect clusters, we employ the concepts of autonomy and heteronomy [7]. An autonomous variety serves as its own frame of reference and is perceived as a standardized, independent language. A heteronomous variety is viewed in relation to and is often subordinate to an autonomous one. This framework allows us to analyze the Kafa Zone as a linguistic market where different dialects possess unequal symbolic capital. The historical-political centrality of Cluster B endowed it with a primordial autonomy, transforming its geographical space into a locus of institutional power. The current standardization represents the institutional ratification of this long-standing autonomization process, with Cluster A historically heteronomous to Cluster B.

2.2.3 Acts of Identity in Post-Imperial Ethno-Linguistic Revitalization:

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's theory of "acts of identity" complements this framework by explaining the micro-level dynamics of acceptance [7]. Speakers constantly adjust their linguistic behavior to align with perceived social groups. In the context of post-1991 Ethiopian ethnic federalism, where Kafinoonoo identity became crucial for political recognition, the adoption of Cluster B can be interpreted as a collective "act of identity." This represents a projection of unified Kafecho identity that strategically draws upon the variety with the greatest accumulated historical and cultural capital.

2.3 Synthesis:

This integrated framework posits that the standardization of Kafinoonoo results from a historical process (Cluster B's autonomous status) being activated within a new political opportunity structure (ethnic federalism) and driven by both institutional selection and communal acts of identity. It provides a robust analytical lens through which empirical data on dialect variation can be interpreted as dynamic reflections of power, history, and identity rather than static geographical facts.

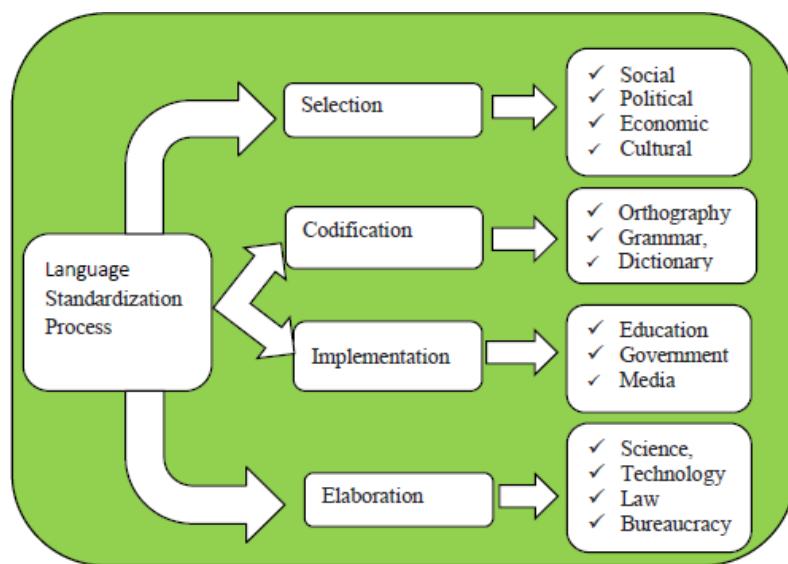


FIGURE 1: A Conceptual framework adapted from Haugen-Deumert's Model [4]

III. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a descriptive survey design with a qualitative approach, utilizing traditional methods of dialect geography adapted to the local context of the Kafa Zone.

3.1 Data Collection:

Data on dialect variation were collected through guided interviews using a detailed questionnaire based on semantic domains. The questionnaire was designed to elicit a comparable set of linguistic data across different regions and included approximately 120 items covering body parts, kinship terms, fauna, flora, natural phenomena, material culture, common activities, and abstract concepts. This instrument was designed to identify systematic phonological, lexical, and morphological variations across the speech communities.

3.2 Informants and Sampling:

Eleven native speakers of Kafinoonoo were purposively selected as informants to represent the twelve rural districts and two urban administrations of the Kafa Zone (see Appendix B for full demographic details). The sample was balanced for age (range: 28-65 years) and sex (6 male, 5 female). All informants were lifelong residents of their respective districts, recognized as proficient native speakers within their communities, and had minimal prolonged exposure to other dialect areas. They were identified through local administrative offices and community referrals.

3.3 Data Analysis:

The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative comparative methods to identify systematic patterns of lexical, phonological, and morphological variation. The analysis proceeded through three stages: (1) initial transcription and organization of responses by geographical location; (2) identification of variant forms for each semantic item across locations; (3) grouping of locations showing consistent patterns of shared variants, leading to the identification of the two dialect clusters. A comparative table was constructed to juxtapose the forms from these clusters, with 52 items selected as key differentiators based on their consistency across speakers within each cluster and their salience as markers of dialect identity.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 The Two Dialect Clusters of Kafinoonoo:

The analysis reveals a clear bifurcation in Kafinoonoo, forming two distinct dialect clusters with geographical coherence:

1. **Cluster A (Northwestern):** Comprising the varieties of Gesha, Saylem, Bitta, Chenna, Shisho-Inde, and Gewatta districts. This cluster shows linguistic affinities with neighbouring zones such as Sheka and Bench Sheko.

2. **Cluster B (Central-Southeastern):** Comprising the varieties of Bonga, Gimbo, Decha, Addiyo, Tello, and Chetta districts. This cluster forms the basis for the standardized form of Kafinoonoo used in official domains.

4.2 Lexical and Morphological Variations:

Appendix C provides a comprehensive list of 52 lexical pairs illustrating the systematic divergence between the two clusters. Notable examples include:

- 'Meat': [Meeno] (Cluster B) vs. [Qongo] (Cluster A)
- 'Forest': [Kubbo] (Cluster B) vs. [Shubbo] (Cluster A)
- 'Big': [Oogeto] (Cluster B) vs. [Oogato] (Cluster A)
- 'Are you fine?': [Wodaabeetine] (Cluster B) vs. [Woditime?] (Cluster A)
- 'Small': [Gilshecho] (Cluster B) vs. [Gilshacho] (Cluster A)

These variations demonstrate consistent differences in lexicon and morphology, with additional phonological distinctions including patterns of palatalization and vowel variation.

4.3 Discussion:

4.3.1 Historical Geography and the Political Economy of Standardization:

The hegemony of Cluster B is fundamentally rooted in historical political economy. The territory of Cluster B constituted the nucleus of the Kafa Kingdom, housing successive royal capitals (Andiracha, Shosha, Bonge Shambeto). This historical centrality transformed the region into a crucible of administrative, judicial, and cultural power, where the dialect naturally accrued symbolic capital as the medium of bureaucracy, royal decrees, and high culture—paralleling the development of standard languages in European nation-states.

This phenomenon illustrates the **spatial semiotics** of language, where geographical space becomes imbued with social meaning. The dialects of Cluster B became indexically linked to authority and tradition. Consequently, when the post-1991 Ethiopian federal system created an institutional need for a standard Kafinoonoo, Cluster B was already "pre-equipped" with the historical prestige necessary for **selection** in Haugen's model. Its standardization thus represents **path dependency**, where historical contingencies lock in a particular linguistic trajectory.

4.3.2 Social Stratification and the Elaboration of a Prestige Code:

The data reveals that standardization is not merely geographical but also social. Lexical items such as [Bitoo] (royal beverage) and [Maccilaatoo] (curtain)—exclusive to or strongly associated with Cluster B—provide empirical evidence for the **elaboration of function** in Haugen's model. These terms represent a specialized, courtly lexicon that signified social distinction. Cluster B was thus not just a regional variant but a sociolect associated with the aristocracy and state mechanisms.

This association imbued Cluster B with a covert prestige that outlasted the Kafa Kingdom itself. The current institutionalization of Cluster B represents the contemporary manifestation of this historical social stratification, where the linguistic capital of the ancient elite is converted into the cultural and educational capital of the modern state—a process central to the **implementation** stage of standardization.

4.3.3 Autonomy, Heteronomy, and Post-Imperial Language Revival:

The relationship between Clusters A and B exemplifies linguistic **autonomy and heteronomy**. Cluster B achieved autonomy as the focal point for internal and external recognition, cemented by its historical-political role. Cluster A remained historically heteronomous, its identity defined in relation to the central variety.

The 1897 annexation introduced a new heteronomy to Amharic (evidenced by loanwords like [daabboo] for 'bread'). Paradoxically, post-1991 ethnic federalism prompted a re-autonomization of Kafinoonoo from Amharic while internally re-imposing Cluster B's autonomy over Cluster A. This demonstrates that language revitalization in post-imperial contexts can re-inscribe internal hegemonies even while challenging external ones—a complex dynamic of **acts of identity** at the community level.

4.3.4 Towards a Polycentric Future? Theoretical and Practical Implications:

While the current standard exhibits **monocentric selection** from Cluster B, the significant systematic variation in Cluster A challenges the long-term viability of a purely exclusionary model. The Kafinoonoo case suggests that for languages with robust internal diversity, a **moderately polycentric standardization**—as anticipated in Deumert's refinement of Haugen's model—may be most sustainable.

This would involve firmly establishing the Cluster B variety for official, educational, and media functions (**implementation** and **elaboration**) while simultaneously recognizing the legitimacy of Cluster A variants in local contexts, literature, and oral heritage. Such an approach aligns with contemporary sociolinguistic wisdom that views standardization as the management rather than eradication of variation. Future corpus planning efforts (dictionary and grammar creation) could adopt a descriptive approach noting common regional variants, acknowledging the language's diversity without undermining the functional efficiency of a standard.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has delineated the primary dialectal division within Kafinoonoo and provided a robust sociolinguistic explanation for the dominance of the central-southeastern cluster (Cluster B). The findings demonstrate that its standardization is not a linguistic accident but the result of a complex interplay of historical geography, social hierarchy, and political developments—processes well explained by the integrated Haugen-Deumert model complemented by theories of autonomy/heteronomy and acts of identity.

The lexicon of 52 variations presented serves as a valuable empirical resource for further historical linguistic and comparative Omotic studies. The case of Kafinoonoo underscores that standard languages are socio-political constructs, born from the focusing of a specific regional and social variety that has accrued significant political and cultural capital.

Future research should expand on this foundational survey in several directions: quantitative studies measuring variable frequency across social strata; perceptual dialectology investigating speaker attitudes toward Clusters A and B; detailed grammatical description of both varieties; and longitudinal studies of how standardization policies affect actual language use in education and media. Such research will ensure that the standardization of Kafinoonoo proceeds in a manner that is both linguistically informed and socially inclusive, honoring the language's rich diversity while providing it with the unified standard necessary for its future vitality.

DECLARATIONS

5.1 Data Availability:

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study (including transcribed interview recordings, sociolinguistic questionnaire responses, and dialectal wordlists) are not publicly available due to the need to protect participant confidentiality and privacy, as per the terms of the ethical approval and informed consent. Anonymized data supporting the findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

5.2 Ethical Approval:

The research protocol, including all procedures involving human participants, was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) of the University of Bonga (Protocol Ref: CSSH/27/14/2025, Date: 28 November 2025). The study was conducted in accordance with the committee's ethical guidelines and regulations, as well as the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

5.3 Consent to Participate:

Informed written consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. No participants under the age of 18 participated in this sociolinguistic survey.

5.4 Consent to Publish:

Informed written consent for publication of the research findings was obtained from all participants. The consent forms explicitly stated that anonymized data derived from their participation could be published in scholarly articles.

5.5 Competing Interests:

The author declares that there are no competing interests.

5.6 Trial Registration:

Not applicable. This study is not a clinical trial.

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This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors including Bonga University.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS (SEMANTIC DOMAIN QUESTIONNAIRE)

A guided interview with semantic domains made between eleven native speakers of Kafinoonoo language as dialect indication:

What do the people you belong to call the following morphemes in your locality?

Semantic Domain Containing

- 1) Body parts of a man
- 2) Animal name: both tame and wild
- 3) Natural world and Geographical terms like: soil, water, river, valley, climate, forest, tree
- 4) Material name, concrete objects, etc.
- 5) Abstract concepts like: like, hate, truth, falsehoods, justice, love, etc.

The semantic domain we have used for the guided interview contains 27 pages. For the sake of minimizing the amount of this paper we only attached the more general domains here

APPENDIX B

INFORMANT DEMOGRAPHICS

| No | Name | Age | Sex | Place of interview | Informants' Profile |
|----|--------------------|-----|-----|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Worqu W/Mariam | 56 | M | Bonga | He was born in Kafa Zone Gimbo district especially in Carabba and knows the language and the culture well. His educational status is BA in sociology. He is working in Kafa zone culture, tourism and government communications affair department as culture expert. He wrote a book titled, " Gippee and Magaaye " that is about kafecho proverb. |
| 2 | Fiqiru Belay | 27 | M | Bonga | He was born in Kafa Zone Gewatta district especially in senbete and knows the language well. His educational status is BA in sociology. He is working in south nation, nationalities and people's media /FM 97.4/ Bonga branch as language editor and news writer. |
| 3 | Tadase Alamirew | 45 | M | Bonga | He was born in Kafa Zone Tello district especially in Gurguppa and knows the language and the culture well. His educational status is BA in management. He is working in Kafa zone culture, tourism and government communications affair department as planner. |
| 4 | Banchyr ga Tesfaye | 33 | F | Bonga | Was born in Chena , especially in Shisho-Inde village and has lived in Gesha for many years and knows about Chenna language area dialects. |
| 5 | Ama nuel ademe | | M | Bonga | Was born in Gesha, especially Wodo village and whose L1 belongs to the Gesha dialect. |
| 6 | Girma Gizaw | 27 | M | Bonga | Was born in Bitta , especially in Bitta-Gennet village and has lived in Bitta for many years and knows about Bitta language dialects |
| 7 | Almaz Gemta | 35 | F | Bonga | Was born in Saylem , especially in Yadota village and has lived in Saylem for many years and speaks the language well. |
| 8 | Ayalew Haile | 43 | M | Bonga | Was born in Decha , especially in Awasho village and has lived in Decha for many years and knows about both language dialects. |

APPENDIX C
LEXICON OF 52 DIALECTAL VARIATIONS (CLUSTER A VS. CLUSTER B)

| No. | Cluster B (Central-Southeastern Varieties) | Cluster A (Northwestern Varieties) | English Gloss / Semantic Domain |
|-----|--|---|---|
| | <i>Districts: Bonga, Gimbo, Decha, Addiyo, Tello, Chetta</i> | <i>Districts: Gewatta, Gesha, Saylem, Bitta, Chenna</i> | |
| 1 | Shuggiye shalligoo | Aa’iroo | A cow's feeling of being in heat (Animal husbandry) |
| 2 | Shakko / Shakke / Kooki | Shuukoo / shuukee / waarijjo | Ape (Fauna) |
| 3 | Qoccee ichoo | Qoccee gamo | Storage pit for <i>Kocho</i> (enset food) (Material culture/Food) |
| 4 | Gaxoo | Goco | Edge, border (of land/territory) (Spatial relations) |
| 5 | Gutinoo | Gunetoo / guretoo | Knee (Body part) |
| 6 | Oogeto | Oogato | Big (Adjective) |
| 7 | Giishecho | Giishacho | Small (Adjective) |
| 8 | Maa’ii hammite | Maaqqii hammite | "He/she ate and went" (Verb phrase) |
| 9 | Meeno | Qongo | Meat (Food) |
| 10 | Maqo | Qumbaro | Stalk of maize/corn (Agriculture/Flora) |
| 11 | Daakko / Shiroo | Dilaaloo | Pap, soft food (esp. for infants) (Food) |
| 12 | Gurimoo | Guremoo | Yolk (of an egg) (Food) |
| 13 | Getaa | Getee | Said (past tense verb) |
| 14 | Accecho | Accacho | Wise, intelligent (Adjective) |
| 15 | Afaafinecho | Afaafinacho | Fast, quick (Adjective) |
| 16 | Amo, amoone? | Amasho, amashoone? | What? What is it? (Interrogative) |
| 17 | Angeshoo | Angashoo | [Meaning requires verification] |
| 18 | Ariyaano / tuushoo | Ariitaano / tuushoo | Foolish, simple-minded (Adjective) |
| 19 | Bariyoo | Bareho | Bull (Fauna) |
| 20 | Beeggetine | Beqqatine | She saw (Verb) |
| 21 | Biiyete | Bijjete | Illness, sickness (Noun) |
| 22 | Ciicheyaano | Ciinneetaano | Unseen (Adjective) |
| 23 | Ciicho, gawaatoo, tungo | Qappho | To finish, to complete (Verb) |
| 24 | Diggaabeetine? | Diggeetine? | Are you fine? (Greeting/Phrase) |
| 25 | Galleto, naadoo | Galato | To thank (Verb) |
| 26 | Kubbo | Shubbo | Forest (Nature) |
| 27 | Maamo | Maanjo | Calf (young cattle) (Fauna) |
| 28 | Miimo | Miinjo | Cattle (collective) (Fauna) |
| 29 | Qaraannoo | Baanoo | [Meaning requires verification] |
| 30 | Qollecho | Qollacho | Beggar (Noun) |
| 31 | Toociyoo, gawaatoo | Toocciyoo | To conclude, to end (Verb) |
| 32 | Waayeyaanoone | Waayetaanoone | Not yet heard (Verb phrase) |
| 33 | Wodaabeetine? | Wodiitine? | Are you fine? (Greeting/Phrase) |
| 34 | Diggaabeetine? | Diggaatine? | Are you fine? (Greeting/Phrase) |
| 35 | Wodaabeetaane | Wodiitaane | I am fine. (Response) |
| 36 | Wollo | Maatoo | Leaf of the enset plant (Flora/Agriculture) |
| 37 | Wottee-wotte’ii | Wottaa-wottaqqii | Repeatedly (Adverb) |
| 38 | Worefoo | Worafoo | [Meaning requires verification] |
| 39 | Yibbaatoo | Dittoo | Speech, talk (Noun) |

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|----|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 40 | Koteechii | Kotaachii | Just sitting, idle (Verb phrase) |
| 41 | Cookoo | Bunno | To shout, to yell (Verb) |
| 42 | Aabiichenane? | Aaboochane? | Where is it? (Interrogative phrase) |
| 43 | Cuyee kexo | Qoppi kexo | Prison (Institution) |
| 44 | Maccilaatoo | — (Not attested) | Curtain (Material culture/Household) |
| 45 | Duppeto | Duppato | Ignored, thrown away (Verb/Adjective) |
| 46 | Eechi kisho | Eechi qeco | To open a beehive to extract honey (Activity) |
| 47 | Eretto / Erettiyoo | Eratto / Erattiyoo | To lend / to borrow (Verb) |
| 48 | Hawulle / Cewulle qellechi | Shawulle qellechi | "...with uncombed hair..." (Descriptive phrase) |
| 49 | Qayani | Qayalli | Don't do it! (Prohibitive) |
| 50 | Aalleb! | Aallab! | Go away! (Expression of dismissal/quarrel) |
| 51 | Ta imaa qajjite | Ta imee qajjite | He/she doesn't accept my gift (Verb phrase) |
| 52 | Ne gedaa beeба! | Ne gedee beeба! | Save it for future use! (Admonition/Phrase) |