

Article

Some Notes on Dizi Phonology

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Abstract

Dizi is an Omotic language spoken in Southwest Ethiopia. Dizi has three dialects namely Central Dizi, Eastern Dizi and Western Dizi. This study is mainly based on the data collected from the central Dizi dialect. The major objective of this project is describing and documenting the phonology of Dizi language. In the process of data collection participant and non-participant observation of natural interactions, interview with informants and other supplementary methods such as reviewing of other works have been used to achieve the intended objective. Moreover, the analysis of the collected data for the phonology of Dizi has employed the Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) (Dixon 2010, Dryer 2000, 2006). It refers to the set of descriptive notions that is commonly used in Language description. In the Analysis of Dizi phonology the previous works are reviewed. The consonant and vowel phonemes, the tone system, syllable structure of the language and the co-occurrence of consonant is examined. The existence of retroflexed and the glottal stop sounds in western Dizi and Eastern dialects and the absence of these sounds in central dialect may show the influences of the neighboring languages. In this regard, I would like to recommend that a comparative study of Dizi dialects is needed to clarify the different occurrence of sounds in different dialects of Dizi.

1 Introduction

Dizi is an Omotic language spoken in Southwest Ethiopia with three main dialects; these are Central Dizi, Eastern Dizi and Western Dizi. Aklilu labels the three dialects he studied “Adikas, Maji and Jaba” (2003: 65). However, the previous three names are based on geographical area, while the later three are based on the name towns in the Dizi speaking area. Some Dizi believe that that

those “dialects” were probably based on nine traditional Dizi chiefdoms, and the linguistic differences between some of those “dialects” are very slight. In his view, Dizi can be divided into three main dialects, the geographical areas where these are spoken. Moreover, Muldrow (1976: 605) lists nine dialects of Dizi and twenty-two geographical areas where these are spoken. This is a claim which would still need to be confirmed with systematic fieldwork. It needs further research. This research is mainly focused on the central dialects.

The Dizi people live in southwestern Ethiopia, west of the Omo River. The town of Maji, which is near the center of the Dizi area, is about 100 kilometers (62 miles) directly south of the town of Mizan Teferi. Driving from Mizan Teferi to Maji on the road through Dima is about a 170 kilometer (106 mile) journey. The Dizi’s closest neighbors are the Me’en people to the north, and t Surma to the south and west. Their languages are both part of the Surmic branch of Nilo-Saharan, unlike Dizi, which is Omotic. The current research focuses on the phonological description of Dizi.

According to the 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, which was published in 1996, the following figures for those who live in that region are given: 20,703 Dizi mother tongue speakers (1994: 163); 1,933 second language speakers (1994: 204); 21,894 in the Dizi ethnic name of the language. The Ethnologue also lists Maji, Dizi-Maji, Sizi, and Twoyu as names that have been used for the group (1994: 119). The dialects of Dizi are demonstrated based on some basic words in the table below:

Table 1: The three dialects of Dizi

East	west	Central	Gloss
bota	buda	botu	‘pape cane’
gangu	gangu	kudu	‘road’
giama	gona	giamu	‘yesterday’
?ent	?ent	?ant	‘later’
biara	biana	biaro	‘tomorrow’
tʃima	tʃima	tʃim	‘the day after tomorrow’
ʃaayiku	ʃaayiku	ʃeyik	‘lion’
tʃˀaraŋ	tʃˀaraŋ	garzu/begŋ	‘spear’
k’iyar	k’egər	k’iyaro	‘forest’
miyeŋ	miyeŋ	miyenu	‘buffalo’
liyalu	liyalu	niyalu	‘stone’
luufa	luufa	muuʃi	‘gun’

The dialectal variations may be exceeding from lexical differences but my current data on Dizi may restricted me to discuss further.

2 Previous Studies on Dizi

Different scholars have studied the Dizi language. Some of the descriptive works to be mentioned are the followings; Aklilu (1994, 2000 and 2003), Allan (1976 and 1978), Beachy (2005), Breeze (1988), Claudi and Serzisko (1985), Habte-Mariam (1982), Keefer (1969a and 1969b), Tamirat (1988), Teberih (1989) and Toselli (1939). These are the cultural, social, socio-linguistics and linguistics studies. Moreover, the Dizi classification has also been discussed by different scholars. Bender has speculated “about the possibility that part of Omotic is indeed Afrasian but that perhaps Aroid and Dizoid (AD) are not” (2003: xii). In his recent reanalysis of the Omotic data based on morphology, Bender calls “Dizi” a member of Dizoid which is a member of Dizoid Aroid group (TNDA group). That abbreviation stands for “ta:/ne” (pronouns common to the TN group) and “Dizoid-Aroid” (DA) (2003: 1-7, 299).

The controversial issues discussed in Dizi phonology is the existence of retroflexed sounds. Marvin (2005) writes that in Eastern Dizi and Central Dizi, “the retroflex consonants [ʈʂ, ʈʂʰ] seem to be in free variation with their corresponding alveo-palatal affricates [tʃ, tʃʰ]” (2003: 66). /ʈʂ/ and /ʈʂʰ/. Moreover, it is also reported in pervious works, for instance, in Aklilu (2003) and in Azeb (2017) the presence of retroflex set ʂ, ʐ, tʂ, and tʂʰ in Benchnon, Dizi, Nayi and Sheko and their absence in other Omotic languages is attested.

The use of palatalized and/or labialized consonants in Benchnon, Northern Mao as well as in the Dizoid languages: Dizi, Nayi and Sheko, is controversial. Scholars differ in their analysis of these speech sounds to determine their staus as phonemic or phonetic. For example, Breeze (1998: 5) includes py, by, my, ty, dy, t’y, sy, zy, ny, ky, gy, k’y, ʔy and labialized ones bw, gw, zw, sw, cw in the phonemic inventory of Benchnon, but Rapold (2006: 101-3) considers them as phonetic.

According to Marvin Dean Breachy (2005: 25) the retroflex sounds are treated using Aklilu’s (2003) work. He mentioned that Aklilu reports allophonic variation for /tʃ/ and /tʃʰ/. Aklilu goes on to say that he has found /ʈʂ/ and /ʈʂʰ/ with the status of phonemic in Western Dizi (2003: 66), so the data for these retroflex affricates is reproduced here. (1) a. /ʈʂon³/ ‘heart’ (2003: 75) b. /ʈʂow/ ‘cold water’ (2003: 75) c. /ku¹ʈʂu¹/ ‘hand’ (2003: 76) d. /ke³ʈʂun/ ‘spin!’ (2003: 76) e. /u³ʈʂu³/ ‘five’ (2003: 76) f. /boʃʂkn/ ‘take out soil from a hole by hand’ (2003: 76) (2) a. /ʈʂ¹uʈʂ¹u/

‘louse’ (2003: 77) b. /tʃʰubu/ ‘smoke’ (2003: 77) c. /atʃʰu/ ‘tooth’ (2003: 77). Thus, the retroflex sounds in Dizi are found only in some dialects and the sounds are not used frequently across the dialects. According to my informant Mekonnen¹ (Dizi native speaker), the retroflexed sounds in Central Dizi dialect are not found frequently but they are rarely occurred as free variation of the counter palatal and affricate sounds. Thus, retroflexed sounds are not considered in my data as phonemes. Furthermore, the voiced glottal sound /ɦ/ is not included in both Breachy (2005) and Aklilu (2003) phonemic chart, which is presented in my data. The fricative plosive /ɸ/ presented in Breachy (2005) is considered as /f/ phoneme in my data in the central dialect. Aklilu (2003) also recorded the phoneme /f/ in his phonemic inventory. The fricative ejective sound /sʰ/ recorded in the current study and Aklilu (2003) but /sʰ/ does not exist in Breachy’s (2005) analysis. The existence of retroflexed and the glottal stop sounds in western Dizi and Eastern dialects and the absence of these sounds in central dialect may show the influences of the neighboring languages. Aklilu (2003: 66) also noticed that the various dialects of Dizi differ particularly with regard to their inventory of the retroflexed sounds. In this regard I would like to recommend that a comparative study of Dizi dialects is needed in order to clarify the different occurrence of sounds in different dialects of Dizi. Concerning the vowel phonemes of Dizi I identified five vowel system (i, e, o, u, a), while Beachy (2005: 33) recorded seven vowel system of Dizi (i, e, o, u, a, i, ε). Aklilu (2003) discusses that Sheko, Nayi and Dizi have similar five vowel system.

3 Objectives of the study

Dizi is one of the least known and studied languages among the five languages spoken in Bench Maji zone. The language is not employed for medium of instruction. The languages with which Dizi speakers currently have the most contact are Amharic, Tirmaga-Chai, Me'en, and English. Amharic had major influence on Dizi during the last century because it was the language of the soldiers, traders and government workers who came to Maji. Numerous loan words have been thoroughly integrated into Dizi from Amharic. Dizi also shares a number of vocabulary items with Tirmaga-Chai, a Nilo-Saharan language. More research is needed to investigate the direction and details of borrowing. Since the Dizi people are much more likely to speak Tirmaga-Chai than the Tirmaga-Chai are to speak Dizi, it is reasonable to

¹ MeKonen is a 40 years man and Dizi native speaker who has been living there. He served as a head of the Zone

assume that Dizi has more borrowed words from Tirmaga-Chai than the other way round. However, more data are needed to confirm the fact behind.

The major objective of this project is describing and documenting the phonology of Dizi language. The young generation of the Dizi people is severely exposed to the neighboring dominant language (Surmic and the federal and regional official language (Amharic). Thus, documenting and describing the Dizi language is very crucial to preserve the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Dizi community.

4 Methodology and theoretical framework

In this study, Basic Linguistic Theory (Dixon 1997, Dryer 2006) is used to analyze and describe the data. It is a framework particularly used for grammatical description of the entire languages. Dryer (2006) points out that the theory is a descriptive theory deals with ‘what languages are like’ and the primary goal of this theory is descriptive.

The data collection in fieldworks using key informants has been carried out by the researchers in Dizi speaking area, Southwestern Ethiopia, West of the Omo River. Moreover relevant data are collected from the native speakers of the language and through reading the available literature on the Dizi language and people.

5 The Phonology of Dizi

5.1 The Consonant and vowel phoneme of Dizi

Table 2: The Consonant Phonemes of Dizi

		Bilabial	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Plosive	Vl	p	t		k		
	Vd	b	d		g		
	Ej Imp	p'	t' (d)		k'		ʔ
Fricative	Vl	f	s	ʃ			h
	Vd		z	ʒ			ɦ
	Ej		s'				
Affricate	Vl		ts	tʃ			
	Vd			dʒ			
	Ej		ts'	tʃ'			
Nasal	Vd	m	n		ŋ		
Liquids			l				
			r				
Glides		w		y			

Table 3: The vowel phonemes of Dizi

Close	i		u
Half-close	e	a	o
Half-open			
Open			

5.2 Description of phonemes

5.2.1 Description of Consonants

As it is demonstrated in the above table, the consonant phonemes in Dizi include the plosive sounds p, t, k, and their voiced counterparts b, d, g and the glottal voiced sound ʔ. The other plosive sounds in the language are ejective sounds such as p', t', k' and the implosive sound d̥ as a free variation sound.

The fricative sounds are f, s, ʃ, h, fi, z, ʒ, and ejective fricative s'. Among these sounds z, and ʒ are voiced while the others are voiceless. Affricate sounds are ts, tʃ, dʒ, tʃ', and the ejective affricate ts'. The nasal, lateral and semivowels that exist in Dizi are m, n, ŋ, l, r, w, y. Furthermore, Aklilu (2003) has identified the retroflexed sounds tʂ, tʃʂ, ʃʂ, ʒ and Beachy (2005) has also mentioned the existence of these sounds in the language citing Aklilus' work (2003). Beachy (2005: 17) has also explained that the retroflexed sounds are found only in Western dialects. However, in the current study, the central dialect of Dizi does not have these retroflexed sounds. Some speakers considered as free variation sound of their counter part of the palatal and affricate sounds in the language. Thus, we never discussed the retroflexed sounds in the consonant phonemes of this study. The existence of retroflexed sounds in Dizi needs further study. In the description of phonemes the occurrence of sounds in every position (i.e, word initial, medial, final), and minimal pair contrast are means of identifying phoneme in the language. Thus, the following examples demonstrate the occurrence of phonemes at various word positions.

(1)

/p/ voiceless bilabial stop occurs word initial and medial position

hopo	'he sighed'
sapm	'over'
piala	'malaria'

/f/	voiceless labiodental fricative occurs elsewhere
fook'u	'floor'
kafo	'refuse'
kutʃkuf	'type of spider'
/b/	voiced bilabial stop occurs elsewhere
tʃ'ubu	'father'
gob	'smoke'
kubm	'place/space'
/d/	voiced alveolar stop occurs elsewhere
kudu	'child'
gaad	'road'
yedn	'group work'
bals	'windy'
/t/	voiceless alveolar stop occurs elsewhere
kuutu	'ten'
kutt	'leather'
bottu	'on the road'
taaso	'give'
/p'/	bilabial ejective stop occurred word initial and medial position
p'aso	'disrespect'
p'irp'ar	'scattered'
p'it'ik'p'at'ik'	'reflect repeatedly'
/t'/	ejective alveolar stop occurs word initial and medial position
t'aafo/d'aafo	'sew'
t'urumo	'contract'
t'iyamo'/diyamo	'suck'
p'it'ik'p'at'ik'	'reflect repeatedly'

/t'/ is used frequently in central dialect which seems to be the standard one. The sound /d/ is used in west and east dialect. It can be used as a free variation in the language.

(2)

/k'/ velar ejective stop occurs word initial and medial position

k'udi	'cover'
k'aatfu	'ant'
k'otfi	'itch'
p'it'ik'p'at'ik'	'reflect repeatedly'

/k/ voiceless velar stop occurs elsewhere

buko	'hen'
?uuk	'he sews'
?aakŋ	'uncle'
kuutu	'ten'

/g/ voiced velar stop occurs elsewhere

təgo	'stick'
guig	'went'
t'aagŋ	'farm'

/ʔ/ glottal stop occurs word initial and medial position

?ina	'we (two)'
?inu	'we (three or more)'
ya?aŋ	'take'

/ts/ voiceless alveolar affricate occurs elsewhere

tsanu	'forehead'
?ubtso	'crawl'
?ints	'to heavy'

/tʃ/ voiceless post-alveolar affricate occurs elsewhere

tʃakal	'siting tool'
kutʃu	'hand'
guutʃ	'additional'

/tʃ'/ post-alveolar ejective affricate occurs word initial and medial position

tʃ'ankz	'yellow'
daatʃ'i	'worm'

/tsʼ/ alveolar ejective affricate occurs word initial and medial position

tsʼimo	‘groan’
giitsʼu	‘fiber’
tsʼaanis	‘black’

/dʒ/ voiced post-alveolar affricate occurs elsewhere

dʒob	‘horizontal’
dʒizʒo	‘fed up’
dʒadzim	‘confuse’

/s/ alveolar fricative occurs elsewhere

sarbm	‘elder’
tu:su	‘seven’
darsn	‘star’
dass	‘slowly’

/sʼ/ alveolar fricative ejective occurs elsewhere

sʼabtu	‘disease/illness’
sʼasʼo	‘bind’
gumsʼ	‘barking of tiger’

/ʃ/ post-alveolar fricative occurs elsewhere

ʃadnz	‘long’
ʔuʃko	‘call’
ʃorʃi	‘victory’

/h/ glottal fricative occurs word initial and medial position

haru	‘mule’
tsehi	‘flea’
nuhŋ	‘hyena’

/z/ voiced alveolar fricative occurs elsewhere

zuru	‘relative’
guzdu	‘Authority’
yilz	‘small’

/ʒ/ post-alveolar voiced fricative occurs elsewhere

ʒufi	‘bat’ (Beri dialects)
duʒi	‘maize’
ʔiʒ	‘she’
tʃʼiliʒ	‘green’

/fi/ glottal voiced fricative occurs word initially

fīaa	‘this’
fīaaki	‘those’
fīeyik	‘lion’

The voiced glottal sound /fi/ considered as a word phoneme in the language but it is found word initially in my data it is not found in other position.

(3)

/m/ bilabial nasal occurs elsewhere

mamo	‘adapt’
marmisi	‘denial’
kubm	‘four’

/n/ alveolar nasal occurs elsewhere

naaru	‘wind’
kunu	‘great grandfather’
yatn	‘fox’

/ŋ/ voiced velar nasal occurs elsewhere

ŋnaŋ	‘my’
gaŋgu	‘road/way’,
diŋ	‘circle’

/r/ voiced alveolar flap occurs elsewhere

ruzu	‘rice’
guru	‘empty house’
kuur	‘tree type’

/l/ voiced alveolar lateral approximant occurs elsewhere

loka ‘neck’

kulul ‘donkey’

?aal ‘fire’

/y/ voiced palatal approximant occurs elsewhere

yaab ‘human being’

guybab ‘farm owner’

day ‘bow’

/w/ voiced bilabial approximant occurs elsewhere

woli ‘cutter’

wowtu ‘campaign’

bow ‘liver’

A minimal pair or close pair consists of two words with sounds that are very similar but have different meanings. This may help to determine the status of the phoneme in a language. The main objective of the arrangements of the following examples is to demonstrate the sound contrast between consonants that are related phonetically. Some of the word pair contrasts are arranged based on the parameter of their voice difference. The followings are some examples of minimal pairs of consonants in Dizi.

(4)

/p/ versus /f/

tiifm ‘disseminate’

tiipm ‘higher place’

/p/ versus /b/

hopo ‘he sighed’

kobo ‘he takes’

siibm ‘needle (big)’

tiipm ‘uphill’

/d/ versus /t/

tumu	'lake'
dumu	'metal'
taabo	'relieved'
daabo	'process of potter'

/s/ versus /z/

sogo	'he sleeps'
zogo	'extended'

/y/ versus /w/

wulu	'smoking gourd'
yelu	'land/earth'
wɔŋgo	'sense of vomit'
yɔŋgo	'was depressed'

/t/ versus /tʰ/

tifo	'disseminate/distribute'
tʰafo	'patch'
turo	'plugged'
tʰuro	'he rolls'

/n/ versus /m/

kumu	'neck'
kunu	'the grandfather of father/great grandfather'
maro	'a kind of decor'
naro	'to smell'

/z/ versus /ʒ/

daazu	'enset plant'
dazu	'the gift of first product to the chief'

/ʃ/ versus /tʃ/

ʃano	‘repeat/ again’
tʃano	‘break’
ʃetʃo	‘put on light’
tʃetʃo	‘looking after’

/tsʰ/ versus /tʃʰ/

giitsʰu	‘fiber’
totʃʰu	‘manure’ (east west) totʃu (Central Dizi)

/ts/ versus /tʃ/

ʔints	‘to heavy’
ʔintʃ	‘wood/tree’
ʔintso	‘become heavy’
ʔintʃo	‘Demolition’

/l/ versus /r/

naaru	‘wind’
niyaalu	‘stone’
narmo	‘become windy’
naalum	‘become faint’

/ʃ/ versus /ʒ/

kaaʒ	‘beard’
kaaʃ	‘plough’

/k/ versus /kʰ/

kudu	‘road/way’
kʰudi	‘cover’
kuutu	‘leather’
kʰutu	‘right’

/k/ versus /g/

kobu	‘hen’
gobu	‘place/space’

/ʔ/ versus /g/

ifi	‘they’
gifi	‘to pul’

/n/ versus /ŋ/

tʃonu	‘abdomen/heart’
tʃoŋi	‘lyre’

5.2.2 The Description of Dizi Vowels

In Dizi there are five vowel systems which have their long vowel counterparts. The Dizi vowels are described and demonstrated with at various word positions as shown below:

(5)

/i/, close front vowel, examples:

biz	‘grass’
tʰiyamo	‘suck’
ʔii	‘house’

/e/, half-close front vowel, examples:

bekn	‘to drink’
heri	‘bell’
kʰetʃʰo	‘be cold’

/a/, open central vowel, examples:

kʰayo	‘rise up’
ʔalo	‘sit’
naru	‘air’

/o/, half close back vowel, examples:

boʔow	‘liver’
hoŋ	‘lung’
koso	‘breath’

/u/, close back vowel, examples:

tʃʰudu	‘saliva’
gubo	‘jump’

The Dizi Vowel minimal pairs are demonstrated in this section. The main objective of the arrangements of the following examples is to demonstrate the sound contrast between vowels that are related phonetically. Examples:

(6)

/u/ versus /o/

tokku	‘mud’
tukku	‘gourd’

/e / versus /i/

gibo	‘chaise’
ʔebo	‘think’

/o/ versus /a/

ochu	‘brother’
acho	‘shortage’

5.3 Supra-Segmental Features

5.3.1 Consonant Clusters and Germination

In the language consonant cluster and gemination of consonants are occurred in Word medial and final positions. The maximum number of consonants cluster is three or more in both medial and final positions. However, it is not exceed four based on my data. The following examples show the occurrence of consonant sequence in the language.

(7)

a.	bongu	‘barely’
b.	hownsu	‘assistant’
c.	hownsmo	‘unite’
d.	damkr	‘stability’
e.	gabm	‘association’
f.	ʃazhnz	‘bright’

As can be seen in the above examples there is no word initial consonant sequences. Moreover, there are two, three and four sequence of consonants in both word medial and word final positions. Concerning the sonority of consonants

sequence it can be rising or falling in both words medial and final positions. Consider the following examples:

(8)

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|---------------|
| a. | botku | ‘baboon’ |
| b. | hirkiŋ | ‘expression’ |
| c. | bongu | ‘barely’ |
| d. | ebmbaab | ‘careful’ |
| e. | dahn | ‘poverty’ |
| f. | kəydn | ‘destruction’ |
| g. | g ^y amt | ‘evening’ |
| h. | gabmt | ‘partial’ |

As we have seen in the above examples both the rising and falling sonority sequence is occurred as we compared examples (c and d), and (g and h) above.

Furthermore, as we mentioned earlier the geminate consonants are occurred word medially and word finally. None of them occurred at word initial position. Consider the following examples:

(9)

- | | | |
|----|--------|----------------|
| a. | tokku | ‘mud’ |
| b. | bezz | ‘hive’ |
| c. | beezzo | ‘planted’ |
| d. | tukku | ‘gourd’ |
| e. | deybb | ‘conservation’ |

Most of the consonant phonemes of Dizi have their geminate counterpart. However, due to time and data limitation I am not exhaustive to identify the entire consonant that can be geminated or not in the language.

5.3.2 Vowel Length

As we discussed so far Dizi has five vowel systems with their long counterparts. The followings are examples of vowel length contrast in the language.

Vowel length

(10)

/a/ versus /aa/

babu	‘father’
baabu	‘lord’
baru	‘dagusa’
baaru	‘adult’

/u/ versus /uu/

dufu	‘pack saddle’
duufu	‘sorrow’
tʃ ^h ubo	‘smoked’
tʃ ^h uubo	‘squeeze’

/i/ versus /ii/

tir	‘to throw’
tiir	‘shadow’
biz	‘grass’
biiz	‘star’

/o/ versus /oo/

doolu	‘gourd’
dolu	‘anus’
kolu	‘knee’
koolu	‘a kind of lazy person’
bottu	‘pumpkin’
bootu	‘soil’

/e/ versus /ee/

ebm	‘concentration’
eebm	‘program’

5.3.3 The type and patterns of Tone

Concerning the tone system of Dizi, Aklilu (2003) and Beachy (2005) agreed the language has three tonal systems (i.e, high, low and level). Beachy further argues that he found contour tone in the language. However, in my data and analysis I identified two tones (i.e, high and low tone) at least in the Central dialect. We further noticed that in Dizi, there are lexical and grammatical tones. Beachy (2005: 51) also pointed the existence of grammatical tone with one example. We demonstrated the lexical and grammatical tone in the language with specific examples below:

(11)

Lexical Tone		Tone pattern
a.	fi'a'y 'water'	HH
b.	fiay 'ear'	LL
c.	gəli' 'stick'	LH
d.	gə'li 'head'	HL
e.	go'nu 'tree type'	HL
f.	gonu' 'bath'	LH
g.	tu'su 'pillar'	HL
h.	tusu' 'seven'	LH
i.	ko'lu 'knee'	HL
j.	kolu' 'cultural music'	LH

Grammatical tone is the distinction pitch level which marks contrast in grammatical features such as tense, aspects, case, persons etc. In Dizi the grammatical tone marks persons as in example (a, b, c and d) and marks tense as in example (e and f) below:

(12)

Grammatical Tone pattern		
a.	ʔiŋbab 'my father'	LL
b.	ʔi'ŋbab 'our father'	HL
c.	ʔabab 'your father'	LL
d.	ʔa'bab 'his fathrer'	HL
e.	ti'yez 'that he will go'	HL
f.	tiyez 'that he went'	LL

5.4 Syllable Structure

A syllable that has a coda is known as closed syllable but if it doesn't have coda is open syllable. Dizi has both closed and opened syllables. The syllable type in Dizi demonstrated below:

(13)

CV	example	du.ru	'cat'
CVC	example	gob	'space'
CVV	example	duu	'rodent'
CVCC	example	kubm	'four'

Concerning the co-occurrence of phoneme in Dizi, Aklilu (2003) discussed that the two liquids (l, r) in Dizi are not occurred at word initial position. However, in my analysis of consonant phoneme in the language one of the liquid /l/ is occurred word initially while the other liquid sound /r/ also found in borrowing word as shown in in the following examples. Example:

(14)

ruzo	'rice'
loka	'neck'

In the above examples the first example (14) is a borrowed Amharic word which is commonly used in the community of Dizi, while the second example is a Dizi word used in daily spoken.

6 Conclusions

Dizi is an Omotic language spoken in Southwest Ethiopia with three main dialects; these are Central Dizi, Eastern Dizi and Western Dizi. This study mainly focused on the Central Dizi dialects. The language is not employed for media of instruction. The major objective of this project is describing and documenting the phonology of Dizi language. The young generation of the Dizi people is severely exposed to the neighboring dominant language (Surmic and the federal and regional official language, Amharic). Thus, documenting and describing the Dizi language is very crucial to preserve the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Dizi community. In the process of data collection participant and non-participant observation of natural interactions, interviewing of informants, focus group discussions and other

supplementary methods such as reviewing of other works have been used to achieve the intended objective. Moreover, the analysis of the collected data for the phonology of Dizi has employed the Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) (Dixon 2010, Dryer 2000, 2006). In the Analysis of Dizi phonology the previous works are reviewed. The consonant and vowel phonemes, the tonal system, syllable structure of the language and the co-occurrence of consonants is examined. The central dizi dialect contains 30 consonant phonemes and five vowels. All the five vowels have their long counterparts. It has lexical and grammatical tone with low and high tone contrast. There is consonant germination at word medial and final position. The consonants cluster also occurred at word medial and final position. In both cases neither geminated consonant nor cluster of consonants appeared word initially.

In the analysis of consonant phonemic inventory, the retroflex sounds in Dizi are found only in some dialects and the sounds are not used frequently across the dialects. According to my informant Mekonnen (native speaker) the retroflexed sounds are not found in Central Dizi dialect of the language. However, he noticed that they are rarely occurred as free variation of the counter palatal and affricate sounds. Thus, we did not consider retroflexed sounds in the current data as a phoneme. Furthermore, in both Breachy (2005) and Aklilu (2003) phonemic chart the voiced glottal sound /ɦ/ is not included, which is presented in my data. The fricative plosive /ɸ/ presented in Breachy (2005) is considered as /f/ phoneme in the central dialect of my data. Aklilu (2003) also recorded the phoneme /f/ in his phonemic inventory. The fricative ejective sound /sʔ/ is treated in the current study and Aklilu (2003) but /it does not exist in Breachy's (2005) work. As we have been discussed so far we noticed that the existence of retroflexed and the glottal stop sound in western and Eastern dialects. However, the retroflexed sounds are absence in in central dialect. The existence of retroflexed sounds in eastern and western dialects may be due to the influence of the neighboring languages. Aklilu (2003: 66) also noticed that the various dialects of Dizi differ particularly with regards to the inventory of the retroflexed sounds. In this regard I would like to recommend that a comparative study of Dizi dialects is needed to clarify the different occurrence of sounds in different dialects of Dizi.

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