A Minute on the

Workshop on Developments and Standardization of Guragina

Organizers: HwU and AAU

June 9-10/2014

Welqite Administrative Mini-Hall, Welqite

Dr Fekede Menuta introduced the overall aims of the workshop. He declared that the workshop is organized by Addis Ababa University (AAU), Hawassa University (HU) in collaboration with University of Oslo. Meanwhile, Dr Fekede invited Ato Kifle Lemm the Gurage Zone v/administrator and Ato Kedir Abrar the head of Gurage Zone culture and tourism to formally open the workshop and deliver speech about the program. The two officials particularly focused on the fact that the Gurage language has not yet been used for any institutional purposes including functional literacy. They question that "when would our children learn with their language (L1), and how would embark on to it is possible" was a question. Finally, Ato Kifle Lemma officially opened the workshop.

Then after, Dr Ronney Meyer welcomed the participants, and said NORHED project has created relation on science, technology, and the education sector. The aim of the project is increasing and improving man power in universities (AAU and HU) and in areas where language resources are highly prevailed. Dr Ronney disclosed that the project has been named as 'language and linguistics capacity building …" To implement the program, different sites have been identified: Gurage Zone is one of these linguistic area. Besides, the program has projected its coverage in language and language related problems.

Project Teams of the Group:

Main researchers in Semitic Group are Professor Baye Yimam (Addis Ababa University-focus on Amharic but not exclusively as his presentation on Welkite was more general), Professor Lutz Edzard (Oslo University- on Semitic languages), Dr. Ronney Meyer (Addis Ababa University - focus on Guragina) and Dr. Fekede Menuta (Hawassa university-focus on Guragina). We have

also a cooperative researcher Dr. Fikre Gebrekidan (Mekele University-focus on Tigrinya). The Semitic language group has three research teams:

- Baye Yimam (Professor) – AAU
- Professor Lutz Edzard (Professor) -OU
- Fekede Munota (Dr)   -   HU
- Ronney Meyer   (Dr)   - AAU
- Fikiru G/Kidan   (Dr)   - MU

This research team works on the, Amharic languages focused on dialects of Amharic, Gurage languages (dictionary or lexicography, primes, and proverbs), and Tigregna language respectively. In the corpus planning, there is a need to include the Muher language. The project will stay only for five years.

Dr Fekede, the organizer, has given emphasis on the orthography of the Gurage languages. He has also given information how and what pertinent issues will be included in the entire work.

Generally, the main issues to be accomplished in the NORHED-AAU-HU partnership between 2014-2018 in Gurage are summarized as follows:

- Familiarizing Gurage orthography
- Primers writing
- Piloting the orthography at sample setting and domain
- Helping in status and corpus planning
- Possible inclusion of a new shapes in computer key boards (developing application)
- Writing grammar for Muhir and Gumer varieties- the rest are already written or are being written by PhD fellows in AAU- a few are part of this same project
- Developing corpus, which may help for text writing and archiving
- Carry out four more workshops-one per year to build capacity of those teachers, language experts and journalists working with Guragina.
- Publishing prier, articles and books
- Other linguistic works which might be priority to the Gurage community
- Training language experts (up on competition) in MA and PhD programs.

The participants for PhD already recruited, but for the MA there are rooms.

Question 1: by Ato Tsfaye Goyte- Manager of Gurage cultural center "when will be our languages is a written language?" and "How we bring Gurage languages be a language of education, science, and day to day communication?" He further raised that studying gurage languages individually will lead to different thinking that may not be solved when it stays long.

Answer: By Dr Fekede Munota

1. Because the project is very small in size
2. We have done contrasting studies on major Gurage languages

Dr Fekede adds that the question raised was found very relevant, but it would be impossible to carry it out under this project. Ato Bahiru adds that the project could be taken as a stepping stone to the one we plan to do tomorrow under a large scale project. In the same token, the **other participant** did start his speech appreciating the organizers who have taken the initiative. Providing due attention, he capitalize that all the concerned body has to be included as part of the problem at hand. He further says that we have to give much more information about the significance of the program.

On what has been said, Dr Ronney added that besides the status quo at hand we have to know all possible alternatives for further implementation. Regarding the time it takes to implement and the procrastination to embark on the entire work, Dr Fekede replied this has not to do with our overall project work.

Presentation by: Professor Baye Yimam:

"Language Acquisition, Education, and Development"

Professor Baye has given emphasis on three pertinent issues: language acquisition, education, and the contribution of education for development.

Language Acquisition- How children acquire language? No one has been born with language. No one teaches children language. They are born being human, not having the languages of their parents. Then after, they become social being. For example, a child becomes Kistane because of the language Kistane. They acquire it from the society where they live. Language is an

instrument and mean of expression. Hence, knowing one's first language is technically described as language acquisition. There is an apparent transition from human creator to social member in this language acquisition process.

Though there is a possibility to deny other manifestation of identities, it is uncommon to deny the language-embedded identity if once mastered. If you once acquire language, you cannot separate it from you; it is a mean of expressing and confirmation of once social identity. Language acquisition does not include deaf people. For this reason, instead of saying language acquisition it is better to name it as first language.

Among anything else, it is language that has to be known primarily. The reason is that language is a tool for all knowledge that we possibly acquire through education. Knowing language is ability by itself. Language is also a tool for education which is a social ability. A person may have duality in terms of a social member. We are generally what we speak. Language is as old as the field of linguistics.

Education: what is education? To begin with, there is always something which is unknown at all. If we make it vivid and clear that unknown thing, we call it education. Education is widely known as a social ability. The instrument that we use to make education clear is language. If the unknown concept is explained with the language that can be already known, then it is called education. Therefore, first language is a best one to bring education into existence.

Development: why for education? Education means being freed from poverty, hatred, free from ignorance. Education is a means to declare freedom. The reason is that a person who has education has a better choice than the one who has no education. Development is a collection of many things: brain, economy, social diversity…etc. Development has started from brain. The mother of all development is education. It is difficult to change one's brain however it is inevitable because it is a base for all development.

Recommendations and Questions:

Dr Fekede has appreciated the presentation of Professor Baye. He further said that once we understand it, we have to carry it out into real life situation since we cannot be out of it. It is also

been said that had education been given by Gurage language there would have been more awareness, which we seek currently, about the language and its social role.

Generally the following questions were raised to Professor Baye:

1. Can we substitute language acquisition and functional literacy by 'acquisition' alone?
2. How come people basically speak language where they are exposed?
3. Relatively speaking, does education make us narrow-minded or broad-minded?
4. How can we bring Gurage language into standardization?

Reponses from the stage:

- Yes, it is possible.
- There is a gift from God.
- A social being may be a prisoner, but his brain never ever is prisoner of anything.
- Decision by discussion coupled with principles and theories of linguistics science.

Presentation by Fekede Menuta (PhD)

"Current development in the Orthography of Guragina"

1. Principles in Orthography development

Structural linguists also discovered an abstract system of a sound called a phoneme and developed principles of identifying phonemes. The principles include: phonetic similarity, complementary distribution, contrast and free variation. The concepts of these principles are elaborated as follow:

1.1. Criteria for identification of Phoneme

i. If two or more **phonetically similarity** sounds occur in **complementary distribution** (in exclusive environment), they are **allophones** or variations of the same sound.

ii. When two or more sounds occur in **identical environment** or positions and bring **meaning difference**, then they are different **phonemes;** hence, each of them is represented in the writing system of a language.

iii.   Two or more sounds which might be **phoneme in one context** yet may **not cause meaning difference** are free variants. For instance, in Amharic words /**t'əbəl**/ and /**ts'əbəl**/ 'holly water', the sounds /t'/ and /ts'/ are in free variation yet these sounds can contrast with other sounds of Amharic as in /**t'ɨl**/ 'conflict' and /**tɨl**/ 'worm' in which /t'/ and /t/ constitute minimal pairs; and similarly in /**ts'əbaj**/ 'conduct' and /**təbaj**/ 'pest' the sounds /ts'/ and /t/ constitute minimal pairs.

These principles apply both to vowel and consonant sounds of a language and such principles are important because orthography development is often based on phonemes (contrasting sounds) and not on allophones

1.   **2. Principles in Representing phonemes:**

Principle 1: Every distinctive /contrasting/ sound in a language should be represented by one and only one letter or shape.

This principle will have two **advantages**:

a) There will not be an unrepresented sound in the language,
b)   It will avoid over representation hence secure unique read- off

The problem with this principle is that there are exceptions in some language for there are what we call archiphonemes in which the same sound represents two distinctive ones.

Principle 2: Sounds which are not distinctive, that do not qualify the status of phoneme, should not be represented.

In other word, sounds should have contrastive functions; hence, bear meaning differences. According to this principle, the labialized sounds in Amharic might be avoided from orthography as they are predictably found, that is, only after rounded vowels.

The **advantage** of this principle is that it helps to minimize letters of a language that may appear in writing system of a language hence maintaining the principle of economy which shall be discussed below.

The problem with this principle, however, is that some linguists argue that phoneme is too abstract and some phonetic features, such as labialization as in Amharic should appear in writing

in order to maintain phonetic reality. This is rejected by others who claim phonetic reality is automatically recognized by native speakers of a language.

Principle 3: Free variants will have different representations as far as they have phonemic status in another context.

1.3. Constraints on phonemic principles:

Lass, (1984:25) provides the following overall constraints imposed on sound descriptions: simplicity, symmetry and pattern.

1. **Simplicity**: "Make system as simple as possible: **minimize phoneme numbers, types**, etc., i.e. take the greatest advantage possible of predictability of realization, and use rules to minimize units" (Lass, 1984:25). This principle has to do with economy of phonemes that represent sounds.

2. **Symmetry**: "make system as symmetrical as possible" (Lass, 1984:25). This helps in identifying parallel structures. For instance, if language has an implosive in bilabial position, we may expect that similar sounds may occur in alveolar and velar position.

3. **Pattern**: to achieve simplicity and symmetry, "**get maximum mileage out of systematic regularities of all kind** (Lass, 1984:25).

Using the specific phonemic principles and general constraints, we can draw the following two basic conclusions for alphabet representations:

1. Every contrasting sound should be represented only by one shape in writing system and none distinctive or meaning bearing sounds should be avoided from being represented in orthography to maintain **simplicity**.
2. The orthography of a language should be **patterned**, that is, should be regularized in shape, pronunciation, etc. Patterning in a way enables symmetry. It facilitates learning, offers speed in shaping sounds, and provides maximum memorization and /or retention.
3. Economy: 1) in number of phonemic inventory

                   2) in number of grapheme used to represent a single phoneme.

	ä	u	i	a	e	ï	o
	አ	ኡ	ኢ	ኣ	ኤ	እ	ኦ
b	በ	ቡ	ቢ	ባ	ቤ	ብ	ቦ
s	ሰ	ሱ	ሲ	ሳ	ሴ	ስ	ሶ
ʃ	ሸ	ሹ	ሺ	ሻ	ሼ	ሽ	ሾ
k	ከ	ኩ	ኪ	ካ	ኬ	ክ	ኮ
kʲ	ኸ	ኹ	ኺ	ኻ	ኼ	ኽ	ኾ
l	ለ	ሉ	ሊ	ላ	ሌ	ል	ሎ
z	ዘ	ዙ	ዚ	ዛ	ዜ	ዝ	ዞ
ʒ	ዠ	ዡ	ዢ	ዣ	ዤ	ዥ	ዦ
d	ደ	ዱ	ዲ	ዳ	ዴ	ድ	ዶ
dʒ	ጀ	ጁ	ጂ	ጃ	ጄ	ጅ	ጆ
t'	ጠ	ጡ	ጢ	ጣ	ጤ	ጥ	ጦ
tʃ'	ጨ	ጩ	ጪ	ጫ	ጬ	ጭ	ጮ
h	ሐ	ሑ	ሒ	ሓ	ሔ	ሕ	ሖ
hʲ	ኈ	ኊ	ኌ	ኋ	ኈ	ኅ	ኈ
ʔ	ዐ	ዑ	ዒ	ዓ	ዔ	ዕ	ዖ
w	ወ	ዉ	ዊ	ዋ	ዌ	ው	ዎ
m	መ	ሙ	ሚ	ማ	ሜ	ም	ሞ
g	ገ	ጉ	ጊ	ጋ	ጌ	ግ	ጎ
gʲ	ጘ	ጙ	ጚ	ጛ	ጜ	ጝ	ጞ
n	ነ	ኑ	ኒ	ና	ኔ	ን	ኖ
ɲ	ኘ	ኙ	ኚ	ኛ	ኜ	ኝ	ኞ
p	ፐ	ፑ	ፒ	ፓ	ፔ	ፕ	ፖ
t	ተ	ቱ	ቲ	ታ	ቴ	ት	ቶ
tʃ	ቸ	ቹ	ቺ	ቻ	ቼ	ች	ቾ
j	የ	ዩ	ዪ	ያ	ዬ	ይ	ዮ
k'	ቀ	ቁ	ቂ	ቃ	ቄ	ቅ	ቆ
k'ʲ	ቈ	ቊ	ቌ	ቋ	ቈ	ቍ	ቈ
r	ረ	ሩ	ሪ	ራ	ሬ	ር	ሮ
f	ፈ	ፉ	ፊ	ፋ	ፌ	ፍ	ፎ

	ä	i	a	e	ï		
bʷ	ቧ	ቧ	ቧ	ቧ	ቧ		
kʷ	ኰ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ		
hʷ	ሗ	ሗ	ሗ	ሗ	ሗ		
mʷ	ሟ	ሟ	ሟ	ሟ	ሟ		
k'ʷ	ቈ	ቊ	ቋ	ቌ	ቍ		
fʷ	ፏ	ፏ	ፏ	ፏ	ፏ		
gʷ	ጐ	ጒ	ጓ	ጔ	ጕ		
pʷ	ፗ	ፗ	ፗ	ፗ	ፗ		

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 1000

፩ ፪ ፫ ፬ ፭ ፮ ፯ ፰ ፱ ፲ ፳ ፴ ፵ ፶ ፷ ፸ ፹ ፺ ፻ ፼

Patterning:

- Patterns based on shape:

1) Two legged: አ - ጀ

2) Three legged: ጠ-ሕ

3) Rounded: 0-መ

4) One legged: ገ-�

5) Bottom leg leveled: ረ-ፈ

- **Pattern based on articulation**

- Palatals: ሸ ኸ ዠ ጀ ሕ ኝ ኘ ቸ ቿ Exception ጥ

- Labialized: ቡ   ኩ   ሑ   ሙ   ቌ   ፆ   ጉ   ጡ

Simplicity: minimizing phoneme numbers and types:

- Problems of phonetic reality and phonemic status of fifth order labialized consonants

  ሐርሑም   harhum   you knew

  ሐርሑም   harh^{w}im   I knew

  ሐርሕም   harh^{j}im   you(fs) knew

  ፍር/ፉር   rat (consider language variation Inor versus Cheha)

- If bilabial fricative of Inor β, which occurs medially ʔaßar 'winter' and word finally ʔiß 'butter', but surface as b initially bariʔ 'elder' may be represented by ଣ bilabial voiced fricative.

β   ሰ ሱ ሴ   ባ   ቤ   ብ   ሮ

(May be other possible shape)

Muhir also seems to have $?^w$ consonant, in which case $\boldsymbol{0}$ series may be added.

Good experience:

- The substitution of complex shapes that existed in the pre-existing literature by the simple ones:

  Example ፝ ፞ ፟ ፠ by   ሻ ቿ ኸ አ

- Regularization of the pronunciation of አ ዐ ሐ in accordance with first order letters.

- Avoidance of homophones (superfluous sounds: ሀሐሃሓጎኃኽ ሰሠ ዐአ ጸፀ.

  #### What then?

  #### Status planning =language choice (composite or a single?):

- Intelligibility level: inherent, acquired

- Language attitude

- Stake holders' discussion

- The need for consensus

- The need for mobilization and awareness creation

  Who to plan: All stake holders and professionals:

  - Linguists

  - Educators

- Policy decision makers

- The language community at large

Expected Problems:

- Pluralist versus assimilationist argument

- The question of my language variety

- Sub-ethnic identity as opposed to Gurage national identity

Corpus planning: grammar writing, spelling rules, code elaboration (lexical development:

Options for code elaboration:

- Creation

- Borrowing and localizing

- Compounding

- Semantic shift

- Derivation (using morphological rules), etc

   Implementation:

   - Domains of language use (which variety for what-based on status planning)

   - Pilot program

   - Level of use determination (as a subject, as a medium, primary school, High school, … for example)

- Full scale use (in different domains)

- Program evaluation

- Revisiting and improvement (remedial programs)

Questions and Suggestions raised by the participants:

1. Is this presentation differing from the one that has been presented previously in a different workshop regarding the grapheme?

2. What is the difference between sound 'B' and sound 'b'? (Similarities and difference?)

3. Dr Fekede was asked about his PhD dissertation: which particular dialects of Gurage language your dissertation inclined to promote over another?

Response from the Stage:

- In the presentation, only the scientific explanation of languages in general is explained, not just a mere decision about the grapheme. The universally acceptable consensuses are simply presented which is not something personal. Gradually, we may have the IPA of the Gurage language. It is possible to list them there though functional implementation wait until we choose based on our immediate purpose of interest.

- The sound 'B' is usually seen words like "ADDIS ABABA", but 'b' is a phoneme.

- Decision is waiting for some time. This will be disclosed after some consensus.

Big questions not yet answered during stage reflections:

1. How do we access the software of unique code regardless of time, space, and domain? How come we overcome and end up this threat?

Suggested answers:

Dr Ronney Meyer asserts that there is undeniably big problem in this regard. However, this could be solved by using 'Abyssinia sill' or it is possible to use 'pdf' as a short term solution. Besides, there is a plan to have professionals who have reasonable skills, knowledge and experience about the software. This further alleviates the tendency relying on the good will of the zone. That is to say we should not expected everything from the zone.

Presentation by Ronney Meyer (PhD)

"General Introduction to Language Development and Standardization"

Dr Ronney has focused on the following important issues for language development and standardization: language – dialect, bilingualism, and language planning.

Why language development and standardization? The fact that**:**

- It facilitates easy and efficient communication in society
- It helps achieving national integration, authentication and modernization, and
- language is a resource that can be changed to better fit the goals of a society

Language – Dialect:

English and Amharic are two different languages. But what about Gojjam Amharic – Gondar Amharic – Wello Amharic? They are:

- Dialects of a single language Amharic, form a geographical dialect continuum, and they are mutual intelligible. Language is a sum of all its dialects.

But what about:

- British English – American English – Australian English?
    - Mutual intelligible but not geographically adjacent

- – Form a dialect cluster (> migration)

- – Spoken in three different STATES

- Three distinct languages!!!

But what about:

- Nigerian English?

  - – Still mutual intelligible with other *Englishes* and spoken in a separate STATE

- Dialec   of   British   English!!!
  (= former colonial language)

<u>Summary:</u>

- There is no clear criterion for defining a language

- Usually a mixture of various criteria

  - – Mutual intelligibility is found between dialects but not between languages

  - – Existence of a script and an old literary tradition

  - – Existence of national borders and independent states

<u>Assumption behind:</u>

- People with different ethnic background speak different languages

Means: Language is essential for defining ethnic identity

<u>Variation in inside a language</u>

- Different speech styles: formal and informal

- Different registers: school, hospital, court, etc.

- Different varieties in rural and urban areas

- Different varieties spoken by older and younger people

- …

Intra-linguistic variation indicates social stratification = social identity

Bi- and Multilingualism

- Bi- and multilingualism norm in Africa

    - Usually in urban centers and traditional centers of economic exchange

        - Rural areas may still be monolingual

    - Multilingualism may trigger language shift to the more prestigious lingua franca

        - In the long run, this might yield language death

    - *Mother tongue + lingua franca + colonial language* pattern widespread in Africa

    ### **Division of language functions in multilingual society:**

From the speaker's perspective:

- First language for intra-group communication

    - Usually learnt as first language during childhood in natural setting

    - A child can have two mother tongues in a bilingual setting

- Second language for national inter-group communication

    - Usually learnt until adolescence after the first language in a natural setting

- Foreign language for international inter-group communication

Usually learnt in school in an artificial setting

From the community's perspective:

- Number:

- – Major vs. minor languages

- Special purpose languages:

  - – Languages used in education, for literacy production and mass media, for religious purposes, etc.

- Official languages

- Lingua franca

  - – Regional level within a state (e.g. Oromo)

  - – National level (e.g. Amharic)

  - – Cross-border language (e.g. Somali, Oromo)

  - – Language of wider communication (e.g. English)

From the language's perspective:

- Standardized versus non-standardized languages

Standard languages are the result of modifying language form or use

Language Planning:

	FORM	FUNCTION
SOCIETY > STATUS PLANNING	Selection • Allocation of standard form	Implementation • Through schools • Correction procedures • Selected form must be accepted by the community
LANGUAGE > CORPUS PLANNING	Codification • Script • Grammar • Lexicon	Elaboration • Use of the selected form in all the functions associated with central government and with writing (education, court, etc.)

Status Planning

- Selection of language form

  – Prestigious variety (French, Arabic)

    • Nobody wants to use the variety of low-status groups

  – Variety with largest number of speakers (English in US)

    • Nobody wants to speak a variety used by minority groups

- Variety with the highest degree of mutual intelligibility (Filipino = Manila variety of Tagalog in the Philippines)

  - Is understood by largest proportion of the community

- Pan-dialectal artificial variety (Standard German, Wogagoda)

  - Mixture of various varieties

- Important feature of standard languages is that they are usually concerned with the written form of a language (i.e. grammar and lexicon)

- Language status planning is basically a political activity

Corpus Planning

- Codification of a language form, and

- Its elaboration and modernization

Codification

- Orthography development

  - Development of new orthographies for unwritten languages

    - Symbols AND writing rules

- Grammar and dictionary the standard variety

- Development of vocabulary for new functions :

  - New meanings to old words: *drive*, *mouse* (computer)

  - Coining of new terms by combining existing words into new meanings: *track+ball* (computer)

  - Borrowing: *computer*

  –

Elaboration

- Preparation of school material

- Preparation of a literary corpus

- Use of the standard at the court, in administration, in mass media, etc.

- For the success of standardization, the establishment of a language body/committee is important

    – Coordinates codification and elaboration activities

    – Identifies problems in the standardization process and proposes solutions

A standard language should be widely accepted throughout the speech community, as a supra-dialectal norm, i.e. a variety rated above regional and social dialects.

Language Acquisition Planning

- Language Acquisition Planning is deliberate organized effort of a government or institution to promote the learning of a language

    – Concerned with language in education

- Language Acquisition Planning has 3 goals:

    – The acquisition of a language as a second or a foreign language

    – The reacquisition of a former vernacular language (revitalization)

    – The maintenance of a language so that it will be acquired by the next generation

- These goals can be achieved through:

    – Creating the opportunity to

        - Learn the language in school and

- Providing of materials in that language (promoting the literature production, printing of newspapers and preparation of radio and television programs)

  - Improving the incentive to learn the language

    - Through teaching it as a compulsory subject and including it in national or regional examinations,

    - Through making it a prerequisite for employment with sanctions for those who do not comply

  - Using the language as medium of instruction at schools

- Language Acquisition Planning decides which languages are used in education:

  - L1 or mother tongue alone (endocentric), or

  - In combination with L2 and foreign languages (=bilingual education) or

  - Only L2 or foreign languages (exocentric)

- Bilingual education may follow **two basic concepts**:

  - **Additive bilingual education:**

    - Students learn an L2 in addition to their mother tongue > become bilingual through education

  - **Subtractive bilingual education**

    - Students first learn in their mother tongue and in an L2, but later only L2 is used as medium of instruction

      - This is usually the case when the mother tongue is a minority language

For linguistic minorities three different schooling models were observed:

- **Monolingual model**

  - Schooling only in L2 (majority language)

  - Yields monolingualism in the long run and the loss of the minority language

  - Might also create cognitive problems for students and trigger high drop-out rates

  - Children and their parents are alienated from school

    - Feel that their identities is lost

    - Enhances language shift/death and loss of local knowledge and heritage

- **Weak bilingual model**

  - Basically schooling in mother tongue and L2

  - But mother tongue clearly subordinate (only in initial grades, only in general subjects) as means to learn the L2

- **Strong bilingual model**

  - Schooling in mother tongue and L2 but both with a strong background

  - Yields to strong bilinguals / bilitracy

Conclusion

- Language standardization is necessary for many reasons:

  - It facilitates easy communication for everyone in the community and makes it easy to teach it in schools

  - It unifies the members of a community

    - By symbolizing some kind of ethnic identity

    - By giving prestige to its speakers

- Benefits of standardizing a language are accompanied by several negative effects:

- Choosing one variety as a norm means favoring those who speak it

- It diminishes other competing varieties and those who use them

- This creates a sense of elitism among the speakers of the standard and a feeling of inferiority in those who continue to use the non-standard form.

Questions and Suggestions raised by the participants:

1. What is wrong if we let students to speak their language up to tertiary level?
2. Which model is good: the monolingual, the weak bilingual, or the strong bilingual models? and
3. If we say that language standardization has adverse impact, considering the facts of the Gurage society, what do you advise us for the entire implementation our unfinished homework?

Suggested Answers:

This is primarily related not with linguistic features, the thinking of the political leaders. Language alone does not do anything, but the social stratification really matters. An interesting point is the linguistic communities' consensus, harmony. Regarding the models, the weak bilingual one is preferable initially till it will be substituted by the strong bilingual model later. It is advisable to take the obvious common features of the many varieties.

Panel Discussion:

Issues for Discussion:

1. Language choice: which varieties of Gurage language has to be chosen?
2. Who is supposed to develop and standardize the language/s?
3. What language we use in schools and media?
4. How come we address the issues to the community?
5. What is the role of decision makers in this plan of action?

Themes of the panel Discussion:

In fact, language choice is a problematic issue to implement in areas like the Gurage Zone. However, we have to follow the alternatives provided from the science of linguistics. There are two alternatives regarding which language should be chosen: assimilationist argument and the cluster argument. For the former one, there is a need to choose the language that has been relatively well developed among the varieties of Gurage language group. In addition to this, it is better to use the documents for further testimony. To do this, we have to be tightening to the principles and theories of linguistics science. The later one is the best choice for the development and standardization of Gurage language. Among anything else, we have to give due attention to the tendency of communicative competence and mutual intelligibility.

Scholars, politicians, and the community at large have the responsibility to participate on the development and standardization processes. Regarding the language that has to be employed in schools and media, possible solutions will be after a certain anonymous decision. It is possible to address the process of mobilization about development and standardization via news, folk media, and the likes. The role of decision makers on the plan of action is undeniably noble. The forefront body to implement the proposal of the Zone's tourism and culture is the politicians of the Zone besides setting up language board and activating the pre-existing committees.

Finally, the meeting was officially adjourned at 1: 40 pm.