



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND PHILOLOGY**

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO DIALECTS OF BENCH:  
BENCHNON AND SHENON**

**TIZAZU ATIMO**

**SEPTEMBER 2010  
ADDIS ABABA**

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**BY  
TIZAZU ATIMO**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS  
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
LINGUISTICS**

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**Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and that all sources of the materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name-----

Signature-----

Place-----

Date-----

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as thesis advisor.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

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## List of Abbreviations and Symbols

-	Morpheme boundary, rising tone from 2 to 3 indicator
_____	Absence of meaning due to tone changes
( )	optional use
//	phoneme boundary
/ø/	zero morpheme
1+2	first person plural exclusive
1+3	first person plural inclusive
1SG	first person singular
2PL	second person plural
2SG	second person singular
2SGfv	second person singular female vocative pronoun
2SGmv	second person singular male vocative pronoun
3PL	third person plural
3refi	third person reflexive
3SGm	third person singular masculine
7 <sup>0</sup> N	Seven Degree North
Com	Comitative case marker
Cont	Continuous tense
dm	Definite marker
f	Feminine gender
Fut	Future tense
Gen	Genitive case marker
Inst	Instrumental case marker
Loc	Locative Case
m	Masculine gender
N	Noun
Neg	Negation marker
Nom	Nominative Case

Past	Past tense
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SNNP	South Nation Nationalities and Peoples
SOV	Subject Object Verb
V	Verb
v <sup>1</sup>	Lowest tone
v <sup>2</sup>	Low tone
v <sup>2-3</sup>	Rising tone from 2 to 3
v <sup>3</sup>	Level tone
v <sup>4</sup>	High tone
v <sup>5</sup>	Highest tone (Where 'v' represents vowels or syllabic nasal sounds)

## **Abstract**

This study is designed to deal with some linguistic features of Benchnon and Shenon dialects in a comparative way. The objective of the study is to show variations in some phonological, morphological, lexical items and semantic differences in the two dialects. The methods implemented in the study are through eliciting forms from the speech of native speakers of the two dialects, and through using published literatures as a secondary source. Both descriptive and comparative approaches are used to find out the dialectal variation in the two dialects.

The findings of the study indicate that there are variations in phonological, morphological lexical items and semantic differences between the two dialects. Chapter one of the study deals with the people and language. Chapter two of the study deals with the conceptual framework of study. Chapter three of the study deals with phonological features of the two dialects. Under phonology variation in the two dialects is attested in the syllabic nasal, tonal distribution, meaning change and phonological differences in some words. Chapter four of the study deals with morphological features, and under this, the two dialects show variations in some noun inflections, pronouns, case, verb inflections, aspect and tense, negation and ordinal numbers. Chapter five of the study deals with lexical variations and semantic differences. Under lexical items variation is attested in some word classes, cardinal numbers and days of the week. Under semantic, variation is attested in some words in Benchnon and Shenon.

The language has some unique natures, such as tone and uncommon sounds when it is compared with other Omotic languages in Ethiopia. The language is unwritten language until the resent year and it is now on the process to be written language. This process should consider the nature of the language, the relation and difference between the two dialects to have clear grammar and sociolinguistic profile

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1. The People and the Language

The Bench people who call themselves Benc̣ and their language Benc̣, Benc̣non or Benc̣gah<sup>3</sup>, [Bench speech], live in Bench Maji Zone, SNNP Regional State around 561 kilometers away from Addis Ababa south west of Ethiopia. The particular woredas where Bench people live are She Bench woreda, Debub Bench woreda, Semen Bench woreda and Mizan-Aman town as indicated in figure 1

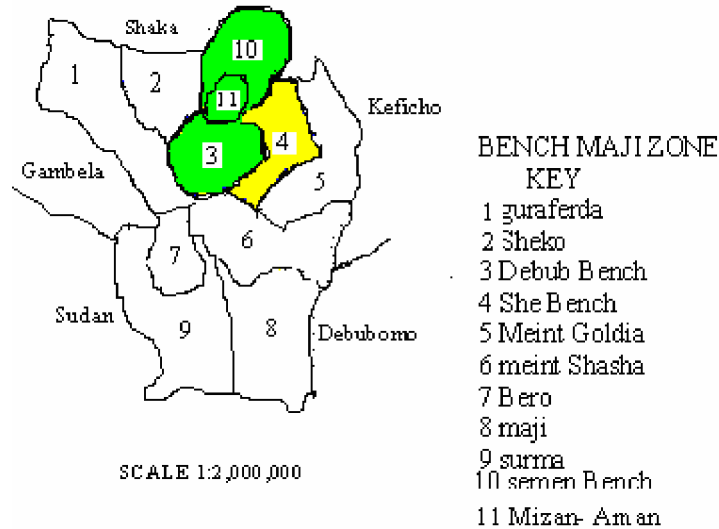


Figure 1-Map of Bench Maji Zone (Adopted from Bench Maji zone Finance and Economic Development office, 2009)

According to the 2007 population and housing census of Ethiopia, the population of Bench is around 353,526. Even though there are no ample written history and documents on Bench history and language, there are different legends and stories spoken by old people. The name *Bench* can be considered as ‘language’ spoken by the Bench people and at the same time the name of ‘the people’ who are native speakers of Bench language. The language has different dialects spoken by different people. Out of these, there are two dialects that have more linguistic differences and show significant speech differences in communication. These two

dialects are Bench, Benchnon (literally Bench mouth) or Bench gah<sup>3</sup> (Bench speech) and She, Shenon (literally she mouth) or She gah<sup>3</sup> (she speech). ‘*She*’ is the name of the clan living in She Bench woreda and the name of the ‘dialect’ spoken by the She clan. Example, He is She (clan). He speak She (dialect). In a similar way, on the other hand ‘*Bench*’ represents broadly the ‘language’ under Omotic family (spoken by both Shenon and Benchnon dialect speakers) and the people who speak Bench (both Benchnon and Shenon dialect). In the narrow sense ‘*Bench*’ represents the name of the ‘clans’ who live in Semen Bench woreda, Dehub Bench, Woreda and Mizan-Aman town and speak Benchnon dialect and the name of the ‘dialect’ spoken by Bench clans. The dialects spoken by She and Bench clans are Shenon and Benchnon, respectively.

In the last time the name of the Bench people and the language are not used in the same way as it is used by native Speakers of the language. There were different names used by different people and outsiders. Bench is a national name ... of people called by different names by other peoples and their neighbors (Girmaye 1993: 13). The major economic activities of the people are farming and livestock. Farming includes producing wheat, barley, inset, maize, sorghum and taro /zong<sup>3</sup>/, which is common for Benchnon speaking area. Livestock includes cattle, sheep, goat and chicken. The people are also renowned for bee keeping. In addition to this, coffee is the most important cash crop for the Benchnon speaking area.

Bench is classified under Afro-Asiatic the Phylum, in the Omotic Family; it is in the branch called the North Omotic subfamily of Gimojan division (Christian 2006: 27). It is phonologically complex having six tones: five level tones and one contour tone. Typologically, the language has Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order (Christian 2006: 29). The sub-classification of the family itself is also still debated though different proposals are made all assuming (almost) the same terminal subgroups and by and large agree on the height at which each subgroup branches off in the family tree (Christian 2006: 27). For its recent information and popular use, I use the following family tree.

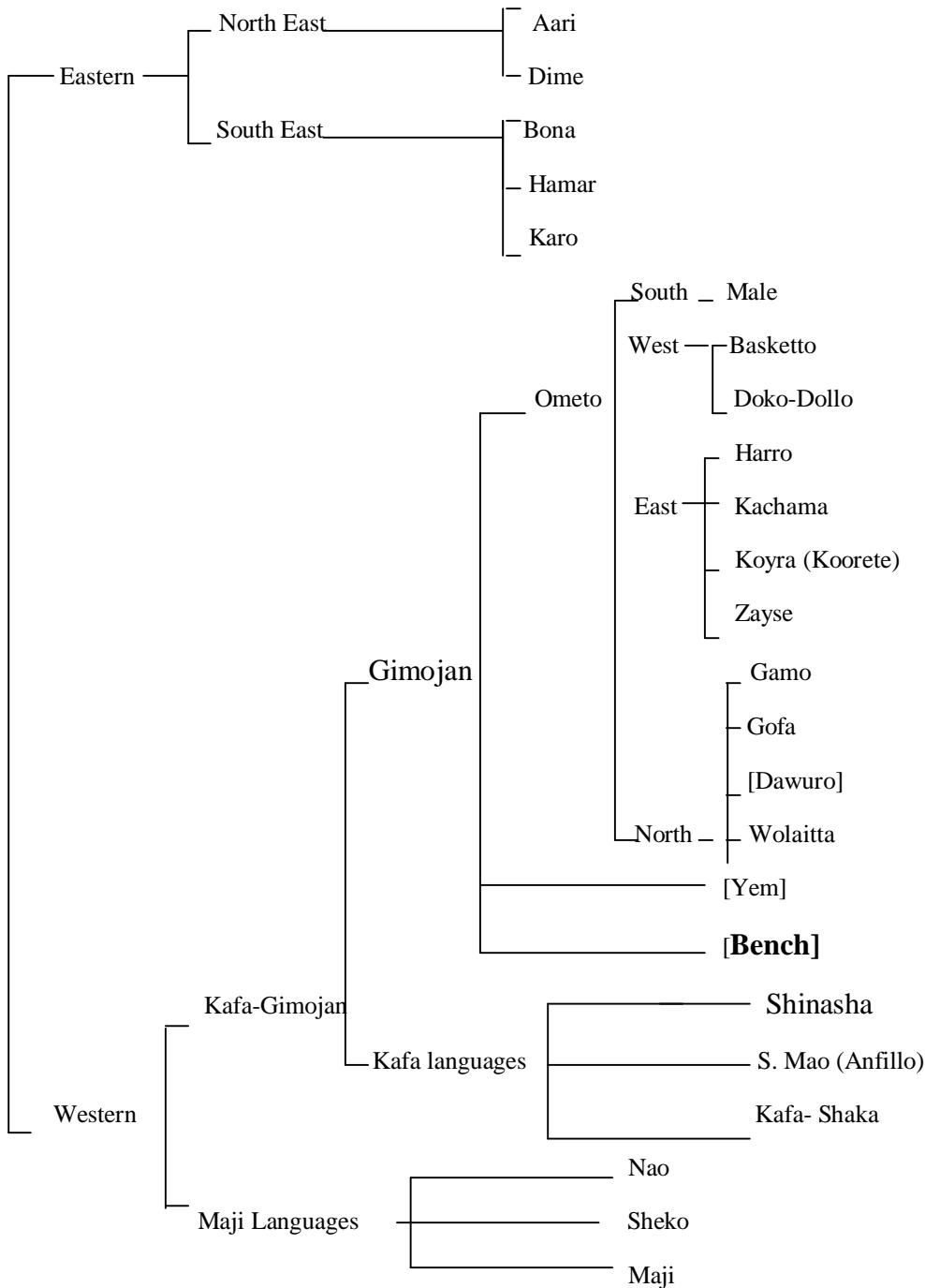


Figure- 2 Omotic language family tree adapted from Azeb (2001: 5)

As we can see from the above figure Bench is a member of Omotic family and it is classified under the north Gimojan cluster.

Roughly, Benchnon, Shenon and Mernon are spoken in the south-west Ethiopia linguistic diversity Belt of the Omotic Nilo-Saharan border in and round Mizan Tefferi [Mizan-Aman

town] and their neighboring languages are Kaficho [Kafinoono], shakacho [Shaka] (both north Omotic and Gonga), Sheko (North Omotic, Dizoid) and Me'en (Eastern Sudanic, Surmic) (Christian 2006: 26). Christian (2006:1) stated the following in relation to linguistic nomenclature and dialectal variation:

*Speakers of the language commonly recognize three dialects Benchnon, Shenon and Mernon of which Benchnon has the highest number of speakers. All the three varieties are mutually intelligible. Between Benchnon and Mernon there are only a few minor differences, the customary distinction between the two being more political than linguistic. The language constituted by these three varieties was known as...[Bench] until recently, but since there is no un controversial name for the language it is referred to as 'Benchnon Shenon and Mernon ' it will be noted that this practice in no way implies any varieties of one and the same language.*

The language area covers a surface of some 60 by 40 kilometers, its eastern border more or less straddling the meridian while the 7<sup>0</sup>N parallel divides the language area itself into two equal parts. The area lies between around 1,700 and 2,200 meters above sea level and with over 2,000 millimeters of rain fall per year. It has one of the wettest climates of Ethiopia (Christian, 2006).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

When we compare Bench to other Omotic languages spoken in Ethiopia it is a language with less document and research works. The language is not being used in school as a medium of instruction and as School subject. It is not used in offices and the media like radio and television. Sometimes, the Ethiopic script bible and other written materials are used for spiritual activities. The use or the status of the language in the language speaker's society is very less. But, recently the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Ethiopia in collaboration with Bench Maji Zone started the project to begin mother tongue based multilingual education in the zone. The SNNP Regional Media Agency in Bench Maji Zone will start to transmit news and other programs on FM in ethnic languages in few months and at that time news and different programs will be transmitted in Bench. In addition to this, the interest of

speakers to develop their language and culture is increasing now days than ever. These are the existing situations that need the attention of linguists in Bench. Having all the above situations and assumptions about the language, its dialects have not been studied either in comparative way or in isolation. Thus, the present study is intended to answer the following questions considering the planned activities mentioned earlier:

- Ø To what extent do the two dialects vary with eachother?
- Ø To what extent is the degree of intelligibility between the speakers of the two dialects?

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to compare and contrast some linguistic features of the two dialects (Benchnon and Shenon). Under this, the research has the following specific objectives:

- Ø Comparing and contrasting the phonological aspects of the two dialects.
- Ø Comparing and contrasting the morphological aspects of the two dialects.
- Ø Comparing and contrasting the lexical items and semantic variations of the two dialects.

### **1.4. Significance of the study**

Benchnon is a less documented language, not yet used in different social activities like education, media and other areas. Even though the recent activities in the area have brought bright future for the language, these activities are not considering the study of dialect variation that needs attention. The present study has, therefore, the following significance:

- Ø It increases additional knowledge on the existing knowledge about Bench in particular, and Omotic family in general.
- Ø It can serve as recent reference about the people, the language and the two dialects.
- Ø It can give some clues about the differences and similarities of the two dialects.
- Ø It can give contributions for mother tongue-based multilingual education program in the zone for teacher training, material preparation and other activities.

## **1.5. Scope of the Study**

Bench is spoken in She Bench woreda, Semen Bench woreda, Dehub Bench woreda and around Mizan-Aman town which are some kilometers far away from each other. Out of these, Shenon is spoken in She Bench woreda and Benchnon is spoken in the other areas. From the linguistics point of view, the language is phonologically complex, tonal and that needs time and deep investigation. Due to these geographical and linguistic factors it is difficult to cover all linguistic features and all areas of language within this short period of time. Therefore, the study mainly focuses on some aspects of phonological features, morphological features, lexical items and semantic variations. The data for the study is collected from two dialect areas: for Shenon, from She Bench woreda, for Benchnon mainly around Mizan Aman and Dehub Bench woreda. Secondary data is used from previous works on the language. However, Mernon is excluded from the study due to its extreme intelligibility with Benchnon. Thus, the focus is on Benchnon and Shenon dialects.

## **1.6. Review of Related Studies**

There are some research works at different times by different scholars on Bench language. Among these, Bender (1976), Mary (1981, 1986 and 1990), Wedekind (1983 and 1985) and Christian (2006) are the most relevant works for this study.

Bender (1976) stated about the most striking features of Ometo Bench and Yem numeral relations and lexical similarity. He further views lexically as, Ometo, Bench and Yem form a unit (Gimojan), with each having its highest sharing with one of the others. Yem and Ometo languages average around 40 percent with each other in basic Vocabulary and various Ometo languages run from 50 percent to 90 percent when compared with each other.

Mary (1981), under the title, “A basic vocabulary list of [Bench] and the verb root in [Benchnon]” collected 1145 basic vocabulary with their tones and word classes, under basic vocabulary list with their various word classes and reflect the effect of tone on the word classes. Under verb root she collected and arranged 525 verbs and group into sub classes as class one, class two and class three verbs based on the nature of the root verb and the effect of tone change on root verbs.

Mary (1986), has written an article entitled “Personal pronouns in Benchnon” describing the Bench personal pronouns, pronoun sets, the reflexive pronoun, some unique pronouns such as first person plural inclusive (1+2), first person plural exclusive (1+3), honorific pronouns, the role of tone and pronominalisation in discourse briefly and concludes that:

*The distinctions and usages of Bench pronouns and the major features of pronominalisation in discourse has revealed a number of significant features not typical of Ethiopian in general, there are indications however that at least some of these features are also present in some of other Omotic languages. It is now necessary for more research to be carried out in order to establish which features are general within the Omotic group, which are common within the Gimojan sub group and which are peculiar to Bench. (Mary 1986:101)*

Mary (1990), under the title, “A sketch of the phonology and grammar of Benchnon”, again describes the brief phonology, tone and syntax of Benchnon. Under phonology, she describes the vowel phones consonant phonemes. Under tone, she describes the six tone systems and suggests the following:

*While tone has been found to make numerals lexical distinctions, grammatical distinctions shown by tone are rather more limited. However, tone is important in distinguishing the case of certain words and the semantic features of certain adjectives.*

Under syntax she describe the noun phrase, the vocative phrase ,the verb phrase, the clause and conclude by dividing the sentence in Bench as simple sentence, sequence sentence, quotation sentence and complex sentence.

Wedekind (1983), under the title, “A six-tone language in Ethiopia: Tonal analysis of Benchnon”, has shown a comparative overview of some tonal languages of Ethiopia including Bench. The map of tonal languages in Ethiopia, the description of the segmental phonology and tone system of Bench, lexical tone and its distribution, lexical tone morpheme shape and the tone system of the Bench are discussed in this work. He states the three well defined ways of communicating system in Bench by tone alone; whistling with lips whistling with the hollow of the hands and plucking the ‘Krar’ [Ethiopian five string gitar].

Wedekind further point out that:

*The loss of final syllables quite obviously has led to a greater differentiation of tones in the Bench language. Initial tones are lowered, and final tones are raised. This generalization is true both morphologically and syntactically. Within words, the first syllables tend to lower-as it has been shown for lower-as it has been shown for loans reduplications and suffixes in general. Within sentences, again the initial forms tend to be lower: subject pronouns in initial position and nouns in general have lower tones than word classes which normally belong to the rhematic part of a Benchnon sentence. Sentence final forms, on the other hands are characterized by higher tones. (Wedekind 1983: 148)*

Wedekind (1985), under the title, “Why Bench of Ethiopia has five level tones today”, describes the sketch of the Bench phonology, the tone system and factors which influence the Bench tone system and compare with the neighboring languages. He then, concludes that ‘The distribution of the tonal language over Ethiopia resembles the distribution of the tonal languages over the world’.

Christian (2006) “Towards a grammar of Benchnon” is the PhD work on Bench. His description focuses on the phonology, tone and grammar of Bench. Under phonology, he discusses consonant phonemes, vowel phonemes and syllabic nasal phonemes. Under tone, he describes tone contrast, phonemic realizations of tones and tone distributions. Under morphology, he discusses the noun morphology and verb morphology broadly. In terms of quantity and quality, it covers a wider portion of linguistic concepts of Bench, the whole grammar and some sociolinguistic profile of the language.

All the above works on Bench deal mainly with the phonology and grammar, but not on the dialect variations that needs attention. Thus, the present study focuses on the comparison of some linguistic features of Benchnon and Shenon dialects.

## **1.7. Methodology of the Study**

Appropriate methodology and research design is very important to collect, organize, interpret and analyze data and produce good findings. In conducting this research there are some methodologies which have been used. First, I collect and read relevant research materials, design clear cut point and develop clear concepts about dialect, tone and other linguistic features. Since, I am a speaker of Benchnon dialect and understand some of the Shenon dialect. I organize some linguistic features that make variations in the two dialects. The linguistic features are attested by the help of Shenon informants and other Benchnon speakers to point out the clear variation in two dialects. Qualitative and quantitative data are collected from She Bench and Gaya markets of She Bench woreda through semi structured interview and informant method. Some secondary data and examples that use as input for my comparative study are collected from previous works on the language. In addition to this, my Owen introspective method is used to organize the data. Based on the data variations in phonology, morphology, lexicon and semantics are attested in Benchnon and Shenon dialects. At last discussion and conclusion is made on the findings.

## Chapter Two

### Conceptual Framework

#### 2.1. The What of Dialect

Many scholars define dialect in different ways. The lack of a single working definition is, due to the fact that languages in different parts of the world have different nature, attitude of people towards language and dialect and overlapping definition and meaning of dialect with language are the main factors. Even though, there is no single definition of dialect there are some definitions by some scholars in dialect studies. According to Crystal (1987: 23), dialect is substandard variety of language spoken only by low status groups. From this statement dialect is an abstraction of the same sort of language that is used by specifically lower social groups. This definition highlights social dialect rather than geographical dialect. It is also described as a variety of a particular language that differs in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Holmes 1992: 142). This one more focus on linguistic features that vary based on the geographical variations. Trudgill (1980: 3) states about dialect in the following way:

*Dialect is a sub standard, low status, often rustic form of language, generally associated with the peasantry, the working class, or other groups lacking in prestige. Dialect is also a term which is often applied to forms of language, particularly those spoken in more isolated parts of the world which have no written form. And dialects are also often regarded as some kind of deviation from a norm-as aberrations of a correct or standard form of language.*

If we look the definitions of dialect by different linguists or dialectologists it can be observed differently and there is no single and uniform definition of dialect.

## 2.2. Dialectology

Dialectology (dialect geography or linguistic geography) is the study of the geographical variation of a language. It is the investigation of geographically determined differences in various aspects of language. This definition is not inclusive of social dialects that have equal focus of linguistic variation of individuals and social groups. Therefore, the definition is incomplete in that it is one-sided and gives less attention to the social variation of language which considers socio-economic status, education, occupation, age, sex, and others. Considering these, dialectology can be defined as the science of geographical and social variation of languages (Campbell 2004: 215; Crystal 1987: 26; Hudson 1980: 39).

Dialectology is a discipline used to create awareness and develop understanding of scholars to observe that there are differences among the speech communities having the same language (Crystal 1987: 26). It can be considered as one of the means to identify from where peoples are and their residence and background simply by perceiving their speech at a glance. Because, language is one of the identity markers of society, that gives us information from where some one is. There are different methods used by dialectologists to represent their findings on linguistic items across different geographical areas. *Dialect atlas* is one of the methods in which numerous maps and information show regional variation in language. Dialect atlas points out linguistic features which are characterize a particular group of speakers from one area to other area. Using these maps it is possible to show the boundaries between speakers of one dialect and speakers of another. The second type of dialect is social dialect (sociolect) and this can be represented vertically on the map by a kind of triangular prism to show the relationship between the speeches of lowest classes, and highest classes or any other social class (Holmes 1992: 45 and Trudgill 1980: 8)

Regional dialectology refers to the identification and classification of consistent features of speech found in a particular geographical area. It attempts to show the distributions of various linguistic features on maps so as to show their geographical attribution (Trudgill 1980: 8). Regional dialects, in relation to this, are varieties of language spoken in certain geographical areas, in which the speakers of the dialects, speak different dialects of the specific variety, can usually understand each other (Crystal 1987: 24 and Hudson 1980: 35). Geographical dialectology is one of the ways of identifying variety in language in which we notice

distinctive local differences of linguistic items by moving from one location to another. In fact, scholars certainly treat dialects in very careful ways, looking them as regionally distinct varieties of one language that are mutually intelligible. Social dialectology is the study which focuses on correlations between variation in language use and a speaker's membership in various social groups. It deals with dialects by subdividing them into smaller categories in terms of socio-economic status of speakers, ethnic, gender, educational level, occupation, age and sex groups (Holmes 1992: 142). Currently, dialect identification is become much more difficult because of increasing number of towns and social mobility to these towns, many people go from place to place with their own dialects and it is difficult to identify dialect geographically (Crystal 1987: 24).

### **2.3. The Relation between Language and Dialect**

There are some factors that relate language and dialect and make their meaning ambiguous. As indicated above one of the main factors that case ambiguity between language and dialect is the attitude of the people. Edwards (2006: 324) states the attitude of the people towards language and dialect in the following way:

*Social preferences and prejudices concerning language varieties are long –standing and of continuing potency. This is because views of language correspond to views of social status of language users; in this sense, language (or dialect or accent) provides simple labels which evoke social stereotypes that go far beyond language itself.*

Even though there is meaning ambiguity of dialect and language, there are some points proposed by different scholars to distinguish language from dialect. The following are some of them:

(i) *Difference of size*: This criteria focus on the number of linguistic items that distinguish language from dialect. Language contains more linguistic items than dialect and contains all the linguistic elements in its specific dialects (Hudson 1980: 30), sometimes the language may not fully contain the whole linguistic items that are not in specific dialect, and this can be considered as limitation of this criteria.

(ii) *Degree of standard or prestige*: this criterion refers to the popular use of language or dialect in different social affairs like school, media and offices. The dialect which is popularly used and that has written form is said to be language and the Variety which is not used popularly and lack the written form is said to be dialect (Hudson 1980: 30 and Trudgill 1980: 3). This one is relatively convincing than other points that used as criteria to distinguish language from dialect, Because it is working criteria in many countries by many linguists.

(iii) *Mutual intelligibility*: This deals about the common understanding between two speakers or Societies. It is believed that if there is common understanding between two persons while they communicate the variety in which they communicate is said to be dialect and if they do not communicate the variety in which they communicate is language. (Hudson 1980: 35) states this idea in the following way: If the speakers of two varieties can understand each other, then the varieties concerned are instances of the same language; other wise they are not.

Similarly, Crystal (1987: 24) states the relation between the two as follows:

*At first sight, there may appear to be no problem. If two people speak differently, then it might be thought there are really only two possibilities. Either they are not able to understand each other in which case they can be said to speak different languages; or they do understand each other; in which case they must be speaking different dialects of the same language.*

This is not always common in all contexts and everywhere. One common problem with this criterion is that dialects belonging to the same language are not always mutually intelligible in their spoken form. (Hudson 1980: 35), points out the four limitation of mutual intelligibility used to distinguish language from dialect in the following ways.

- a. Even popular usage does not correspond consistently to this criterion, since varieties which call different languages may be mutually intelligible.
- b. Mutual intelligibility is a matter of degree, ranging from total intelligibility to total unintelligibility.

c. varieties may be arranged in a dialect continuum, a chain of adjacent varieties in which each pair of adjacent varieties are mutually intelligible, but pairs taken from opposite ends of the chain are not.

d. Mutual intelligibility is not really a relation between varieties but between people, since it is dialect speakers and not varieties that understand one another. All the above factors that used to distinguish language from dialect are not sufficient. Thus, there is no real distinction between language and dialect (Hudson 1980: 37)

## **2.4. Dialect and Accent**

In the study of dialect variation, it is necessary to identify accent from dialect. It is known that there is no single definition, for the term *dialect*. By many linguists dialect is described as a variety of a particular language that differs in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation whereas, *accent* is used to refer speakers segmental and non segmental phonetics and phonology (Trudgill 2006: 14).He further describe accent as the way in which people pronounce when they speak. Differences which are restricted to variation in individual person's pronunciation or a certain form of language spoken by a group of speakers of that language are defined by phonological feature. It refers to the way in which speaker pronounces and there fore refers to a variety which is phonologically or phonetically different from other varieties (Hudson1980: 43).The term *pronunciation* sometimes is ambiguous with accent; hence, dialect is inclusive concept (Holmes 1992: 142). For instance, Standard English is spoken in a variety of accents and pronunciations, usually with clear regional associations: there are accents of Africa, North America, India, London, and so on, but many people who live in such places indicate uniformity to one another in their grammar and vocabulary because they speak Standard English (Hudson 1980: 33 and Wardhaugh 1992: 43).

## 2.5. Isoglosses and Dialect Continuum

### (i) Isoglosses

Regional dialectologists use number methods to indicate the linguistic varieties of different areas on the map. Isoglosses is used of find a number of significant differences in the speech of people who speak the same language and living in various areas, and draw charts where the boundaries are. The possible line drawn on a map to separate one dialect from another is referred to as *isogloss* (Crystal 1987: 28). It indicates the dialect features and an extension of the original sense of the word form dealing with a line roughly corresponding to the actual linguistic phenomena (iso-‘same’ and gloss-tongue’) (Campbell 2004: 215; Hudson 1980: 39; Yule 1995: 229). When several isoglosses coincide, the result is said to be dialect boundary. This is a solid line drawn to indicate the bundles of dialect on one side of the boundary speaking one dialect and speakers on the other side using different dialect (Wardhaugh 1992: 43). Isoglosses indicate that certain linguistic features spread from one location, which is focal area or zone of prestige from which the variety spreads outwards, in to neighboring locations. However, a particular area may remain without being affected by the spread out of dialects. This area is called *relic* area which preserves older forms that have not undergone the innovations of the surrounding areas. The area is sometimes region of difficult access for cultural, political or geographical reasons, and thus resistant to the spread of prestige variants from elsewhere (Campbell 2004: 216 and Wardhaugh 1992: 133).

There are four kinds of isoglosses identified by Crystal (1987: 28). These are:

**Isophone** -the line drawn to distinguish dialects based on phonological features.

**Isomorph** -the line drawn to identify dialects based on morphological features.

**Isolex** -the line drawn to identify dialects based on lexical items.

**Isoseme** -the line drawn to identify dialects based on semantic features.

## **(ii) Dialect Continuum**

If someone travels from one edge of a country to another edge of the country, he will cross varieties of the language. When the distance becomes far away from where he starts his journey, it is clear that he finds people speaking one variety at the beginning and ends with people entirely speaking different speech; however, there is no one point at which the change happens, nor is there any way of determining how many intermediate dialect boundaries the person crosses. This situation is referred to as a dialect continuum; continuing sequences of dialects at each end of the continuum may be some distance. When dialects are arranged well in a dialect continuum, a chain of adjacent varieties in which each pair of adjacent varieties are mutually unintelligible, but pairs taken from opposite ends of the chain are not. This can be interstitially illustrated in the European dialect continuum, which links the dialects of languages known as, German, Dutch and Flemish. (Wardhaugh 1992: 42; Hudson 1980: 36). For example, Dialect A---Dialect B----Dialect C----Dialect D-----Dialect E. In the above example, five dialects (A-E) over space, speakers of A and B may understand, but probably speakers of dialect A may not understand the speech of people with dialect E. Thus we call the sequence dialect continuum. This is the effect where certain varieties are identified at various focal points in a continuous sequence, without directly clear boundaries between one variety of speakers and the next ones. We can view regional dialects as existing along a continuum, and not as having sharp breaks from one region to the next (Yule 1995: 231).

# Chapter Three

## Phonological Features

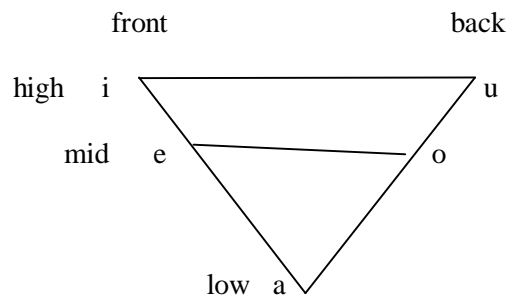
This chapter deals with the phonological features in the two dialects under study. Phonological features are linguistic items based on the Sound features of varieties. Segmental phonemes and suprasegmental features are included under Phonological features.

### 3.1. Segmental Phonemes

There are two main phonemic inventories described by two different scholars for Bench. Meanwhile the two phonemic inventories are not similar all in all. The first phonemic inventory was described by Mary (1986: 101). Even though other scholars work on the phonemes of Bench in relation to other Omotic languages; Mary's phonemic inventory was the first independent work. (Mary 1986) under the title "*Personal pronouns in Benchnon*" describe 5 vowels and 29 consonants of Bench

The second phonemic inventory was Christian's (2006: 48) 5 vowels, 2 syllabic nasals and 28 consonant phonemes of Bench. Both Mary's and Christian's phonemic inventories are the same, except in the consonant phoneme /w / and the syllabic nasals. In the following section the phonemic inventory of (Christian, 2006) is followed by examples and discussion on differences of the two phonemic inventories.

#### a. Vowels



#### b. Syllabic Nasals

- labial    m̥
- alveolar    ŋ̥

### c. Consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Alveolo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Voiceless Stops	p	t			k	
Voiced Stops	b	d			g	
Glottal zed Stops	p'	t'			k'	ʔ
Voiceless Fricatives		s	ʃ	ç		h
Voiced Fricatives		z	ʒ	ʒ̥		
Voiceless Affricates		ts	tʃ	cç		
Glottal zed Affricates		ts'	tʃ'	cç'		
Laterals		l				
Taps		r				
Nasals	m	n				
Approximants				y		

Table- 1 consonant phonemes

Adapted from Christian (2006: 48-54)

The same vowel phonemes are described by two scholars, Mary and Christian, at different times. However, there are differences in the syllabic nasals and consonant phonemes. (Mary 1986) did not consider the syllabic nasals, but (Christian 2006) identified 2 syllabic nasals (ɱ, ɳ) which are used as vowels and tone bearing units and 28 consonant phonemes by excluding the phoneme /w/ that exists in Mary's phonemic inventory and also used by other scholars who work on Bench. Concerning the phoneme /w/, Christian states that; "In the root initial position before back vowels the phoneme /y/, which is realized as [w] in this case, is represented as <w> although there is phoneme /w/ in the language" (2006: 38). He consider the phoneme /w/ as allophone of /y/, But he used the phoneme /w/ in some part of his work as in:

wobd<sup>2-3</sup> 'flower'

wobs<sup>3</sup> 'to honor'

(Christian 2006: 109)

In addition to this, the recent orthography of Bench proposed by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Ethiopia includes the phoneme /w/ in the list. Considering these factors, one can identify the presence of the phoneme /w/ in Bench, and it must be included in the phonemic inventory. Since the vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes are the same in Benchnon and Shenon, the syllabic nasal sound (ŋ) make some variation in the two dialects. The syllabic nasal (ŋ) is not used in Shenon dialect as my data concerns. This can be clearly expressed in the ordinal number markers and other word classes shown below.

<b>Ordinals</b>	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> -ŋ <sup>5</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	kaz <sup>4</sup> -ŋ <sup>5</sup>	kaz <sup>4</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup>	od <sup>4</sup> -ŋ <sup>5</sup>	od <sup>4</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
5 <sup>th</sup>	uc <sup>2</sup> -ŋ <sup>5</sup>	uc <sup>2</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	nya <sup>2</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> -ŋ <sup>5</sup>	nya <sup>2</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
9 <sup>th</sup>	irs <sup>2</sup> tn <sup>3</sup> -ŋ <sup>5</sup>	irs <sup>2</sup> tn <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>

As can be seen from the above examples, variation is attested in ordinal number marker morphemes of Benchnon and Shenon dialects in the syllabic nasal phoneme /ŋ/. The Syllabic nasal (ŋ) can also appear and make some variations at phoneme level with n, in other word classes, like as shown in the following examples.

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
bab <sup>4</sup> -ŋ <sup>3</sup>	bab <sup>2-3</sup> -n <sup>3</sup>	‘father’
mit <sup>4</sup> iŋ <sup>3</sup>	mit <sup>4</sup> in <sup>3</sup>	‘witness’

Most of the time syllabic nasal sound /ŋ/ in Benchnon is represented by the nasal sound /n/ in Shenon in speech form as indicated in the above examples.

In a similar way some words in Benchnon and Shenon show variations with slight phonological difference or in single phoneme. There are words with the same word classes and similar meaning, but show variations in single phoneme. The following examples show these phonological differences:

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>
bud <sup>2-3</sup> n <sup>3</sup>	bud <sup>4</sup>	‘adopted mother’
koy <sup>3</sup>	koyt <sup>3</sup>	‘search’
dit <sup>5</sup> ʃl <sup>4</sup>	dit <sup>5</sup> ʃln <sup>4</sup>	‘maze’
sin <sup>4</sup> i <sup>3</sup>	sin <sup>3</sup>	‘glass’
kiy <sup>5</sup> am <sup>3</sup>	kiy <sup>5</sup> an <sup>3</sup>	‘fast’

As can be seen from the above examples some words show slight phoneme differences that show the phonological difference in Benchnon and Shenon. Thus variation is attested in phoneme of some words in Benchnon and Shenon and this shows the phonological difference.

### **3.2. Phonology difference in verb.**

Most of the root verbs in Bench are monosyllabic or disyllabic that can stand alone without affixes. Grammatical and semantic change of verbs in Bench is mostly based on the tonal change beside inflectional and derivational processes that cause verb formation and verb change. Mary (1986: 109) classifies the verbs into three classes which are set up on the basis of the form of the basic root.

**Class 1:** Verbs that include the majority of verbs and consist of verbs with active root of a single syllable.

Most of these groups have a causative and a passive root, and sub-classes can be set up on the basis of these forms.

**Class 2:** Verbs that have two forms of root one with an intransitive or passive meaning and another with a transitive or causative meaning.

**Class 3:** Verbs are compound with mak<sup>2</sup> ‘say’, and it is this part of the verb which is conjugated. Variations in root verbs of Benchnon and Shenon can exist in different forms. Some of the words are with complete phonemic change and some of them are with partial phonemic change. In the following sections verbs with different forms show variations in the two dialects as can be seen through the following examples and discussions.

In most of the root verbs with clusters of **vcc** and **cvcc**, a consonant sound **-r-**, exists after the vowels and before alveolar consonants like **t, d, t’** and **s**, and velar consonants like **k, g, and k’** in Benchnon is changed in to **-y-** in Shenon. The above fact is shown in **vcc** cluster in the following data as follows.

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>
a. ork <sup>3</sup>	oyk <sup>3</sup>	‘uncover’
b. urk <sup>3</sup>	uyk <sup>3</sup>	‘remove from the moth’
c. irk <sup>3</sup>	iyk <sup>3</sup>	‘mix with water’

As indicated in the above data the situation of root verbs and the change of **-r-** into **-y-** in Benchnon and Shenon are clearly shown. In a similar way the **cvcc** cluster in which **-r-** in Benchnon is changed into **-y-** in Shenon is described in the following data.

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>
a. gurt <sup>2</sup>	guyt <sup>2</sup>	‘shiver’
b. gart <sup>2</sup>	gayt <sup>2</sup>	‘roll’
c. kart <sup>3</sup>	kayt <sup>3</sup>	‘turn’
d. t’urk <sup>3</sup>	t’uyk <sup>3</sup>	‘push’
e. bart <sup>3</sup>	bayt <sup>3</sup>	‘splash liquid’
f. kurs <sup>2</sup>	kuys <sup>2</sup>	‘select’
g. wors <sup>3</sup>	woys <sup>3</sup>	‘insert’

In the above examples, it can be understood that **-r-** is frequently used in some specific clusters like **vcc** and **cvcc** in Benchnon, and **-y-** is frequently used in the same clusters in Shenon dialect. In this situation the speakers of the two dialects can be easily distinguished at

a glance by hearing the pronunciations and use of **-r-** and **-y-** in their speech. The use of **-r-** and **-y-** in Benchnon and Shenon dialects respectively is one of the prominent linguistic distinguishing factors of Benchnon and Shenon dialect speakers. To have clear concept in these sounds (r and y) farther and deep investigation is needed in the two dialects and Shenon.

### **3.3. Suprasegmental Feature (Tone)**

Tone in linguistics refers to the degree of highness or lowness of speech sounds that changes lexical and grammatical meaning of language. All languages use intonation to express emphasis, contrast, emotion, and others, but not every language uses tone to distinguish lexical meaning. When this occurs, tones are phonemes (discrete speech sounds), just like consonants and vowels, and they are occasionally referred to as tonemes. <http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/tone-linguistics/>

Mulugeta (2008: 29) defined tone in the following way:

*Tone is the use of the speech pitch in the language to distinguish words. Not all languages use tone to distinguish meaning, even though they use intonation's to express emphasis, emotions etc. If a language uses tone to distinguish lexical and/or grammatical meaning, tones are as important and essential as consonantal phonemes.*

Yip (2006: 761) supported the above idea by stating tonal language as the language in which the pitch of the voice can change the meaning of the word. Benchnon is a tonal language which has 6 tones; 5 level (register) tones and 1 contour tone. Tone in Benchnon can be considered as important as vowel and consonant phonemes. Mary (1990:7), Wedekind (1983: 129) and Christian (2006:117) express the tone system and number of tones in Benchnon that are uncommon in African languages. Bench is the first language by having six tones in Ethiopia. Most lexical and grammatical meaning changes in Bench depend on tones. Tone can be represented in different ways: such as, diacritic, number and tone letters. I use numbers to represent the tones in this paper, because it is not complex like diacritic and tone letters to use it. For clarity of tone systems and tone marks, the word /kar/ in (Christian 2006:

117) that represents 6 different meanings due to different tone changes in Bench is used as example to guide the readers in understanding the examples and discussions in this work.

**Example**

Degree of tone	Number	Examples	'Gloss'
a. Highest tone	5	kar <sup>5</sup>	'clear'
b. High tone	4	kar <sup>4</sup>	'leaf'
c. Level tone	3	kar <sup>3</sup>	'to circle'
d. Rising tone from 2 to 3	2-3	kar <sup>2-3</sup>	'game with small tone'
e. Low tone	2	kar <sup>2</sup>	'wasp'
f. Lowest tone	1	kar <sup>1</sup>	'loincloth'

All the vowel phonemes and syllabic nasals are the central elements of tone, and tone change represents one of the tones listed from 1-5, level tones and 2-3 rising tone from 2 to 3 (contour tone).

**3.3.1. Tone variation and its effect**

Before attesting meaning and grammatical variations of different word classes due to tonal variations in Benchnon and Shenon, it is better to see some points about tonal features and tone effects in Bench in general. In the following examples, a single tone change at sentence level or intonation changes the meaning of sentence as a whole.

- a. wu<sup>5</sup>itf<sup>3</sup>-e<sup>3</sup>                      'it is her brother'
- b. wu<sup>5</sup>itf<sup>3</sup>-e<sup>1</sup>                        'is it her brother?'

(Christian 2006: 120)

In the above two examples, the change of tone from level tone 3 to lowest tone 1 change the meaning of sentences from statement (a) to question (b) In a similar way, sometimes tone

change in some personal pronouns changes the meaning of the pronouns and in sentence as a whole as in the following examples:

- a.  $ni^5 bek'^3 - u^2 - e^3$  'He saw us'
- b.  $ni^4 bek'^3 - u^2 - e^3$  'He saw you'
- c.  $ni^1 bek'^3 - u^2 - e^3$  'We saw some body or something'

(Christian 2006: 121)

As can be seen from the examples, the root pronoun /*ni-*/ has different meanings due to tone change. In (a)  $ni^5$  with highest tone represents the pronoun 'us'. In (b)  $ni^4$  with high tone represents the pronoun 'you', and in (c)  $ni^1$  with lowest tone represents the pronoun 'we'. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the meaning of words only through tonal difference without contextual meaning. For example, in Christian's description, in the word /*kar*/ with 6 meanings, there is ambiguity among meaning of words that are formed due to tone change.

- a.  $kar^5$  'clear'
- b.  $kar^4$  'inset or banana leaf'
- c.  $kar^3$  'to circle'
- d.  $kar^{2-3}$  'game with smaller stones'
- e.  $kar^2$  1, 'wasp' /2, 'grass in swamp area'
- f.  $kar^1$  'loin cloth'

(Christian 2006: 120)

As can be seen from the above data in (e)  $kar^2$  with low tone has the word has two meanings with the same tone level. The first meaning is 'wasp' and the second is '*type of grass in swamp area used as food for cattle*'. In this situation, it is difficult to distinguish one meaning of a word from the other simply by using tone without contextual meaning. The above facts are some of the tonal factors that make the phonology of the Bench complicated.

### 3.3.2. Meaning variation due to tone change

In the following sections tonal changes that bring meaning differences in Benchnon and Shenon can be seen through examples and discussions. Most of the words that have similar meaning with the identical tone change their meaning while the tone is changed to other level. The following examples show words that have similar meaning with the identical tone and change their meaning in Shenon when the tone is changed in to another level.

	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>
a. /gar/	gar <sup>2-3</sup>	gar <sup>2-3</sup>	‘preparing butter’
	_____	gar <sup>2</sup>	‘wedding’

In the above example, the root word /gar/ with rising tone ‘gar<sup>2-3</sup>’ is a verb and its meaning is ‘*preparing butter*’ in the two dialects. When the tone changes into low ‘gar<sup>2</sup>’, it does not have meaning in Benchnon. But, in Shenon, its category is changed to noun and its meaning become ‘*wedding*’.

	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>
b. /gaf/	gaf <sup>2-3</sup>	gaf <sup>2-3</sup>	‘tooth’
	_____	gaf <sup>3</sup>	‘drive out’

In b, the root word /gaf/ with rising tone ‘gaf<sup>2-3</sup>’ is a noun and its meaning is ‘tooth’ in Benchnon and Shenon. When the tone is changed from rising to level tone ‘gaf<sup>3</sup>’, it does not have meaning in Benchnon. However, the word category is changed in to verb and its meaning becomes ‘drive out’ in Shenon.

	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>
c. /kaf/	kaf <sup>2-3</sup>	kaf <sup>3</sup>	‘taking rest’
	_____	kaf <sup>4</sup>	‘cattle’

In c, the root word /kaf/ with level tone ‘kaf<sup>3</sup>’ is a verb and its meaning is ‘taking rest’ in Benchnon and Shenon. When the tone is changed into high ‘kaf<sup>4</sup>’, it does not have meaning in Benchnon, but the word class is changed into noun and it is to mean ‘cattle’ in Shenon.

In the same way a word with similar meaning and represented by the identical tone in Benchnon and Shenon change its meaning when the tone is changed to other level in Benchnon. The following examples show words that have similar meaning with the identical tone and change their meaning in Benchnon while tone changes.

	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>	
a.	/daḡ/	daḡ <sup>4</sup>	daḡ <sup>4</sup>	‘external part of cottage house’
		daḡ <sup>2</sup>	_____	‘inset’

In a, the root word /daḡ/ with high tone ‘daḡ<sup>4</sup>’ is a noun and it is to mean ‘external part of cottage house’ in Benchnon and Shenon. When the tone is changed to low ‘daḡ<sup>2</sup>’, it has no meaning in Shenon, but it is to mean ‘*inset*’ in Benchnon.

	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>	
b.	/k’am/	k’am <sup>3</sup>	k’am <sup>3</sup>	‘looking baby’
		k’am <sup>2-3</sup>	_____	‘last year taro yield’

In b, the root verb /k’am/ with level tone ‘k’am<sup>3</sup>’ is a verb and it is to mean ‘looking baby’ in Benchnon and Shenon. When the tone is changed into rising ‘k’am<sup>2-3</sup>’, it has no meaning in Shenon, but the word class is changed into noun and it is to mean ‘*last year taro yield*’ in Benchnon.

# Chapter Four

## Morphological Features

### 4.1. Noun Inflections

#### 4.1.1. Numbers

Number is grammatical feature of nouns that is used to represent objects or entities in linguistics (Crystal 1997: 93). Many languages are distinguished by inflections between one and more than one. In the two dialects of Bench, singular and plural nouns make distinction by plural marker morpheme. In the examples below, singular nouns are given first and followed by plural nouns and the plural marker morpheme in Benchnon and Shenon.

##### (i) Benchnon singular and plural nouns

In The following data, four singular and plural nouns of Benchnon are presented side by side to show the plural form marker morpheme that makes variation from Shenon.

<b>Singular nouns</b>	<b>Plural nouns</b>
e <sup>1</sup> zu <sup>4</sup> bay <sup>1</sup>	e <sup>1</sup> zu <sup>4</sup> bay <sup>1</sup> -nd
‘cat’	‘cats’
kets <sup>3</sup>	kets <sup>3</sup> -nd
‘goat’	‘goats’
kyan <sup>3</sup>	kyan <sup>3</sup> -nd
‘dog’	‘dogs’
uts <sup>3</sup>	uts <sup>3</sup> -nd
‘rat’	‘rats’

From the above examples we can understand that, Benchnon regular singular nouns exist neutrally without any morpheme, and are marked by zero morpheme / $\emptyset$ / and plural nouns are marked by morpheme **-nd**.

## (ii) Shenon singular and plural nouns

In The following data, four singular and plural nouns of Shenon are presented side by side to show the plural form marker morpheme that makes variation from Benchnon.

<b>Singular nouns</b>	<b>Plural nouns</b>
e <sup>1</sup> zu <sup>4</sup> bay <sup>1</sup>	e <sup>1</sup> zu <sup>4</sup> bay <sup>1</sup> -ndhay <sup>4</sup> k'n
'cat'	'cats'
kets <sup>3</sup>	kets <sup>3</sup> -ndhay <sup>4</sup> k'n
'goat'	'goats'
kyan <sup>3</sup>	kyan <sup>3</sup> -ndhay <sup>4</sup> k'n
'dog'	'dogs'
uts', <sup>3</sup>	uts'-ndhay <sup>4</sup> k'n
'rat'	'rats'

From the above examples we can understand that, Shenon regular singular nouns exist neutrally without any morpheme, and are marked by zero morpheme / $\emptyset$ /. But plural nouns are marked by **-ndhay<sup>4</sup>k'n**.

As indicated in (i) and (ii), one can understand that regular singular nouns can exist neutrally and marked by zero morpheme / $\emptyset$ / in Benchnon and Shenon and the plural nouns are marked by the morpheme **-nd** in Benchnon and **-ndhay<sup>4</sup>k'n** in Shenon. Therefore, variation is attested in regular plural nouns in Benchnon and Shenon.

### 4.1.2. Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used instead of a noun or name to avoid the repetition of it. Pronouns are special cases of more general linguistic category which replace lexical content-bearing syntactic units of particular category (Saxena 2006: 131). Benchnon has a rich pronominal system in number of persons it distinguishes, and in the variety of paradigms (Mary 1986: 74 and Christian 2006: 332). In the following table and examples possessive pronoun of 2pL and 3pL that show variations in Benchnon and Shenon can be seen.

	Possessive pronouns	
persons	Benchnon	Shenon
2PL	yint <sup>2</sup> ayk'n <sup>3</sup>	its <sup>4</sup> hiyk'n <sup>3</sup>
3PL	its <sup>4</sup> ayk'n <sup>3</sup>	its <sup>4</sup> hiyk'n <sup>3</sup>

Table -2 possessive pronouns

2pL and 3pL pronouns show variations with change of single phoneme. A vowel phoneme **-a-** in Benchnon is changed into **-hi-** in Shenon as shown in the above table. The change of **-a-** (Benchnon) in to **-hi** (Shenon) can be illustrated in the following examples.

	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>
a.	yint <sup>2</sup> ayk'n <sup>3</sup> dor <sup>3</sup> your sheep 'Your sheep'	yint <sup>2</sup> hiyk'n <sup>3</sup> dor <sup>3</sup> your sheep 'Your sheep'
b.	its <sup>4</sup> ayk'n <sup>3</sup> dor <sup>3</sup> their sheep 'Their sheep'	its <sup>4</sup> hiyk'n <sup>3</sup> dor <sup>3</sup> their sheep 'Their sheep'

As can be seen from examples (a) and (b) **-ayk<sup>3</sup>n<sup>3</sup>** in Benchnon becomes **hiyk'n<sup>3</sup>** in Shenon in both 2pL and 3pL (**-a-** in Benchnon is changed into **-hi-** in Shenon). Thus, variation is attested in 2pL and 3pL possessive pronouns of Benchnon and Shenon. Vocative pronouns are quite interesting in Bench because of the way they are expressed and used. They are relatively unique in Bench from other Omotic language families in Ethiopia. In this section vocative pronouns that show variations in second person singular feminine and masculine are summarized in the following table and the variations in the two dialects can be explained through examples and discussions.

	Vocative Pronouns	
persons	Benchnon	Shenon
2SGmv	wo <sup>5</sup> ro <sup>4</sup> /wor <sup>4</sup> /	woy <sup>5</sup> nda <sup>4</sup> /woy
2SGfv	ha <sup>5</sup> ne <sup>4</sup>	han <sup>5</sup>

Table -3 Vocative pronouns

As can be seen from the above table, Benchnon uses 2SGmv (**wo<sup>5</sup>ro<sup>4</sup>/wor<sup>4</sup>**), and Shenon uses (**woy<sup>5</sup>nda<sup>4</sup>/woy<sup>4</sup>**) to call a male person mostly below or the same age as someone who is calling. In a similar way Benchnon uses 2SGfv (**ha<sup>5</sup>ne<sup>4</sup>**) and Shenon uses (**han<sup>5</sup>**) to call a female person mostly below or the same age as someone who is calling. These 2SGmv and 2SGfv in normal communication represent the 2SG (nen<sup>4</sup>) ‘you’ in both masculine and feminine in Benchnon and Shenon. From the above table and discussions we can understand that the 2SGm and 2SGf of vocative pronouns show clear cut variation in Benchnon and Shenon.

## 4.2. Variations in Case markers

Case is used in two different senses: as grammatical case, where it is used to mark the function of a noun or more precisely a noun phrase and oblique cases to mark location or direction (Katamba 1993: 237). Thus, case can be classified as syntactic or grammatical and semantic function based on the context. There are many case markers that have different structures and function in Benchnon and Shenon. In the following sub-sections some case markers which are not the same in terms of forms and meaning in Benchnon and Shenon are reviewed through examples and discussions to attest the case marker variation.

### 4.2.1. Comitative Case

Comitative case has a semantic function of ownership case marker. In Benchnon, comitative case has function, or more precisely marks the possessed in the widest sense (Christian, 2006: 516). Christian shows comitative case marker in Benchnon by morpheme **-am<sup>4</sup>**. In Shenon, the comitative case marker is **-an<sup>4</sup>**. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>
a. mant <sup>3</sup> -a <sup>2</sup> fel <sup>3</sup> -am <sup>4</sup> - uɕ <sup>2</sup>	b. mant <sup>3</sup> -a <sup>2</sup> fel <sup>3</sup> -an <sup>4</sup> - uɕ <sup>2</sup>
Ox-dm horn- Com -2SGm	Ox – dm horn –Com 2SGm
‘The ox with horn’	‘The ox with horn’
c. dyant <sup>2-3</sup> -a kiɣ <sup>4</sup> -am <sup>4</sup> -en <sup>2</sup>	d. dyant <sup>2-3</sup> -a kiɣ <sup>4</sup> -an <sup>4</sup> -en <sup>2</sup>
Cow- dm milk- Com-3SGf	Cow- dm milk- Com-3SGf
‘The cow with milk’	‘The cow with milk’

From the above examples one can identify that the comitative case marker for Benchnon is a morpheme **-am<sup>4</sup>** as indicated in examples (a) (c) and for Shenon the comitative case marker is a morpheme **-an<sup>4</sup>** as indicated in examples (b) (d) The Comitative in this context refers to the possession or the ownership of some thing. Thus, one can understand that variation is attested in Benchnon and Shenon in Comitative Case.

#### **4.2.2. Instrumental Case**

The instrumental case, as its name implies, marks a noun phrase denoting some entity which is used to perform the action indicated by the verb (Katamba 1993: 241). It has a range of semantic function, including cause (Force, cause, temporal, comitative and/path to show extended Location) (Christian 2006: 512). Instrumental case marker and the morpheme itself cover a number of functions in Bench.

Christian (2006: 512) states the instrumental case in the following way:

*In combination with a transitive verb, the instrumental case marks the instrument by which the event denoted by the verb is carried out, while the referent of the subject is pictured as having the main control in the state of affairs such instruments marked by -am<sup>4</sup> [in Benchnon] may be concrete inanimate, animate/human or abstract.*

The instrumental case marker has different semantic functions, and it is represented by the portmanteau morpheme **-am<sup>4</sup>** in Benchnon and by **-an<sup>4</sup>** in Shenon. This can be illustrated by the following examples (a) through (f) in Benchnon and Shenon.

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>
a. gaʃ <sup>2-3</sup> -am <sup>4</sup> Saʔ <sup>1</sup>	b. gaʃ <sup>2-3</sup> -an <sup>4</sup> Saʔ <sup>1</sup>
Tooth –Inst bite	Tooth – Inst bite
‘Bite with tooth’	‘Bite with tooth’
c. nyaʔ <sup>3</sup> -am <sup>4</sup> tits <sup>4</sup>	d. nyaʔ <sup>3</sup> -an <sup>4</sup> tits <sup>4</sup>
Child- Inst send	Child- Inst send
‘send by child’	‘Send by child’
e. gid <sup>1</sup> -am <sup>4</sup> han <sup>3</sup> k’-u <sup>2</sup>	f. gid <sup>1</sup> -an <sup>4</sup> han <sup>3</sup> k’-u <sup>2</sup>
Force-Inst go-m	Force-Inst go-m
‘He went by force’	‘He went by force.’

In examples (a) (c) and (e) Benchnon instrumental case marker is marked by *-am<sup>4</sup>* and in examples (b) (d) and (f) Shenon instrumental case marker is marked by *-an<sup>4</sup>*. The instrumental case markers in the two dialects have the semantic function of ‘by’ or ‘with’. Thus, we can understand that there is variation in instrumental case marker in Benchnon and Shenon.

### 4.2.3. Spatial expression of location

Some terms that express the relative location of things show some sort of variation in Benchnon and Shenon. The following examples show some variations in spatial location in Benchnon and Shenon.

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>gloss</b>
kan <sup>4</sup> gam <sup>3</sup>	kan <sup>4</sup> gan <sup>3</sup>	above
dun <sup>4</sup> gam <sup>3</sup>	dun <sup>4</sup> gan <sup>3</sup>	below
eg <sup>4</sup> gam <sup>3</sup>	eg <sup>4</sup> gik’n <sup>2</sup>	around there
se <sup>4</sup> gam <sup>3</sup>	seg <sup>4</sup> gik’n <sup>2</sup>	beyond the river/ there
ha <sup>4</sup> gam <sup>3</sup>	hag <sup>4</sup> gik’n <sup>2</sup>	beyond the river/here

As we can understand from the above examples location expression markers show variations. In Benchnon most of location markers are marked by morpheme *-gam<sup>3</sup>*. In Shenon most of

location markers are marked by the morphemes **-gan<sup>3</sup>** and **-gikn<sup>2</sup>**. Thus, variation is attested in some location markers in Benchnon and Shenon.

### **4.3. Tense and Aspect**

Aspect and tense are viewed in different perspectives by different linguists. Katamba (1993: 221) explains aspect as a common inherent verbal category, and its function is to distinguish the internal temporal unfolding of the predication. He further states the function of aspect as indicator of whether an event, state, process or action that is denoted by a verb completed or in a progressive form. Tense indicates the time of the predication in relation to some particular movement. This movement is typically the movement of speaking or writing (Katamba 1993: 220).. Both concepts deal with two main factors: activities or action and time as reference of activities. The aspect used for incomplete action and called imperfective (progressive), and that is used to indicate completed action and is called perfective. In the morphology of many languages, three tenses are distinguished as past, present and future (Katamba 1993: 220-222). Benchnon and Shenon show some morphological difference in their aspect and tense and this can be seen in the following section. Progressive aspect (continuous tense) across the two dialects shows variations. These variations undergo with different progressive markers. The following table summarizes Benchnon and Shenon progressive tense markers, followed by examples and discussion that illustrate variation in the two dialects.

	The Progressive Aspect (Continuous Tense) Markers	
Person	Benchnon	Shenon
1SG	-yis <sup>4</sup> ku <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'u <sup>3</sup>
2SG	-yis <sup>4</sup> ku <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'u <sup>3</sup>
3SGm	-yis <sup>4</sup> ku <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'u <sup>3</sup>
3SGf	-yis <sup>4</sup> ken <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'en <sup>3</sup>
3refl	-yis <sup>4</sup> ku <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'u <sup>3</sup>
1+3	-yis <sup>4</sup> ku <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'u <sup>3</sup>
1+2	-yis <sup>4</sup> ku <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'u <sup>3</sup>
2PL	-yis <sup>4</sup> ku <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'u <sup>3</sup>
3PL	-yis <sup>4</sup> kend <sup>3</sup>	-yit <sup>,4</sup> k'end <sup>3</sup>

Table -4 The progressive aspect (continuous tense) marker

In the above table, the continuous tense marker for 1SG, 2SG, 3SGm, 3refl, 1+2 and 1+3 is **-Yis<sup>3</sup>ku<sup>2</sup>**, and for 3SGf is **-Yis<sup>3</sup>ken<sup>2</sup>** and, for 3PL is **-Yis<sup>3</sup>kend<sup>2</sup>** in Benchnon. In the same way the continuous tense marker in Shenon for 1SG, 2SG, 3SGm, 3refl, 1+2 and 1+3 is **-yit<sup>,4</sup>k'u<sup>3</sup>**, for 3SGf is **-yit<sup>,4</sup>k'en<sup>3</sup>** and for 3PL is **-yit<sup>,4</sup>k'end<sup>3</sup>**. The following examples illustrate the above facts clearly about continuous tense marker in Benchnon.

(1) a. tan<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> t'olk'<sup>3</sup>-yis<sup>4</sup>ku<sup>3</sup>

I -Nom jump Cont.

'I am jumping'

b. yis<sup>4</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> t'olk'<sup>3</sup>-yis<sup>4</sup>ku<sup>3</sup>

he-Nom jump Cont.

'He is jumping'

c. wus<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> t'olk'<sup>3</sup>-yis<sup>4</sup>ken<sup>3</sup>

she-Nom jump Cont.

‘She is jumping’

d. its<sup>4</sup>yik<sup>3</sup>n<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> t’olk<sup>3</sup>-yis<sup>4</sup>kend<sup>3</sup>

they –Nom jump Cont.

‘They are jumping’

To have clear understanding between the two dialects the following examples show continuous tense marker in Shenon reflecting variation from Benchnon as follows.

(2) a. tan<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> t’olk<sup>3</sup>-yit<sup>4</sup>k’u<sup>3</sup>

I -Nom jump Cont.

‘I am jumping’

b. yis<sup>4</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> t’olk<sup>3</sup>-yit<sup>4</sup>k’u<sup>3</sup>

he-Nom jump Cont.

‘He is jumping’

c. wus<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> t’olk<sup>3</sup>-yit<sup>4</sup>k’en<sup>3</sup>

She-Nom jump Cont.

‘She is jumping’

d. its<sup>4</sup>yik<sup>3</sup>n<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> t’olk<sup>3</sup>-yit<sup>4</sup>k’end<sup>3</sup>

they –Nom jump Cont.

‘They are jumping’

From the examples in table 4 above, one can understand that there is difference in progressive aspect (continuous tense) marker in the two dialects. Thus, variation is attested in progressive aspect (continuous tense) in Benchnon and Shenon.

#### 4.4. Negation Markers

Negation is one of the morphological features in which variation takes place in the two dialects under study. Christian (2006: 258) shows the negation of past tense by the suffix -**arg**<sup>4</sup> or its allomorph -**ar**<sup>4</sup> in perfective aspect (past tense) almost in all verb forms of Benchnon. In a similar way negation marker of Shenon becomes -**ayg**<sup>4</sup> or its allomorph -**ay**<sup>4</sup>

in all verb forms. The negation marker of the imperfective aspect (future tense) in Benchnon is **-sarg<sup>4</sup>** and this become **-sayg<sup>4</sup>** in Shenon. In the following section tables and examples illustrate variations in negation marker of Benchnon and Shenon.

#### 4.4.1. Negation Markers of Past Tense

In the following section negation markers of past tense in Benchnon and Shenon dialect are presented in the table and followed by discussion.

Past tense Negation Markers of Benchnon and Shenon		
Person	Benchnon	Shenon
1SG	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
2SG	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
3SGm	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
3SGf	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
3refi	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
1+3	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
1+2	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
2PL	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>
3PL	-arg <sup>4</sup>	-ayg <sup>4</sup>

Table- 5 Past tense negation marker

As can be seen from the above table 5 the past tense negation marker for all persons in Benchnon dialect is **-arg<sup>4</sup>** and past tense negation marker for all persons in Shenon is **-ayg<sup>4</sup>**. The following examples illustrate the negation markers in Benchnon that make variation from Shenon.

(1) a. tan<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup>    om<sup>4</sup> tan<sup>3</sup>    gab<sup>3</sup>-m<sup>5</sup>    ham<sup>4</sup>- arg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>

I-Nom    yesterday    market- Loc    go- Neg - Past.1SG

‘Yesterday I didn’t go to the market’

b. wus<sup>4</sup>- a<sup>3</sup>    om<sup>4</sup>tan<sup>3</sup>    gab<sup>3</sup>-m<sup>5</sup>    ham<sup>4</sup> -arg<sup>4</sup>-en<sup>2</sup>

She-Nom    yesterday    market-Loc    go-Neg - Past.3SGf

‘Yesterday she didn’t go to the market’

c. its<sup>2</sup> yikn<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> om<sup>4</sup> tan<sup>3</sup> gab<sup>3</sup>-m<sup>5</sup> ham<sup>4</sup>-arg<sup>4</sup>-end<sup>2</sup>

They- Nom yesterday market-Loc go-Neg- Past.3PL

‘Yesterday they didn’t go to the market’

(2) To have a clear understanding and to reflect the specific places how variation of negation marker takes place in the two dialects the following examples illustrate the past tense negation markers in Shenon that make variation from Benchnon.

a. tan<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> om<sup>4</sup> tan<sup>3</sup> gab<sup>3</sup>-m<sup>5</sup> ham<sup>4</sup>-ayg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>

I-Nom yesterday market- Loc go- Neg - Past.1SG

‘Yesterday I didn’t go to the market’

b. wus<sup>4</sup>- a<sup>3</sup> om<sup>4</sup>tan<sup>3</sup> gab<sup>3</sup>-m<sup>5</sup> ham<sup>4</sup> -ayg<sup>4</sup>-en<sup>2</sup>

she-Nom yesterday market-Loc go-Neg - Past.3SG

‘Yesterday she didn’t go to the market’

c. its<sup>2</sup> yikn<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> om<sup>4</sup> tan<sup>3</sup> gab<sup>3</sup>-m<sup>5</sup> ham<sup>4</sup>-ayg<sup>4</sup>-end<sup>2</sup>

They- Nom yesterday market-Loc go-Neg- Past.3PL

‘Yesterday they didn’t go to the market’

From table 5 and from the examples in (a-c) one can understand that past tense negation marker for all persons in Benchnon is **-arg<sup>4</sup>** and past tense negation marker for all persons in Shenon is **-ayg<sup>4</sup>**. Thus, variation is clearly attested in negation marker of past tense in Benchnon and Shenon.

#### 4.4.2. Negation Markers of Future Tense

In this section negation marker of future tense in all persons of Benchnon and Shenon is presented in the table. Then examples of Benchnon and Shenon dialect negation markers are given followed by discussion.

Future Tense Negation Markers of Benchnon and Shenon.		
Person	Benchnon	Shenon
1SG	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
2SG	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
3SGm	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
3SGf	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
3refi	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
1+3	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
1+2	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
2PL	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>
3PL	- sarg <sup>4</sup>	-sayg <sup>4</sup>

Table-6 Future tense negation marker

The future tense negation markers of Benchnon in the above table that make variation from Shenon can be illustrated in following examples

(1) a. tan<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> won<sup>4</sup>san<sup>3</sup> ham<sup>3</sup>-sarg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>

I-Nom tomorrow go-Neg-Fut.1SG

‘I will not go tomorrow’

b. nen<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> won<sup>4</sup>san<sup>3</sup> ham<sup>3</sup>-sarg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>

you-Nom tomorrow go-Neg-Fut.2SG

‘You will not go tomorrow’

c. yis<sup>4</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> won<sup>4</sup>san<sup>3</sup> ham<sup>3</sup>-sarg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>

he-Nom tomorrow go-Neg-Fut.3SGm

‘He will not go tomorrow’

In a similar way to have clear understanding about the future tense negation markers of Shenon that make variation from Benchnon, in addition to the data from table-6 the following examples can illustrate the facts as follows.

- (2) a. tan<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> won<sup>4</sup>san<sup>3</sup> ham<sup>3</sup>- sayg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>  
 I-Nom tomorrow go-Neg-Fut.1SG  
 ‘I will not go tomorrow’
- b. nen<sup>4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> won<sup>4</sup>san<sup>3</sup> ham<sup>3</sup>- sayg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>  
 you-Nom tomorrow go-Neg-Fut.2SG  
 ‘You will not go tomorrow’
- c. yis<sup>4</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> won<sup>4</sup>san<sup>3</sup> ham- sayg<sup>4</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>  
 he-Nom tomorrow go-Neg-Fut.3SGm  
 ‘He will not go tomorrow’

From table 6 and the examples (a-c), one can understand that the future tense negation marker in Benchnon dialect is **-sarg**<sup>4</sup> and the future tense negation marker in Shenon dialect is **-sayg**<sup>4</sup>. From this one can understand that there is variation in negation marker of future tense in Benchnon and Shenon. Therefore, in the negation markers of the past tense and the future tense clear variation is attested in Benchnon and Shenon.

#### 4.5. Ordinal Number Marker

Ordinal number marker morpheme in Benchnon is lexically conditioned, and the ordinal number morpheme change occurs based on the specific lexical conditions of the last phoneme of the lexical item of the number. Based on this, there are two suffixes of ordinal number marker morphemes (**-ŋ** and **-ŋ̄**) in Benchnon. In Shenon, the ordinal number marker morpheme is uniform **-itin** throughout the numbers. These differences can be seen in the following examples:

<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	nam <sup>2</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	nam <sup>2</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	kaz <sup>4</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	kaz <sup>4</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup>	od <sup>4</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	od <sup>4</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
5 <sup>th</sup>	ucḥ <sup>2</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	ucḥ <sup>2</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup>	sa <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	sa <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
7 <sup>th</sup>	na <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	na <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	nya <sup>2</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	nya <sup>2</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
9 <sup>th</sup>	irs <sup>2</sup> tn <sup>3</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	irs <sup>2</sup> tn <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
10 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -m <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
11 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> mat <sup>3</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> mat <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
12 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> nam <sup>4</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> nam <sup>4</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> kaz <sup>4</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> kaz <sup>4</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
14 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> od <sup>4</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> od <sup>4</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
15 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> ucḥ <sup>2</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> ucḥ <sup>2</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
16 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> sa <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> sa <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
17 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> na <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> na <sup>2</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
18 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> nya <sup>2</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> nya <sup>2</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
19 <sup>th</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> ir <sup>1</sup> stin <sup>3</sup> -ḥ <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> ir <sup>1</sup> stin <sup>3</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
20 <sup>th</sup>	nam <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> -m <sup>5</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	nam <sup>3</sup> -tam <sup>2</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
30 <sup>th</sup>	kaz <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> -m <sup>5</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	ḥat <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>
40 <sup>th</sup>	od <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> -m <sup>5</sup> - ḥ <sup>5</sup>	od <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> -itn <sup>5</sup>

50 <sup>th</sup>	uc <sup>5</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - m <sup>5</sup>	uc <sup>5</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - itn <sup>5</sup>
60 <sup>th</sup>	sa <sup>5</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - m <sup>5</sup>	sa <sup>5</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - itn <sup>5</sup>
70 <sup>th</sup>	na <sup>5</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - m <sup>5</sup>	na <sup>5</sup> pm <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - itn <sup>5</sup>
80 <sup>th</sup>	nya <sup>5</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - m <sup>5</sup>	nya <sup>5</sup> rtn <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - itn <sup>5</sup>
90 <sup>th</sup>	ir <sup>5</sup> stin <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - m <sup>5</sup>	ir <sup>5</sup> stin <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> - itn <sup>5</sup>
100 <sup>th</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> bal <sup>23</sup> - n <sup>5</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> bal <sup>23</sup> - itn <sup>5</sup>
1000 <sup>th</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> wom <sup>23</sup> - m <sup>5</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup> wom <sup>23</sup> - itn <sup>5</sup>

As can be seen from the above examples, Benchnon has two ordinal number marker morphemes (-m<sup>5</sup> and -n<sup>5</sup>); the morpheme **-m<sup>5</sup>** is the ordinal number marker in numbers ending in -m (2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 16, 17, 20, 30, 40 ... 90 and 1000), and the morpheme **-n<sup>5</sup>** is ordinal number marker in any other numbers that are ending other than m, in Benchnon. Shenon has only one and uniform ordinal number marker morpheme, that is **-itn<sup>5</sup>** in all the ordinal numbers. Thus variation is attested in the ordinal number marker in Benchnon and Shenon.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Lexical and semantic Variations**

In this chapter, various lexical items from different word classes, cardinal number lexical items and lexical items of days of the week that cause variations in Benchnon and Shenon are dealt with examples from each dialect under lexical study. Under semantic variation some words that have the same form and different senses or meanings in the two dialects are dealt with examples and discussions.

#### **5.1. Lexical Variations**

Before dealing with lexical variations in the two dialects it is better to see some points about lexicon. Lexicology is the theoretical study of words, their use and their meaning; and lexicography is a study of a practical activity that involves compiling an inventory of the words in a language and saying some thing about each of them Hanks (2006:113). In linguistics the lexicon of the language is its vocabulary, including its words and expressions, more formally it is a language's inventory of lexemes. ( [http://www.google.com/search? hl](http://www.google.com/search?hl) ). Some times word and lexeme share similar meaning, but in more specific situations they are not the same. This section considers some lexical items or word variation in the two dialects.

##### **5.1.1. Some lexical items from different word classes**

To compare and contrast the two dialects, 352 lexical items are selected, of which 322 are from revised Summer Institute of Linguistics, SIL word list, 12 are from Christian (2006) and Mary (1986), and others from my own during my field work in She Bench worda. Some functional words that are not considered as free lexical items and words with slight phonological differences are excluded from lexical comparison. 41 lexical items that have clear-cut variations and used to identify differences in the two dialects under consideration are presented in the following way:

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>'Gloss'</b>
er <sup>3</sup> kin <sup>3</sup>	cɕ'ay <sup>3</sup>	'sweat'
bel <sup>3</sup>	kuyt <sup>3</sup>	'hanger'
bay <sup>2-3</sup>	woy <sup>4</sup>	'mother'
ga <sup>2</sup> tas <sup>3</sup>	katcɕ' <sup>3</sup>	'ant'
pel <sup>4</sup>	uɕ <sup>3</sup>	'horn'
dyant <sup>2-3</sup>	kaf <sup>4</sup>	'cattle'
fot <sup>2-3</sup>	kap <sup>3</sup>	'bird'
ka <sup>4</sup> kin <sup>2</sup>	p'ay <sup>3</sup>	'wing'
ts'odn <sup>2-3</sup> bat <sup>3</sup>	ɕoɕ <sup>3</sup>	'snake'
suys <sup>4</sup> kin <sup>3</sup>	sang <sup>3</sup> sang <sup>3</sup>	'scorpion'
ʒeg <sup>3</sup>	bat' <sup>4</sup> at <sup>3</sup>	'salt'
fap' <sup>3</sup>	ot <sup>2</sup>	'pot'
gag <sup>3</sup>	gud <sup>3</sup>	'mountain'
sok <sup>4</sup>	gyam <sup>3</sup>	'night'
fayt <sup>3</sup>	ʒat <sup>3</sup>	'star'
bet <sup>3</sup>	goyt' <sup>2-3</sup>	'skin'
sarg <sup>3</sup>	gar <sup>2</sup>	'weeding'
dan <sup>4</sup> bay <sup>3</sup>	tun <sup>4</sup> ba <sup>3</sup>	'cigarette'
ufikn <sup>2-3</sup>	put' <sup>3</sup>	'flower'
dayn <sup>3</sup>	bo <sup>2</sup> ket <sup>3</sup>	'grave'
yirɕ <sup>2</sup>	kaf <sup>3</sup>	'rest'
zub <sup>3</sup> zub <sup>3</sup>	wi <sup>3</sup> wi <sup>3</sup>	'bat'
nial <sup>2-3</sup>	bak <sup>2-3</sup>	'stone'
dul <sup>3</sup>	har <sup>2</sup>	'knife'

famt <sup>2-3</sup>	ɕan <sup>4</sup> k'al <sup>3</sup>	'lightening'
dorg <sup>3</sup>	mat <sup>3</sup>	'fat'
kazgn <sup>2-3</sup>	ez <sup>3</sup>	'milk'
dub <sup>3</sup>	dor <sup>2</sup>	'dance'
daɕ <sup>2</sup>	ut <sup>4</sup>	'inset'
mʔ <sup>4</sup>	ʃab <sup>3</sup>	'food'
ɕot <sup>3</sup>	uk <sup>2</sup>	'traditional bed'
fentʃ <sup>2-3</sup>	ha <sup>4</sup> lad <sup>3</sup>	'50 cent'
bak <sup>'3</sup>	tor <sup>3</sup>	'wait'
o <sup>4</sup> kar <sup>3</sup>	mi <sup>4</sup> t'ad <sup>3</sup>	'cooking oven'
yank <sup>'4</sup>	kub <sup>4</sup>	'anger'
bom <sup>2</sup>	bits <sup>2</sup>	'change'
ts'un <sup>4</sup>	uk <sup>2-3</sup>	'narrow'
donk <sup>'3</sup>	zang <sup>3</sup>	'sorghum'
kar <sup>4</sup>	ay <sup>4</sup> sin <sup>3</sup>	'inset leaf'
dap <sup>2-3</sup>	kab <sup>4</sup>	'slow'
ts'yakn <sup>2-3</sup>	ben <sup>2</sup>	'ash'

Out of 352 lexical items, 41 show variation in Benchnon and Shenon. These 41 words represent 11% of total 352 lexical items used for lexical comparison in two dialects in this study. In the lexical cognate relation, the comparative analysis, more than 80% of lexical items are similar and there is agreement on basic lexicon can be considered as reasonable cut point for mutual intelligibility. Bender (2003) and Crowley (1997) being cited in Wondimu (2006: 39) describes varieties sharing cognate percentage in basic vocabulary from 81-100 to be considered as dialects of a language, while those sharing 36-80 are languages of a family. There fore, based on the findings from the data one can understand that there is clear cut variation between lexical items of Benchnon and Shenon.

### 5.1.2. Cardinal Numbers

To attest the specific areas where variation takes place, the lexical items of the cardinal numbers in the two dialects are presented below in comparative way, and the comparison is followed by examples and discussions.

Benchnon	Shenon	'Gloss'
a. mat <sup>'3</sup>	mat <sup>'3</sup>	'one'
b. nam <sup>4</sup>	nam <sup>4</sup>	'two'
c. kaz <sup>4</sup>	kaz <sup>4</sup>	'three'
d. od <sup>4</sup>	od <sup>4</sup>	'four'
f. ucϯ <sup>2</sup>	ucϯ <sup>2</sup>	'five'
g. tam <sup>5</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup>	'ten'
h. tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> mat <sup>'3</sup> -a <sup>4</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> mat <sup>'3</sup> -a <sup>4</sup>	'eleven'
i. tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> nam <sup>3</sup> -a <sup>4</sup>	tam <sup>5</sup> -a <sup>4</sup> nam <sup>3</sup> -a <sup>4</sup>	'twelve'
j. nam <sup>3</sup> -tam <sup>2</sup>	nam <sup>3</sup> -tam <sup>2</sup>	'twenty'
k. kaz <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup>	ϯat <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup>	'thirty'
l. kaz <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> a <sup>4</sup> ucc <sup>2</sup> -a <sup>4</sup>	ϯat <sup>3</sup> tam <sup>2</sup> a <sup>4</sup> ucc <sup>2</sup> -a <sup>4</sup>	'thirty- five'
m. bal <sup>2-3</sup> /mat <sup>'3</sup> bal <sup>2-3</sup> /	bal <sup>2-3</sup> /mat <sup>'3</sup> bal <sup>2-3</sup> /	'hundred'
n. wom <sup>2-3</sup> /mat <sup>'3</sup> wom <sup>2-3</sup> /	wom <sup>2-3</sup> /mat <sup>'3</sup> wom <sup>2-3</sup>	'one thousand'

In the above data, the lexical items of numbers 1-10 are used as they are in some other languages (one, two three...). Numbers after 10 use the conjunction 'and' (-a<sup>4</sup>) to join the first and second number as in (*tam<sup>5</sup>-a<sup>4</sup> mat<sup>'3</sup>-a<sup>4</sup>* 'ten and one' or *tam<sup>5</sup>-a<sup>4</sup> ucϯ<sup>2</sup>-a<sup>4</sup>* 'ten and five'). Numbers like 10, 20, 30... are simply a number and 10 (*nam<sup>3</sup>-tam<sup>2</sup>* 'two ten' to mean twenty, *ucϯ<sup>5</sup> tam<sup>2</sup>* 'five ten' to mean fifty). The lexical item of numbers 100, 200, 300... is used as it is used in many languages of the world: *bal<sup>2-3</sup> / mat<sup>'3</sup> bal<sup>2-3</sup>* 'hundred'/'one hundred', and *ucϯ<sup>2</sup> bal<sup>2-3</sup>* 'five hundred'. As can be seen from the above examples, variation is

not much attested in cardinal number lexical items in the two dialects except ‘*thirty*’ and thirty five as indicated in (k) and (l)  $kaz^3 tam^2$  and  $kaz^3 tam^2 a^4 ucc^2 a^4$  in Benchnon or  $\text{ፍ}at^3 tam^2$ , and  $\text{ፍ}at^3 tam^2 a^4 ucc^2 a^4$  in Shenon to mean ‘*thirty*’ and thirty five respectively. Thus, variation is clearly attested only in cardinal number lexical items in thirty and thirty plus other numbers in Benchnon and Shenon.

### 5.1.3. Days of the Week

Lexical items of days of the week in Benchnon and Shenon are not the same. Most of the words of days of the week in Benchnon are loan words from Amharic but, most of the words of days of the week in Shenon dialect, are similar words with the neighboring language Kafinoonoo. The following data illustrate the facts mentioned above.

<b>Benchnon</b>	<b>Shenon</b>	<b>‘Gloss’</b>
sayn <sup>4</sup> u <sup>3</sup>	ፍan <sup>3</sup>	Monday
mak <sup>3</sup> sayn <sup>4</sup> u <sup>3</sup>	mak <sup>3</sup> ፍan	Tuesday
or <sup>3</sup> wob <sup>3</sup>	or <sup>3</sup> ob <sup>3</sup>	Wednesday
ha <sup>4</sup> mus <sup>3</sup>	a <sup>3</sup> maj <sup>3</sup>	Thursday
arb <sup>4</sup>	mits <sup>5</sup> ir <sup>5</sup>	Friday
k’ida <sup>3</sup> mi <sup>4</sup>	bu <sup>3</sup> ፍa <sup>3</sup> ፍ	Saturday
wud <sup>4</sup> /ፍam <sup>3</sup> bat <sup>3</sup>	ፍam <sup>3</sup> bat <sup>3</sup>	Sunday

Amharic loan lexical items of days of the week are widely used in Semen Bench and Dehub Bench woredas that are not adjacent to She Bench woreda and around Mizan-Aman town. On the other hand, Shenon lexical items of days of the week are predominantly used in She Bench woreda mostly areas that are adjunct to Kafinoonoo speaking areas. Shenon dialect speakers adjacent to Benchnon speaking areas are using the two systems interchangeably based on situations.

## 5.2. Semantic Variations

Before dealing with semantic differences in Benchnon and Shenon it is better to see what of semantics in linguistics. Semantics is defined by deferent scholars in different ways. Most of the time semantics is defined in linguistics as the study of meaning of words and of complete utterances. Sanford (2006:152) Semantics in general is the study of the relationship between words and meanings. It is the empirical study of word meanings and sentence meanings in existing languages (<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/semantics+linguistics>). In Bench there are some words that have some semantic differences in the two dialects under study. In the following table semantic differences in Benchnon and Shenon can be seen through examples and discussions.

word	Benchnon	Shenon
a. bal <sup>3</sup>	'Type of tree' nas <sup>3</sup> -i <sup>3</sup> bal <sup>3</sup> dog <sup>3</sup> -u <sup>2</sup> man- m tree cut Man cut bal tree	'Green fruit' muz <sup>3</sup> -i <sup>3</sup> bal <sup>3</sup> banana-m green Banana is green
b. yaz <sup>2-3</sup>	'heat from the fire or sun' o <sup>2</sup> var <sup>3</sup> yaz <sup>3</sup> -i <sup>3</sup> i <sup>2</sup> te <sup>3</sup> Sun heat- m bad 'Heat from the sun is bad'	'quarrel or squabble' yaz <sup>3</sup> -i <sup>3</sup> i <sup>2</sup> te <sup>3</sup> Quarrel m bad 'Quarrel is bad'
c. woꜛ <sup>3</sup>	'scratch or graze on the wall, ground' 1)deg <sup>3</sup> woꜛ <sup>2</sup> Wall scratch Scratch of the wall 2. 'old taro'	'scratch or graze on the wall, ground' deg <sup>3</sup> woꜛ <sup>2</sup> Wall scratch Scratch of the wall.

	<p>1) zong-a<sup>3</sup> wo<sup>3</sup></p> <p>taro-f old</p> <p>Taro is bad.</p>	
d. en <sup>4</sup>	<p>‘old women’</p> <p>en<sup>4</sup>-a ha<sup>4</sup>na<sup>3</sup></p> <p>old women-f where</p> <p>Where is old woman?</p>	<p>‘Mother’</p> <p>en<sup>4</sup>-a ha<sup>4</sup>na<sup>3</sup></p> <p>mother-f where</p> <p>Where is mother?</p>
e. buk <sup>3</sup>	<p>‘Fight’</p> <p>buk<sup>3</sup> bek<sup>3</sup></p> <p>fight look</p> <p>Look at the fight!</p>	<p>‘hit’</p> <p>1) nans<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> nans<sup>3</sup> buk<sup>3</sup>-u<sup>2</sup></p> <p>man- m boy hit-Past</p> <p>Man hit the boy.</p> <p>‘build or construct’</p> <p>2) nas<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> k’or<sup>3</sup>kor<sup>3</sup> ket<sup>3</sup> buk<sup>3</sup>-u<sup>2</sup></p> <p>man- m house build-Past</p> <p>Man built the house.</p>
f. tsap <sup>4</sup> m <sup>3</sup>	<p>‘Root of tree’</p> <p>intj<sup>3</sup> tsap<sup>4</sup>,m<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> kol<sup>3</sup>e<sup>3</sup></p> <p>tree root- m dry</p> <p>Root of the tree is dry.</p>	<p>1) ‘Root of tree’</p> <p>intj<sup>3</sup> tsap<sup>4</sup>,m<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> kol<sup>3</sup>e<sup>3</sup></p> <p>tree root- m dry</p> <p>Root of the tree is dry</p> <p>2) ‘Male genital organ’</p> <p>niy<sup>2-3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> yars<sup>3</sup> ts’ap<sup>4</sup>,m<sup>3</sup>-i<sup>3</sup> yar<sup>3</sup>se<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Child –m small male genital organ- m small</p> <p>Small child genital organ is small</p>

Table-7 semantic variations

As can be seen from the examples in the above table 7, semantic variation in the two dialects is caused by different factors. For example taro is the main root crop in Benchnon speaking areas and the words like ‘woʒ<sup>3</sup>’ that is used to represent this crop in Benchnon speaking area is used with in other senses in Shenon speaking areas where taro crop is not widely used. This is one semantic difference based on economic activity. In a similar way, there are other factors that cause semantic differences in Benchnon and Shenon. In the other way a word with single meaning in one dialect may have two meanings in the other dialect For example one word can have meaning of male genital organ and root of tree in Shenon while it represents only the meaning of root of tree in Benchnon as indicated in the above example. In some contexts it is difficult to communicate with out contextual references and additional explanations with words that have semantic differences in Benchnon and Shenon. Thus, semantic variation is attested to some extent in Benchnon and Shenon.

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## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

This chapter highlights some facts and findings on Benchnon and Shenon dialectal variations under study. In this study, I try to deal with some linguistic features of two dialects in comparative way. The objective of the study is to compare some phonological features, morphological features lexical items and semantic differences in Benchnon and Shenon. The basic sources of the data are primary structured interviews of texts and lexical items from the two dialect areas. Mainly for Shenon dialect I work with informant to select, organize and check the specific areas that show variations with Benchnon. For Benchnon I use from my own experience introspectively and there is secondary data elicited from previous works on the language. Both descriptive and comparative approaches are used to find out variation in Benchnon and Shenon dialects.

The first chapter of the study deals with the people and the language, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, review of related literature and methodology of the study. Regarding the language, Bench is classified under Afro-Asiatic Phylum, Omotic Family; it is in North Omotic subfamily of Gimojan. It is phonologically complex having six tones: five level tones and one contour tone. The second chapter of the study deals with the concept of dialect, the relation between dialect and language, relation between dialect and accent, what of dialectology, isoglosses and dialect continuum,. The third chapter of the study deals with measure findings of dialectal variations of phonological feature. Most of the time syllabic nasal is not used in Shenon dialect. This can be clearly expressed in the ordinal number morphological markers and some other words. In addition to this, tonal variation results meaning difference in Benchnon and Shenon. The fourth chapter deals with morphological features of dialect markers. Under this, some noun inflections, verb inflections, aspect and tense, negation and ordinal numbers, show some variations. The fifth chapter of the study deals with lexical features and semantic variations. Clear cut variation is attested in lexical items of some word classes, cardinal numbers and days of the week. Regarding semantic variation some Words show variations in Benchnon and Shenon.

Considering the findings obtained from the analysis of the sociolinguistic and linguistic data, the following recommendations on the linguistic situation of Bench is given. Geographically Benchnon dialect speakers cover wider areas (Semen Bench Woreda, Dehub Bench Woreda and Mizan-Aman town). On the other hand speakers of Shenon dialect cover one Woreda, which is She Bench Woreda. There are better road and communication access today than before that make the speakers of the two dialects to communicate and understand each other. Most of the Shenon dialect speakers use more of indigenous lexical items of language than Benchnon dialect speakers and they understand more Benchnon than Benchnon dialect speakers can understand Shenon dialect. Some of the previous works on the language mainly focus on Benchnon dialect. The language is unwritten language until the resent year and it is now on the process to be a written language. This process should consider the relation and difference of the two dialects. The language has some unique natures, such as tone and uncommon sounds when it is compared with other Omotic languages in Ethiopia. I try to point out only some features of phonology, morphology, lexical and semantic variation between the two dialects. Thus, to have clear grammar and sociolinguistic profile deep and further study is needed on the language.