

# **SOME LINGUISTIC FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OGIEK ORTHOGRAPHY**

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Ogiek is a highly endangered language spoken mainly in the Mau Forest Complex and other regions of Kenya. Some of its speakers called the Akie live in Tanzania. Its orthography was developed through the efforts of Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL), East Africa; and a language documentation project sponsored by Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP). Ogiek orthography was also developed by Micheli (2018) in her study of the grammar of the Ogiek language of Mariashoni. The paper aims to present a detailed analysis of the linguistic factors considered in the development of the Ogiek orthography in order to find out if it would be categorized as being satisfactory. Data for this paper was collected through the researcher's participation in the Ogiek orthography development workshop organized by BTL and practical experience during fieldwork in an Ogiek language documentation project sponsored by Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP). The researcher also interviewed a linguist and one of the members of the Ogiek speech community, chosen and employed to translate the Bible into Ogiek. This paper presents the graphemes proposed for Ogiek alongside the IPA symbol for each sound. It traces the process of the development of Ogiek orthography. It discusses the linguistic factors that were considered in the development of the Ogiek orthography. One of these linguistic factors is a phonological analysis. In the phonological analysis, for example, certain sounds were marked with a bar to eliminate ambiguity (Bible Translation and Literacy (E.A.) 2021). Another linguistic factor is the representation for words in context. Ogiek has a number of phonological processes occurring at word boundary. These processes cause changes in phonemes. It therefore identifies the phonemes which were preferred in such positions. The other linguistic factor discussed is word divisions. For researchers who are not native speakers of the language, word divisions pose a great challenge. The paper shows how utterances were divided into words. The last linguistic factor is the representation of suprasegmental features such as tone. Ogiek is a tonal language yet tone was not given adequate attention. The paper concludes that the orthography is to a great extent satisfactory. The Ogiek people are satisfied with their written materials.

## **References**

- Micheli, I. 2018. "Grammatical Sketch and Short Vocabulary of the Ogiek Language of Mariashoni". Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste.
- Bible Translation and Literacy (E.A.). 2021. *Lōgōōywēk che Miach chē Kiisirēy Luka*. Nairobi: Ogiek Language Project.
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