



The Politics of Qubee in Ethiopia: Rationales and Criticisms to the Adaption of Qubee as an Official Orthography of Afaan Oromoo

Wondimu Tegege*
Wolaita Sodo University
College of Social Sciences and Humanities
Email: wondelove7@gmail.com

Abstract

Afaan Oromoo is spoken by more than 40 million people as mother tongue. In Ethiopia, it is spoken as a lingua franca by other people who are in contact with Oromoo people. Besides, Afaan Oromoo is the second widely speared indigenous language in Africa south of the Sahara. Despite of these facts, Afaan Oromoo had been written by using different scripts such as Latin, Geez and Arabic. However, in 1991 Latin Script, Qubee was adapted as an official orthography of Afaan Oromoo writing. Since then, there have been arguments in favor and against this adaption. Hence, this review article explored rationales and criticisms on the adaption of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing. To achieve this purpose, document analysis was used as a main tool of data collection. The analysis of the documents revealed that reasons to adapt Qubee was mainly based on linguistic suitability, pedagogical easiness and the adaptability of Qubee to computer technology. Besides, those in favor of Latin script argued that Geez script has several limitations to adapt for Afaan Oromo writing; lack of marking germination for the consonants to indicate strong and weak syllables, failure of the Geez to show the length of vowels and inadequacy of the orthography to represent some Afaan Oromo sounds. However, the choice of Latin alphabet for writing Afaan Oromoo has encountered serious criticisms from those who favor Geez script for Afaan Oromoo writing. The proponents of Geez argue that the use of Geez script will unite the Ethiopian people, the use of other scripts than Geez affect the unity of Ethiopia and Geez is an indigenous script of Ethiopia. Consequently, they advocate that Geez script should be used to write any Ethiopian language including Afaan Oromoo. The critics against the use of Qubee are not based on a linguistic analysis and technical strengths and weakness of using Qubee. Thus, the claim against the use of Qubee seems subjective and not scientific, and are not convincing. Accordingly, it can be recommended that Qubee should be continued to be used for Afaan Oromoo writing.

Keywords: *Afaan Oromoo, Qubee, Latin, Geez, linguistic suitability, pedagogy, adaptability*

Axareeraa

Afaan Oromoo namoota miliyoona 40 ol tahaniin akka afaan dhalootaatti nidubbatama. Akkasumas, namoota afaan gara garaa dubbatan gidduutti bal'inaan nidubbatama. Afaan Oromoo bal'inaan tamsa'ee dubbatamuuttin biyyoota Sahaaraatii gad jiran keessatti afaaota dubbatamaniin walbira qabamee yeroo ilaalamu, sadarkaa lammaffaa irra jira. Haata'uu maalee, Afaan Oromoo sirna barreeffama mijataa hanga argatutti Qubeewwan adda addaa kanneen akka Gi'izii, Arabaafi Laatinii barreeffamaa tureera. Garuu, bara 1991(ALA) irraa jalqabee Qubee Laatinii madaksaachutiin seeraan raggaasifatee fayyadamaa tureera. Kana irraa kan ka'ee yaadoolii wal-morman lamatu deeggartootaafi mormitoota Qubee gidduutti uumamae. Kanaafuu, waraqaan qorannoo kun kan xiyyeeffatu, sabaabootaafi qeeqaawaan maadaqfamuu Qubee Afaan Oromoo irraatti dhiyaatan xinxaaluu irratti. Kaayyoo kana fiixaan baasuuf, qaaccessa dookimantii barreeffamaa akka meeshaalee meeshaa qorannooti hojiirra ooleera. Qacceessi barreeffamaa akka muldhisutti, Qubee Laatinii gara Afaan Oromootti madaqsuuf saboota gurguddoon sadiitu jiru. Isaanis: Laatiin Xinqooqa Afaan Oromoottiif mijaa'aa ta'uu isaa, barnootaaf salphaa ta'uu isaafi gara teknooloojii Kompiitaraatti salphatti madaaquu danda'uu isaati. Gama biraatiin, barreeffama Afaan Oromoof Gi'izii akka sirna barreeffama Afaan Oromootti madaqsuun hanqinaafi rakkoolee hedduu qaba. Qubeen Gi'izii sagalee dubbachiiftuu gabaabaafii dheeraa muldhisuu hindanda'u; dubbifamaa jabaataafi laafaa muldhisuuf Gi'iziin mallattoo hinqabu. Kana maalees, Gi'iziin sagalee Afaan Oromoo muraasaaf mallattoo bakka bu'u hinqabu. Haata'uu malee, madaqfamuu Qubee Laatinii akka sirna barreeffama Afaan Oromoo tolutti Qubee Afaan Oromoo sirna qabsiisuun, mormii cimaan warren Gi'izii deeggaraniifi leellisan irraa quunameera. Warreen barreeffama Gi'izii deeggarani akka jedhanitti, fayyadamni Gi'izii uummatoota Itoophiyaa tokko taasisa (tokkummaa biyyaa cimsa); Gi'izii malee Qubee biraa fayyadamuun immoo tokkummaa Itoophiyaa miidha; Gi'iziin sirna barreeffamaa biyya keessatti qalaqamedha kanneen jedhan fa'i. Kanaafuu, afaanonna Itoophiyaa, Afaan Oromoo dabalaatee, Gi'iziitiin barreeffamuu qabu jedhu. Qeeqonni fayyadama Qubee Afaan Oromoo irratti dhiyaatan kunneen garuu xiinxala yaadrimee Xinqooqaafi ciminaafi hir'ina Qubee Afaan Oromoo gargaaramuun qabu irratti kan hundaa'an miti. Kanaaf, qeeqni faallaa Qubee irratti keennamu kuni yaada dhuunfaa (subjective) irraa kan madde malee bu'uura saayinsii afaaniitiin amaansiisaa miti. Haaluma kanaan, Qubeen Afaan Oromoo ittiin barreessuuf gama hedduutiin irra caalaa mijataa waan ta'eef, falmiin jirumurtii haqa qabeessa kana wan duuba deebisu hintahu.

Jechoota Ijoo: Afaan Oromoo, Qubee, Latin, Gi'izii, mijaa'ummaa xinqooqaa, Xinbarnoota, Madaqsuu

1. Background to the Adaption of Qubee as a formal Orthography of Afaan Oromoo

Afaan Oromoo is the second widely speared indigenous language in Africa south of the Sahara (Mekuria, 1994; Mohammed, 1994). It is widely spoken and used in most parts of Ethiopia and some parts of the neighboring countries (Mekuria, 1994). Besides, Afaan Oromoo has long history and well developed oral tradition (Feyisa, 1996). Despite the size

of its speakers as well as its value as a widely spoken language in the Horn of Africa, the attempt to develop written Afaan Oromoo was started in the first half 19th century.

Afaan Oromoo has been written for different purposes using different scripts such as Latin, Geez, Arabic and Sheikh Bakri scripts (Teferi, 2015). Numerous Oromoo and foreign scholars attempted to discover the script that can be suitable for writing Afaan Oromoo. In connection to this, Tafari (1999) said that the first attempt to write Afaan Oromoo was made by Oromoos themselves and the first script used to write Afaan Oromoo was Arabic script. For instance, in the beginning of 19 century the Muslim Oromoos in Wallo, Arsi, and Bale and Hararghe areas used Arabic script to write religious, and praise poems in Afaan Oromoo (Guluma, 2018). But, the unsuitability of the script is believed to limit the expansion of writing in Afaan Oromoo (Tafari, 1999).

Besides, in 1830s and 1840s foreign scholars wrote Afaan Oromoo using Latin script. For instance, Feyisa (1996) stated that Bruce was the first European who collected a few words and developed sentence structure in Afaan Oromo, and he wrote in Latin script. Besides, Krapf recognized the importance of Afaan Oromoo for missionary purpose in North Eastern Africa and studied Afaan Oromoo. Then, he published a book in 1840 (Mekuria, 1994) using Latin script. His Justification was "... because the Ethiopic characters present great difficulty to writing as well as to memory" (Krapf, 1840, p. 21). In his book, Krapf specifically focused on the script that should be used to write Afaan Oromoo. Consequently, to solve the perceived limitations of Geez alphabet, Krapf used the Latin script to write Afaan Oromoo.

In addition, Onesimos Nasib (1856-1931) translated the Bible and other religious literature into Afaan Oromoo using Geez script (Mekuria, 1994). Besides, together with his colleagues, he compiled an Oromoo dictionary and written and translated secular literature. Hence, Onesimos and his language team were the first and the significant step towards creating an Oromoo literature in the 1880s and 1890s (Dereje, 2010). Feyisa (1996, p. 22) explained that the contribution of Onesimos by saying "He was a real pioneer in Oromiffa literature. His translation using the Geez alphabet with an additional glottal letter for 'dh' is still the standard work in the field, and without doubt he was a father of Oromiffa literature." However, it appears that the use of the Geez script is not suitable to Afaan Oromoo.

Another attempt to develop the script of Afaan Oromoo was made by an Oromoo scholar named Sheikh Bakri Sapalo. Sheikh Bakri invented an indigenous Afaan Oromoo script in 1956 (Feyisa, 1996; Mohammed, 1996). Hayward and Mohammed (1981, p. 553) described his invention as "It does seem highly likely that Sheikh Bakri was the first Oromoo who saw clearly the problems inherent in attempting to write the Oromoo language by means of orthographic systems which had been devised primarily for other languages." This shows that Sheik Bakir designed as a new indigenous writing system for Afaan Oromoo to solve the challenges of script to write Afaan Oromoo. Teferi (2015) has noted that Sheik Bakri has rejected the use Geez and Arabic scripts because he believed that they were not as such

suitable scripts for Afaan Oromoo writing. Consequently, Sheik Bakri invented a new script that he believed would suit the writing of Afaan Oromo better.

Furthermore, around 1970s, Haile Fida and his colleagues conducted a phonetic study of Afaan Oromoo and their major focus was to resolve the Afaan Oromoo orthography (Mekuria, 2017). In 1972, the study group reported that they adapted the use of the Latin script for Afaan Oromoo writing (Guluma, 2018). From the result of their research, Haile Fida in cooperation with the study group published a grammar book in Latin alphabet entitled, "*Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan Oromoo*" in 1973 using Qubee and Afaan Oromoo grammatical rules (Teferi, 2015). This is the first systematically presented grammar book in Afaan Oromoo, written by an Oromoo individual using Qubee. Thus, it was Haile Fida and his colleagues who developed an early version of Qubee (Guluma, 2018). This is also considered as the final step in the search for script suitable to write Afaan Oromoo. Here it should be noted that the contribution made by Haile and his friends has played a pivotal role in the adaption of Qubee as an official script of Afaan Oromoo

Then, in the 1970's Qubee was adapted from the Latin alphabet by the Oromoo scholars and was introduced to the Oromoos by the Oromoo Liberation Front (OLF). Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, the OLF started used Qubee for communication and literacy work at its base and among Oromoo refugees in neighboring counties (Guluma, 2018). Finally, in 1991 Qubee was adapted as an official and formal orthography of Afaan Oromoo writing.

After the adaption of Qubee, different textbooks and other useful reading materials began to be published by the new alphabet (Teferi, 2015). In September 1993, school instruction was legally launched in Afaan Oromoo for the first time. Here it should be noted that the educational curriculum and school instruction made Qubee Afaan Oromoo to reach every Oromoo schools in every corner of Oromia as an official alphabet of teaching and work. That is, millions of teaching and learning books were published and millions of Oromoo children were taught in it. In the history of the Oromoo, for the first time, Oromoo children got the chance to study in their first language. Now millions of Oromoo children are learning in schools in Qubee Afaan Oromoo. Besides, Oromoo people from all walks of life flocked to literacy classes to learn reading and writing in the Qubee alphabet (Mekuria, 2017).

Furthermore, the introduction of Qubee was welcomed by the Oromoos with joy. The Oromoo people were united in their acceptance of a writing system based on the Latin alphabet (Teferi, 2015). For the first time, Afaan Oromoo was transformed from a spoken language to a written language in a Qubee, Latin Script. Despite its popular acceptance and use for the last 27 years, there have been several arguments in favor and against the adaption of Qubee as an official script of Afaan Oromoo writing. The rationales and justifications behind the arguments should be clearly known to the academics and public in general. Thus, the main aim of this review article was to explore and describe the rationales and criticisms to the adaption of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing.

2. Objectives of the Review

The main aim of this review article is to describe the rationales and criticisms to the adaptation of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing. Besides, the specific objectives are:

1. To explore the key reasons for the adaptation of Qubee as an official orthography of Afaan Oromoo writing.
2. To investigate the advantages of using of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing.
3. To disclose the justifications and rationales presented by scholars in support for the use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing.
4. To reveal the criticisms against the use of Qubee for the writing of Afaan Oromoo

3. Methodology of the Review Article

To achieve the above objectives, document analysis was employed as a key method of data collection and analysis. Accordingly, relevant documents, research findings, articles, books and journals were purposively collected and reviewed. That is, only the documents which were believed to be related and relevant to the objectives of the study were selected. After the necessary and relevant documents were selected, the contents of the materials were reviewed. Then, the information which was believed to be relevant to the purposes of this study was identified from the documents. That is, from each document the perspectives and justifications of the authors in relation to the objectives of the study were separately recorded. Next, the perspectives and justifications recoded from the documents were categorized according to related themes of four categories: Reasons for adapting Qubee, advantages of using Qubee, arguments for the use of Qubee and criticisms against the use of Qubee for the writing of Afaan Oromoo. Finally, the perspectives and justifications were presented, described and discussed thematically based on the objectives of the study.

4. Results of the Document Review

4.1. Reasons for the Choosing Qubee, the Latin Script, as a Formal Orthography of Afaan Oromoo

Before the adaptation of Qubee, Afaan Oromoo has been written for different purposes using different scripts by various individuals. Several works have been written in Afaan Oromoo using Latin, Geez and Arabic scripts (Teferi, 2015). However, in November 1991, OLF called Oromoo scholars and intellectuals a general meeting. Tilahun (1993, p. 36) described the objective of the meeting as “The purpose of the meeting was to adopt the Latin script that OLF had been using or suggest an alternative.” After long hours of the discussion, it was decided that the Latin script was to be adapted as a formal and official orthography of Afaan Oromoo writing. It is argued that adaptation of Qubee to Afaan Oromoo is based on scientific studies and rigorous arguments that considered the nature and the features of Afaan Oromoo phonology (Feyisa, 1996).

Accordingly, there are different reasons for the adaptation of Latin script as an official orthography of Afaan Oromoo. Teferi (2015) argued the adaptation of the Latin alphabet for Afaan Oromoo writing is based on the following reasons:

1. The Latin alphabet has 26 letters whereas the Geez script has 231 characters.
2. The Geez script does not make provisions for germination or for certain long vowels.
3. It is easier to use keyboards designed for the Roman alphabet than that of the Geez syllabary.
4. Oromoo in the Latin alphabet is more commonly and widely used than the Geez script.
5. The Latin script is more commonly and widely used globally which means that the use of it brought the Oromoo closer to the world community.
6. Learning reading and writing in the Latin alphabet could offer an advantage for Oromoo children who later chose to study in other foreign languages (such as English and French) which were also written in the Latin alphabet.

These reasons can be categorized under three major points namely: linguistic, pedagogical and practical. The first was linguistic reason. On the meeting held to decide the script suitable to write Afaan Oromoo, Geez script was suggested as an alternative. However, it is argued that its roughly 250 characters are too clumsy to adapt to Afaan Oromoo. Tilahun also divulged the weakness to adapt Geez script saying “It must also be added that the Sabeen syllabary not only fails to indicate vowel length and germination, but also slows down a writer's speed since each symbol, which cannot be written cursively, must be printed”(1993, p. 37). With regard to the shortcomings of the Geez script for Afaan Oromoo writing, Baye (1992, p. 4) stated that:

Geez scripts are weak in representing long sounds and stresses. This is correct statement. Geez scripts in their present form cannot show clearly stresses and/or long sounds. As a result of this, alternative (ashami) meanings can be created. For instance, in the Oromigna [Afaan Oromoo] word of "beru", short and long vowels cannot be identified (from the script). In addition the consonant (r'e or rr'ee) cannot be known whether it has to be stressed. Therefore, the whole word is subject to different interpretations.

This excerpt divulges Baye (1992) noted that Geez script cannot represent the sound system of Afaan Oromoo such as the stressed and unstressed sounds as well as the short and long vowels. Failures to represent such features of Afaan Oromoo lead to the meaning differences. Thus, he supported the linguistic reason for adapting Latin alphabet for Afaan Oromoo writing.

Feyisa (1996) stated that an ideal writing system should be in agreement with the actual system of the languages's sounds. It needs to be recognized that some languages make distinction of sounds that may be unnoticed in other languages. A writing system, to be

easily learned and used, must provide a clear means of distinguishing the phonemes of the language (Teferi, 2015). In this connection, Qubee represents the phonemes of Afaan Oromoo and subsequently adapted for Afaan Oromoo writing. Thus, for linguistic reason, it was decided that the Latin alphabet be adapted to Afaan Oromoo phonological patterns.

The second one is pedagogical reason. According to Tilahun (1993, pp. 36-37), the 37 characters (or 34 + P, V, Z) can be learned in less than a month. In fact, only 32 symbols (minus the 5 double vowels) need to be recognized. For an Oromoo learning these signs and sounds they represent, the task is even much easier. It may take a non-Oromoo a little longer because producing the sounds-especially those not found in his/her language-takes time.

Practical reason is the third reason for the adaption of Latin script. Latin script was adapted to many languages of the world. Thus, Qubee Afaan Oromoo aligned itself with the so many countries of the world that use Latin script. For instance, one practical advantage that is an Oromoo child who has learned his own alphabet can learn the English script in a relatively short period of time due to the association between the two scripts. Besides, availability and suitability of technology is one of the areas of considerations while adapting a given writing system. In connection to this, Eastman (1983) as cited in Dereje (2010) argued that if special letters and diacritics are required, they may raise cost and availability of printing equipment. Accordingly, the adaptability of Qubee to computer technology is the other practical reason for its adaption to Afaan Oromoo writing (Tilahun, 1993).

To sum up, the decision to adapt Qubee as the writing alphabet of Afaan Oromoo was made by taking the above main reasons into consideration. After the adaption, different textbooks and other useful reading materials were published. Accordingly, using Qubee to write Afaan Oromo has several advantages.

4.2. The Advantages of Using of Qubee for Afaan Oromo Writing

The use of Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo is argued to have several advantages. In this connection, Feyisa (1996, p. 26) stated that the use of Latin alphabet for Afaan Oromoo writing have the following advantages over Geez script:

- A. The number of letters is very small. Afaan Oromoo can be written using only 31 letters (*i.e.*, *a, b, c, ch, d, dh, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, ny, o, p, ph, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z*) compared to 182 letters of Geez script. With this regard, Bahiru Zergawu cited in Tabor (2015:609) asked “Which is easy to study? 200-300 characters or 26-30 characters?” He reacted that 31 characters are appears to be easy to learn for students. Thus, the first advantage is easiness to learn the scripts. Similarly, Tilahun (1993) stated that the major advantage for the Oromoo child to learn in Qubee is that it is a phonetic based language; it is written in the way it is spoken. The script is much easier for children as it enables them to identify Afaan Oromoo sounds without ambiguity.
- B. The use of the Latin script would not put any additional burden on the children who have to learn English or want to learn other foreign languages which use the Latin alphabets. The Latin alphabet was adapted to many languages including English,

German, Swedish, Danish, French, Croatian, Czech, Italian, Romanian, Portuguese, Polish, Slovene, Hungarian, Finnish, Lithuanian, Vietnamese, Somali, Swahili, Turkish and others and it would be easier for an Oromoo child to learn any of these languages.

- C. Latin script can be easily printed and typed with machines used for English, Italian, French or Slavic languages with only minor adjustments
- D. Latin script is very economical, i.e, easy to learn, easy to print and has a quick result.
- E. Latin script has very simple letters. There is no unnecessary line and looping in the letters that are problematic with the Geez script.
- F. Latin script could be easily used for commercial and telegraphic communication purposes. In addition, its alphabetic writings can be easily adapted to computer technologies which are very important in business and education.
- G. Each letter in the alphabet stands for a single sound unit.

In addition to the above list, Garre (2017) argued that another practical advantage of using Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing is the fact that no new software or hardware is required to compose a text in Afaan Oromoo. One can use any computer and type his message, since every modern computer has the ASCII character code as its basis.

Thus, the use of Qubee scripts offers several advantages that scholars opted to use it for Afaan Oromo writing. Besides, scholars have been presenting various justifications and rationales in support for the use of Qubee as a formal orthography of Afaan Oromoo writing. The next subsection describes arguments for and against the use of Qubee as a formal script of Afaan Oromoo.

4.3. The Justifications and Rationales Presented by Scholars in Support for the Use of Qubee as Formal Orthography of Afaan Oromoo Writing

As stated earlier, Qubee was adapted as a formal script of Afaan Oromoo writing in 1991 and thus, Afaan Oromoo has been written by Qubee for more than quarter of a century. The adaption of the Qubee was a burning issue in the country since the beginning of 1990's. The choice of Latin script for writing Afaan Oromoo has invited serious criticisms from many quarters, mainly, from the advocates of the Geez script. Besides, the use of Latin script for writing Afaan Oromoo has become a subject of debate (Teferi, 2015). Consequently, there have been arguments for and against the use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo Writing. Next the justifications and rationales that are presented by various scholars in favour of Qubee script are explained.

Different reasons and justifications have been presented by several scholars in support for the use of Qubee as a formal orthography of Afaan Oromoo Writing. Various Oromoo and other scholars provide different reasons for using Qubee and for not using Geez script. For illustration, the adaptability of Qubee to computer technologies is one of the practical reasons for the adaption of Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo (Tilahun, 1993; Garree, 2017).

Accordingly, the suitability of Qubee for writing Afaan Oromoo phonology is one of the rationales to favor the use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing. As it was clearly indicated in the foregoing discussion, Oromoo scholars had discussed on the selection of the script that would be appropriate to Afaan Oromoo writing. The scholars had conducted several studies on "which script is appropriate and suitable for Afaan Oromoo". The studies revealed that Latin, Arabic and Geez scripts were not appropriate to write Afaan Oromoo sounds. The scripts cannot properly represent the phonology of Afaan Oromoo (Tabor, 2015). Similarly, Gadaa (1988, p. 16) stated the "Roman, Arabic and Sabeian scripts are all foreign to Oromiffa [Afaan Oromoo]. None of them fit well the peculiar features of the sound (phonology), in Oromiffa." Thus, the three scripts were not originally created for writing Afaan Oromoo and consequently, the scripts do not perfectly represent the sound system of Afaan Oromoo.

However, it should be noted that among Latin, Arabic and Geez scripts, the Latin alphabet appeared to be more suitable for writing Afaan Oromoo sounds. In connection to this, Gadaa (1988) noted that the Latin script is relatively best suited for transcription of Afaan Oromoo sounds. As a result, several political, cultural groups and linguists have strongly advocated for the use of the Latin script with the necessary modifications.

According to Feyisa (1996) the major characteristics and special features of Afaan Oromoo are the two degrees of reading vowel length (short and long) and the consonants mode of articulation (hardening and softening). The short and long degree of vowels and the hardening and softening degrees of the consonant mode of articulation lead to differences in the meanings of words. These special features of Afaan Oromoo are perfectly represented by the use of Qubee script. Examples and illustrations are presented below.

Furthermore, the weaknesses of Geez script to represent the sound system of Afaan Oromoo are another justification presented by scholars in favor Qubee. In connection to this, Cerulli (1922) cited in Gadaa (1988, p. 17) expressed the short comings of the *Geez* script as follows: "to express the sounds of Oromoo language with letters of the Ethiopic (*Sabeian*) alphabet, which express very imperfectly even the sounds of the Ethiopian language, is very near impossible ... reading *Oromoo* language written in Ethiopic alphabet is very like deciphering a secret writing." Similarly, Gadaa (1988, p. 16) stated the weakness of using Geez script saying, "The Sabeian script does not differentiate germination of consonant and glottal stops. Moreover, it has seven vowels against ten for Oromiffa." This quote shows that the Geez script fails to suit the phonology of Afaan Oromoo and thus, scholars prefer Latin script over the Geez alphabet.

Besides, Krapf (1840, p. 21) wrote Afaan Oromoo in Latin Script and his justification was that "... because the Ethiopic characters present great difficulty to writing as well as to memory." In relation to this, Feyisa (1996, p. 22) stated that "... he [Krapf] observed a number of problems with the use of Geez script to write in Oromiffa [Afaan Oromoo]". Feyisa added that Krapf discovered that Geez was unsuitable for writing Afaan Oromoo. Specifically, Krapf noted that Geez alphabet does not include some of the major

phonological distinctions in Afaan Oromoo and fails to express some particular sounds in it. To solve the perceived limitation of Geez, Krapf used the Latin script to write Afaan Oromoo.

Moreover, several scholars such as Baye (1992), Tabor (2015), Dereje (2010), Feyisa (1996), Bender et al. (1976) as cited in Alemayehu (2012), Teferi (2015) stated that Geez script have several limitations to adapt for Afaan Oromoo writing. These include the presence of some unneeded alphabet, the irregularity of many of syllabic characters, the presence of some redundant alphabets, lack of marking germination for the consonants to indicate the stressed and unstressed consonants, failure of the Geez script to show the length of vowels and inadequacy of the Geez to represent some sounds of Afaan Oromoo. Let see some of these weaknesses with illustrations.

1. **Failure of Geez alphabet to show the length of vowels.** Afaan Oromoo has five short and five long vowels. The length of the vowels are shown in the orthography by doubling the five vowel letters. Based on their length, vowels in Afaan Oromoo are categorized as short and long. The short sound vowel is represented by a single vowel letter while the long vowels by double vowel letters: ***(a) short: I, e, a, o, u*** and ***(b) long: ii, ee, aa, oo, uu***

Two vowels in succession indicate that the vowel is long. That is, if similar vowels are double in a word the sound should be longer. See the example below for illustration:

A. Long Vowel- **Laagaa** (roof of the mouth in English)

B. Short Vowel- **Laga** (river in English)

These examples indicate that Afaan Oromoo short sound vowel is represented by a single vowel letter while the long vowels by double vowel letters. However, when Geez script is used to write Oromoo words, it is impossible to show the length of vowels in writing.

The difference in length of vowel bring meaning difference. See the following pairs of Afaan Oromoo words for illustrations:

Example 1: Dhufe he came, in English (Short Vowel)

Dhuufe he farted, in English (Long Vowel)

Example 2: Hara is Lake, in English (Short Vowel)

Haaraa is New, in English (Long Vowel)

As illustrated above, in Afaan Oromoo, the word '*Hara*' with short '*a*' sound means *lake*, in English. But, the word in Afaan Oromoo '*Haaraa*' with long '*aa*' sound means *new*, in English. Similarly, in Afaan Oromoo the word '*Dhufe*' with short '*u*' sound means *he came*, in English. But, '*Dhuufe*' the word in Afaan Oromo with long '*uu*' sound means *he farted* in English. These examples indicate that the short and long sound in Afaan Oromoo can bring differences in a meaning. Thus, vowel length should be strictly observed since it leads to the difference in meaning. The illustrations also divulge that Qubee adequately

represents the the phonemes of Afaan Oromoo. However, if you want to write the above words in Geez alphabet, both words are written in the same way. Subsequently, it is difficult to know whether a vowel is to be long or short while reading the words if it is written in Geez Script (Teferi, 2015).

2. **Lack of gemination markers for the consonants to indicate unstressed and stressed syllables.** Depending on the degrees of the mode of articulation, Afaan Oromoo consonants are grouped as unstressed and stressed. As to pronunciation of any Afaan Oromoo word, if the sound stressed, or emphasized, similar consonants are used, or doubled in a word.

See the following pairs of words for illustration:

Example 1: *Badaa* (unstressed/unemphasized)-**Evil**, in English

Baddaa (stressed/emphasized) –**Highland**, in English

Example 2: *Boba'e* (unstressed/unemphasized)-**Burnt**, in English

Bobba'e (stressed/ emphasized) – **Deployed**, in English

That is, the consonants are unstressed when they are single and stressed when they are doubled. Besides, the stressing and unstressing of consonants lead to meaning differences. The examples given above show that the stressing and unstressing of Afaan Oromoo consonants can be bring meaning differences. For instance, in Afaan Oromoo word "*Badaa*" means "*Evil*" in English, the '*d*' sound is unstressed, whereas the word "*Baddaa*" means "**Highland**" in English, the letters '**dd**' are stressed. In example 2, the Afaan Oromoo word *Boba'e*, which is unstressed/unemphasized means **Burnt** in English, whereas the Afaan Oromoo word *Bobba'e* which is stressed/ emphasized, means **Deployed** in English. Thus, it is vivid that the use of Qubee can show the stressing and unstressing of Afaan Oromoo consonants.

However, Geez alphabet cannot indicate the stressing and unstressing of the consonant. In relation to this, Feyisa (1996, p. 26) stated that "We believe the problems of the degree of length in vowels, i.e., lengthening and shortening and the degree of the mode of articulation in consonants, i.e., hardening and softening can be solved only if written in the adopted Latin alphabet and not in Geez alphabet." This elucidates that the Latin script suits the phonology, sound system, of Afaan Oromoo and it also represents the sound features of Afaan Oromoo. The Geez alphabet, however, doesn't suit the Afaan Oromoo phonology (Gadaa, 1988; Teferi, 2015). Consequently, it is argued that the Latin script is more suitable than the Geez alphabet to signify the sound features of Afaan Oromo as it has semantic implication which is the core purpose of writing.

Teferi (2015) further argued that the absence of a mechanism to distinguish single and geminated sounds when writing Afaan Oromo in the Geez script creates more complications and misunderstandings. To solve such difficulties, Geez script needs additional symbols marking strong sounds. The examples and explanations reveal that Geez script not only failed to indicate strong and weak syllables of Afaan Oromoo, it also failed to show the features in Amharic sounds. Accordingly, it is argued that the lack of gemination marker in Geez script is one the major rationale in the choice of Latin script for Afaan Oromoo.

3. Inadequacy of Geez alphabet to represent some sounds of Afaan Oromoo

The implosive /dh/ has no equivalent symbol or representation in the Geez script. For example, Afaan Oromoo has unusual sound that is produced when the tip of a tongue is curved back and touches the palate. This sound is easily represented in Qubee as "dh". However, Teferi (2015) noted that the absence of an equivalent symbol for the implosive /dh/ would clearly pose challenges if the Geez script is to be adapted as a writing system for Afaan Oromoo.

4. The presence of some redundant alphabets: Geez alphabet contains different script to represent the same sound. For example, the sounds /a /, /h/, / ts / and /s/ have more than one representation in the Geez script as the following illustration shows:

• Sounds	• Representations in Geez Alphabet
• /a/	• አ and ኅ
• /h/	• ሀ and ሐ
• /s/	• ሰ and ሠ
• /ts/	• ጸ and ፀ

Such double representations are redundant and creates burden for learners. With this regard, Addis Alamayyahu decided to use only one from each and left out the others as redundant (Teferi, 2015). Besides, some words are traditionally (at least in Amharic) written with one rather than the other symbol. These representations create a problem to adapt Geez Alphabet to Afaan Oromoo.

5. The presence of some unneeded scripts in Geez: The Geez alphabet also contains some script for which Afaan Oromoo has no equivalent sounds. With this regard, Teferi (2015) stated that the Geez alphabet has unwanted symbols such as /ts/ and /ጸ/, for which there are no equivalent sounds in Afaan Oromoo. In fact borrowed words are joining Afaan Oromoo these days and they are becoming part of the sound.

The foregoing illustrations show that there are linguistic feature incompatibilities between Geez script and Afaan Oromoo sounds. Besides, the examples show that Qubee Script is suitable to write the sounds of Afaan Oromoo. The above systemic linguistic problems forced scholars to come up with the idea of using the alphabet system which has characters

that represent basic language sounds, technically known as phonemes (Tilahun, 1993). With this regard, Bonsa (2013) stated that "The Geez script utterly and completely fails to convey the language. That is why Oromos refused to use Geez script and use Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing." In general, the inadequacy of the Geez script to represent some of the phonological distinctions in Afaan Oromoo and its failure to express some particular sounds in Afaan Oromoo is argued for the use of Latin script for Afaan Oromoo writing.

In addition to linguistic factors, the preferences of Oromoo people to use Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo is another rationale presented by scholars for the use of Qubee. Accordingly, it is argued that Oromo people prefer to write Afaan Oromo using Qubee and currently, Oromos in all walks of life are using the orthography of their choice, Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo . With this regard, Ali and Zaborski (1990) stated that the reason for using Latin script in their book is because Qubee is favored by most of the Oromos and it greatly facilitates the study of the Afaan Oromoo. Mulata (2013, p. 2) stated that "All Ethiopians should begin to consider Qubee as a tool of convenience chosen by native speakers of the Oromoo language". Consequently, it seems the use of Latin script is related to the preference of Oromo people and the fact that Qubee assists and simplify the study of the language. Hence, the role of attitude is also a central issue in script selection.

Furthermore, the symbolic representation of Qubee among the Oromoo people is considered as another rationale for its use for Afaan Oromoo writing. The use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo is seen as symbol of freedom or independency from past subjugation and domination of the imperial and dictatorial systems (Mulalem, 2017). Besides, the script becomes a primary symbol of Oromoo national identity and unity. The choice of Qubee is also an attempt to construct once own identity and a way of fighting the old tradition of anti-diversity Ethiopianist. The previous Ethiopian rulers designed and implemented the Amharization policy, where all ethnic groups in the country were obligated to abandon their own language and culture and forcefully made to accept the culture and language of the Amhara (McNab, 1989; Dereje, 2010). On the contrary, Qubee generation, the current Oromoo youth, consider the use of Latin alphabet as an act of de-Amharization of Oromoo culture, language and identity.

Moreover, Qubee is seen as one way of correcting the linguistic dominations that happened in the past. With this regard, Mulalem (2017) noted that there are two perspectives about Ethiopian political narratives. These are Ethiopianist (extreme pan-Ethiopianist) and correctionist (extreme ethno-nationalist). These perspectives have different view regarding the use of Latin alphabet for Afaan Oromoo writing. Ethiopianism (extreme pan-nationalist) is the oldest view in the Ethiopian nationalism that has been dominantly articulated by the Amhara. This view sees Ethiopia as the country which had a long political history and ancient society welded by its history and devotion to Christian faith. This ideology has hegemonic discourse that considers Ethiopia as one ethnic, one language and one religion state.

After the coming to power of Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front, ethno-linguistic based governance has introduced a policy that tries to meet the interest of multi-

ethnic and multi linguistic groups in Ethiopia. In relation to this, the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Article 39, sub-article 2) has guaranteed that “Every nation, nationality and people in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history.”

Currently, multi-language, multi-culture and multi-religion is highly favored political system. The establishment of the Federal system in Ethiopia has enabled Ethiopian people to be liberated from the domination of one language, one culture and one religion, though it is not a concluded agenda (Mulualem, 2017). Accordingly, the speakers of various languages in Ethiopian languages have chosen their own script to write their own language. Specifically, the speakers of Afaan Oromoo opted to use Latin scrip to write Afaan Oromoo. Consequently, Latin script is seen as a symbol of identity to Oromoo people. Hence, Lorraine as cited in Mekuria (2017) has stated that the Qubee signifies the celebration of Oromoo culture, traditions, and identities, and an assertion of their place in the world of modern literacy and learning.

According to Mulualem (2017) the correctionist (extreme ethno-nationalist) view has emerged to deconstruct the extreme pan-nationalist (Ethiopianism) view and construct the corrective political narratives in the political history of modern Ethiopia. They advocated that the previous Ethiopian governments had suppressed the culture, language and the socio-political system of Ethiopian people. Besides, the correctionist view asserts that Ethiopia state is an exclusionist one and the oppressed and marginalized groups need to have the right to self-determination. With this regard, the use of Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo is seen by the correctionist as a symbol for the construction of the sense of ethno nationalism and deconstruction of the normative narrative of Ethiopianist view in the Ethiopian polity. Consequently, Qubee is considered as a symbol of strong Oromoo Nation hood or Orommumaa (Dereje, 2010).

As result, the correctionists argue that Qubee is as symbol of freedom and independence from the past subjugations (Mulualem, 2017). Thus, Qubee represents the resistance and scarifies of Oromoo towards any unfair, injustices and inequalities happened to Oromoo people. Additionally, the adaption of Qubee has contributed to the psychological liberation of the Oromoo people from past subjugations. Guluma (2018) argued that Oromoo intellectuals have scarified a lot to establish Qubee and the Oromoo people believe Qubee is the result of their struggle and symbol of their unity. Hence, Qubee has become both an outcome and the symbol of Oromoo national struggle.

Ever though there are several arguments for the use of Qubee as a formal orthography of writing Afaan Oromoo, there are also oppositions and criticism, particularly from non Oromoo scholars and politicians to the adaption by those who favor Geez Alphabet for Afaan Oromoo writing. The oppositions and critics are presented below.

4.4. The Criticisms against the Use of Qubee for the Writing of Afaan Oromoo

After its adaption, Qubee has been marvelously used in governmental offices, in research, in writing, and teaching Afaan Oromoo and other school subjects. Besides, several dictionaries, novels, songs, teaching materials, children's books, scholarly articles and books were published in Afaan Oromoo (Teferi, 2015; Mekuria, 2017; Guluma, 2018). In addition, Afaan Oromoo vocabulary has shown an extraordinary expansion. Hence, it is argued that the consequences of the use of Qubee over the last three decades have been incredible. But, 27 years after Oromoo scholars had officially adapted Qubee for writing Afaan Oromoo, some Ethiopianists are still questioning appropriateness of the use of Qubee for writing Afaan Oromoo and are arguing for the reverse of the decision to use it (Guluma, 2018).

There has been oppositions and criticism to the adaption by those favoring Geez Alphabet for Afaan Oromoo writing. In connection to this, there is still a demand from Amharic-speaking scholars and political activists that the Oromoo drop the Qubee and adapt the Geez script to write their language (Mekuria, 2017). In similar vein, Teferi (2015) divulged that the argument against Qubee Afaan Oromoo came invariably from Amharic speakers who had different social or academic backgrounds. Those who oppose the use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing forwarded different reasons and rationales for their dislike of the use of Qubee.

One of the earliest critics was made in March 1992 by Baye. As stated earlier, Baye (1992) acknowledged that the Geez script failed to represent the phonology of Afaan Oromoo. However, Baye (1992) argued that the shortcomings of the Geez alphabet can be solved and accordingly, Baye argued that Geez script can be adapted to Afaan Oromoo writing. The main argument of Baye (1992) for the use of Geez for Afaan Oromoo is based on the perceptions Ethiopia should have only one Script that is the Geez script and the use of multiple scripts for the writing of languages in Ethiopia is disadvantages. This implies that even though the Geez script is unfit to the sound system of Afaan Oromoo, it should be adapted to Afaan Oromoo writing. This does not seem logical and convincing argument.

In addition, Baye (1992) argued that several difficulties will be encountered if the Oromoo insisted to use Latin script for Afaan Oromoo. The felt difficulties were:

- 1) Anyone who is trained only in Latin script needs to learn how to read and write in the Geez script if he/she is to go and work in the other part of the country where Geez is used. As a result such a person needs to be literate twice! In terms of time and money, this will cause a tremendous amount of difficulty and inconvenience.
- 2) Such a measure will also transform the country from a multi-lingual one to a multi-script one. Thus, Ethiopian who wants to travel and work in any parts of the country will have to learn at least three scripts and writing systems!
- 3) Any communication and correspondence with the central government will no longer be done in one writing system but, possibly, with three. In such an event, the

central government will have to make additional preparations. All written materials regarding national issues will have to be printed in all the three writing systems. The cost of human labor and training for such an undertaking will not be trivial.

From the felt difficulties mentioned by Baye one can realize that, there are no linguistic and technical difficulties in the use of Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo. Rather, the difficulties mentioned by Baye were related to the additional task of learning the Geez script if Afaan Oromoo is continued to be written in Qubee. He argued that each citizen will be required to learn at least two writing scripts; the one being the regional writing script, while the other is the center's writing script. It also shows the material, financial and human resources expenses of using multi script in a country. Citing the difficulties, he argued that Qubee should not be used for writing Afaan Oromoo. Finally, Baye (1992) stated that for multi-lingual under-developed countries like Ethiopia, it is uni-script and not multi-script that has a clear advantage. Adding multi-script to a multi-lingual society results in more problems. Hence, he suggested that all Ethiopian languages should be written in Geez script because multi-script is financially disadvantages to Ethiopia.

The other great criticism to the adaption of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing is from the proponents of Ethiopianist ideology that considers Ethiopia as one ethnic, one language, and one religion state (Muluaem, 2017). These advocators considers Amharic and Geez alphabet as a symbol of unity and identity for Ethiopian people. Accordingly, the Ethiopianists argue that the use of Geez script will unite the Ethiopian people. Hence, the use of the Geez script to write Afaan Oromoo and all the other Ethiopian languages would create a feeling of unified identity among the people (Teferi, 2015). Consequently, the Ethiopianist advocates Geez alphabet should be used to write any Ethiopian language. With this regard, some Ethiopianist strongly believe that one official language for the country and one script for all languages are necessary for a unitary status of the Ethiopian state (Guluma 2018).

However, the use of a single script and a single official language do not promote unity of the Ethiopian people. This is because the use of one script to write different languages in a country does not necessarily make the speakers feel as though they belong to a unified country (Teferi, 2015). Thus, it appears that the reason for arguing against Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing is not linguistic, rather politics.

The other criticism to the adaption of Qubee is based on the assertion that the Geez script is an indigenous script of Ethiopia that should be used for writing all Ethiopian languages, including Afaan Oromoo (Teferi, 2015). In addition, the Ethiopianist argues that Geez script is a national heritage and consequently, it should be used by all Ethiopian languages for "national pride and identity" (Guluma, 2018). Yet, this claim does not seem convincing in that the suitability of a script to write a language should be taken into consideration, not the origin of the script.

The use of other scripts than Geez is also argued to affect the unity of Ethiopia. Thus, the Ethiopianist strongly opposes the use of other script than Geez for writing Ethiopian

languages. This is because the use of other script is argued to lead to the disintegration of Ethiopian state and argued to affect the unity and the Ethiopian strong nation hood (Mulualem, 2017). Some Ethiopianist believe that, unless we use a common language (Amharic) or at least a common Geez *script* for writing in different languages in the country, Ethiopia will disintegrate (Guluma, 2108). For instance people, like Dinberu, Haile and Larebo argued that using different scripts for the different languages in the country endangers Ethiopian unity. In connection to the use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo, Teferi (2015, p. 200) has noted that “For some politicians, the use of the Qubee was seen as unnecessary endeavor because it would lead Oromia to secede from Ethiopia”. Therefore, one of the oppositions is based on argument that the use Qubee will disintegrate Ethiopia.

On the contrary to leading to disintegration, the recognition and support of peoples’ right to choose and develop their language in a way that they think best suits them is often a condition for the realization of reconciliation, trust and harmonization of multilingual societies (Teferi, 2015, p.168). That is, mutual respect, tolerance and democratic governance bring people together and allow them to live in peace (Guluma, 2108). But imposing one language and its script on others spreads division and mutual exclusion.

The other argument against the use of Qubee is based on the claim that Geez script is more suitable to the phonology of Afaan Oromoo than the Latin script and thus, it should be adapted to Afaan Oromoo. However, Baye (1992) noted that “Geez scripts are weak in representing long sounds and stresses”. As illustrated in the previous section, the reality on the ground is different in that Geez script failed to show the length of vowels and to indicate the stressing of the consonants in Afaan Oromoo. Besides, the Geez alphabet does not even have a symbol for the Afaan Oromoo (dh) sound such as in ‘**dhadha**’ or ‘**dhidheessa**’ or the Latin ‘V’ as in Visa. This also shows the inadequacy of the Geez alphabet to represent some sounds of Afaan Oromoo. So the opponents to Qubee did not consider the linguistic limitations of Geez script to represents the phonology of Afaan Oromoo.

Furthermore, the wrong perception about Qubee is another reason for its critics. For example, some Ethiopianist argued that the Qubee alphabet as an instrument invented to disintegrate the Ethiopian state (Mekuria, 2017). This is one of the wrong and misleading arguments in that Qubee script is chosen by the Oromoo people to exercise a legitimate right to develop literacy in their own language and the issue of script choice is a matter of the people’s autonomy and exercise of their democratic rights (Guluma 2018).

Furthermore, Mekuria (2017) added that the Oromoo choice of the Qubee has been wrongly interpreted as forms of hatred against the Amhara people and Geez script. On the contrary to this wrong perception, various Oromoo scholars proved in their research that Geez script is unfit for Afaan Oromoo as it can’t represent Afaan Oromoo phonetic system. Thus, the main reason why the Oromoo scholars adapted Latin script for Afaan Oromoo is more of linguistic. The adaption of Latin alphabet for Afaan Oromoo has nothing to do with hatred for the Geez script. With this regard, Guluma (2018) stated that the Oromoo question is not

to ban of the Geez script in Ethiopia, but the development of their language along other languages in the country using a script that is better suitable for their language.

Moreover, the other opposition to the adaption of Qubee is from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church persists (Makuria, 2017). Teferi (2015) has shown that the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy were among those who were known for their opposition to the use of Qubee. With this regard, Guluma (2018) noted that before a decade ago priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church were urging their followers to oppose the use of Qubee convincing it is harmful for the works of the Church. But, they haven't justified how it is harmful. In addition, the priests of the Orthodox Church opposed Qubee because they consider Qubee as a "*Devil's script*". Accordingly, the clergy argued that Qubee should be baned from Ethiopia. Thus, the opposition of the clergy was based on wrong attitude towards Qubee. However, Mekuria (2017) said that the opposition to the Qubee script is the not to recognize the language and the identity it represents.

Generally, it seems that the oppositions to the adaption of Latin script for Afaan Oromoo writing is solely ideological and is not based on linguistic reason. In connection to this, Garre (2017, p. 1) stated that "The main focus of arguments for or against adopting the Latin alphabet for Oromiffa must have been a linguistic analysis and technical pros and cons. Instead, almost all of the articles criticizing the use of Qubee focus on side issues, non-issues and other unrelated (historical/political) matters to make their vacuous arguments look plausible". Similarly, Guluma (2018) argued the only argument in favor of expanding the Geez script is political interest based on their sense of Ethiopian "national pride and identity". Thus, it can be said that the arguments for the use of Geez script in writing Afaan Oromoo has very little linguistic justification.

5. Summary

After the adaption of Qubee as a formal script of Afaan Oromoo writing, there have been arguments for and against the use of Qubee as a formal orthography of Afaan Oromoo writing. Different reasons and justifications have been presented by several scholars in support for the use of Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo writing. Generally, it is argued that Qubee is the most convenient system of writing that best suits to the phonology Afaan Oromoo. There are linguistic incompatibilities between the Geez script and Afaan Oromoo sounds. In addition, the Sabeen /Geez script has more than 300 characters while the Oromoo language has 34 basic sounds which are easy for new beginners to learn the writing of the language. The Geez script syllabary does not indicate the length of vowels. It is easy to write Afaan Oromoo words clearly without any confusion using the Latin script. Thus, Qubee was chosen over the Geez script for Afaan Oromoo writing for its suitability.

In addition to linguistic factors, the symbolic representation of Qubee among the Oromoo people is considered as another rationale for its use for Afaan Oromoo writing. In this connection, the correctionist argues that Qubee is as symbol of freedom and independence from the past subjugations (Mulualem, 2017). Qubee has become a primary symbol of Oromoo national identity. Moreover, Qubee is seen as one way of correcting the linguistic

dominations that happened in the past. Consequently, Qubee is considered as a symbol of strong Oromoo Nationhood or Orommuma (Dereje, 2010). Thus, Qubee represents the resistance and scarifies of Oromoo towards any unfair, injustices and inequalities happened to Oromoo people. Guluma (2018) argued that Oromoo intellectuals have scarified a lot to establish Qubee and the Oromoo people believe Qubee is the result of their struggle and symbol of their unity.

However, after 27 years of its adaption to Afaan Oromoo, still oppositions to Qubee have continued. The main opposition usually comes from some none Oromoos who are Amharic-speaking scholars and with assimilationist political motives. Those who opposes the use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing forwarded different reasons for their dislike of the use of Qubee. First, the advocates of Geez claimed that Amharic language and Geez alphabet are a symbol of unity and identity for Ethiopian people. Consequently, it has been argued that Geez alphabet should be used to write any Ethiopian language. However, the use of other alphabet has been considered to affect the national unity of Ethiopia. In connection to this, the use Latin script for Afaan Oromoo writing will disintegrate unity of Ethiopia and hence, it should be avoided. Hence, the bases of the oppositions seem more of ideological and political and are not based on linguistic realted reasons.

The use of Geez script for Afaan Oromoo is also based on the perceptions that Ethiopia should have only one script that is the Geez script, and the use of multiple scripts for the writing of languages in Ethiopia is disadvantages. However, these arguments are not based on a linguistic analysis and technical strengths and weakness of using Qubee. So, it can be said that the arguments against the use of Qubee to write Afaan Oromoo has very little to do with scientific linguistic justification. The claims against the use of Qubee seem subjective rather than scientific and are not convincing.

However, in arguing for or against the use of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing, the effectiveness of the scripts to represent the sound system of the language should be taken in to account. From the illustrations in this review paper, it is clear that the Latin alphabet represents the sound features of Afaan Oromoo such as gemination and vowel length. But these features are not clearly indicated in Geez script. Thus, based on the evidences given in this review article it is recommended that Afaan Oromoo should be continued to be written using Qubee. Moreover, more practical research should be conducted to illustrate the suitability of Qubee for Afaan Oromoo writing.

6. References

- Alemayehu Jote. (2012).The Contribution of Mother-Tongue Education to Promote Indigenous Knowledge: The Case of Bale Zone in Oromia Region (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). Addis Ababa University: Ethiopia.
- Ali, M. and Zaborski, A. (1990). *Handbook of the Oromo language*. Wroclaw: Maria Kowalska Stanis
- Baxter, Huiltin, Jand Triulzin A. (Eds). (1996). *Being and becoming Oromo: Historical and anthropological enquiries*. USA: The Red Press Inc.

- Baye Yimam (1992). Ethiopian Writing System. *Dialogue: Journal of Addis Ababa University Teachers' Association*, 1(1)
- Bender, M.L., Bowen, J.D, Cooper, R.L. and Ferguson, C. A. (Eds). (1976). *Languages in Ethiopia*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bender, M.L., Mulugeta, E. and Stinson,D.L. (1976). *Two Cushitic Languages*. In Bender, M.L., Bowen,J.D, Cooper, R.L. and Ferguson, C. A.(Eds). *Languages in Ethiopia*. London: Oxford University Press
- Cerulli, E. (1922). *The folk Literature of the Oromo of Southern Abyssinia (Part 1 and 2)*. Harvard University: The African Department of the Peabody Museum.
- Dereje Terefe. (2010). The implementation of a multilingual education policy in Ethiopia: The case of Afaan Oromo in primary schools of Oromia Regional State (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). University of Jyväskylä: Finland.
- Feyisa Demie (1996). Historical challenges in the development of the Oromo Language and some agenda for future research. *Journal of Oromo Studies*, 3(1 and 2), 18-27.
- Gadaa Melbaa. (1988). *Oromiya: An introduction to the Oromo People*. Minneapolis: Krik House Publishers.
- Guluma Gameda (2018).The History and Politics of the *Qubee* Alphabet.
- Hayward, R.J. and Mohammed, H. (1981). The Oromo orthography of Shaykh Bakiri Saphalo. *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African studies*,4(3), 554-576.
- Krapf,J.L.(1840). *An imperfect outline of the Oromo Language*. London: The Church Missionary Society.
- Mekuria Bulcha. (1994). The language policies of Ethiopian Regimes and the history of written Afaan Oromo: 1844-1994. *Journal of Oromo Studies*, 1(2), 91-116.
- Mekuria Bulcha. (1995). The Onesimos Nasib's Pioneering Contributions to Oromo Writing. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 4(1): 36-59.
- Mekuria Bulcha. (1997). The politics of linguistic homogenization in Ethiopia and the conflict over the status of the Afaan Oromoo. *African Affairs*,96 (384): 325-352.
- Mekuria Bulcha. (2017). “The ‘Nine Lives’ of Oromo Literacy: Qubee and the Birth of a Generation, Part I and Part II,” accessed from <https://kichuu.com/oromo-literacy-qubee-birth-generation/>
- Mohammed Hassen. (1994). Some aspects of Oromo History that have been misunderstood. *Journal of Oromo Studies*, 1(2), 77-91.
- Mohammed Hassen. (1996). The Development of Oromo Nationalism. In Baxter, Hultin, Jand Triulzin, A. (Eds). (1996). *Being and becoming Oromo; Historical and anthropological enquiries* (67-80). USA: The Red Press Inc.
- Mulualem Daba. (2017).The Political and Historical Representation of Statues in Three Ethiopian Consecutive Regimes (1889 - Present). *Social Sciences*. Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 35-44.
- Tafari Nigguisie. (1999). The origin of written Oromo literature. *Wiirtuu –Jildii* 8, 97-115.

- Tabor Wami. (2015). *Partisian discourse and authentic history*. Addis Ababa: Artistic printing Press.
- Teferi Degeneh. (2015). *The Development of Oromo Writing System* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). University of Kent.
- Tilahun Gamta. (1993). Qube Afaan Oromo: Reasons for choosing the Latin script for developing an Oromo alphabet. *Journal of Oromo Studies*, 1(1), 36-41.
- Tilahun Gamta. (2006). Jalqabdoota bif'aa fi sagalee Qubee Afaan Oromoo (Qubee for beginners). *Journal of Oromo Studies*, 113, (1and 2), 131-417.

1.