

# THE REPORT OF TACHONI ORTHOGRAPHY WORKSHOP THAT WAS HELD AT MABANGA AGRICULTURAL TRAINING CENTRE FROM 25/07/2016 TO 28/07/2016

## 1.0 Introduction

This report shows the findings of the language system of the Tachoni community of the Luhya ethnic group. The community extensively resides in Bungoma county, Bungoma East sub-county. Some of the Tachoni people have moved out their original land to occupy land in Trans-nzoia and Kakamega.

The language is extensively spoken among the Tachoni of Ndivisi Division of the former Bungoma district. This area covers Ndivis, Mihuu, Lukusi, Furoyi, Webuye, Chetambe, among others.

It should be noted that the participants in the orthography workshop were sampled from all the mentioned areas and some from the kakamega and Trans-nzoia.

### 1.1 Objective.

The workshop's objectives were;

- a. Come up with the Tachoni Alphabet.
- b. Develop a preliminary Alphabet chart
- c. Have the participants write and narrate stories some of which were recorded

This outcome would then determine the beginning of Bible translation in the community. Now this is the ultimate goal of the whole process of orthography.

## 2.0.0 Alphabet

From the workshop, there were twenty two alphabets. This is inclusive of seventeen consonants and five vowels.

They are are;

**Aa, Bb, Chch, Ee, Ff, Hh, Ii, Kk, Khkh, Ll, Mm, Nn, Nyny, Ng'ng' Oo, Pp, Rr, Ss, Tt, Uu, Ww, Yy.**

### 2.0.1 Consonants.

Tachoni Language has got seventeen consonants. They include the;

**B, Ch, F, H, K, Kh, L, M, N, Ny, Ng' P, R, S, T, W, Y**

The consonants were settled on after determining the sounds discovered among the present participants and comparing them with data collected during the research. These sounds can be represented on the IPA chart as follows.

	Bilabial	Labial-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
<b>Plosive</b>	p [p]		t [t]'				ch [c]	k [k]		
<b>Nasal</b>	m [m]			n [n]			ny [ɲ]	ng' [ŋ]		
<b>Trill</b>				r [r]						
<b>Tap or Flap</b>										
<b>Fricative</b>	b[β]	f [f]		s [s]					kh [χ]	h [h]
<b>Lateral fricative</b>										
<b>Approximate</b>							y [j]	w [w]		
<b>Lateral Approximate</b>				l [l]						

## 2.0.2 Plosives

### a. The voiceless bilabial plosive p

The voiceless bilabial plosive [p] shall be written **P**. Note that the voiced bilabial plosive [b] only appears as a pre nasalised, due to the shared environment of both [m] and [p], the sound [p] is voiced and thus the pre nasal [mb] which is written as **mb** in the Tachoni language.

#### **p**

**Pima** 'measure; put to scale'

**Omusalapa** 'the cross'

**Esipoli** 'stupidity'

#### **mb**

**Mbara** 'I think'

**Ambeli** 'ahead'

Chimbivilisi

‘eyes’

### b. The voiceless dental Plosives

There is one voiceless dental plosive and this is the voiceless dental plosive [t] which shall be written as **t**. Note that voiced [d] does not exist naturally in Tachoni language but as a pre nasal. This is because of the shared environment between the nasal and the voiceless dental. The pre nasal [ʰd] shall be written as **nd**.

Look at the examples bellow;

**t**

**Tukha**

‘reach’

**Yiyeta**

‘help oneself’

**Sitaka**

‘sue’

**nd**

**Ndunguvasia**

‘holy’

**Olwanda**

‘big hard rock’

**Nyindala**

‘be courageous’

### c. The voiceless Palatal plosive and the pre nasalized

The language has a voiceless palatal plosive [c] BUT does not have its voiced counterpart [j], instead it has a pre nasal [ʰj]. The sound [c] is preceded by the nasal sound [n] in some words. Having a common environment the nasal affects the voiceless palatal plosive making it voiced, hence the pre nasal [ʰj]. The voiceless palatal plosive [c] shall be written as **ch** and the Pre nasal [ʰj] shall be written as **nj**. Look at the examples bellow.

**ch**

**Chekha**

‘laugh’

**Amacheke**

‘molars’

**Echamu**

‘secret’

**nj**

**Njafuki**

‘a very dirty person’

**Injeko**

‘center post of the traditional house’

Lun**j**ikha

‘go straight or behave well’

**d. The voiceless velar plosive and its labialized.**

The voiceless velar plosive [k] does not have its voiced sound. Therefore, the voiceless velar plosive [k] will be written as **k**. Note that there situations when the sound [k] is preceded by an alveolar nasal sound [n] which thus makes the voiceless velar plosive voiced. However this is end result is a pre nasal sound [ⁿg]. This pre nasal sound shall be written as **ng**. Look at the examples below.

**k**

**K**ana

‘narrate’

Lak**k**ha

‘fall down, accidentally’

Ik**u**lu

‘up’

**ng**

Ng**u**riayi

‘an expression of surprise’

Ol**u**h**u**ngu

‘shrill cry’

Ol**u**f**u**ngu**o**

‘key’

**2.0.3 Nasals**

There are seven nasals; bilabial nasal [m], alveolar nasal [n], palatal nasal [ɲ], velar nasal [ŋ]. They shall be written as follows; [m] shall be written as **m**, [n] shall be written as **n**, [ɲ] shall be written as **ny**, [ŋ] shall be written as **ng** while [ⁿg] shall be written **ng**. Look at the following examples;

**m**

M**o**kina

‘castrate’

Ok**h**um**al**ilisia

‘to finish’

Am**a**tum**w**a

‘maize’

**n**

N**e**ra

‘fatten’

Ob**w**ino

‘ink’

Min**i**kisia

‘compress or force into something’

### **ny**

Nyola	‘find’
Munyikana	‘land between swampy and dry land’
Menya	‘live’

### **ng’**

Ng’ali	‘true’
Ying’oma	‘drum’
Ling’u	‘the evil spirit; madzini’

## **2.0.4 Trills**

This language has an Alveolar Trill [r] which shall be written as **r**, Look at the examples below;

### **r**

Rovola	‘choose or pick from many’
Sera	‘attack’
Esirandaro	‘the stand on which washed utensil are put’

## **2.0.5 Fricatives**

This language has a voiced bilabial fricative [β], voiceless labial-dental fricative [f], Alveolar fricative [s], Voiceless Uvular fricative [χ] and Voiceless Glottal fricative [h]. The voiced bilabial fricative [β] shall be written as **b**, the voiceless labial-dental fricative [f] shall be written as **f**, Alveolar fricative [s] shall be written as **s**, the voiceless uvular fricative [χ] shall be written as **kh**, and the voiceless Glottal fricative [h] shall be written as **h**. Look at the examples below.

### **f**

Funaka	‘break’
Ufu	‘an expression of surprise and disgust’

Omuvo <b>fu</b>	‘the blind’
<b>b</b>	
bororo <b>sia</b>	‘twist’
Tu <b>ba</b> nia	‘mix’
Ya <b>bi</b> la	‘burry’
<b>s</b>	
Su <b>ng</b> a	‘Say’
Ra <b>si</b> a	‘sting with nettle’
Omwi <b>bu</b> si	‘parent’

**kh**

K <b>ho</b> oba	‘fornicate’
Le <b>kh</b> asia	‘compare things’
Kitu <b>kh</b> a	‘break especially the rope’

**h**

Hu <b>r</b> ukura	‘emphasize’
Olu <b>v</b> aha	‘wing’
Ng’ <b>h</b> aha	‘become thin’

### 2.0.6 Approximates and Lateral Approximates.

This language has two approximate sounds; Velar Approximate [ɥ] and Palatal Approximate [j]. The language also has one Lateral Approximate [l]. The velar approximate [ɥ] shall be written as **w**, palatal approximate [j] shall be written as **y**, the lateral approximate [l] shall be written as **l**. Look at the examples below.

**w**

Welola	‘the proud’
Owenyu	‘yours; a person’
Ekewa	‘swampy land’

**y**

Yeta	‘help’
Bakaye	‘stop them’
Sietikiyi	‘behind the house’

**l**

Livuva	‘jealousy’
Mala	‘finish’
Obwali	‘alter’

**2.1.0 VOWELS.**

	<b>FRONT</b>	<b>CENTRAL</b>	<b>BACK</b>
<b>Close</b>	<b>i [i]</b>		<b>u [u]</b>
<b>Near close</b>			
<b>Mid – close</b>			
<b>Mid</b>			
<b>Open mid</b>	<b>e [ε]</b>		<b>o [ɔ]</b>
<b>Near open</b>			
<b>Open</b>		<b>a [a]</b>	

Most of the words in Tachoni language employ vowel sounds and thus you cannot find any word that does not have the vowels, **a e i o u**. There are also diphthongs of the some vowels. Most of the word end have vowel sound. In rare occasions will you find a word end with a consonant sound. The example of such a word is *cheptail* which is the original name for God in the Tachoni language and which is more of Kalenjin than luhya.

Therefore, the vowel sounds present in the Tachoni Language include; front closed [i] and [i:], front open – mid [ε] and [ε:], central open [a] and [a:], back closed [u] and [u:] and back open – mid [ɔ] and [ɔ:] There the front closed [i] and [i:] shall be written as **i and ii** respectively, front open – mid [ε] and [ε:] shall be written as **e and ee** respectively, central open [a] and [a:] shall be written as **a and aa** respectively, back closed [u] and [u:] shall be written as **u and uu** respectively and back open – mid [ɔ] and [ɔ:] shall be written as **o and oo** respectively. Look at the examples below.

**a**

Abakhasi	‘women’
Bwangu	‘faster’
Tukha	‘arrive’

**aa**

Nyaa khana	‘struggle’
Lwaana	‘fight’
Kaama	‘catch something that is thrown’

**e**

Emikholovoyo	‘husks’
Seva	‘circumcise’
Chine	‘four’

**i**

Ikhavi	‘blessing’
Esivove	‘a very bad smell’
Kayayani	‘market place’

**o**

Obweni	‘forehead’
Amakonkhwe	‘sisal plants’
Lifumo	‘spear’

**u**

Ulila	‘listen’
Yambukha	‘cross’
Amalalu	‘madness’



### 2.2.0 Tone

Generally Tachoni language is tonal; however, the most significant part of the tone in this language is when some words have similar spellings but different pronunciation which brings about different meaning.

For example, the word *yinjila and halala* has two meanings depending on how you pronounce it.

Yínjìlà	‘come in’
Yínjilà	‘road’
Hálālā	‘one place’
Hálálà	‘help someone in need’

### 2.3.0 Borrowed words

Tachoni language has some words that are borrowed majorly from Swahili language due to interaction with the language at school and many other places.

Most of these borrowed words are added vowels at beginning to make them sound like other Tachoni words. The examples include;

<b>Tachoni</b>	<b>Swahili</b>	<b>meaning</b>
Omuchele	mchele	rice
Omukati	mkate	bread
Esifuria	sufuria	cooking vessel
Elamu	lami	tarmac road

### 2.4.0 Alphabet chart.

Developing Tachoni language alphabet chart proved to a difficulty thing to do. This is because the language has most if not all of its nouns marked. The language has twenty two alphabet letters and thus coming up with noun markers for all of them is not possible. Actually there are there but the problem is they repeat themselves with different letters. For this reason, it

was concluded that it is hard for the language to have a comprehensive alphabet chart. In place of the alphabet chart, stories were written by the participants.

### **2.5.0 Conclusion**

The orthography development process in the Tachoni language group came to conclusion with the workshop. This means that the language has a writing system and thus ready to start the translation. This process would not have taken place without the input of key people, they facilitated the training, advice and information that was needed for the purpose of the process. These important people include, Mr. Jacob Njagi, The Consultant in Training Linguistics, Faith Shume , a Linguistic Trainer, Mr. Ngania Sabila, The Assistant Language Programmes Manager, Western Region, The Tachoni PAC, Pastor Joseph Murumba, Wasilwa Se Wekesa, the chairman Tacuso and the entire BTL family for the input, financial, prayers and advice.

The report was compiled by Samson Wanyonyi Ngosia;

Tachoni Bible Translation

Project Officer.