LANGUAGE CONTACT AND ITS EFFECTS ON GURAGE VARIETIES OF MUHER.

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Social and linguistic contacts between speakers of diverse varieties as well as the influence of the surrounding Cushitic languages contributed to the establishment of Gurage dialects and widespread bi- or multilingualism. However, the actual extent and the effects of language contact on individual languages in the Gurage Zone are not clearly known. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to investigate language contact and its effects on language use and form on Gurage varieties of Muher.

The Muher community lives in the north-western part of the Gurage Zone. Its neighbors are Ezha in the west, Mesqan and Dobbi in the southeast, Wolane in the northeast, K’abeena in the northwest and Silt’e in the southeast. As a result, many of the Muher speakers are bilingual in one of these languages. The study targets the language behavior of individuals belonging to Muher Gurage ethno-linguistic group residing in rural and urban settings, namely the rural areas of Teklehaimanot, Zəbbidar and the town of Hawarijat and Wolkite as zonal administration center. Mixed research methods (questionnaire, interview, and participant observation) are used as research tools.

Basic terms: Language contact, language use, specch accommodation theory, variation theory