

## IS DAHALIK A DIALECT OF TIGRE?

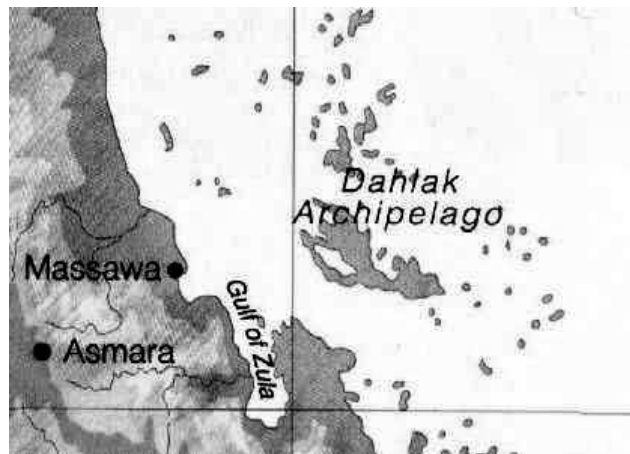
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### Background

The Dahlak Archipelago encompasses a group of more than 200 islands 58 kilometres east of Massawa in the Red Sea. Only four of these islands are inhabited. Dahlak Kabir with an area of 643 square kilometres is the largest island in the archipelago.



Location of the Dahlak Archipelago

*Source:* <http://home.planet.nl/~hans.mebrat/eritrea-dahlaks.htm>

Historically the Dahlak islands were used as a bridge between the Arabian Peninsula and the eastern coast of Africa. Archaeological evidences found on these islands show that life on these islands was sustained through out the Old South Arabian period to at least late Bronze Age times (NEAC)<sup>1</sup>. The early residents of the Dahlak islands used a water engineering system that is well known in South Arabia from the pre-Islamic period; cutting bedrock to build underground water reservoir. This could be one evidence which shows that there was cultural interaction, through Dahlak, between the east and west sides of the Red Sea. People from both coasts might have met in these islands for their first time, without any common language, which is an ideal situation for a pidgin language to develop. Then the children of the pidgin speaking parents might have had created a creole language. If this assumption is true then the study of the Dahalik language could contribute much to our understanding of language change in progress and some universal linguistic features. In addition, it might provide valuable information about the first settlers of the islands, such as socio-economic relations with each other. In the seventh century, the Dahalik (people of Dahlak) formed an autonomous sultanate. Despite subsequent invasions by Yemen and, later, by the Ottoman Turks the Dahlak sultanate flourished and reached its highest level of civilisation around the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. The beautiful Arabic inscriptions, found in the Dahlak burial grounds, are evidences of the high level of cultural development of the Dahlak sultanate.

The Ummayyad Caliphs used Dahlak as a prison and exile islands. Similarly, the Italians and the Ethiopians used one of these islands, the Nukra island, for the same purpose. Eritreans who opposed the occupation of their land by the Italians and opponents from other Italian colonies were imprisoned and sent to the detention camp at Nukra. During the Ethiopian occupation of Eritrea, Nukra remained to be one of the worst Ethiopian prisons. Although many of the prisoners might have died due to mistreatment and the harsh environment, we can still speculate that some of them had survived and ended up living in the islands. Ancestral oral history of many families supports this fact. Many families are still called by the names of the mainland places they came from. One of my informants, Abdu Ahmed Kamarani, whose ancestors came from the island of Kamaran is one such example.

The historical importance of the Dahlak archipelago as it was situated at the crossroads of various civilisations and the extraordinary composition of its people makes the study of Dahlak in general and the study of its language in particular very interesting and fascinating subject.

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<sup>1</sup> Near Eastern and Asian Civilizations Department (NEAC) – Royal Ontario Museum – Dahalak Archipelago: Yemeni Connections on an island offshore from Eritrea. On line: [http://www.rom.on.ca/neac/yem\\_moses.html](http://www.rom.on.ca/neac/yem_moses.html).

The language of the Dahlak islands is the least known language of Eritrea. According to impressions of some previous scholars and visitors, Dahalik was assumed to be a very different dialect of the Tigre language. For example, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch geographer Olfert Dapper noted that "...the language of Dahlak differs 'to some degree' from the language spoken in the coast"<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, in 1853 Werner Munzinger noted that the language spoken in Dahlak was hardly understood by Tigre speakers in Massawa<sup>3</sup>. In 2000 Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle, reported that Monolingual Dahalik did not understand continental Tigre<sup>4</sup>. However, none of these scholars conducted actual intelligibility tests. Their assumptions are based on speakers' perception and quick lexical observations<sup>5</sup>.

The Dahlak archipelago is home to three languages: Arabic, Afar and Dahalik. Although there is no recent official census in the island, the Dahalik claim that they are the ethnic majority of the 2500 residents of the islands. As far as linguistic competency in this language is concerned, those who speak Dahalik at this time seem fewer than those who speak the other two languages. When I visited the island to collect data, it was not easy to find people who are fluent in the language.

### **Research Focus**

This paper is only a preliminary report of the pilot phase of a bigger research project. Thus, it is not expected to answer all of the research questions in the level of the intended depth and scope. Its purpose is to raise awareness about the importance of the study of Dahalik, and to share the research plan with fellow researchers. In order to determine whether Dahalik is a dialect of the Tigre language or a distinctive language by itself, the paper makes comparisons between the Dahalik and the different dialects of the Tigre language in terms of lexical similarities and mutual intelligibility levels. In addition tries to make lexical comparisons between the different varieties of Dahalik that are spoken in the different islands. It also looks at the sociolinguistic aspect of the issue by reporting the speakers' perceptions and attitudes towards their own language, the other languages and vice versa. Issues like language maintenance and language shift are also discussed by looking at the domains in which the language is

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<sup>2</sup> Wolbert Smidt, "Dahlak Ethnography", in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia*, vol. II, ed. by S. Uhlig, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2005, p. 70. The assumption here is that by "the language of the coast" the author meant Tigre language.

<sup>3</sup> Smidt, "Dahlak Ethnography", cit., p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle, "Haka na Dahālik", in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia*, vol. II, ed. by S. Uhlig, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2005, pp. 70-71.

<sup>5</sup> Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle, "Up to date Assessment of the results of the research on the Dahalik Language (December 1996-December 2005)". On line: <http://llacan.vjf.cnrs.fr/fichiers/Senelle/DahlikBilan.pdf>.

functioning and the motives behind it. Furthermore, it highlights the endangering factors and some indicators of the endangerment in order to draw attention to the subject.

The survey included some oral text collection, and an attempt was made to make grammatical description and analysis based on the oral text collected. In addition, some linguistic features that are of special interest were identified. In this paper, however, these dimensions are not discussed due to time and space constraints.

The purpose of the main research project is to:

1. Record and describe the language;
2. Check and measure if the Dahalik is closely related to the Tigre language;
3. Ascertain whether or not the Dahalik language has arisen through the process of creolisation; and
4. Suggest ways by which Dahalik could be revitalized.

In light to the above stated objectives, the study will seek answers for questions such as:

1. Is Dahalik a dialect of Tigre?
2. If so, in what way is the Dahalik variety different from the rest of the dialects of the Tigre language (vocabulary, phonology, phonetics, syntax, morphology)?
3. Is Dahalik a creole language?
4. If yes, what are the contributions of each language (Tigre, Arabic, Afar, etc.) to the creolisation process?
5. In which way might the study of the Dahalik language contribute to the understanding of universal linguistic features?
6. In which way could Dahalik be documented (description of its grammar, dictionary, collecting texts for future analysis)?
7. What could be done to revitalize Dahalik?

### **Methodology**

In order to find answers for these research questions, the following research methodology and tools were used:

1. *Word List*: Word list is a research method by which a certain number of basic words (words that are less likely to be borrowed from other cultures) are collected and compared with other related dialects or languages to measure the degree of their common origin. Word list is used together with other methods to classify languages.

2. *Interview*: A group of about five native Dahaliks were interviewed in Darbushat area. In the interview, issues such as the speakers' attitude to their own language and other languages, the attitude of others to the

Dahalik language, the function of the language (the domains in which it is used), and the history of the language and the people (according to oral literature) were given great emphasis.

3. *Recorded Text Testing*: Recorded Text Testing (RTT) is a research method which helps the researcher to measure intelligibility among dialects or languages in an area. It requires tape recordings of short non-folkloric texts from the reference dialects, to be played to subjects from other dialects.

4. *Grammatical Analysis*: A number of stories and other texts have been collected. Some of them have been transcribed and they will be translated into English with the help of Dahalik speaking informants, using them for analysis of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The outcome of the analysis will be compared to that of the Tigre language and other related languages<sup>6</sup>.

5. *Personal Observation*: In order to prove the data gathered through the above tools I tried to listen to people discussing different topics in real life environment.

#### **Lexical similarities between Dahalik and the rest of Tigre dialects**

The Swadesh word list, which was also used and adapted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), was used to collect about 300 basic words from Darbushet, Salaet [salaʕe:t] and Jamhile in the main island, i.e. Dahlak Kabir, and from Ageddi in Nora and from Dihil [dəħəl]. In each case the data were gathered from a group of 10 people of about nine to 60 years of age. In most cases, Arabic words, real objects and gestures were used to describe the concept so that the respondents would be able to provide the researcher with the corresponding words in their language.

Data analysis was carried out according to the following procedures.

a. The Dahalik wordlist was arranged in pairs with wordlists from five dialects of the Tigre language.

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<sup>6</sup> General bibliography: Dany Adone & Ingo Plag, *Creolization and Language Change*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1994; Eugene H. Casad, "Dialect Intelligibility Testing", Oklahoma, SIL & University of Oklahoma, 1974; *Windows of Bilingualism*, ed. by Eugene H. Casad, Arlington, SIL & University of Texas, 1992; Frank Robert Palmer, *The Morphology of the Tigre Noun*, London, Oxford U.P., 1962 (London Oriental Series, 13); Shlomo Raz, *Tigre Grammar and Texts*, Malibu, Undena Publications, 1983; Saleh Mahmud Idris "Dialectal Variation and Intelligibility Levels Between the Dialects of the Tigre Language", University of London, 1999, unpublished MA Dissertation; Andrew Simpson, "Language, Society and Communication", University of London – School of Oriental and African Studies, 1998, unpublished paper; Saleh Mahmud Idris, "Tigre Dialects", *Journal of Eritrean Studies* 4, 2005 (1-2), pp. 45-73; Idem, "Dahalik: the Most Endangered Linguistic Variety of Eritrea", in *Social Science Research and the Challenges of Development in Eritrea: Proceedings of the First National Workshop of the Eritrea Chapter of OSSREA*, Asmara, University of Asmara, 2007, pp. 121-129.

b. An attempt was made to establish a set of regular sound correspondence between Dahalik and the dialects of Tigre.

Table 1: Regular sound correspondences between Dahalik variety of Dahlak Kabir and Nora islands and the Tigre language

Sounds	Manner and Place of Articulation	Corresponding sound in Dahlak Kabir and Nora variety of Dahalik with example words
[s'] <b>ጸ</b>	Voiceless alveolar ejective affricate	[ʔ] <b>ከ</b> voiceless glottal plosive
[t'] <b>ጠ</b>	Voiceless alveolar ejective stop	<b>ጠ/ጸካይ</b> = <b>ካካይ</b> t'/s'ahɑ:j ~ ʔahɑ:j
[tʃ'] <b>ጨ</b>	Voiceless alveo-palatal ejective	<b>ጸ/ጭፍር</b> = <b>እፍር</b> s'/tʃ'əfəɾ ~ ʔəfəɾ
[ʔ] <b>ከ</b>	Voiceless glottal plosive	<b>ጠሊት</b> = <b>እሊት</b> t'alit ~ ʔəlit
[d] <b>ደ</b>	Voiced alveolar plosive	[d] Voiced alveolar plosive
[z] <b>ዘ</b>	Voiced alveolar fricative	<b>ብዱሕ</b> = <b>ብዙሕ</b> bəzuh ~ bəduh

Table 2: Regular sound correspondences between Dahalik variety of Dihil island and the Tigre language

Sounds	Manner and Place of Articulation	Corresponding sound in Dihil variety of Dahalik with example words
[s'] <b>ጸ</b>	Voiceless alveolar ejective affricate	[t'] Voiceless alveolar ejective stop
[t'] <b>ጠ</b>	Voiceless alveolar ejective stop	<b>ጸካይ</b> = <b>ጠካይ</b> s'ahɑ:j ~ t'ahɑ:j
[d] <b>ደ</b>	Voiced alveolar plosive	[d] Voiced alveolar plosive
[z] <b>ዘ</b>	Voiced alveolar fricative	<b>ብዱሕ</b> = <b>ብዙሕ</b> bəzuh ~ bəduh

c. All words which are identical within the pairs were marked as “s” i.e. the same.

d. Those words which only differed phonologically, and where the difference was predictable on the basis of the set of regular sound correspondence, were marked as “c” i.e. cognates.

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e. Those words which only differed in one or two vowels or one consonant, even in the cases where the sound correspondence could not be proved, were marked “pc” i.e. possible cognates. For example [radʒab] ~ [rajab]

f. Other words were considered as different and marked “d”.

g. Finally, words of the first three categories, i.e. “s, c, pc” were regarded as the same. In this way, wordlist from Dahlak Kabir variety of Dahalik was compared with five dialects of the Tigre language. Word lists from the three Dahalik dialects were also compared with each others in the same way. All differences and similarities were calculated as a percentage of the total number of glosses for which data was available.

Table 3: Total number of comparisons

Sahil					
321	Mansa				
321	321	Maria Kayah			
321	321	321	Barka		
320	320	320	320	Samhar	
<b>306</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir</b>

Table 4: Sum of words considered exactly the same, “s”, by dialect pairs

Sahil					
309	Mansa				
312	311	Maria Kayah			
308	302	303	Barka		
274	280	279	276	Samhar	
<b>116</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir</b>

Table 5: Percentage of words considered exactly the same, “s”, by dialect pairs

Sahil					
96%	Mansa				
97%	97%	Maria Kayah			
96%	94%	94%	Barka		
86%	88%	87%	86%	Samhar	
<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir</b>

Table 6: Percentage of all the same words, “s + c + pc”, by dialect pairs

Sahil					
96%	Mansa				
97%	97%	Maria Kayah			
96%	94%	94%	Barka		
86%	88%	87%	86%	Samhar	
<b>58%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir</b>

### Lexical similarities between the three Dahalik dialects

The above comparisons between Dahalik and the 5 dialects of the Tigre language are made on the basis of a word list from a Dahalik variety which is spoken in different villages of the island of Dahalak Kabir. There are two other varieties of Dahalik which are spoken in two different islands. These are the Nora variety of Nora island, and the Dihil variety also called Dihilia which is spoken in Dihil island. Nora island is located in the far east of the Dahlak archipelago and its residents have less contact with the mainland of Eritrea. As the result the Dahalik believe that the Nora variety is the purest variety of Dahalik. On the other hand the Dihil island is found in the north western end of the archipelago with the closest proximity to the mainland of Eritrea. Its residents maintain strong ties and contacts with the Tigre speakers of the mainland of Eritrea through marriage and trade.



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Their Dahalik variety is believed to be the closest Dahalik variety to the Tigre language. For example unlike the Dahalik of Dahalak Kabir and Nora the [t̥] Voiceless alveolar ejective stop and the [t̥ʰ] Voiceless alveopalatal ejective are not replaced by [ʔ] voiceless glottal plosive. They are distinctive phonemes. Despite such peculiarities all three varieties of Dahalik show a high degree of lexical similarities, and mutual intelligibility is also expected to be high. Therefore, the result of the above comparisons is also valid for the other two dialects. The following display of comparisons of the word lists from the three Dahalik dialects proves this fact.

Table 7: Total number of comparisons

Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir		
317	Dahalik of Nora	
314	314	Dahalik of Dihil (Dihilia)

Table 8: The sum of words considered exactly the same, “s”, by dialect pairs

Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir		
278	Dahalik of Nora	
245	234	Dahalik of Dihil (Dihilia)

Table 9: Percentage of words considered exactly the same, “s”, by dialect pairs

Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir		
87.7%	Dahalik of Nora	
78%	74.5%	Dahalik of Dihil (Dihilia)

Table 10: Percentage of all the same words, “s + c + pc”, by dialect pairs

Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir		
89.9%	Dahalik of Nora	
85%	85.7%	Dahalik of Dihil (Dihilia)

Observing the row data above, it became clear that the lexical relation between the Dahalik and the five dialects of Tigre is very low. Furthermore, some of the common words are of Arabic origin which could mean both Dahalik and the dialects of Tigre have borrowed them independently. According to some literature similarity below 60% is always an indicator of poor intelligibility<sup>7</sup>. In addition, difference in function words and affixes, syntactic and morphological rearrangements, certain kinds of regular sound shifts, and semantic shifts, which are quite common in the case of Dahalik, can get in the way.

Although the lexical comparison between Dahalik and the five dialects of the Tigre language makes it clear that Dahalik is very different from the Tigre language and that the differences are significant enough to consider Dahalik as a different language, it is hard to reach that conclusion on the basis of lexical relations alone. There are other social (perceptions and attitudes), political (policies and ideologies) and linguistic (mutual intelligibility) factors that need to be considered before deciding that two linguistic varieties are one language or different languages. Thus, the following section makes preliminary attempts to look at these factors.

#### **Intelligibility of the Tigre of Maria Tsalam [s'alaam] by the Dahalik**

A biographical story from the dialect of Maria Tsalam of the Tigre language which was previously used in the dialect survey of the Tigre language of 1997, was played to 10 randomly selected Dahalik subjects from Darbushet and Jamhile in Dahalak Kabir, 10 from Dihil and 10 others from Agaddi in Nora. Each of the 10 subjects, in each site, was asked, based on the story, to answer 10 simple questions that do not require special intelligence or education. These same questions were used in the 1997 dialect survey of the Tigre language. An introduction and a shorter story for use as practice were also prepared in the same way. After the practice story, the entire main story was played once, and then bit by bit, to the subjects individually. Questions were inserted after each section of the main story, and this was done by a Dahalik speaker, in order to avoid misunderstanding of the question because of dialectal variation in the paraphrasing of the question or in the pronunciation of the words.

In each research site, results were scored numerically: one for a full correct answer, half for half correct, and zero for incorrect. Then, scores of all subjects for each question were summed up and added to the sums of the other nine questions and divided by the total number of frequency of questions asked and multiplied by 100, in order to find the average percentage. For example the sum of scores for questions one up to 10 for Dahalik of Jamhile and Darbushet were, one, three, four, three, one, three

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Grimes, "Correlations between Vocabulary Similarity and Intelligibility", in Janet Holmes, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, London, Longman, 1997.

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point five, six, five, three point five, and three. The total sum of all correct responses is 33. Ten questions each for 10 respondents brings the number of frequency of questions asked to 100. Therefore:  $33 \div 100 \times 100 = 33\%$ . This means the average intelligibility of Maria Tsalam by Dahalik speakers of the Dahlak Kabir is 33%. The following table shows how the Maria Tsalam dialect was understood by the three dialects of Dahalik and the other dialects of the Tigre language.

Table 11: Understanding of the Maria Tsalam Text

Dialect of the Story Dialect of the Respondents	Maria Tsalam
Sahil	90%
Mansa	95.5%
Maria Kayah	97.5%
Barka	99%
Samhar	89.5%
<b>Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Dahalik of Nora</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
<b>Dahalik of Dihil</b>	<b>51%</b>

From linguistic point of view, mutual intelligibility is the main factor for deciding whether two dialects are dialects of the same language or two different languages. If speakers of two linguistic varieties can not understand each other, then they are speaking two different languages. According to the hypothesis of mutual intelligibility, none of the Dahalik dialects is a dialect of the Tigre language. However, it is not always the case that the criterion of mutual intelligibility is used to divide up different linguistic varieties into languages. In many cases, divisions/classifications are done on some socio-political grounds. For example, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian are mutually intelligible but they are all officially recognised separate languages. Similarly, Hindi and Urdu are mutually intelligible, but they are called different languages, because they are associated with different countries and different religions. Linguistically, Serbo-Croat is a single Slavic language used by two ethnic groups, the Serbs and the Croats, but on socio-political grounds they are considered two different languages. On the other hand, Cantonese, Taiwanese and Mandarin are mutually unintelligible. However, the Chinese people and the Chinese government declared that all three of them are forms of a single Chinese language.

Thus, in an attempt to look beyond the linguistic facts, I interviewed some Dahalik men and women and some non Dahalik speakers of the Tigre language. The Dahalik respondents claim that they speak a different

language called Dahalik and they do not consider themselves as Tigre. Furthermore, they say that the Tigre people do not understand their language. The Tigre speakers on the other hand, say that the Dahalik speak a mixture of Tigre and other languages which is difficult for Tigre speakers to understand. When they were asked on whether they consider the Dahalik as Tigre, most of the respondents hesitated, probably because of the confusion between their perceptions of Dahalik as a different language and the official status of Dahalik.

Both the linguistic and the socio-linguistic findings of this preliminary survey show that Dahalik may not be considered as a dialect of the Tigre language. Given the complicated nature of classifying linguistic varieties into languages and dialects, however, whether Dahalik is a different language or not might not be the primary concern. The concern is that we have a unique and endangered linguistic form which contains a very important part of our history as the people and nation. So far, nothing has been done to study and document the richness and secrets of this language. Therefore, the primary issue now is the high endangerment risk that this language faces.

### **Endangerment**

The main objective of this research is to study the Dahalik language, which is the most endangered language of Eritrea. Its endangerment is attributed to several factors. Firstly, Dahalik is not among the so far written Eritrean languages. This denies the language a certain prestige, which might in turn contributes to the death of the language. There are already some indications which show that Dahalik is considered as less prestigious when it is compared to Afar and Arabic. According to my respondents for example, if three Dahalik speakers are joined by a speaker of another language when they are speaking in Dahalik, they would shift into Arabic, but the opposite is not true.

Secondly, since most of the domains of language function such as schooling, administration, religion, court proceedings, etc. are taken by Arabic, there are few domains in which the language can function. So, even those few children who learn Dahalik from their parents forget it when they go to school or work, and shift to other languages, particularly Arabic.

Thirdly, because the non-Dahalik residents of the islands do not speak the Dahalik language, the offsprings of intermarriages are non-Dahalik speaking children. Intermarriage among Dahalik and the Afar is very common. Marriage with other nationalities which is also not a rare phenomenon will have the same effect of diminishing the status of Dahalik.

Fourthly, those Dahalik who go to the mainland frequently, are shifting to the Tigre language of the Massawa area and taking this back to the

islands. As a result, many Dahalik words and other linguistic structures are dying and being replaced by Tigre words and structures. For example, the Dahalik variety spoken in Dihil [dəhəl], an island with greater contact with Tigre speakers, is closer to the Tigre language than the Dahalik variety which is spoken in Ageddi a small village found in the island of Nora.

Fifthly, the language is also threatened by huge investment projects such as tourism and fishery. If such projects are fully implemented, they will result in the displacement of some of the Dahalik speaking population from their home islands. Such projects will also create conducive atmosphere for more powerful languages to threaten the Dahalik language. In addition to all of these, the spread of other languages through the media is endangering the survival of this language.

Some signs that show that Dahalik is disappearing include the scarcity of folklore, the low value given to the language by the community and others, and the community's lack of motivation and interest to preserve their language.

### **Conclusion**

Dahalik is the least known language of Eritrea. For long, it was assumed that it might not be very far removed from the Tigre language. The preliminary findings of this pilot survey, however, suggest that Dahalik might be a distinctive language with its own grammatical structures and history. The intelligibility level between the Tigre of Maria Tsalam and the Dahalik of Dahlak Kabir, Nora and Dihil is about 33%, 23.5% and 51% respectively. Words of common origin make about 50-60%. However, some of these common words are of Arabic origin which, could mean both Tigre and Dahalik have borrowed them independently. Most importantly, the Dahalik do not consider themselves as Tigre.

There is also another hypothesis which assumes that the Dahalik language might have arisen through the process of creolisation. Because of the limited scope and purpose of this paper the present work did not look into this aspect of the language. However, if this assumption is true then the study of the Dahalik language could contribute to our understanding of language change in progress and some universal linguistic features. In addition, it might provide valuable information about the first settlers of the islands and their socio-economic relations with each other and the rest of the world.

Dahalik is at the verge of death due to several factors. The older generation of the community seem to be the last generation who is effectively using the language. It therefore needs to be studied and documented before we lose the older members of the community who are still holding this invaluable, unique human property.