Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics and Philology

Addis Ababa University

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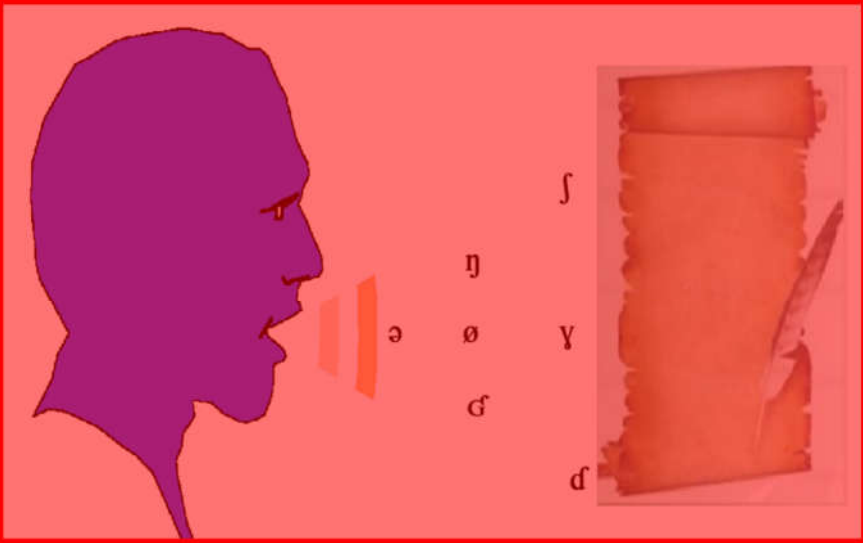

November 2015
Addis Ababa

Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics & Philology

Department of Linguistics and Philology
College of Humanities, Language Studies and Journalism & Communication
Addis Ababa University

Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics & Philology

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Editorial

Linguistic Capacity Building

The Department of Linguistics and Philology of Addis Ababa University, which is committed to the science of linguistics, essentially aims at studying and building the capacity of the over-eighty languages of Ethiopia. Since its establishment in 1978, the Department graduated hundreds in Linguistics at BA, MA and PhD levels, scores in Sign Language at BA level and about eighty in Philology at MA and PhD levels. In addition to requiring especially postgraduate students to produce theses, the Department encourages its staff members to engage in research. Accordingly, apart from endeavours made individually, the staff members engage in thematic (interdisciplinary) and project research. Of the latter, currently the project dubbed "Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia" is the major undertaking. It involves collaboration among Addis Ababa University (AAU), Hawassa University (HU), the University of Oslo (UiO), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Sør-Trøndelag University College and Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan. The five-year project (2014-2018) obtained the funding, 17.5 million NOK (Birr 52.5 million), from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) through its program the Norwegian Program for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED). The chief objective of the project is to increase knowledge and build capacity at the two Ethiopian universities thereby developing resources for disadvantaged languages (both spoken and signed), and providing opportunities to children and adult speakers of

these languages in education and other arenas that have bearing on the overall development of Ethiopia. The disadvantaged languages are the ones that have not been adequately researched and lack resources such as orthography, description of grammar, dictionaries and other teaching materials.

The collaborative project has accomplished a number of capacity-building tasks in 2014-2015 involving collaboration between universities in Ethiopia and Norway as well as local governments and communities. A networking workshop was conducted with experts and administrators in Adaama (Feb. 25-26, 2015) and a workshop on a curriculum for an MA program in Signed Language Linguistics was held in Bishoftu (Oct. 16, 2015). Furthermore, five capacity building training programs were conducted: in Hawassa (Feb. 12-14, 2015) for the Sidaama Zone education and culture representatives (essentially from districts) as well as mass media representatives focusing on lexical development, orthography appraisal and dictionary making; again in Hawassa (April 20-24, 2015) for Ethiopian Sign Language (EtheSL) teachers and experts from various zones of the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) on the structure of the EthSL and teaching methodology; in Wolkite (May 1-3, 2015) for representatives from various offices and schools of the Gurage Zone on language development and standardization; in Shashemene (June 26-30, 2015 for journalists, editors and government communication practitioners on news writing, news presentation and language use; and again in Shashemene (July 7-9, 2015) for representatives from the Aari district in South Omo Zone (SNNPR) on mother tongue education.

Eleven PhD and eight MA students who were granted scholarships by the project are now in their second year at Addis Ababa University and Hawassa University respectively. Laptops were bought for the students and also for coordinators of research teams including audio-visual devices for fieldwork. An MA program in Linguistics and Communications has been launched at HU while the curriculum for an MA program in Signed Language Linguistics has been finalized involving stakeholders and will be submitted soon to the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, for implementation.

A number of articles which resulted from fieldwork by researchers from AAU and HU have been published and others are in the pipeline including those read at the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES) which was held in Warsaw, Poland, and those presented at Rondane conference (Norway). Academics from Norway and Ethiopia also collaborate in supervising and examining PhD students as well as in conducting series of lectures. When Dr. Admassu Tsegaye, president of AAU and Professor Ole Petter Ottersenm, rector of UiO, met in Oslo in June 2015, the Linguistic Capacity Building project was commended as a symbol of a strong partnership.

News

Prof. Baye Gets Award for Excellence in Research

Prof. Baye Yimam got an award for excellence in research at the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and communication (CHLSJC), Addis Ababa University. The award was bestowed on him by Ato Kasa Tekleberhan, Chair of the AAU Board and the then Chair of the House of Federation at a ceremony held to recognize distinguished researchers of the various colleges and institutions of Addis Ababa University. The bestowal ceremony took place at the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) in May 2015. Dr. Admasu Tsegaye, president of Addis Ababa University, and other officials were present at the ceremony.

Prof. Baye Yimam after receiving the award

Dr. Moges Finds a "New" Language, *Ngaalam*

Dr. Moges Yigezu recently found a "new" language called *Ngaalam* in the southwestern part of Ethiopia in Anuak Zone of Gambella Region. *Ngaalam* is a Nilo-Saharan language. Dr. Moges presented a paper on the language entitled *Ngaalam: Sketch Grammar and Genetic Position* at the 12th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium to which he was invited to deliver a keynote speech. The conference was held at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, September 1-4, 2015. Dr. Moges was invited by Dr. Helga Schröder, Senior Lecturer, Department of Linguistics and Languages, University of Nairobi, on behalf of the organizing committee of the 12th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium. At the end of the 12th Colloquium, the participants unanimously chose Addis Ababa University, that is, the Department of Linguistics and Philology, to

Partial view of 12th Nilosahann Colloquium at the University of Nirobi

host the 13th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium in August 2017. The participants of the 12th Colloquium were prominent linguists from Africa, Europe, North America and Asia (For additional information on *Ngaalam*, see under the heading "Ngaalam, a 'New' Nilo-Saharan Language".)

Dr. Zelealem Appointed as Dean of CHLSJC

Dr. Zelealem Leyew has been appointed as Dean of the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication by AAU president, Dr. Admasu Tsegaye, as of December 1, 2015 (Hidar 21, 2008 E.C.). Dr. Zelealem Leyew, Associate Professor of Linguistics, has been engaged in teaching and research at the Department of Linguistics and Philology since 1990 for the last twenty six years. He has published a number of articles concerning the grammatical and sociolinguistic descriptions of the Ethiopian languages. Under the auspices of the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), he published a book on the ethnobotany of three Ethiopian languages. He assessed books and articles for publishers and journals here and abroad. He is a member of the editorial boards of various local and international journals as well as scientific

Dr. Zelealem Leyew, Dean CHLSJC

committees. At different times, he received service and research awards from AAU and universities abroad. He was a research fellow at Alexander Humboldt Foundation, Germany, in 2003 and is currently serving as the secretary of the Ethiopian Association of Humboldt Fellows. The Editorial Committee of BDLP congratulates Dr. Zelealem on his appointment and wishes him a fruitful term of deanship at the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication.

Dr. Girma Mengistu Appointed as Department Head

Dr. Girma Mengistu has been appointed as Head of the Department of Linguistics and Philology as of August 1, 2015. Dr. Girma replaced Dr. Amsalu Tefera who is now a postdoc fellow at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), Germany. The Editorial Committee of BDLP congratulates Dr. Girma on his appointment.

Dr. Binyam Sisay, Selected as a Founding Member of the Ethiopian Young Academy of Science

Dr. Binyam was selected as a founding member of the Ethiopian Young Academy of Science in January 2015. The Ethiopian Young Academy of Science is the brainchild of the Ethiopian Science Academy. Similarly, Dr. Binyam was selected as the inaugural fellow of the African Science Leadership Program (ASLP) which was hosted by the

University of Pretoria, South Africa. He also attended a workshop at the same university for about a week, June 7-12, 2015. At the end of last September 2015, Dr. Binyam travelled to Norway and gave a talk on language use on the internet in Ethiopia based on evidence from *Temari Net* and facebook at the MutiLing Center of the University of Oslo on October 1, 2015. The academic event was attended by the staff of the MultiLing Center and the Institute of Linguistics and Nordic Studies. In May 2015, Dr. Binyam was invited to the same university as a guest researcher to collaborate with Prof. Rolf Theil on a chapter of a book being written on the Omotic languages.

Dr. Amsalu Wins Postdoc Fellowship Award

Dr. Amsalu Tefera, a staff member in the Philology stream of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, won a postdoctoral research award offered by Alexander von Humboldt for two years—August 2015 - September 2017. The host university is Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), Germany. The title of Dr. Amsalu's research project is *Uriel Traditions in Ethiopia: Critical Edition and Translation of the Ethiopic Homilies Dedicated to the Archangel Uriel*.

Dr. Amsalu Tefera

Staff Members Earn PhD and Students Defend Dissertations

In July 2015, at AAU graduation of the academic year 2007 E.C., three staff members of the Department of Linguistics and Philology received their doctorates in Linguistics. The three staff members are Dr. Endalew Assefa, Dr. Girma Mengistu and Dr. Eyasu Hailu. The titles of their dissertations are respectively: i) *Descriptive Grammar of Ezha: A Central West Gurage Language*, ii) *A grammar of Sezo* and iii) *A Sociolinguistic Study of the Use of and Attitudes toward Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)* (The synopses of the three dissertations are available in this issue).

During this first semester of the academic year 2008 E.C. (2015/2016), nine doctoral candidates of the department successfully defended their dissertations. The candidates who defended their dissertations and the respective institutions they came from are:

1. Emana Beyene, Haramaya University
2. Yenealem Aredo, Addis Ababa University
3. Dawit Bekele, Jimma University
4. Teshome Belayneh, Jimma Universityi
5. Mihretu Adnew, Jimma University
6. Yohannes Adgeh, Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures, AAU
7. Sellassie Cheru, Jimma University
8. Tesfaye Baye, Kotebe University College
9. Mokonnen Hunde, Ambo University

Each candidate publicly defended her/his dissertation at a separate session. The external examiners were from universities abroad and acclaimed in the respective fields. The internal examiners, who were from AAU, were also experts in the fields. The candidates were all from the Linguistics stream of the department's graduate programs. Seven of the nine dissertations focus on those Ethiopian languages which are among the least studied (Dawuro, Kafinoonoo, Gyeto, Endegagn, Gofa, Burji, and Girirra) while two of them on Afaan Oromoo. The editorial committee of BDLP would like to congratulate the candidates on their successful defence results.

The Department Welcomes New Students

The Department of Linguistics and Philology welcomed the 2008 E.C (2015/2016) batch of undergraduate and postgraduate students at a ceremony held on November 9, 2015. The ceremony was entertaining and informative. On the occasion, the new students were introduced to the staff members and earlier batches of students of the department. Prof. Baye Yimam gave an inspirational

speech to the students. Former graduates of the department also shared their experiences with the new students. Prizes were given to outstanding undergraduate students from both spoken language and signed language Linguistics programs. Activities such as singing competition among the undergraduate students were part of the program. Occasions such as this year's welcoming ceremony are of great importance in bringing staff and students together and also in promoting the department and should, therefore, continue as a tradition.

Linguistic Capacity Building Conference Held in Rondane (Norway)

The Norwegian and Ethiopian researchers as well as the PhD scholarship students of the NORHED program held a conference in Rondane, a ski resort in north-western Norway, from

Participants of the Rondane Conference

September 1 to 4, 2015. At the conference, fifteen papers were read by the researchers and eight papers, based on proposals, were also presented by the PhD students. In addition, a workshop, related to language technology, was conducted. Of the presentations made by the researchers and PhD students some were on sign language. The titles of the presentations are given below.

A. Presentations by Researchers

1. BayeYimam: *The Phonology of the Variety of Amharic in Wollo*
2. Rolf Piene Halvorsen and Lindsay Ferrara: *Methods in data annotation:Insights from signed language research*
3. Pawlos Kassu: *Aspect Marking in Ethiopian Sign Language*
4. Ronny Meyer: *Marking of Core Case in Muher*
5. ShimelisMazengia: *Some Observation on Hadiyissa Orthography*
6. BinyamSisay: *Negation in Hamar*
7. Derib Ado and Feda Negesse: *Recognition of Redundant Letters in Amharic: A Psycholinguistic Experiment*
8. Janne Bondi Johannessen: *Using corpora for linguistic research*
9. Hirut Woldemariam: *Contesting Identities in Multilingual Settings: The case of Gamo*
10. Elizabeth Lanza and Hirut Woldemariam: *Linguistic landscape as (socio)linguistic data*
11. Zelealem Leyew: *Kinship Terms and Concepts among the Sidaama*
12. Kristin Hagen: *ELAN workshop: Preliminary guidelines*
13. Fekede Menuta and Ruth Vatvedt Fjeld: *The Pragmatics of Cursing and Insult in Gurage and Nordic Culture*

14. Girma Mengistu: *Tone in Sezo*
15. Nigussie Meshesha: *Political and Social Discourse in Sidaama Folk Media*
16. MogesYigezu: *The Morphophonology of Hamar*

B. Presentations by PhD Students

1. John Koang: *Nuer Orthography*
2. Melkeneh Seid: *Noun Inflection in Gayl*
3. Solomon Getahun:*The Influence of Amharic on Guragigna Varieties: A Study of Language Contact and Genetic Affiliation*
4. Emebet Bekele: *Multilingualism and Language Choice among the Gurage*
5. Almaz Gelagay : *The Standardization of Gamo: Practices, Challenges and Implications*
6. TsehayAbza: *The Phonological Preliminaries of Inor*
7. WoineshetGirma: *The Semantics Properties of Ethiopian Sign Language: Implications for Sign Language Dictionary Making*
8. Andargachew Deneke: *Phonology of Ethiopian Sign Language*

Partial view of the Rondane Conference

The conference sessions were accompanied with excursions in the Rondane region of scenic beauty. The Rondane conference was organized by Prof. Janne Bondi Johannessen from the Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan, University of Oslo. The participants agreed to make their papers ready for publication of the conference proceedings by the end of the year. They are grateful to the organizer, Prof. Johannessen, the Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia project and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for covering travel, accommodation and conference expenses.

Three Sign Language PhD Candidates Make a Study Visit to Trondheim

Three sign language PhD Candidates from AAU who are benefiting from the Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia project of the NORHED program stayed in Trondheim, Norway, for a study visit from September 5 to 19, 2015. The three PhD candidates were: Pawlos Kasu and Andargachew Deneke from the Department of Linguistics and Philology as well as Woynishet Girma from Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf. There was also another PhD candidate called Guri Amundsen from the University of Stockholm, Sweden and currently a staff member of the host, Sør-Trøndelag University College. Each one of the PhD candidates made presentations and got feedback and also had discussions with her/his respective supervisor as to how to proceed with her/his research. In addition, the group

received training in ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator) by two staff members of Sør-Trøndelag University College and Dr. Lindsay Ferrara and Dr. Rolf Piene Halvorsen from the NORHED program.

Language Technology Team of LCB Meets with Habit project

The members of the Language Technology team of the Linguistic Capacity Building project met with the Habit project participants in Oslo at the Department of Linguistics and Nordic Studies on September 5-6, 2015. The meeting focused on joining hands in developing text corpora for the under resourced languages of Ethiopia that are also one of the focus areas of the Linguistic Capacity Building collaborative project between Addis Ababa University, Hawasa University, University of Oslo and

Participants of the meeting between LCB and Habit projects

Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The meeting discussed ways of improving the quality and increasing the quantity of the corpora being developed. Dr. Feda Negesse, Dr. Derib Ado, from Addis Ababa University, Prof. Janne Bondi Johannessen, Dr. Anders Nøklestad, Joel Priestley and Kristin Hagen from UiO represented the Language Technology Team while Aleš Horák, Pavel Rychlý, Vít Suchomel from Masaryk University of Czech and Björn Gambäck from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology represented the Habit project.

The Habit project is concerned with developing language technology tools for under resourced languages including those of Ethiopia. It is a collaborative project between Masaryk University of Czech, Norwegian University of Science and Technology and University of Oslo. The Language Technology team is grateful to Prof. Janne Bondi Johannessen and Björn Gambäck who made the meeting possible.

Linguistic Capacity Building Holds Annual Meeting with NORAD

The AAU, HU and UiO collaborative NORHED program of Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia project (LCB), held an annual meeting with Ms. Jeanette da Silva, Senior Adviser of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) at Semien Hotel, Addis Ababa on 16 November 2015. Dr. Binyam Sisay, the coordinator of LCB (NORHED), Dr. Taye Regassa, Dean of the College

of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication, Dr. Mersha Alehegne, Associate Dean of the Office of Research and Technology Transfer, Dr. Girma Mengistu, chair, Department of Linguistics and Philology, Prof. Janne Bondi Johanessen, University of Oslo and Dr. Nigussie Meshesha, Hawassa University, as well as project team leaders and researchers were present at the annual meeting.

The project coordinator, Dr. Biniyam Sisay, a staff member of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, welcomed those present at the meeting and presented the 2014-2015 report of the LCB.

LCB annual meeting with NORAD representative

Supplementary reports were also presented by Dr. Nigussie Meshesha from Hawassa University and by Prof. Janne Bondi Johanessen from UiO. After the report, Ms. Jeanette da Silva, stated that the annual report showed that the project has been well-managed and is going well, the partnership between the institutions involved is very active, the networking and collaboration with stakeholders is positive.

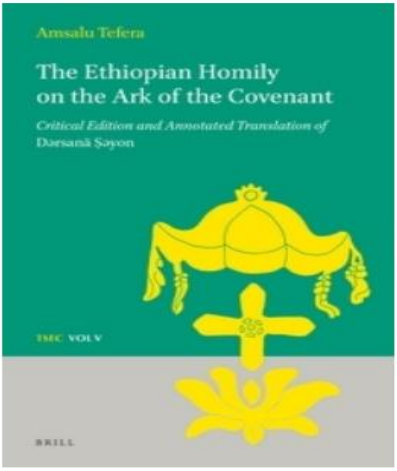
She said that NORAD is happy that the partners are taking the activities seriously as they help the project to be successful. Gender mainstreaming, the role of the project in developing languages, the language situation in Ethiopia and the main challenges that the project faced and steps taken to mitigate them were among the items discussed.

Four Staff Members and Sign Language Unit of the Department of Linguistics Publish Books

Dr. Amsalu Tefera, Dr. Hirut Wolde-Mariam, Dr. Shimelis Mazengia, Ato Pawlos Kasu and the Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture Program Unit of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, each published a book recently. The books of the first three staff members are based on their doctoral dissertations. That of Dr. Amsalu is concerned with a philological study while those of Dr. Hirut and Dr. Shimelis are focused on linguistic studies. Ato Pawlos's book is a guide to teaching Ethiopian Sign Language while that of the Sign Language Program Unit of the department is a baseline survey concerning deaf-blindness and the deafblind in Ethiopia. Highlights of the books are given below.

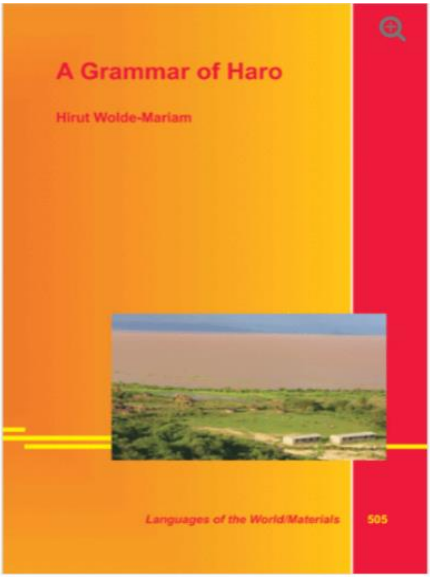
Dr. Amsalu: *The Ethiopian Homily on the Ark of the Covenant: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Dərsanä Ṣəyon*

Dr. Amsalu offers an *editio princeps* of the Ethiopic text of *Dərsanä Ṣəyon* together with an annotated English translation.



The homily, most likely composed in the fifteenth century, links the term Zion with the Ark of the Covenant and recounts at length its wanderings from Sinai to Ethiopia. As a Christian document, many of the events are interpreted as symbolic of Mary and the heavenly New Jerusalem. First edited by the author for his doctoral dissertation, the critical text and apparatus present a complete collation of the ten known witnesses to this homily. Detailed notes are supplied on significant and difficult terms in the translation. The publisher is BRILL: http://www.brill.com.

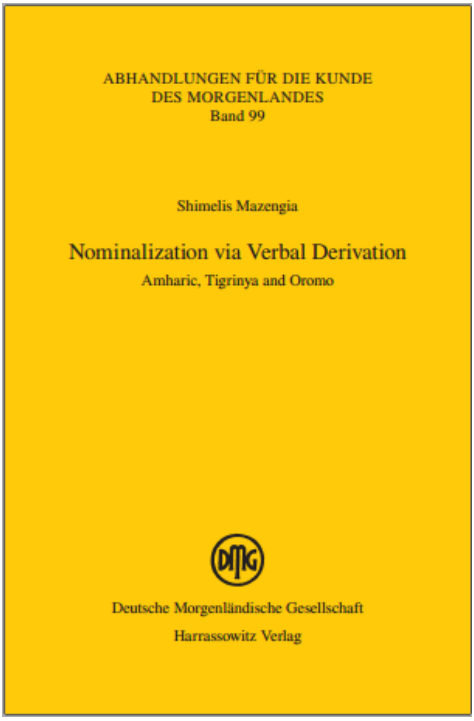
Dr. Hirut: *A Grammar of Haro*



Dr. Hirut's book is on Haro grammar, an endangered language spoken by less than 200 people who live on the eastern shore of an island in Lake Abaya. The latter is located in the south-western part of Ethiopia. The Haro language belongs to the Ometo linguistic group of the Omotic language family within the Afro-Asiatic superfamily. The book, which is based on the author's PhD dissertation, provides description of the phonological, morphological and syntactic structures of the language. The book was published by LINCOM GmbH.

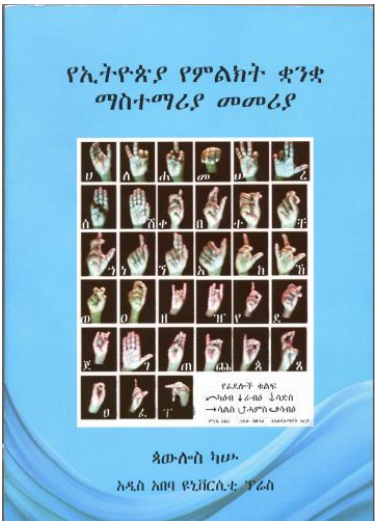
Dr. Shimelis: *Nominalization via Verbal Derivation: Amharic, Tigrinya and Oromo*

The book describes and contrastively compares the mechanisms which three major Ethiopian languages, Amharic, Tigrinya and Oromo, use to satisfy their needs for nominals at word, phrasal and clausal levels—in other words, the operations utilized for lexical, phrasal, and clausal nominalizations. Amharic and Tigrinya are Semitic and Oromo is Cushitic. However, Amharic is sometimes considered to have undergone significant Cushitic influence and is therefore often assumed to be structurally intermediate between Semitic and Cushitic. The description and analyses take tone into account for Oromo, as tone is considered to have some bearing on the nominalization processes of the language. The book was published by Harrassowitz Verlag, Germany.



Ato Pawlos Kasu: *የኢትዮጵያ የምልክት ቋንቋ ማስተሪያ መመሪያ (A Guide to Teaching Ethiopian Sign Language)*

Pawlos's book introduces modern methodology to teach sign language. Pawlos is a Deaf lecturer at the Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture Program Unit of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU. His new book is the first of its kind in Ethiopia. Although Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) is used by over two million people and taught at various schools, colleges, universities, religious institutions and educational establishments of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the only published resource available so far is EthSL dictionary which contains pictures of the signs along with their meanings in Amharic and English. Shortage of materials has adversely impacted the development of the language as well as language acquisition of deaf children. Because of the faulty methods used in teaching the language, many deaf children display severe language lag and many users also often



distort the beauty of the language. The focus of Pawlos's 222-page book is to minimize these problems. The book contains hitherto untouched topics such as the history of the Ethiopian Deaf Community and Deaf Culture, which is an important ingredient for understanding the language. The great

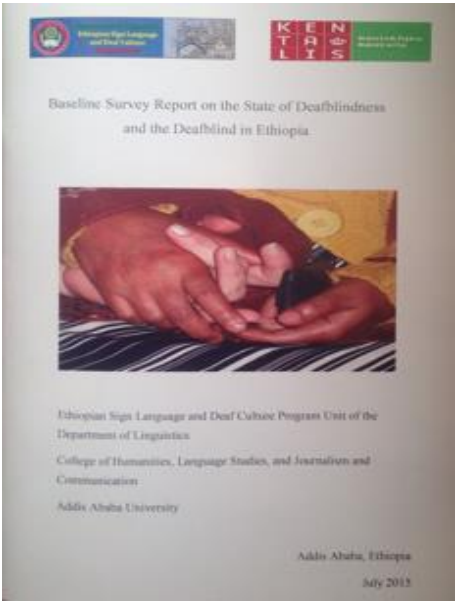
majority of deaf children are born of hearing parents; as a result, unlike other language speakers, they learn their language mostly at school and develop it with their peers. Therefore, how it is taught to them determines their language skills and proficiency.

The book is in Amharic to make the content accessible to all those who can read Amharic and are involved in the teaching of EthSL especially in primary schools where the foundation is laid. All those interested in EthSL, Deaf Culture as well as sign language teaching methodology will find the book very useful. Prior to this book, Pawlos has already published three books and is currently doing research on "Aspect Marking in EthSL" for his PhD. ***የኢትዮጵያ የምልክት ቋንቋ ማስተሪያ መመሪያ*** (A Guide to Teaching Ethiopian Sign Language) was published by AAU Press.

Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture Program Unit: *Baseline Survey Report on the Sate of Deafblindness and the Deafblind in Ethiopia*

The book is a report about the baseline survey that was conducted from May 2013 to February 2014 in four regional states and two city administrations. The study engaged different groups of people to obtain the required baseline information. The study aimed to acquire knowledge and skills on issues of deafblind in relation to communication, social interaction, orientation and mobility, service availability such as day care, medical service, education, transportation and early intervention and collaboration among stakeholders. The baseline survey for the book was conducted by four

committee members including two members of the Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture Program Unit of the Department of Linguistics and Philology—Ato Andargachew Deneke Demssie, team leader of the baseline survey, and Ato Pawlos Kassu Abebe—both PhD candidates in Sign Linguistics. The other two committee members are Ato Assefa Berihun Mitikea from the School of Psychology, AAU, and Dr. Sewalem Tsega Agegnehu from the Department of Special Needs Education, AAU. The research work as well as the publication of the book were funded by the project called "Deafblindness: Theory and Practice in Ethiopian Context", a collaboration between AAU and Kentalis International of the Netherlands. The book was printed by Berta Publishing Enterprise, Addis Ababa.



MA Curriculum for Ethiopian Sign Language Appraised

To launch a postgraduate program for Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture, an MA curriculum, designed earlier, was appraised at a workshop conducted in

Bishoftu (Debrezeit) at Air Force Hotel on October 16, 2015. The workshop was organized by Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia project (NORHED). During the one-day deliberations, valuable comments and suggestions were forwarded by the participants. Most of the comments and suggestions focused on the contents of the curriculum, the overall readiness of the Department of Linguistics and Philology to effectively run the program, potential opportunities and prospects as well as possible challenges. The comments and suggestions offered are to be used to improve the curriculum which will be finally submit to the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU. The participants of the workshop were member of the academic staff of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, representatives of the deaf community and other

Workshop participants discussing in groups

stakeholders including Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf, Federation ENAPD (Ethiopian National Associations of Persons with Disabilities), Alpha School For The Deaf, Mekanissa School For The Deaf, Victory School For The Deaf, Minilik Primary School, Minilik II Secondary School, Ministry of Education, and Hoseana School for the Deaf. The curriculum for the MA program in Ethiopian Sign Language is expected to be implemented as soon as approval is obtained from the university.

Researchers of Linguistic Capacity Building from AAU and HU Present Papers at the 19th ICES

Researchers of the Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia (NORHED program) presented papers at the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Warsaw (Poland) August 24-28, 2015.

There were ten researchers from the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, and two from the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hawassa University. The conference was held under the theme: "Ethiopia: Diversity and Interconnections through Space and Time". The researchers from the two universities participated in two panels—*Time in the languages of the Horn of Africa* and *Spatial expressions in Ethiopian languages*. Below is a list of the researchers—the first ten from AAU and the last two from HU—along with the titles of their papers.

1. Prof. Baye Yimam: *Deictics in Amharic*
2. Dr. Binyam Sisay: *Deixis in Koorete*
3. Dr. Derib Ado: *Metaphors of Time in Amharic*
4. Dr. Feda Negesse: *Dialectometry in the Studies of Ethiopian Languages*
5. Dr. Girma Mengistu: *Spatial Expressions in Sezo*
6. Dr. Hirut Woldemariam: *Deictics in Haro*
7. Dr. Moges Yigezu: *Deictics in Hamar*
8. Dr. Ronny Meyer: *On Tense in Amharic and Muher (Ethiosemitic)*
9. Dr. Shimelis Mazengia: *Aspect and Tense in Oromo*
10. Dr. Zelealem Leyew: *Endangered Languages in Ethiopia*
11. Dr. Fekede Menuta: *Time in the Guragina variety of Gumer*
12. Dr. Nigussie Meshesha: *Names and Genealogical Communication System in Sidaama*

LBC researchers who participated at the 19th ICES

The panel for *Time in the languages of the Horn of Africa* was coordinated by Prof. Lutz Edzard, Dr. Ronny Meyer, Dr. Yvonne Treis and Dr. EwaWołk-Sor while the panel of *Spatial*

expressions in Ethiopian languages was coordinated by Dr. Anbessa Teferra, Dr. Azeb Amha, Prof. Baye Yimam, Dr. Binyam Sisay and Dr. Hirut Woldemariam.

The over 300 participants of the conference were welcomed by Dr. Hanna Rubinkowska-Anioł, President of the Conference Organizing Committee, Dr. Ahmed Hassen Omer, Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University and other dignitaries. The five-day conference included 40 panels under 18 different headings covering linguistics, archaeology, history, social and political affairs, art and literature, all aspects of development, Ethiopia's place in Africa and the world, and Poland's links with Ethiopia. The 19th ICES was a large gathering of scholars and academics interested in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. The International Conference of Ethiopian Studies takes place every three years. The contingent from the AAU and HU is grateful to the Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia project and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for covering travel, accommodation and conference expenses.

Prof. Baye Delivers a Key Lecture at the 19th ICES

Prof. Baye Yimam delivered a key lecture at the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES) on August 25, 2015. The topic of his speech was *Movement, Contact and Diffusion of Features in the Ethiopian Language Area*. He began his speech by underscoring that the horn is a confluence of linguistic phyla, both major and minor, and where the Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic peoples and cultures converge. He also pointed out that the

region is where the Cushitic sub-phylum meets Nilotic and where the youngest sub-phylum, Omotic, *alias* West Cushitic, found itself wedged in between forming an intersection.

Prof. Baye gave an account of the movements of the peoples of the region by stating that the southward movement of Semitic over the Agaw sub-stratum and the northward movement of Oromo across the Western highlands and the Eastern Lowlands of the traditional Abyssinian state, and the southeastern and south-western expansion of the modern Ethiopian state are some of the major movements in history. According to his observation, this is leaving aside minor cross-local movements of groups caused by population dynamics and resource limitation, where one group pushes the other next to it with the same or greater force applied to it by the one behind it. Citing Fleming's (1984) metaphor, he likened the manner of the movement to

Partial view of the 19th ICES (Warsaw)

a domino effect. Concerning the results of the movements, Prof. Baye said that there have occurred contacts of cultures, of which languages constitute the core. He explained this with the Omotic intersection where Nilo-Saharan vocalic features appear prominent; where Semitic vowels and Nilo-Saharan consonants figure widely in Central Cushitic, and where vowel length is lost, against a background where such would be the exception rather than the norm in Cushitic and non-Semitic in general. He noted that the prefix conjugation of Lowland East Cushitic and its counterpart in the imperfect paradigm of Semitic is witnessed as a diachronic feature.

Concerning religion, Prof. Baye underscores that the horn is home to the largest Abrahamic religions—Christianity, Islam and Judaism—in which the Christian–Islam divide has been blurred by a strongly secular socio-cultural tint as observed in the Wollo variety of Amharic where a good mix of the latter with Oromo and Arabic constitutes its lexicon and where a sub-variety of Muslim Amharic seems to be on the emergence.

Regarding Ethiopian Linguistics, Prof. Baye indicated that first it has been, by and large, classification based on textual evidence and later on descriptive based on facts of live data to which the effect of crisscross movements leading to contact and diffusion of features has been an encumbrance. He thus suggested a broader perspective with a multidisciplinary thematic approach might prove useful. In addition to that of Prof. Baye's, key lectures were given by Dr. Yaqob Arsano, AAU, on "The New Hydro-diplomacy of the Nile:

Prospects for Peace and Security in North-eastern Africa" and Professor Adam Łukaszewicz, the University of Warsaw, on "Encounters with Ethiopia: Towards Ethiopian Studies in Context".

Dr. Endris Makes a Presentation on *Ramsa* via Skype

Dr. Endris presented a paper, "The *Ramsa* of Sheikh Ahmed Adem of Dana" (the latter is a center of Islamic learning and mysticism in Yajju, Wallo) via skype at the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES)—panel: Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research—on August 26, 2015. *Ramsa*, the origin of which is Oromo, is an opening recitation, usually *manzuma* (a melodic poem), at religious ceremonies such as *Mawlid* (celebration of Prophet Mohammad's birth) and *hadra* (a ritual gathering), in Wallo and other regions of Ethiopia which share in the practice.

The Muslim scholars of Wallo are generally known for panegyrics that are usually chanted at special occasions like *hadra* and *Mawlid*. The composer of the *Ramsa*, which was the focus of Dr. Endris's presentation, Sheikh Aḥmad Adem (d. 1903.), the founder of Dana, was one of the disciples of the famous sheikh of Yajju, Ǧamāl Al-Dīn Al ʿAnī. Dr. Endris presented the *Ramsa* text with analysis and annotation in English.

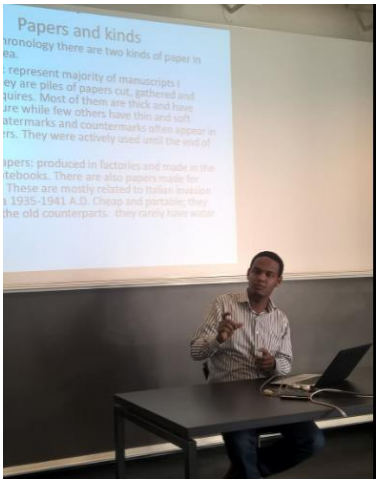
Binyam Ephrem Makes a Study Visit to Japan

Binyam Ephrem, a PhD candidate in the language technology track of the IT PhD program, made a three-month study visit to the National Institute of Informatics (NII), Tokyo (Japan) from May 20 to Aug 20, 2015. During his stay, he worked at his external supervisor, Dr. Yusuke Miyao's lab (http://kmcs.nii.ac.jp/mylab/?page_id=7&lang=en) focusing on the development of a Treebank for Amharic. A Treebank is a language dependent resource which is a linguistically annotated corpus for syntactic as well as semantic analysis. Such a resource is used to develop a parser and other Natural Language Processing (NLP) applications. Binyam, along with his supervisor, developed a draft annotation guideline for annotating Amharic sentences. Based on his PhD research, Binyam made a presentation to the lab group. The title of his presentation was "Towards the Development of Dependency Treebank for Amharic". In his talk, he pointed out the challenges he faced in developing a Treebank for Amharic and he got important feedback from the group. During his stay in Japan, he had a chance to participate in WOCAL 8 (8th World Congress of African Linguistics) which was held at Kyoto University, August 21-24, 2015. The title of his presentation was "Developing Deep and Robust Parsing for Less-resourced Languages: Challenges and a Way out".

Binyam Ephrem

Kemal Makes a Study Trip to the University of Copenhagen

Kemal Ibrahim, a lecturer and a PhD candidate in Philology, went to the University of Copenhagen for a two-month study visit (September 20 - November 19, 2015). He was invited by Professor Allesandro Gori, head of the project Islam in the Horn of Africa: Comparative Literary Approach at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, Faculty of Humanities. Kemal gained expertise through technical and bibliographic assistance from the project.



Kemal Ibrahim

Dr. Hirut Reads Papers at Various Conferences

Dr. Hirut participated in varioius conferences over the last several months. She read, among others, the following four papers: 1)"What does it mean to be multilingual in the diverse settings in Africa and its satellites?" at a conference on African multilingualism: motivations, modalities, movement and meaning, at The British Academy, London, September 8 – 9, 2015; 2) "Linguistic Landscape as a Standing Historical Testimony: The Case of Ethiopia" at the 7th

Conference on Linguistic Landscape, University of California, Berkeley Language Center, Berkley, May 7-9, 2015; 3) "Methodological challenges in conducting Linguistic Landscape research", at the 7th Conference on Linguistic Landscape, University of California, Berkeley Language Center, Berkley, May 7-9, 2015; and 4) "Identity contestation as a challenge of multilingual settings: The case of Gamo", at the NORHED Headquarters, Norway, August 30, 2015.

Dr. Meyer Co-authors an Article on Muher and Makes a Presentation

Dr. Ronny Meyer co-authored with Fekade Manuta (Hawassa University) an article "Sonorant alternations in Muher" (a Gurage variety) which was published in Lutz Edzard (ed.) 2015, *Arabic and Semitic Linguistics Contextualized: A Festschrift for Jan Retsö*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. At a workshop organized by Wolkite University, July 7, 2015, Dr. Meyer presented a paper entitled "Linguistic research on Gurage: Overview about major trends".

Dr. Mersha Participates in Logos in Oxford 2015 Conference

Dr. Mersha Alehegne participated in the *Logos in Oxford 2015* Conference which was held at the University of Oxford, 31 May – 5 June 2015. Dr. Mersha was invited to the conference in his capacity as a participant in the Green

Scholars Initiative Project on the Ethiopian Canticles—*Songs of Africa*. At the conference, Dr. Mersha led *the Ethiopic Seminar* as the Green Scholars Initiative Mentor. The seminar was aimed at giving participants with a broad range of traditional and contemporary issues on the Ethiopic textual tradition and practice.

Logos in Oxford 2015 conference was organized by SCIO (Scholarship and Christianity in Oxford) on behalf of Green Scholars Initiative. SCIO is the UK subsidiary of the Council for Christian Colleges &

SCIO
Scholarship & Christianity In OXFORD

Universities (CCCU). It is a research and educational institute in Oxford. Logos in Oxford 2015 was hosted at St Hugh's College, one of the 38 colleges of the University of Oxford. St Hugh's College was relative newcomer when it was founded in 1886.

Dr. Eyasu Presents a Paper at WOCAL 8

Dr. Eyasu Hailu presented a paper at the 8th World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL 8) which was held at Kyoto University, Japan, August 20–24, 2015. The title of Dr. Eyasu's paper was "Phonemic Inventory of Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)". He also attended a number of presentations on African sign languages including Kenyan, Cameroonian, Chadian, Ivorian, and South African sign languages. There were side events in which Dr.

Eyasu participated; among them a visit to Kyoto Sign Language Resource Center which is managed by the Japanese Deaf Community members.

It was as of WOCAL 6, which was held in Cologne, Germany in 2009, that presentation of research papers on African sign languages was considered. Since then, sign language presentations were given due attention by large audience and a number African sign language researchers. The WOCAL 8 sign language workshop was led by the famous Japanese sign language researchers including Prof. Soya Mori (Japan College of Social Work), Prof. Myamoto Ritsuko (Akita University), Dr. Nabotuka Kamei (Aichi Prefectural University) and Nami Akiyama (Japanese Federation of the Deaf) along with members of the Japanese Deaf community. The presentation made by Prof. Tetsuro Matsuzawa of Kyoto University was among the most celebrated ones at the conference. It was about "Evolutionary origin of human language viewed from the study of chimpanzees." It argues that the memory capacity of chimpanzees is much bigger than that of humans which was once as big but perhaps got lost at the time between the Neanderthals and the following hominids.

The WOCAL conference is conducted every three years focusing on the linguistic research of African Languages. The next WOCAL, that is WOCAL 9, will be hosted by Morocco. Dr. Eyasu is grateful to Mrs. Anja Malm of Disability Partnership Finland (FIDIDA) and to the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for covering his travel and conference attendance expenses.

EthSL and Deaf Culture Program Unit Continues Rendering Community Service

The EthSL and Deaf Culture Program Unit, Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, continues rendering non-regular sign language training to the university community and others who are interested in the language. The training has been given for over 10 years.

Currently, there are 300 registered trainees. The training is being given to five sections by 12 final-year undergraduate students. In addition, at the request of the Ministry of Justice of the Federal Government and Yekatit 23 Primary School of Special Needs Education, the Program Unit is providing training for 52 employees of the ministry as well as 26 teachers and administrative staff of the school, respectively, every Saturday mornings on the university premises. Over the last ten

Yeseph Yemane, a Deaf comedian, signing a joke during orientation.

years, the Ethiopian Sign Language Program Unit of the Department of Linguistics and Philology has trained nearly two thousand people and over 1,500 have been certified in preliminary sign language skill.

Lectures and Conferences Organized by Office of ADRTT (CHLSJC)

The Office of Associate Dean for Research and Technology Transfer (ADRTT) of the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication (CHLSJC) organized lectures, conferences and a Research Day over the last one year. The lectures were conducted on monthly basis inviting senior faculty members to share their knowledge and experiences with fellow colleagues and students. As to conference, three were held during the year—two were organized by the Office and one jointly: 1) The 20th Annual CHLSJC Conference, June 19-20, 2015; 2) *Fidel* Conference, June 23, 2015; and 3) Conference on *The Force of Faith: Belief, Tradition and Health in Ethiopia*, September 7-9, 2015. The latter was organized jointly by: Dr Mersha Alehegne, Associate Dean of Research and Technology Transfer (CHLSJC) as well as Professor David Phillips and Dr. Dan Levene, both from the University of Southampton. The Research Day was celebrated on 25th June 2015 by conducting a panel discussion and presenting award to faculty members of exemplary engagement with research.

Scholars Give Talks

Prof. Sweeny on speech and language therapy

Prof. Triona Sweeny gave a public lecture on Speech and Language Therapy at Addis Ababa University on June 5, 2015. The lecture covered a wide range of issues in relation to clinical linguistics and speech as well as language therapy. It was attended by staff, students and practitioners from Yekatit 12 Hospital and from other rehabilitation centers. Prof. Sweeny, who was a member of a medical team called *Smile Train* which repaired torn lips and palates of many Ethiopians, helped the patients to improve their speech and feeding. She has also contributed to the establishment and organization of the cleft Unit in Yekatit 12 Hospital.

Prof. Triona Sweeny

Professor Sweeny is an Irish clinical speech and language therapist and researcher with more than 30 years of experience as a clinician.

Prof. Theil on the age of language

Prof. Theil of the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo, gave a public lecture on the age of language on October 29, 2015. The topic of his lecture was *How old is Language?* Prof. Theil's talk was based on massive data from various areas of disciplines such as linguistics, biology, genetics, history, archeology and mythology. His main concern was to address the mysterious question of the beginning of human language. The talk was attended by staff and students.

Prof. Theil lecturing

Profs. Lanza, Svennevig and Røyneland on two topics

Prof. Elizabeth Lanza, Prof. Jan Svennevig and Prof. Unn Røyneland, all three from the Center for Multilingualism in Society across Lifespan, University of Oslo, gave talks on two topics on November 10, 2015. Prof. Lanza talked on *Methodological Issues in Doing Research on and with Multilinguals* while Prof. Svennevig and Prof. Røyneland focused on *Language Attitudes and*

Pofs. Lanza, Svennevig and Røyneland delivering their talks

Negotiation of Language and Identity. The sessions were attended by staff members and students of the department.

Prof. Lanza is professor of Linguistics at the University of Oslo and Director of the Center for Multilingualism in Society across Lifespan while Prof. Svennevig and Prof. Røyneland are professors of Linguistics at the same University.

Prof. Edzard on South Arabian and Ethio-Semitic

Prof. Edzard, from Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg/ University of Oslo, talked on the importance of South Arabian (both Epigraphic and Modern) and Ethio-Semitic for establishment of etymologies and classification at Addis Ababa University on November 17, 2015. Of particular interest was whether the semantics of a root in a given Semitic language can be explained as a genetic reflex of the

Prof. Edzard lecturing

semantics at an earlier "common Semitic stage" or whether the semantics of the root in question rather has to be explained by an inner-family loan. Prof. Edzard's talk was attended by staff and students, especially, PhD candidates. Prof. Edzard is a professor of Middle East Studies, whose areas of interest include: Comparative Semitic and Afroasiatic linguistics, analysis of Hebrew and Arabic (including Judeo-Arabic) texts from different periods, Colometric text analysis, History of science, Phonology and Language in diplomacy. The organizer of the event was The Office of Associate Dean for Research and Technology Transfer (ADRTT) of the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication (CHLSJC).

Ngaalam, a "New" Nilo-Saharan Language

Ngaalam, a "new" Nilo-Saharan language, which was identified recently by Dr. Moges Yigezu, is spoken by a very small community of five hundred people in the south-western part of Ethiopia in Anuak Zone of Gambella Region. The self-name of the speakers of the language is *Ngaalamer* while they call their language *Ngaalam*. The Anuaks call the Ngaalamer people *Olam* while the Majang call them *Majir*; the Suri (Tirma-Chai) call them *Ngidini* and the Baale call them *Ngaalama*. The Murle call them by their self-name, *Ngaalamer*. The Ngaalamer use different names to refer to their neighbors: *Berier* for Anuaks; *Suri* for the Baale and Tirma-Chai. They call the Murle by their self-name, *Murle*.

According to Dr. Moges, the speakers of Ngaalam are scattered in the forest belt of south western Ethiopia between Baale and Majang speakers. The main settlement, which is close to the South Sudanese border, is in a locality known as *Gedu*, approximately some 45 kilometers from Dima westward to Gambella town. The other main settlement area is *Merken*, some 20 kilometers from Dima to the north and close to the Majang speaking area. Their neighbors are: the Majang to the north, Me'enit to the east, Baale and Murle to the south and southwest, and the Anuak to the northwest. Their economy is mainly based on river basin cultivation, hunting, gathering and occasionally fishing. The principal crops are durra, millet, beans, sesame and maize.

Dr. Moges underscores that *Ngaalam* is certainly a Nilo-Saharan Surmic language. Although it is genetically closely related to the Surmic languages, it is, however, distinct from the rest of the Surmic languages. Based on over 300 basic lexical items, a comparison has been made between Ngaalam and the South West Surmic languages. A cognate count shows that Ngaalam has 49% lexical similarity with Baale, 51% with Tennet, 53% with Murle, 47% with Narim and 44% with Didinga whereas with Majang, a language the Ngaalamer are shifting to, the lexical similarity is around 14%.

Ngaalam is highly endangered and is on the verge of extinction. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the situation is one of bilingualism in diglossia whereby the speakers of Ngaalam speak Baale or Majang as their second language. On the contrary, the latter rarely learn or speak Ngaalam as a second language.

Although Ngaalam (or Olam) has been mentioned by various authors in the past (Bryan 1945; Bender1971, 1975, 1977, 1983; Fleming 1982), no significant linguistic data have ever been presented. Dr. Moges's study provides a sketch grammar of Ngaalam from a comparative historical perspective and revisits the internal classification of Surmic in light of data from recent fieldwork. Dr. Moges thus classifies Ngaalam as a coordinate branch of the Didinga-Murle-Baale branch that forms the South West Surmic branch within Surmic.

13th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium to be Hosted by AAU

The 13th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium will be hosted in Addis Ababa by the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, in August 2017. This was decided at the 12th Colloquium, which took place at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, September 1-4, 2015. The unanimous choice of the Department of Linguistics and Philology as the next host by the participants of the 12th Colloquium is recognition of the contributions made by Addis Ababa University to language studies.

The Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium is an international forum established by leading academics in the field of Nilo-Saharan studies some four decades ago in order to discuss, debate and disseminate developments in the field on a regular basis. Since it was languaged in the 1970s, twelve colloquiums have been held in the various parts of the world and the last one (the 12th Nilo-Saharan Colloquium) in

Nairobi, Kenya. Over the years, the study of Nilo-Saharan languages has become one of the most vibrant and innovative fields in African linguistics. It is the close collaboration of linguists of the various universities in Africa, North America, Europe and Asia that made it a highly productive field of study. Since Ethiopia is home to some 21 languages of the Nilo-Saharan family, it is gratifying and deserving to have been chosen as the next host of the colloquium.

Nilo-Saharan is the largest language family in Africa and includes some 204 languages spoken across a wide swath of the African continent roughly from Nigeria in the west to Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania in the east. The Nilo-Saharan languages spoken in Ethiopia are found in the western part of the country along the border with the Sudan and South Sudan particularly in Tigray, Gambella, Benshangul and SNNP Regional States. The languages include: *Kunama* in Tigray Regional State, *Anuak, Nuer, Opuuo* and *Ngaalam* in Gambella, *Gumuz, Komo, Uduk, Gwama* and *Berta* in Benishangual-Gumuz, and *Majang, Koegu, Muguji, Nyangatom, Bodi, Tishena, Murle, Mursi, Tirma-Chai* and *Baale* in SNNP Regions.

Until recently, many of the Ethiopian Nilo-Saharan languages happened to be among the least studied languages in the continent. Thanks to the expansion of graduate programs in Addis Ababa University, many PhD students and staff have been studying little known Nilo-Saharan languages and have brought to the fore unprecedented linguistic and cultural information which could have immense scientific and historical values. We are, thus, contributing not only to the preservation of the precious

linguistic and cultural heritage of Ethiopia but also that of Africa and beyond.

The 13th Nilo-Saharan linguistics Colloquium is expected to involve around 100 participants from various parts of the world ranging from the United States in the west to Japan in the east. It is also Africa and abroad on the different aspects of Nilo-Saharan languages to present their findings at the colloquium. For our PhD students (at AAU and elsewhere in the country) who are engaged in Nilo-Saharan studies, the occasion will be an opportunity to have exposure to an international academic forum and to get feedback from renowned scholars in the field.

To organize the 13th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium, there is a need for collaboration, most of all, among the major stakeholders: expected that a large contingent of East Africans will take part in the conference as the Eastern African region is home to many of the Nilo-Saharan languages and the region has also quite a large group of local linguists actively working on the various languages. We also envisage to attract PhD students working in Addis Ababa University, the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCT) and the House of Federation of the FDRE. MOCT, as an executive organ of the Federal Government, is mandated to oversee the affairs of languages and cultures while the House of Federation is the legislative body in charge of issues pertaining to languages and nationalities. It is customary that higher officials of the host country give opening and/or closing speeches and often the opening session takes place in the city hall or in a high-profile place.

The chairperson of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Dr. Girma Mengistu, has formally requested the good offices of Dr. Mersha Alehegne, Associate Dean for Research and Technology Transfer, College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication (CHLSJC), to inform the College and the University management and request for budget allocation. The Department has already put in place an organizing committee to start preparations for the upcoming 13th colloquium.

Synopses of Doctoral Dissertations

Descriptive Grammar of Ezha: A Central West Gurage Language, Ethio-Semitic

Endalew Assefa

This study provides a descriptive account of the Ezha language which is typologically grouped under the South Ethio-Semitic group of languages. The required data were collected from native speakers through elicitation supplemented by recording of free narratives, and the findings are presented in seven chapters.

Dr. Endalew Assefa

A total of thirty three consonant and seven vowel phonemes are attested in Ezha. Out of the the thirty three consonants, twenty

two are simple or plain, whereas eleven are complex (i.e. labialized or palatalized). No two consonants can co-occur word-initially except when the second slot is filled in by the trill *r*. At word-medial and -final positions, however, two consonants can come in a sequence As regards vowel sequencing, no two vowels can co-occur at any position of a word.

Concerning syllable structure, nine different syllable types are attested: *V*, *VC*,CV, *CVC*, *VCC*, *CVCC*, *CCV*, *CCVC* and *CCVCC* where a CC sequence at the onset position is limited to syllables whose second consonant is *r*. Different morphophonemic processes are discussed in the dissertation including assimilation, non-assimilative palatalization, labialization, vowel deletion, vowel fronting, epenthesis (vowel or glide insertion), and spirantization.

In Ezha, the minor word classes assume three categories: pronouns, determiners and adpositions. The pronoun sub-class is composed of personal pronouns, interrogative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, reflexive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, exclusive pronouns, pronouns of totality, and pronouns of isolation/emphatic pronouns. The determiner category, on the other hand, subsumes demonstratives and quantifiers (cardinal numerals, ordinal numerals and non-numeral quantifiers). The adposition sub-group comprises prepositions, postpositions and circumpositions.

Four major word classes are attested: noun, adjective, verb and adverb. The lexical elements included in all of these word classes are found out to be simple, derived or compound.

Nouns inflect for definiteness and case. Indefiniteness is morphologically unmarked; it is expressed by bare nouns or by employing the numeral *att* 'one'. With regard to gender, only few nouns attach the non-productive suffix *-t* to indicate feminine gender; masculinity has no marker at all. Though there are some supplementary pairs that differentiate between masculine and feminine gender, the overwhelming majority of nouns are not gender specific. The distinction between the two genders for human nouns is indicated by agreement elements attached to verbs. Besides, pre-posed independent words indicating either of the genders can be used. These gender specific terms are *təbatt* 'male' and *arsɨtt* 'female'. As for number, nouns do not inflect for both singularity and plurality. There are a few nouns that distinguish between the two numbers by internal modification or suppletion. For the majority of nouns, number distinction is made by verbal agreement. Numerals can also be employed to distinguish between the two numbers.

Adjectives attract definite and case markers when they precede definite and case marked nouns. No gender specification applies to adjectives of any kind. Regarding number, adjectives undergo complete reduplication to indicate plurality, while the basic forms signal singularity.

Verbs are sub-categorized on the basis of two major criteria: number of root consonants and gemination of the penultimate root consonant. With reference to the number of root consonants, Ezha verbs are mono-consonantal, bi-consonantal, tri-consonantal or quadri-consonantal. Based on gemination of the penultimate root consonant, on the other hand, tri-consonantal and quadri-consonantal verbs are labeled as type-A (those which geminate

their penultimate root consonants in the perfective base only), type-B (those which geminate the penultimate root consonant in all the three base forms: perfective, imperfective and jussive/imperative) and type-C (those which geminate their penultimate root consonant in the perfective and imperfective bases only).

Verbs inflect for subject agreement, object agreement, negation, future tense/epistemic modality, clause marking in their affirmative perfective forms, and converb formation. Object and negation markers exhibit grammatically conditioned allomorphy. Remote past tense is expressed by using the past auxiliary *bannə* following converbs in their perfective form. Near past tense reading is signaled by verbs in the perfective aspect, while a present tense reading is rendered by the imperfective form of verbs. The two future tenses, definite future and indefinite future, are marked by the morphemes *-te* and *-ʃə* which also mark certainty and probability at the same time in their respective order. Aspect is expressed by employing different base patterns.

The four major word classes and adpositions expand to phrasal levels. Thus, five phrasal categories are identified: noun phrase, adpositional phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and verb phrase. Except for an adpositional phrase, all the phrasal types can be built out of a head word only; an adpositional phrase always requires a noun as complement. Once again, except for an adpositional phrase, the remaining phrasal categories are head final; the head of an adpositional phrase can occupy either the right or the left (or even both) position of the phrase.

In situations where a noun phrase is made up of a head noun together with dependents, the dependents can be a noun, adjectives, a numeral, a demonstrative and/or a relative clause. The dependent of an adpositional phrase can be a noun or another adpositional phrase. The head of an adjective phrase can select the intensifier *nɨkk'ar* 'very', an adpositional phrase and/or a relative clause as its dependents. The only dependent that an adverb phrase can select is the intensifier *nɨkk'ar* 'very'. A verb phrase can have a noun phrase, an adpositional phrase, an adverb phrase, an adjective phrase, a clause and/or the intensifier *nɨkk'ar* 'very' as dependents.

Ezha verbal arguments assume three dimensions: one-place argument structures, two place argument structures and three place argument structures. These argument structures are associated with intransitive, mono-transitive and di-transitive verbs.

Different clausal types are identified and described. These include declarative clauses, interrogative clauses (polar and content interrogatives), subordinate clauses (conditional clauses, concessive-conditional clauses, relative clauses, purpose clauses and temporal clauses), clauses involving converbs, clauses involving verbal nouns, and complement clauses. Declarative and polar interrogative clauses have the same structure except that polar interrogative utterances are accompanied by a rising intonation.

The ways in which clausal comparison can be expressed are also addressed. An adjectival predicate expresses similarity. In doing so, the similative marker *-xəma* attaches to a genitive-marked

noun that constitutes the standard of comparison. Difference relative to a particular quality can be expressed by using an adjective predicate which expresses the quality in question whereby a relative verb is situated before the predicative adjective, or by employing verbs which signify the quality in question. In both adjectival and verbal means of expressing difference, the standard of comparison is always marked by *ɨnnɨm*'all' is employed to express the superlative. This element is always marked by *tə-* and can be followed by a verb indicating the respective quality or an adjectival predicate preceded by a relative verb.

Finally, the ways in which focus and topicalization operate in the language are discussed. Focus is attested to be expressed in two ways: morphologically and syntactically. Morphologically speaking, the focus suffix *-m* attaches to nouns, pronouns, numerals, adverbs and verbs of subordinate clauses in order to indicate contrastive focus. Reflexive pronouns and pronouns of isolation can also be used to indicate a focused constituent, hence, syntactic focus marking. As regards topicalization, constituents which relate to an object noun phrase (both direct and indirect object), a time adverb and an adjunct can be dislocated to the left peripheral position within a clause to become topics.

A Grammar of Sezo

Girma Mengistu Desta

The dissertation presents the first comprehensive grammatical description of Sezo, an Omotic language genetically related to the Non-Gonga group of Mao languages. It is spoken in the western

borderland of Ethiopia in Begi and Qondala districts of the West Wellegga Zone.

The phonemic inventory shows that Sezo has twenty two consonant and five vowel phonemes. Consonant gemination and vowel length are phonemic. Assimilation, aspiration, spirantization, vowel/glide insertion, terminal vowel (TV) deletion, degemination, cluster simplification, nasal release and debuccalization are among the most common phonological and morphophonemic processes attested in the language.

Dr. Girma Mengistu

Sezo has two-level tonemes—high and low. The two tonemes occur on monomoraic and bimoraic syllables (i.e. on short and long vowels). Rising (LH) and falling (HL) contour tones have been recorded occurring only on bimoraic syllables. They are analyzed as composites of the high and low tonemes squeezed together on one bimoraic syllable as a result of diachronic and synchronic processes. Tone plays a very significant role in the lexicon of the language. It distinguishes lexical items. It also derives nominal stems from verbal roots. Unlike its importance in the lexicon, tone has a limited role in the grammar of the language. It distinguishes between declarative and interrogative sentences. The key tonal processes are downdrift, downstep, contour formation through partial spreading of a high tone over a low tone bearing unit, contour formation through re-linking of a floating high tone to an adjacent low tone bearing unit and total spreading of a high tone.

In citation form, a noun consists of a root and a TV. A noun root may be either consonant-final or vowel-final. Every root consists of a root-internal associated tones (or tones) and a root-final floating tone. The function of the TV of a noun cited in isolation is to host the root-final floating tone. In the presence of an adjacent morphological or syntactic element, the TV is deleted because its function (i.e. hosting the root-final floating tone), can be carried out by the adjacent tone bearing unit.

In its unmarked form, a countable noun is transnumeral. It may refer to singular or plural referents depending on context. A countable noun can also be further specified for paucal, plural and associative. Sezo does not mark grammatical gender. Only biological gender (sex) is expressed by suppletive forms and periphrastic constructions. Grammatical features such as definiteness and case are morphologically marked.

In Sezo, a verb root does not stand alone. In order to occur as a phonological word, it involves one of the mood markers as its obligatory component. A lexical verb shows interesting features in the way it changes its valence. The causative is morphologically derived. The passive is expressed by the unchanged (active) form of the verb which involves the third person non-singular impersonal pronominal clitic as its essential component. The reciprocal, the middle and the applicative are expressed by verb serialization strategy. The inchoative is derived from nominal and adjectival bases by deleting a root-final floating tone.

Mood is the most prominent verbal grammatical category in the language. It is the most grammaticalized and the most compulsory element of the verb. Tense and aspect are generally less

prominent because they are less grammaticalized and less compulsory as opposed to mood. Tense and aspect are respectively expressed by lexical items and grammaticalized converb constructions.

The study identifies a separate class of adjectives based on their distinct morphosyntactic features. It also describes adverbs the function of which is to express time, frequency, manner and direction. Pronouns, demonstratives and various types of quantifiers were also described with extensive illustrative data.

The syntactic description examines the structures and functions of phrasal, clausal and sentential constructions. In Sezo, phrases are generally head-final. The word order in sentences is subject-verb (SV) with intransitive verbs and subject-object-verb (SOV) with transitive verbs when the subject is overt. In clause structure, dependent clauses precede main clauses.

In addition, the study tries to show grammatical features of Sezo that relate it to or set it apart from other Omotic languages. It also indicates some residues that need further investigation.

A Sociolinguistic Study of the Use of and Attitudes toward Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)

Eyasu Hailu Tamene

This study investigates the language use and attitudes toward the Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) the language of the Ethiopian Deaf community. Data were collected at 11 sites from all over Ethiopia. Three types of informants were recruited: Deaf participants (119), teachers of the Deaf (22) and parents of the Deaf (22). The data were gathered based essentially on

Dr. Eyasu Hailu

questionnaires which were administered to the Deaf participants in the form of video-taped guided interviews conducted in EthSL, and administered to the hearing parents and teachers in writing. This was supplemented, informally and in a minor way, by my own participant observation. The total collected data were from all 119 Deaf participants, 17 of the teachers and 19 parents of the Deaf.

The findings of the study can be grouped into three broad categories: Language use (also skills), services for the Deaf and attitudes. With regard to language skills, the Deaf participants were multilingual with skill in two to five languages. Surprisingly, those who became Deaf when they were below five years old reported that they were more multilingual than those who became Deaf at a later age (self-evaluation on questionnaires). Almost all of the Deaf participants know both Amharic and EthSL to some degree, regardless of factors such as place of birth, onset of Deafness and education. Parents of the Deaf were found to have very little or no sign language skills; teachers, unsurprisingly, have much better signing skills than the parents.

With regard to the language use, sign language is not used equally in all domains. It is commonly used in some informal domains such as in the market or with friends who know sign language; and in some formal domains such as the classroom. It is much less common in the home domain. Parents do not usually communicate with their Deaf children instead they employ oral means for communication, but there are cases where siblings

serve as sign language interpreters. Teachers have a much higher level of sign language use, mainly in the classroom..

Concerning services for the Deaf, the Deaf participants were found to be generally knowledgeable about the services and made frequent use of them. They know better about the availability of sign language interpreters, Deaf associations and sign language dictionaries in their area. Parents have much less knowledge about the services and seldom use them. Teachers are in a better position than the parents.

The participants were also asked about their attitudes towards sign language and sign language use. Typically, the Deaf participants have very positive attitudes, followed by the teachers and, least of all, the parents. The positive attitude of the Deaf and, to a lesser degree, of teachers resulted in the continuing vitality of EthSL.

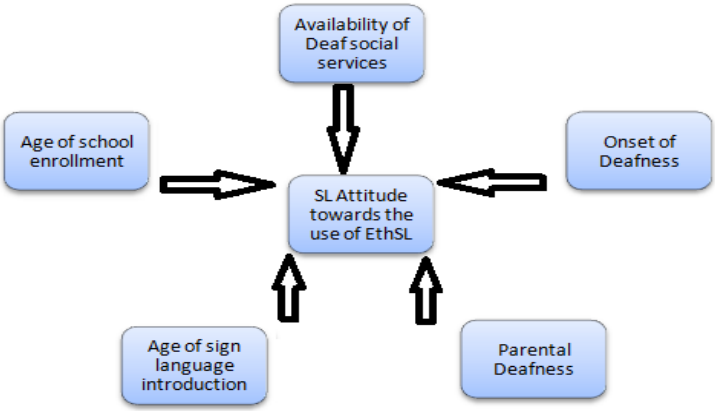
The study has identified five major factors that govern Deaf people's attitudes towards the use of EthSL and they are presented in the following diagram.

Onset of Deafness

Those who became Deaf early, i.e. below the age of five, have a relatively greater chance of developing positive attitudes towards the use of EthSL than the age groups above five. The ones below five are characterized by frequent use of sign language among each other at school, in the market with signer friends, at religious places but less frequently at home. They have no fear or shame at using sign language in public places.

Parental Deafness

Those Deaf people who are from a Deaf family background develop greater positive attitudes towards the use of EthSL than



those families who do not have Deaf members. Deaf people from a Deaf family, including hearing Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs), are characterized by markedly higher frequency of sign language use, at home and at school, in the market place and at religious places, and increased sense of Deaf identity.

Age of Sign Language Introduction

Those individuals who acquire sign language early have a greater chance of developing positive attitudes towards the use of sign language than those who acquire it later. In line with the onset of Deafness, these groups of people have greater confidence in using sign language at school, in the market places, with signer friends and in religious domains.

Age of School Enrollment

Deaf children who join school early show greater chance of positive attitudes than those who enter later. The "early" group of people is characterized by frequent use of sign language at school, in the market, in religious domains and they make use of sign language interpreters in government domains.

Availability of Deaf Social Services

The availability of Deaf associations, Deaf clubs, Deaf gathering sites and sign language interpreters contribute greatly towards the socialization of the Deaf. The more available the Deaf social services, the more positive are the attitudes towards the use of sign language in the neighboring Deaf community.

At the beginning of the research, the assumption was that when a language is used in as many domains as possible that was considered a manifestation of the users' positive attitudes towards the language. The research proved the assumption to be basically correct for EthSL. The research winds up by recommending that parents of the Deaf need to get adequate sign language training and that policy makers need to consider Deaf parents' and teachers' language use situations when drafting Deaf education policy.

Enrollment

The tables below present update on student enrollment of the Department of Linguistics and Philology.

1. PhD

Year of Entry		Track					Total
E.C.	E.C.	Descriptive and Theoretical	Applied Linguistics	Documentary Linguistics	Experimental Phonetics	Philology	
2000	2007/8	-		1	-	-	1
2001	2008/9	-		1	-	4	5
2002	2009/10	-		-	-	1	1
2003	2010/11	4		6	-	3	13
2004	2011/12	6		13	-	4	23
2005	2012/13	9		11	-	7	27
2006	2013/14	8		7	2	10	27
2007	2014/15	24	-	-	-	7	31
2008	2015/16	12	15	-	-	9	36
Total		63	15	39	2	45	164

2. MA

Year of Entry		Track		Total
E.C.	G.C.	Linguistics	Philology	
2006	2013/14	-		
2007	2014/15	-	7	7
2008	2015/16	6	7	13
Total		6	14	20

3. BA

Year of Entry		Track		Total
E.C.	G.C.	Linguistics	Sign Language	
2006	2013/14	-	27	27
2007	2014/15	8	6	14
2008	2015/16	18	10	28
Readmitted		4	6	10
	Total	30	49	79

Staff Profile (2015)

I. Full Time

1. Professor

Baye Yimam

PhD, SOAS, London University, *Syntax*

2. Associate Professor

Gerald Heusing

PhD, University of Hamburg, *Morpho-Syntax & Comparative Linguistics*

Hirut Wolde-Mariam

PhD, Addis Ababa University and Cologne University, *Morphosyntax*

Moges Yigezu

PhD, Laboratoire de Phonologie, Université Libre de Bruxelles, *Phonetics & Phonology*

Ronny Meyer

PhD, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, *Descriptive Linguistics & Typology*

Zelealem Leyew

PhD, Addis Ababa University and Cologne University, *Sociolinguistics & Descriptive Linguistics*

3. Assistant Professor

Abebayehu Messele
PhD, University of Sheffield, UK, *Clinical Linguistics*

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PhD, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, *Morphology*

Binyam Sisay
PhD, Oslo University, *Syntax*

Derib Ado
PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Experimental Phonetics*

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PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Descriptive Linguistics*

Endris Mohammed
PhD, Addis Ababa University and University of Florence, *Philology*

Eyasu Hailu
PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Sign Linguistics*

Feda Negesse
PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Experimental Phonetics*

Girma Mengistu (Currently, Department Chair)
PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Descriptive Linguistics*

Mersha Alehegne
PhD, Hamburg University, *Philology*

Shimelis Mazengia
PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Descriptive & Comparative Linguistics*

4. Lecturer

Samrawit Bekele
MA, Addis Ababa University, Linguistics

4.1 Lecturer (in-house PhD candidate)

Abay Tesfaye
MA, Addis Ababa University, *Linguistics*

Andargachew Deneke
MA, Addis Ababa University, *Special Needs Education*

Binyam Ephrem
MPhil, University of Tromsø, Norway, *Computational Linguistics*
Demeke Asres
MSc, Addis Ababa University, *Computer Science*
Dessie Keleb
MA, Addis Ababa University, *Philology*
Endashaw W/Michael
MA, Addis Ababa University, D*ocumentary Linguistics and Culture*
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Kemal Ibrahim
MA, Addis Ababa University, *Philology*
Muna Abubeker
MA, Addis Ababa University, *Philology*
Pawlos Kassu
M.Ed, University of Jos, Nigeria, *Sign Linguistics*
Samuel Handamo
MA, Addis Ababa University, *Linguistics*

4.2 On Post-Doctoral Research Leave (abroad)

Amsalu Tefera – Maximilian University of Munich (Germany)
PhD, Addis Ababa University and University of Florence, *Philology*

4.2 On PhD Study Leave (abroad)

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MA, Addis Ababa University, *Linguistics*
Gidena - Hamburg University (Germany)
MA, Addis Ababa University, *Philology*

II. Home-Base

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Wondwosen Tesfaye, Assistant Professor
P hD, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway, *Morphology & Syntax*

6. Technical Staff

Dawit Hassen - Technical Assistant III
MSc, Addis Ababa University, *Information Science*
Mihret Daba - Technical Assistant III
Diploma, Africa Beza University College

7. Administrative Staff

Brook Haylemariam, Finance and Administrative Assistant
(Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia--NORHED)
Mekdes Giram, Department Secretary (Part-timer)
Rahel Demisse, Department Courier
Yenenesh Takele, Janitor

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