

Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics and Philology



**Department of Linguistics and Philology
College of Humanities, Language Studies,
Journalism and Communication**

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Editorial

Forty Years of Linguistic Studies at AAU

Language, a defining factor that distinguishes us as modern *homo sapiens* (wise human beings), is pivotal in the interaction among ourselves, as the most important means of communication especially for exchanging information and feelings. Constantly improving this crucially important means is fundamental for the advancement of knowledge which, in turn, is vital to sustain ourselves and ensure meaningful life. In this respect, the origination of writing, which separated the era of history from prehistory, was the greatest invention. It was, possibly, a precursor to so many other technological inventions. In addition to preserving knowledge, it has been a mechanism of communicating and sharing information across space and time. Apart from its forerunner role for the emergence of civilization, the written language, while evolving to computer chips, has been instrumental for the realization of the multifaceted advancement made in the world.

It was the desire to discern the nature of language and thereby enhance communication and advance knowledge that resulted in the emergence of the science of linguistics which widely drew the attention of scholars in the 1960s. Here in Ethiopia, the momentum prompted the establishment of the Department of Linguistics at Addis Ababa

University in 1978. That was a welcome move in a country that has over 80 languages and has a literary tradition of at least two millennia attested by the trilingual—Sabeian, Greek and Ge‘ez—inscriptions at Adulis, the ancient port of the Aksumite Empire on the Red sea coast. Furthermore, the Ethiopian classical language, Ge‘ez, was among the first few languages of the world into which the Bible was translated and that had its grammar published. In the 1960s, the Qur’an was also translated into Amharic. Ethiopia is one of those countries whose languages were printed early. Accordingly, religious materials including the Psalter were printed in Ge‘ez in 1513 in Rome.

After Ge‘ez, and later on Amharic, Tigrinya and Oromo drew the attention of scholars. Subsequently, scholars extended their research endeavor to numerous other Ethiopian languages. Currently, half of over 80 languages of the country, for which orthographies have been developed, are being used in various domains including education and administration. The new language policy issued by the Council of Ministers on March 3, 2020 has recognized four additional languages—Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali and Afar—to be working languages at the federal level alongside Amharic. The languages were selected mainly on the criteria of wider and/or cross-border use. In addition to the wealth of manuscripts in the Ethiopic script, there are ‘*ajami*’ manuscripts (various Ethiopian languages written in the Arabic script). Currently, the Ethiopic and the Latin scripts are in use while the Arabic

script is additionally employed for religious purposes by Muslim compatriots.

The objectives of the Department of Linguistics, later named Department of Linguistics and Philology, are: training linguists for describing, codifying and standardizing the indigenous languages, documentation (with priority to the endangered languages), doing research, applying the knowledge of linguistics to solving problems in areas such as language acquisition, second language teaching and learning, dealing with language impairment and providing consultancy. To harmonize its academic standards at the domestic and international levels, the department collaborates with various institutions and universities. Five international and domestic collaboration projects currently run by the staff members of the department are cases in point.

The efforts to increase knowledge and build capacity at the department help to disseminate resources to the languages of the country with priority to the disadvantaged ones. The collaborative projects attempt to make sure that female folks and children take advantage of the capacity building endeavours. It is assumed that encouraging participation at grass roots level would impact on the overall development of Ethiopia.

At its momentous 40th anniversary (quadragennial), the Department of Linguistics and Philology boasts hundreds of graduates with bachelor's degree in Linguistics and Sign Language as well as master's and doctoral degrees in Linguistics and Philology. Publications of scientific papers by staff and PhD candidates, descriptions of grammars, manuscript studies, documentation of endangered languages and research on sign language and training teachers and researchers at doctorate level for the newly established universities are also among the landmark achievements of the department. Along the forty-year journey, although numerous challenges were faced, the department has achieved so much with its academic and technical staff as well as its students pulling together. The department yet braces for more successes with imprints in the progress of Ethiopia.

Among the contents of this special issue are articles concerning the history of the forty-year journey of the department of Linguistics and Philology, medieval Ethiopian manuscripts, language and the Ethiopian society, the Ethiopian linguistic area, the Ethiopian Sign Language, Linguistics as a dynamic science and Clinical Linguistics.

Department of Linguistics and Philology

Genesis and Development

Baye Yimam

1. Emergence

This is an overview based on my reminiscence and reflections on the establishment of the Departments of Linguistics and Theatre Arts. Both were carved out of the then Faculty of Arts of Haile Sellassie I University to form an institute that was to be known as Institute of Language Studies (ILS). The other two departments of the faculty, those of Amharic and English, were renamed Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature and Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, respectively. The names reflect the broad scope of the mission of the new institute in the study of languages and cultures.

All those started in the academic year 1978 following a directive, I believe, from the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), a junta that declared itself a *de-facto* government and ‘Scientific Socialism’ its ideology. The prerequisite of that new drive was the recognition given to the linguistic diversity of the country, probably in line with the program of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), declared by the government, and the move towards restructuring the existing establishments including Haile Sellassie I University, which had to rename itself, first National University, and then Addis Ababa University. The old Faculty of Arts with all its

departments turned itself into College of Social Sciences, and College of Business Administration; the latter, again, renamed Faculty of Business and Economics. A new president, in the person of Dr. Duri Mohammed, was appointed to the university replacing Dr. Taye Gulilat, to streamline the changes and other developments in line with the revolutionary spirit.

The new Institute of Language Studies (ILS) had Dr. Hailu Araya, as its first dean. He was a man of goodwill and a great teacher favored by many whom he had taught courses like African Literature. He had been Chairperson of the Department of English before the changes and was enthusiastic about the measures being taken, as far as I know. It was during his chairmanship that I was employed as a graduate assistant, after having taught for one year elsewhere.

The core mission of the institute was to see research, inter-twined with the regular teaching-learning activities, to reach out to the diverse languages and cultures of the country and also to programs such as literacy and community engagements. The move was partly a breakaway from the age-old monolingual and mono-cultural tradition of the empire state, perhaps, an incarnation of the Stalinist view of language as a part of the superstructure and hence subject to change according to the dictates of new economic realities at the base, which

in that case was the nationalization of all rural land already declared to the demise of the landed aristocracy.

In line with such ideals and initiatives, four units were established for research in the three sub-phyla of Semitic, Cushitic, and Omotic as well as parts of the Nilo-Saharan phylum within the mandate of the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, and the newborn Department of Linguistics, whose design features warranted wide scope research into the languages and cultures of the country and beyond, as one would expect. Despite this, four young shots, Girma Halefom, Eshetu Kebede, Samuel Oda(?), and Nikodimos Idris were employed to do basic linguistic and cultural documentation of the languages of the above-mentioned families of languages with a view to establishing a research center that would embrace the four branches along with the four teaching departments of national and foreign languages. Among the latter were Arabic, German and later on Italian which were added to English that had been in existence since the 1950s.

Among the national languages, one would envision, in hindsight, at least Oromo, Tigrigna, and Somali, three major languages with wide coverage along with Amharic—the working language of the country—could have been introduced into the curriculum. The former two were promoted only for print and electronic media (radio) while the latter one

for radio. *Hibret*, in Tigirinya (in Eritrea), was in circulation since the days of the emperor while *Bariisaa*, a weekly newspaper in Oromo, started to come out on the morrow of the 1974 revolution.

The four individuals recruited to do documentation did, however, very little as they were soon enrolled in the graduate program of the Department of Linguistics and, upon completion of their studies for master's degrees, joined the teaching force contrary to the *raison d'être* vis-à-vis the mission and vision of the Institute.

The Institute of Language Studies (ILS) was housed in one of the old buildings which used to be called Be'ide Mariam Laboratory School, which is now home to the Institute of Educational Research (IER). The school had already ceased to exist as a feeder to the Faculty of Education, following the reorganization of the various units of the university. The staffing of the newly opened departments required transfer of some of the existing personnel and recruitment of others, eventually leading to the following profiles of the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Theatre Arts which were the emergent departments of ILS.

Department of Linguistics

N°	Founding Staff members	Origin
1	Dr. Taddese Beyene, (Chair)	Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature
2	Ato Habte Mariam Marcos	Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature
3	Dr. Demissie Manahilot	Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature
4	Dr. Hailu Araya (Dean)	Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
5	Dr. Gerard Despatie (Canadian)	Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
6	Ato Mulugeta Ettafa	Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
7	Ato Takkele Taddese	Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Department of Theatre Arts

N°	Founding Staff members	Origin
1	Mr. Hyden George (Chair) (New Zealander)	Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
2	Ato Debebe Seifu	Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature
3	Ato Mengistu Lemma	Recruit, with many years of services elsewhere
4	Ato Tsegaye Gebremedihin	Part-time lecturer
5	Ato Tesfaye Gessese	Part-time and later on full-time lecturer

The re-allocation of staff was not easy; it was met with serious concerns in some cases amounting to resistance from the rest of the staff in the other two departments. At the core of the challenge was an assumption that those transferred from the two mother departments were seniors in the eyes of the remaining (junior) staff and were attempting to create a safe-haven in the ensuing political dissonance looming across the departments and beyond. The result was escalation of a negative attitude vehemently expressed, especially, towards the department of Linguistics, which some took as a refuge for most of the politically discontented seniors. But as I saw it, the reallocation was based on specialization and indeed all those transferred to the two new departments were veterans in their fields.

2. Programs of Linguistics

2.1 Bachelor's program

There were two purposes for the linguistics undergraduate program. One was to train primary level personnel for basic documentation and research. The second, an extension of the first, was to feed the graduate program with candidates of proven potential. The courses were of three categories: basic linguistics courses, general common courses and skill courses.

Bachelor's courses and instructors

N°	Course	Instructor
1	Phonetics	Ato Habte Mariam Marcos
2	Phonology	Dr. Taddese Beyene
3	Morphology	Ato Takkele Taddese
4	Syntax	Dr. Lionel Bender (Home base University of Illinois)
5	Semantics	Dr. Hailu Araya
6	Linguistics and Language Teaching	Dr. Despatie
7	Theory of Communication	Ato Muluget Ettafa (Now Dr. Mulugeta)
8	Sociolinguistics	Ato Mulugeta Seyoum

		(Now Dr. Mulugeta)
9	Contrastive Analysis	Ato Takkele Taddese (Now Dr. Takkele)
10	Historical and Comparative Linguistics	Mr. Ernest Gutt (SIL), (later Dr. Gutt)
11	Nature of Language	Ato Takkele Taddese
12	Structure of Amharic (I and II)	Dr. Taddese Beyene
13	Field Linguistics	Dr. Wedekind (SIL)

The duration of the bachelor's program was three years, including the freshman year, and most of the staff were also engaged in the graduate program. The essays written by the graduating students were supervised and defended to the satisfaction of internal examiners. In hindsight, I believe that the courses would prepare the students sufficiently to do basic linguistic description and cultural documentation. The major stakeholders were the Academy of Ethiopian Languages in the Ministry of Culture and Sports and regional offices of Education and Culture. The best among the graduates enrolled in the graduate program, completed their studies successfully and joined the Department or got employed elsewhere. Among them were Abebe Gebretsadik, Anbessa Teferra, Azeb Amha, Hirut Woldemariam, Mengistu Anberber, Moges Yigezu, and Zelealem Leyew, all are now towering figures in their fields of specialization.

2.2 Master's program

It was amid such discordance seen above that the Department of Linguistics started both its programs of study with five students enrolled in the undergraduate program and six in the graduate program.¹ For some, we were pioneers and for others, guinea pigs of a program that was eyed and judged with mixed feelings. Indeed, we were both pioneers and guinea pigs. The program was launched with little or no government budget earmarked, no required facilities, and no adequate manpower. The government was not even fully aware of the need for a school of graduate studies and would allow one to come-by if only it were not to be a heavy budgetary burden². Nonetheless, the Linguistics Master's program started and continued, though as a parasite on the undergraduate infrastructure, budget and facilities until funding was finally secured from a SIDA-SAREC Project for higher education. There were thus, mixed feelings among those involved in the organization and administration of the program and also across the staff engaged in the teaching of graduate courses. There were among them, those who strongly felt that there was insufficient preparation on the part of the university and little commitment on that of the government.

¹ See the names in this issue under: First batch enrolled for BA and as well as for MA.

² Personal Communication with Shibiru Tedla, one of the founders of the School of Graduate Studies.

There were also enthusiasts, who felt that it was high time for the university to start programs of higher learning and train the required manpower in all sectors; especially, in education and health, which had been staffed by expatriates, whose departure following the change of government had led to an acute shortage, badly felt, particularly, by the university whose ex-pats had been leaving and its nationals in foreign lands not comfortable to make a comeback. There was thus a genuine motive for a program of higher education to come into being. In fact, the university was one of the oldest in the continent and had the best of staff in every field, though not many.

To digress, there is always an exception to a rule; among those on study leave abroad were some like Takkele Taddese (now doctor) who packed up and rushed home, cutting short his studies at Georgetown University. No sooner had he arrived than he was deployed to one of the tens of hundreds of centers of the so-called Campaign for Development through Cooperation, Learning, and Work, a nation-wide call made by the Military Government to all students above grade ten and teachers of high schools, colleges and the university to join. I was one among those from the university, to be deployed. We were out for mobilizing the peasantry in the implementation of a proclamation that was to nationalize all rural land of the landed gentry and distribute it to the landless peasantry through associations of the same, which we the campaigners were supposed to organize, along with conducting a

literacy campaign, creating sanitary awareness and raising general consciousness we were out to do³.

After a campaign of two long years, the university was to resume its regular activities and also reorganize itself within a new reality. One would assume that most, if not all, campaigners had aligned themselves with one or other of the underground political organizations confronting the military government with a demand for a provisional civilian government. Among those popularly known were EPRP (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party) and MESM (All Ethiopian Socialist Movement). I should admit that members of the teaching staff of the Institute had affiliation with the parties and that was being reflected in what seemed, on the surface, a serious concern about the manner in which the graduate programs were organized and run. It was frustrating to us the pioneering one or two batches of students to be partisan to one or another of such competing discourses.

However discomfoting it was, we had to enroll in the master's program for the following courses which were crafted based on the available expertise in the new department.

³ For some, the campaign was a deliberate design to avoid organized student unrest in opposition to the Military Gnoovernment. The campaign might have achieved its objectives to a degree and it might have given the government a spell of relief; but it also created a favorable condition for the proliferation of political groupings and youth activism.

Master's courses and instructors

N°	Course	Instructor
1	Phonetics	Dr. Demissie Manahilot
2	Phonology	Dr. Taddese Beyene
3	Syntax I	Dr. Demissie Manhilot
4	Syntax II	Dr. Taddese Beyene
5	Sociolinguistics	Ato Mulugeta Seyoum
6	Historical Linguistics	Ato Habte Mariam Marcos
7	Field Methods in Linguistics	Dr. Klaus Wedekind (SIL)
8	Linguistics and Language Teaching	Dr. Gerard Despatie

Looking at the list of courses, one wonders why Semantics is missing. One possible reason could be the Bloomfieldian view of it as a subject not amenable to scientific inquiry, or that none of the staff had the readiness to teach it. It was a real miss and remained so for long. As a solution, the Department sent Debela Goshu to Norway to do a Ph.D in Semantics/pragmatics but upon completion, he decided not to continue with the department and the gap remains unfilled.

Even at the formal level, Taddese was a Phonologist and not a Syntactician and Demissie was a Syntactician but not a Phonetician and nor was Habte Mariam a Historical Linguist. But all of them had been

to American graduate schools where they did general courses, and hence were not at a complete loss with the courses they were assigned or volunteered to teach. Hailu was all-rounded, I should say, going across borders into other disciplines like literature and could even do semantics as he did it at the undergraduate level. All tried to deliver what they could, except for one who was out to prove that the program was a disaster. All my batch of students, still alive and kicking, may know who I am referring to.

The program was of two-year duration with 24 credit hours of coursework and six credit hours of supervised theses writing which had to be publicly defended to the satisfaction of a board of internal and external examiners. It was not easy to produce original research work under the circumstances and none of us were able to finish within the prescribed two-year period for several reasons, one of which was lack of capacity both institutional and personal. The first MA batch in Linguistics graduated in 1981, after three years. Among those in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and Literature, ran by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, only two finished in time to the envy of others who could not make it.

Upon graduation, in principle, all of us who did Linguistics should have joined the new department of Linguistics. But the Chairperson of the same department believed only the late Girmay Berhane and I were

eligible. This led to further friction among the staff causing even more negative attitudes expressed towards the department in a manner unbecoming of our moral standing, as I see it now. One unpleasant manifestation of this was in the course offerings by the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature as well as the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, which had historically some linguistics courses taught by members of their staff, before the Department of Linguistics was opened. Against this backdrop, the Department of Linguistics filed a case for all linguistic courses in the institute to be administered by it, as a matter of right. This was raised at the Academic Commission (AC) meetings but it fell on deaf ears and was never adhered to. What the AC finally decided was for the two departments to change the tags of the Linguistics courses from Ling. to EtLa (Ethiopian Languages) and FLEn (Foreign Languages, English) an infraction still holding, as a manifestation of irrationality at its orst⁴. What matters in a course is not its abbreviated tag but its content, which the AC knew only too well but never dared to decide otherwise because of fear of reprisal from those in power.

⁴ The then chairperson of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature announced to the AC that he would scrap all linguistics courses because, in his view, Linguistics was irrelevant for teaching English. That could be left to anyone's judgment.

2.3 Joint PhD programs

In 1983, the Institute of Language Studies initiated a plan of action to launch a joint PhD program with the Institute of Education and the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. The program was supported by the British Council. The first nominees for the PhD program were two colleagues from the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature. But for unknown reasons, both either declined or wanted the offer to be postponed to the following year. The British Council, however, did not want to do that and asked the institute to select two other candidates immediately. Accordingly, Taye Assefa from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature and myself from the Department of Linguistics were selected by the Academic Commission (AC). But getting study leave approved by the University Programs Officer became difficult; because a formal memorandum between the two universities had not yet been signed, which we thought was simply a matter of formality. In any case, we were allowed to leave.

After a year in London, we learnt that the proposed joint program was still in limbo. The responsible bodies were not doing the required paperwork on the *modus operandi* of the joint program. To our delight, the British Council Head Quarters in London, after having obtained confirmation from the School about the progress in our work, assured us that we would be covered for the remaining two years. We completed

within the time frame; to be specific, in a little less than three years. We worked extremely hard and finished at the end of 1986. We came back and tried to make a difference in the programs of our respective departments. I introduced new insights in Generative Linguistics to the existing curriculum which was outdated as reported by external examiners to which I was in total agreement. The late Alemayehu Haile who went to the same school (SOAS) completed his studies in Phonology and joined the Department later. This was a big step in our staff development.

A little after that, the Department of Linguistics initiated a similar joint program with the Institute of African Studies, University of Cologne⁵. For lack of candidates in the department, we recommended Alemayehu Abebe from the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, and Aklilu Yilma from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES), both graduates of the MA program in Linguistics. They went but to no avail. Alemayehu discontinued his studies and left for the United States while Aklilu came back after about six months of stay.

Then went Zelealem Leyew to the same institute and subsequently did Hirut Woldemariam, and followed by Binyam Mitiku. Moges Yigezu

⁵ The shift from London to Cologne was necessitated by a huge budget cut by the British government of Margaret Thatcher.

had a scholarship with the University of Leiden from which he moved back and forth to Belgium where he finally completed his studies. In between, the department went into a serious staff crisis. We lost in death Dr. Despatie, Dr. Demissie, Ato Habte Mariam and, a little later, Dr. Girmay Berhanie, a few days after arrival from Canada where he did his PhD. That was followed by the dismissal of two of our colleagues, Dr. Taddese Beyene and Dr. Alemayehu Haile, in 1984 (E.C.) by order of a letter from the then ‘political center’. That left the department with only Ato Takkele, Ato Abebe Gebretsadik and myself. I remember carrying a teaching load of 24 credit hours over and above my administrative responsibilities as chairperson of the department. To some cynics, the department had become just a one-man show. A program review committee recommended suspending the undergraduate component and focus on the Masters. Nonetheless, we pulled every string to stay afloat until Zelealem came with a PhD in 2001, Moges in 2001 and Hirut in 2004. At this point, we made the joint program with the University of Cologne fully in-house and started winning grants for research and capacity building. The first came from NUFU in 2002 under a North-South partnership with the University of Oslo. It had local and foreign training components and several young people got their Master’s from AAU and PhD degrees from the University of Oslo. Among the grantees were Daniel Aberra and Biniyam Sisay. Like Alemayehu Abebe, earlier on, Daniel made a detour to Canada. Binyam made it with flying colors and came back

and has since been rising-high in his career. He is now working for UNESCO in Addis Ababa and participates in supervising PhD candidates of the department.

The NUFU grant could have continued for a second round in the opinion of external evaluators; but, as in the past, things were not in our favor from within, AAU. However, we were not dispirited. We applied for collaborative capacity-building research and training grant and won two almost concurrently. One was in collaboration with the University of Oslo, Hawassa University and the other with Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway, Bahr Dar University and University of Jubba in South Sudan. The training component is showing fruits in terms of PhD research, corpora development, sole and joint publications, teacher training, and scholarships to deserving undergraduate female students. Among the recent PhD grantees who have completed their studies are Almaz Wassie, Emmebet Bekele, Etaferrahu Hailu, and Tsehay Abza, young ladies of high spirit⁶. Staff participation in local and international conferences has also increased dramatically. In short, the once doomed department has made a resurrection.

⁶. Regrettably, there are also hiccups; not everyone among the gents lasted long in the project. Amanuel Raga and Milkissa Chimdessa dropped off very early on, Binyam Ephrem left for the States and Solomon Getahun no one knows his whereabouts.

2.4 Program expansion

Although the initial focus of the department was on core linguistics, there have appeared a couple of applied areas. First in line was a new undergraduate program in Sign Language and Deaf Culture with initial support from the World Bank following a grant application submitted by Dr. Moges to AAU. It is now commonplace to see signers everywhere on campus; a lot have graduated with undergraduate degree and are serving the nation in various capacities. A program of study leading to MA in Sign Linguistics and Deaf Culture has been developed to open up opportunities for those in the Deaf community.

Another applied area launched during the same year was Applied Linguistics. It was an extension program that had as its objectives producing professionals in translation, lexicography, orthography, terminology, and material development, including textbook writing and evaluation. Unfortunately, the program did not last long.

The third program of study to be launched was Ethiopian Philology. It existed in exile, so to say, until it was repatriated with the collaboration of the University of Florence, in Italy, and the Department of History in AAU. It started with Master's and then moved onto a joint PhD with Amsalu Teferra and Endris Mohammed pioneering it. Then it became in-house and since then a lot more have graduated. There are now more publications on manuscript studies of Ge'ez and Arabic origin by our

graduates, marking a resurgence of an old tradition that had been an exclusive domain of medieval scholarship in continental Europe.

One must mention in due acknowledgment of the role played by the late Paolo Marrassini in this regard. He was hand in glove with the department in rekindling the old tradition in its rightful place. Like him, some had also shown interest initially but later hesitated to take it to the end. However, when they knew that we were launching the program with or without them, they succumbed and helped with some courses in which we lacked authority. The only in-house philologist was the late Dr. Amsalu Aklilu of the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature. He helped in many ways in addition to teaching courses and advising students. Professor Getachew Haile, Professor Taddesse Tamirat and Professor Merid W/Aregay were all thrilled by the launching of the program at home. Commenting on the event, Prof. Getachew said “...we would, ... be able to directly understand, without any need for interpreters from the outside world, the heritage that our Ethiopian forefathers have left to us in Ge’ez and Arabic”. Underscoring the importance of the new program in philology, Prof. Taddesse also remarked that “It is essential to chart out our own priorities and long-term plan for the study and analyses of ... documents and to build up a strong Ethiopian scholarship in the field” (Moges et al. (eds), 2006: xix; xxiii).

Despite challenges and difficulties of the type alluded to earlier on, the department moved further into modularizing its core program. Sub-specialties in Experimental Linguistics, Documentary Linguistics and Culture, Computational Linguistics, and Clinical Linguistics (Abebayehu Messele being the first PhD in the field from the University of Sheffield, UK) have been introduced. These are applied areas of real socio-cultural concern and beyond. With Forensic Linguistics almost at the doorstep, the department will continue proving its worth by going deep into the interfaces of multi- and trans-cultural communication using the available print and digital corpora and technology. Expansion through specialization, and not through reduction, is the order of the day, and it all requires flexibility in the scope and limit of our understanding of the nature and use of language as a uniquely creative human capacity that can be put to use for both destructive and constructive purposes, as we witness now more than ever before. It is a double-edged weapon that can cut deep to hurt or trim to decorate.

3. Research and dissemination

Right from the very beginning, the department had research as its core concern. The teaching was essential for building capacity in the documentation, description, and analysis of language facts as a prerequisite for the comparative and classificatory objectives which Ethiopian Linguistics had been ever since Leo Reinisch (1873) considered by many as the father of Cushitic. The practitioners, who

heavily depended on textual materials, as the philological tradition required it, had always expressed the importance of fresh and live data at their disposal. We thought rightly that such was necessary, and right from the very first batch of the program, a huge amount of work has been done for all levels of descriptions on the little or unknown languages and dialects of the Ethiopian Sociolinguistic area. This, one should think, has made life easy for all those who had made comparative and/or genetic classification their vocation. It has also led to a home-grown capacity in the science, and practice of language, with authoritative expertise in all the sub-phyla of Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan Linguistics.

Ethiopian Linguistics is well represented now in all known traditions of conferences,^a in proceedings thereof and other peer-reviewed international and national journals. The field is now fully within the purview of the department. In the words of one senior academic in the field, Ethiopian Linguistics has declared its independence. But that should not lead to complacency, but rather to more inquiry into what is yet not known in specific domains of the field, on the one hand, and in what lies in the interface between the biology and sociology of language, on the other.

For a detailed report on research on Ethiopian languages in general, one needs to browse the overviews by Bender (1970), Pankhurst (1976),

Habte Mariam (1988), Bahru et al. (1994), Abebe and Haileyessus (2001) and Shimelis and Binyam (2009), and Bulakh et al. (2019). Concerning contributions by staff and students of the department, one needs to see the titles of the BA, MA and PhD theses that have been produced since 1981, some of which have been published as journal articles and others as independent monographs. Among these are Ababayehu Messele (2009); Amsalu Tefera (2011); Moges Yigezu (2010); Shimelis Mazengia (2015) and Zelealem Leyew (2003). My works on Amharic Grammar, in Amharic, have made my name a household word in Ethiopian education. The book was written as a textbook for the courses: Structure of Amharic I and II which I had to teach immediately after my studies in London. There had been no course material for years. I had to produce one which has now become a major reference for structure courses in every university in the country.

The department is, thus, rightly recognized as one of the few best known in Africa, according to Heret Dimmendaal, a senior Nilo-Saharan Linguist who had been involved in our joint PhD program from the very beginning. One major reason for this is our visibility in publications and international conferences as hosts and/or participants. Among such events are the following:

- The First International Symposium on Ethiopian Philology, 2004

- Stemming the Tide, an International Symposium on Endangered Languages of Ethiopia, (in collaboration with the Department of African Languages and Cultures of University of Leiden), 2005
- The 5th World Congress of African Linguistics, 2006.
- The Second International Symposium on Ethiopian Philology, 2006.
- The Third International Symposium on Ethiopian Philology, 2009
- International Conference on Linguistic Landscape, 2011
- The 13th International Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium, 2017
- (Forthcoming) International Conference on Sign Linguistics

In one of its regular issues, the department's Bulletin N° 7, which started in 2002, came out with the following list of activities that reflect the level of staff visibility in academic events at home and abroad during the year 2015.

- Prof. Baye Yimam Gets Distinguished Researcher's Award
- Dr. Moges Yigezu Finds a "New" Language, Ngaalam
- Dr. Binyam Sisay, Selected as a Founding Member of the Ethiopian Young Academy of Sciences
- Dr. Amsalu Teferra Wins Post-doc Fellowship in Germany
- Three Sign Language PhD Candidates Make a Study Visit to Trondheim

- Four Staff Members of the Sign Language Unit of the Department of Linguistics Publish Books
- MA Curriculum for Ethiopian Sign Language Appraised
- Prof. Baye Delivers a Key Lecture at the 19th ICES, in Warsaw
- Dr. Endris Makes a Presentation on Ramsa via Skype
- Binyam Ephrem Makes a Study Visit to Japan
- Kemal Makes a Study Trip to the University of Copenhagen
- Dr. Hirut Reads Papers at Conferences
- Dr. Meyer Co-authors an Article on Muher and Makes Presentations
- Dr. Mersha Alehegne Participates in Logos at the 2015 Oxford Conference
- Eyasu Hailu Presents a Paper at WOCAL 8
- Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture Unit Continues Rendering Community Service
Project activities⁷:
- Linguistics Capacity Building Conference Held in Rondane (Norway)
- Language Technology Team of LCB Meets with Habit Project in Prague

⁷ For recent publications stemming from the LCB project, refer to Binyam Sisay and Bondi Johannessen (eds.) 2016. *Multilingual Ethiopia: Linguistic Challenges and Capacity Building Efforts*. OSla, 8:1, University of Oslo.

- Linguistic Capacity Building Holds Annual Meeting with NORAD
- Researchers of Linguistic Capacity Building from AAU and Hawassa University Present Papers at the 19th ICES

The above is only one quarterly report of activities of the Department for the same year.

4. Facilities

In 1992, under the chairmanship of the late Dr. Demissie Manahilot, the department got its first Sharp computer and printer from SIL Kenya, through the late Dr. Wedekind, a very thoughtful German colleague. It was a refurbished old computer but still a treasure of high value for us. I believe we were the only department in the Institute of Language Studies with a computer. The Chairperson, Dr. Demissie Manahlot, gave a directive as to how carefully it should be used. Not many knew how to type and use it for word processing. With a little instruction from Wedekind, I started using it. I wrote a controversial article on writing systems on it. That was followed by a donation of four new computers from the German Embassy, following a small proposal by the Chairperson, which was me then. The handing over of the computers and demonstration of the application took place at the level of the institute, and we got only one of them; the rest were put in a pool for use by other members of the institute.

In 1996, I was in Leiden on Sabbatical and felt envious of the facilities there. I raised the idea of shipping some of their used computers home, to which they agreed in principle. The following year, we got some of them, but they were all Macintosh, and not so user-friendly.

A major step forward was made with the first NUFU project for which application was jointly submitted with the University of Oslo in 2002. It had three components: training, research, and facilities. The department got computers, printers, copiers, scanners and later publications of all types of Linguistics. A technician was also employed for technical support. Now maintenance became a major problem, for which the University had neither the manpower nor the willpower to have a system in place; a perennial problem every department faces to date.

A further step, almost a breakthrough, in the capacity building was the establishment of a phonetics laboratory, which the late Habte Mariam Marcos had yearned to see while still alive. Following Moges's experience in Experimental Phonetics in Brussels, Belgium, a phonetics laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment was set up; the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa, I think. The department launched its sub-specialty in Experimental Phonetics and has been graduating specialists with PhDs in the phonetics of the languages of the region and beyond.

The phonetics laboratory of the department has been refurbished and equipped with with state-of-the-art apparatus with the support of the project Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for Inclusive Development in Ethiopia (LCB), funded by NORAD (see a report in this issue).

With subsequent research grants, regular government budget, and good team spirit, the department can make further advance in diversifying its programs following trends in natural language processing and communication technology for all of which extensive descriptions and analyses of natural language data using available and accessible tools and softwares are essential. The department should look ahead and strive to keep abreast of advances in the cognitive sciences and their impact on the social sciences. Language is a biological necessity for a sociological purpose, as I see it, and we are as yet grappling with its sociological purpose, not so much with its mental structure.

5. Community service

The best the department can offer is in the area of education. It organizes short term training in orthography development, dictionary-making, and in producing primers from oral narrative stories. One early example in this regard is the series of training the department gave to the Language and Education personnel of the bureau of education and culture of Zones. One such early practice is with the Shekka Zone,

which resulted in the development of orthography, a dictionary, and introduction of the language into the school system.

In the same way, the department had a role in the preparation of a dictionary for the blind. Following a request from the National Association for the Blind, a member of the staff, Dr. Abebe Gebretsadik, played an advisory role. A further example of intervention is the basic linguistic description made on Kabena followed by its orthography. The department provided technical support and played an advisory role with Dr. Moges Yigezu taking the lead.

Other orthographies developed include Hamer, produced by Binyam Sisay and Moges Yigezu, as part of a segment of the project, Beyond Access supported by NORAD. Two reading booklets in the Kambaata language have been prepared with editorial assistance by Shimelis Mazengia and published with the financial support of Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for Inclusive Development in Ethiopia (LCB), funded by NORAD.

What is now almost a standing community engagement is the informal Sign Language training provided by the Unit. It has opened up opportunities for many certified individuals and also served as a showcase for the department. We have also been involved in the Terminology Development project of the Ethiopian Academy of

Sciences in which some of us took part as panelists, producers, organizers, and reviewers.

A recent major achievement is the approval of the Language Policy in which the department took a leading role in general situational assessments, in the drafting of the policy document, in revisions made as per reactions from relevant bodies and finally in the processes of its official approval by the Council of Ministers.

In summing up this cursory reflection on the genesis and often turbulent history of the Department of Linguistics, first, and now becoming Department of Linguistics and Philology, though unofficially. I have highlighted its origin as shrouded with sensitivities, uncertainties, and oftentimes outright dismissal of its existence as one of four departments constituting an institution of language studies. Despite dooms and glooms, however, it has thrived with success registered in the many languages described and in the large number of native linguists trained to do the science and promote its practice, thereby opening up new avenues and perspectives of research.

Habte Mariam had always had a vision for a Phonetics Laboratory, which has now become a reality to the delight of the rest of us, his students, and colleagues. I hope to see the initial vision of the founders of the Institute of Language Studies (ILS) to also come true as an

Institute of Linguistics embracing departments of Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic, Nilotic, Sign Language, Philology, etc. Research on the core, the periphery and the interface areas of each sub-phylum with programs of studies leading to new avenues of knowledge not too farfetched possibilities to realize.

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Medieval Ethiopian Manuscripts
Contents, Challenges and Solutions
Mersha Alehegne

1. Introduction

Ethiopia belongs to a small group of countries boasting ancient civilizations. It is a cradle of civilization that dates from 1000 BC. It is home of one of the oldest Christian Churches in the East which is rich in patristic legacy, religious art, architecture, iconography, hymnody, literature, and monastic traditions. This has always been proved to be true, simply, as one has to look at the big body of literature documented in Gə'əz and Arabic which has been an object of wonder and uniqueness in its quantity, quality, and variety as well as in its sustenance.

This short contribution aims at presenting a brief account of the literary heritage discussing the current state of the heritage recalling remedial measures that have been taken, examining the establishment of a philology unit at Addis Ababa University (the first of its kind in the country), presenting other good developments related to exploring,

documenting and promoting the wealth. Moreover, the current challenges will be identified and remedial measures will be proposed.

2. Enormous wealth

Ethiopia is a host to an immense body of oral and literary tradition. The latter, which is the chief interest to us here, is the direct product of centuries of continuous scribal production which has played a great role in preserving, transmitting and disseminating knowledge and culture of the ancient and medieval times. This literary tradition includes manuscript writing with the aid of authentic reed pens, natural ink, and preparing parchment from animal skin authoring, copying, editing and translating texts from non-Ethiopian languages. Apart from indigenous compositions by local scholars, a significant portion of the literary corpus was derived through translation or adaptation from different writing cultures of the Christian and Islamic Orient including Greek and Arabic as well as Syriac and Coptic through Arabic intermediate versions. These texts were translated (from Greek and Arabic sources directly into Gə'əz) and/or edited with the aim of transferring knowledge of the Christian and Islamic Orient into Ethiopia. Certain translations even include works no longer extant in their original language and even, at times, different versions form texts known in other literary cultures.

2.1. In Gə'əz

To recall a personal experience: when I first arrived in Hamburg (Germany) in 2006 to do my PhD, what struck me was the name of the department at which I was enrolling—*Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Aethiopistik*; i.e. Department of African and Ethiopian Studies. I asked my host professor why it was so. He was quick and positive answering my question saying, *Es ist wegen Ihrer wunderbaren Literatur*—'It is because of your wonderful literature'. It was at that moment that I realized our literary heritage has made the attention of Western scholars focus on us.

The Christian literature of Ethiopia was, and still is, written in the ancient Ethiopic language, Gə'əz (also called Ethiopic by some scholars). Engagement in literary production started through translation with the appearance of a few indigenous literary products. The tradition was, specially, related to the medieval Ethiopian wisdom, which was born, developed and spread from about the fourth century onward. It covers not only the topic that the heritage was designed for i.e. religion, but also philosophy, history, social law, statecraft, culture, and last but not least, the technical sciences including mathematics, astronomy, astrology, architecture, medicine, the fine arts and several allied disciplines.

2.1.1. Wealth in translation

As indicated above, translation has contributed immensely in the long literary history of Ethiopia. It began with the Bible and apocryphal as well as patristic works. For the bulk of the translation into Ethiopic, different branches of Oriental Christianity (mainly Syriac and Coptic) have contributed much as sources.

Until about the 17th century, translations came mainly from Greek which prevailed in the church of Egypt. Although no conclusive evidence exists to confirm, some translations might have been made also from Coptic, possibly between the seventh and the 12th centuries. When Arabic became the dominant language in the Egyptian Coptic church around the 12th century, translations were made from Arabic. Beside the Bible, books such as መጽሐፈ ሄኖክ (the Book of Enoch), መጽሐፈ ኩፋሌ (the Book of Jubilees), ዕርገተ ኢሳይያስ (the Ascent of Isaiah), and ሔርማ ነቢይ (The prophet Herma) were among those translated from Greek to Gə‘əz . Of these, the first two are preserved in their entirety only in the Ethiopic version. Works like መጽሐፈ ቄርሎስ (the Book of Cyril), a collection of homilies, which belong mostly to Saint Cyril of Alexandria, ሥርዓተ ወትእዛዛተ ዘአባ ጳኩሚስ (The Rule of Pachomius) a work of high inspiration for Ethiopian monasticism, and a few lives of saints were translated from different Greek sources at that time.

Innumerable translations were made from Arabic texts of Coptic literature when Greek ceased to be the language of the Coptic church (ca. end of 11th century). During that period, the following notable works were translated: collections of canonical regulations like ሲኖዶስ (*Synodicon*), and ዲድሰቅልያ (*Didascalia*). These works might have found their way into Ethiopia in the 12th/13th century. In the 13th or 14th century works like ዜና እስክንድር (Story of Alexander) and some liturgical books like መጽሐፈ ግንዘት (Book for the preparation of the body of the dead), a ritual for funerals; መጽሐፈ ሰዓታት ዘግብጽ (Book of the Hours of Egypt), the horologion of the Western church; ገድለ ሰማዕታት (Contendings of the Martyrs); ገድለ (Meritorious Acts, i.e. of saintly persons); ገድለ ሐዋርያት (Contending of the Apostles, i.e. their apocryphal acts); ግብረ ሐማማት (Acts of the passion), a lectionary for the Holy Week; ውዳሴ ማርያም (Praise of Mary), ፊልክስዩስ written by Philoxenos of Mabbug, regarding monastic life were translated. Such works as ዜና አበው ቅዱሳን (Stories of the Holy fathers), ስንክሳር (the *Synaxarion*), ተአምረ ማርያም (Miracles of Mary) were also translations of the period. Attributed to the 15th century are the translation of, ፍትሐ ነገሥት (the Code of the Kings), a revered book of juridical relevance, the two renowned treatises of ascetic life አረጋዊ መንፈሳዊ (The Spiritual Elder) and ማር ይስሐቅ (Master of Isaac), the reputed work of Isaac of Nineveh were also translated in the 15th and 16th centuries. In the 16th and 17th centuries, works like ሐይማኖተ አበው (the Faith of the Fathers), ታልሙድ (Tilmidh (The Pupil)), መጽሐፈ ሐዊ

(Book of Hawi), ፈውስ መንፈሳዊ (the Spiritual Medicament), were translated.

2.1.2 Indigenous legacy

The overwhelming mass of Coptic literature brought to Ethiopia stimulated a vigorous movement of original Ethiopic literary production. It is difficult to fix the time of the beginning. However, the majority of the earlier surviving works seem to date back to the 13th or 14th century, a period when the activity of Egyptian clerics in Ethiopia as translators and original writers in Gə'əz was at its peak.

The original Ethiopian literature emulated the genres of the Coptic Christian literature of Egypt. In character, it was theological (dogmatic and pastoral), didactic and monastic, as well as apocalyptic, eschatological, and hagiographic (*gādī* is the typical Ethiopic term for such narratives), mainly concentrating on Ethiopian saints and historical material (based on Christian principles and telling about events in the life of the rulers of Ethiopian society, such as kings, high officials, and dignitaries of the church). Other topics included in this prolific literature were grammar, magic, and chronology. The contents, as a rule, drew on the models offered by the Christian literature of Egypt. Nonetheless, the Ethiopian writers developed an impressive degree of originality. Noteworthy to be mentioned earlier is the *Dəgg^wa*, a hymnal book ascribed to St. Yared (the musician and priest who

became famous since the reign of Gabra Masqal in the 6th century) that contains beautiful hymns, some rhyming, for God and the saints of the Church, is a notable work that should be considered as original. There are also works on Gə‘əz *sawasəw* (lit. ladder) otherwise ‘grammar’. In this connection, it is worth mentioning an original and thriving method of commentary on the Scriptures and patristic texts, which developed in the traditional oral teaching in church schools, where *sawasəw* was taught. This art of commentary is usually called *andəmta*.

The literature surveyed above was written in prose, but poetry was also widely cultivated. Ethiopians developed flourishing poetic literature of original stock. Certain types are thought to have been inspired by Coptic models. Such is the poetic form called *malkə’* (effigy, image) a composition made of stanzas, each of them praising, in symbolic language, the physical parts as well as moral qualities of a saintly person (Christ, Virgin Mary, etc.). The same may be said of another type of poetry, similar in form and content to the *malkə’* which is used to praise holy persons; such poems are called *salam* (peace, equal to the greeting “hail”), taken from the word with which they begin. The *salam* also seems to date from the beginning of the 15th century. Another typical poetic genre is the Qəne, which is metaphorical and possesses a hidden meaning. It has a high degree of elaborateness and is considered by Ethiopians as a poetic genre of the highest standard. All these compositional forms and styles seem to go back for their beginning to

the 15th century. So, it may be that grammar and poetry were introduced into Ethiopia at the same time. They are all studied and practiced in schools.

2.2 In Arabic

Apart from Gə‘əz, Arabic played a crucial role in the literary tradition of Ethiopia. This is because of the geographical proximity of Ethiopia to the Arab world. It is believed that Arabic took root in Ethiopia since the first contact between Ethiopia and Islam which was established when followers of Prophet Mohammed found refuge at the Axum court. The language started to function well as a literary language beginning from the 13th century. Since then, the country accumulated an enormous body of Arabic literature.

Like the Gə‘əz literary wealth, the Arabic literature found in Ethiopia is divided into two types: works originally composed by Arab authors and works written by indigenous scholars. Harar, as the major center of Muslim scholarship in Ethiopia, imported various Arabic literary products such as Ibn Malik’s ‘Alfiya, Ibn Ḥajar’s Tuḥfa, Būṣīrī’s Burda and Hamziyya and Jazūlī’s Dalā’il al-xayrāt. These works differ from one another both in genre and content.

Harar was not only the center of attraction of foreign literary products authored by Arab scholars, it was also a center of literary production by

indigenous scholars. Celebrated Ethiopian scholars like Abd al-Aziz ibn Amir Hasim and Hamid ibn al Faqih Siddiq al-Himyari were based in Harar in the 18th century and produced high standard poetic and pious literary texts. Apart from Harar, there were centers of Islamic literary excellence located in the narrow lowland area between the highland in the west and the desert in the east. Important locations were Anna in Rayya (northern Wällo), Dana in Yäjju, and Gäddo and Shonke in Däwwe (in southern Wällo). Scholars like Mufti Dawud (late 18th century) Shekh Muhammed al-Anni, Shekh Ahmad b. Adam (both late 19th century), and Shekh Jawhar ibn Hayder (early 20th century) were famous scholars of the area who produced wonderful textual works written in classical Arabic.

Speaking of Arabic literary wealth in Ethiopia, one should not forget the presence of a huge body of literature written in different Ethiopian languages (Amharic, Argoba, Oromo, Səlṭe and probably Afar and Tigrinya) using the Arabic script (*'Ajami*). Praise to the establishment of the Philology unit in the Department of Linguistics at Addis Ababa University, the magnitude and importance of this body of knowledge has become increasingly known as graduates are discovering more texts in the different parts of the country.

Although there is a misconception in associating Arabic only with the Islamic faith in Ethiopia, the language has served the Christian faith the

result of which could be seen in monastic archives in terms of literary compositions of various genres. As pointed out above, the translations are essentially from Arabic sources through the Coptic Church. The contributions of the Ethiopian scholars who braved through the desert to master the language and come back carrying Arabic books should also be noted. There were language training centers here in Ethiopia too; Dabra Māryām, in South Gondar, was one of the famous centers during the Gondarine period where monks with the talent as well as sons and daughters of the nobility were able to learn Arabic and Hebrew; and even Greek. As is the case with Gə'ez, the literary wealth imbedded in Arabic is understudied.

3. Worrying conditions

Those marvelous manuscripts (very few though) which are housed in museums in Ethiopia or elsewhere in the world are 'heaven dwellers' compared to the unfortunate great majority of manuscripts which are found dangerously in about 20,000 churches and 800 monasteries, in numerous mosques and in traditional schools all over the country. Although, for their existence, the custodians have to be commended, the manuscripts are undeniably in deplorable conditions. Priceless volumes lie on dirty floors or are simply piled up and are being eaten up by rats and/or insects; others are exposed to damage from rainwater. In many cases, the security is also worrisome. *Iqa betoch* (storehouses) are frequently built of flimsy materials and are sometimes unlocked or

locked with cheap padlocks which can easily be broken or forced open. Some *Iqa betoch*, because of inflammable thatching, have burnt down along with priceless collections.

Natural and manmade caves were repositories of priceless manuscripts during unhappy times like those of wars. A significant amount of the heritage has been lost when the individuals, who buried the manuscripts and kept the information secret for fear of leakage, died.

Theft of manuscripts as well as other relics and church paraphernalia are reported too frequently to allow complacency. There is a suspicion that unscrupulous persons catering for tourists or the international market attempt to corrupt poor clergymen by offering tempting amounts of filthy lucre. Another major problem is that most churches, monasteries, and private collections have no facilities for scholars wishing to consult manuscripts. These are situations of ‘closed books’, so to speak, as far as the advancement of knowledge is concerned.

4. Remedy

As pointed out above, although the literary wealth of the country is generally in worrying conditions, there are some encouraging attempts to make available the knowledge imbedded in the medieval literary heritage of the country. The remedial measures that are taken to

safeguard and avail the knowledge for researchers are briefly discussed below.

4.1. Preserving and conserving traditionally

The literary wealth of Ethiopia suffered from different man-made and natural challenges. However, a significant body of the wealth transmitted through a long chain of generations has reached us. This is because of the effective indigenous techniques of preserving manuscripts of our forefathers. The author of this contribution conducted a modest study on the rationale, techniques and methods of the indigenous conservation and preservation of Gə‘əz manuscripts the result of which was presented at the 1st International Conference on Ethiopia’s Manuscripts (8-9 October, 2018, Addis Ababa). He is convinced that Ethiopians’ past wisdom of preserving manuscripts was effective and can still be applied, of course, along with to the modern techniques and methods.

4.2. Modern preservation and documentation

It is only a very small subset of the literary heritage which embodies the country’s cultural and spiritual wealth that has got a chance to be exhibited in libraries and museums in Ethiopia and abroad and received scholarly evaluation. Otherwise, the immense wealth of precious manuscripts and other relics are kept in church and monastic archives and storehouses, in mosques as well as in private possessions.

With regard to efforts to stop the deterioration of manuscripts, few organized initiatives were taken which could not be seen through to the end. The most important undertaking which could have helped preserve thousands of manuscripts was the joint project conducted by the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwähədo Church (EOTC) and the Hill Monastic Manuscripts Library of St. John's University (1971-1980s). That project was the most effective ever in the attempt to answer the crucial question of preserving a portion of the written heritage of ancient Christianity. But, unfortunately, the project came to a halt as the result of the political upheaval in the 1970s which caused the execution of the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, who was one of the initiators of the project.

Again in 1970, there was another preservation attempt by UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The project microfilmed manuscripts of some libraries in Gojjam and Addis Ababa and deposited the microfilms in different institutions including in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the University of Hamburg microfilmed the manuscripts of the monasteries on the islands of Lake Tana and in the surroundings through what was named the Äthiopische Handschriften vom Tanasee. The head of the project was Prof. Ernst Hammerschmidt.

The Hamburg based EthioSpare project (December 2009 to May 2015) led by Dr. Denis Nosnitsin is a recent project which aimed at identifying

the most important collections of manuscripts in the Tigray region, making inventories and digital copies. The researchers visited over 100 monasteries and churches, many of them with large libraries, and were able to digitize over 2000 manuscripts.

As to the effort to spare the Arabic and *'Ajami* literary heritage of Ethiopia, we do not witness any organized project that took place except the project Islam in the Horn of Africa: A Comparative Literary Approach (IslHornAfr), funded by the European Research Council Advanced Grant no. 322849, 2013–2018, PI Alessandro Gori. For more information on the project see <http://www.islhornafr.eu/>. Other efforts are on individual basis which were funded by different institutes like the Endangered Archives Program of the British Library funded by the Arcadia.

Today, some actions are being taken to the extent possible by different bodies to give a relatively safe haven to some manuscripts. In Addis Ababa, more than ten parishes and monasteries built fairly modern museums where one can visit their collections. Monasteries and parishes like 'Ēnṭoṭo Māryām Church, St. George Church, Hāmara Noah Kidāna Məḥrat monastery, the Holy Trinity Cathedral, etc. have museums that availed ancient manuscripts in their domains. The Patriarch's library and museum located in the vicinity of the Patriarchate which houses hundreds of medieval Gə'əz manuscripts is

the leading museum run by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The museum has also established a digitization station equipped with the necessary infrastructure and trained man power.

Another commendable effort is the expansion underway by the National Archive and Library Agency (NALA). As it is this institution that has legal authority to collect the country's written documents, it plays an imperative role in collecting and archiving manuscripts. Therefore, the ongoing construction of the 14 story complex under construction which is supposed to be fully dedicated to archiving the written heritage and make available is a commendable effort from the government side.

The Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES), the other most important center of manuscripts, is also on a good footing documenting and displaying the manuscripts and archival documents it obtained from the public.

Another encouraging front is the effort being made at the national and regional levels to create awareness. Accordingly, conferences, workshops and symposiums are conducted. In this regard, mention could be made of the annual Gə'əz Conference and Symposium held by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as well as the regular fora provided by such institutions as Bahir Dar University, Mekelle University and

Aksum University where manuscript-related studies are presented by scholars. It should also be mentioned that the First International Conference on Ethiopia's Manuscripts which focused on studying and promoting Ethiopian manuscripts was conducted on October 8-9, 2018 in Addis Ababa. It was organized by Addis Ababa University, Ministry of Culture and Tourism and National Archive and Library Agency of Ethiopia. The second international conference is planned to be held in 2021.

4.3 Philology Unit at Addis Ababa University

Over the last many years, the country's wealth of manuscripts has been a focus of interest to scholars and has served as an object of research to paleographers and philologists of various Western universities. Paradoxically, Ethiopia did not have, until recently, an institution that could train high-level manpower which could engage in the discovery, description, transcription, editing, glossing, annotating and commenting of Gə'əz, Arabic and *'Ajami* manuscripts which are endangered as the result of the conditions they are in. The country was absolutely dependent on foreign expertise in interpreting, preserving and appreciating its past.

For a long time, there was yearning at Addis Ababa University for Ethiopian philologists. Although European philologists who were experts vis-à-vis Ethiopian manuscripts, the high pay they demanded

and their commitment to their own universities could not satisfy the local need. Hence the country was left with the only choice to open its own institution for training high-level manpower in the field.

This highly anticipated and much articulated vision finally came to be true when the Department of Linguistics, AAU, opened the Philology MA program in September 2004 with unreserved support from the Department of History and Heritage Management, AAU, and with the collaboration of the University of Florence, Italy.

Right from the beginning, the Philology master's program consisted of two streams namely, Gə'əz and Arabic. The sacred objective was to train local philologists who would search, preserve and study the rich heritage of manuscripts and other written sources for the various governmental and non-governmental organizations of the country. Graduates were also meant to diffuse knowledge of the rich heritage in the country as a whole, especially to the younger generation, through the school system. The research outcomes were also meant to enrich the scholarship in general. Nevertheless, since there was shortfall in local staff, a joint PhD program in collaboration with foreign universities became necessary. Consequently, in 2007 a PhD program was officially launched with the objective to train philologists who can teach in the MA program and engage in research. The Department of Linguistics started conducting the PhD program in collaboration with the

University of Florence and the University of Naples L'Orientale the professors of which participated in training and/or supervising PhD candidates.

By its own nature, Philology is a multi disciplinary field of study. It draws a lot from the essence, principles and methods of history, linguistics, literature, religion, culture, archeology, etc. of the humanities and the social sciences. In the curriculum of the MA program, six modules are offered and thesis writing is mandatory. Through the modules, the students attain the basics of Ethiopian Philology and brace for their specific research topics. The PhD program is mainly research based commencing with three advanced courses followed by engaging students in their doctoral research and a block workshop focusing on different technical trainings. The program involves extensive reading of recent publications, auditing recommended courses, giving a seminar and/or writing conference papers . The doctoral research is supervised by a committee of academics from within and outside the university. Master's theses and PhD dissertations are evaluated by a board of examiners (from within and outside the department). The candidates whose theses or dissertations are accepted are recommended for graduation. To date, about 80 MA theses and 15 PhD dissertations were approved and a corresponding number of candidates graduated. Most of the graduates

are engaged in teaching and research in the universities across the country.

As anticipated by the founders of the program, the results of the seeds of Philology sown at Addis Ababa University are now taking root especially in other institutions of higher learning in the country. To date, about four teaching departments and units have been opened in four universities. These are specifically: Gə‘əz Language and Literature MA (Bahir Dar University), Gə‘əz Language and Literature BA (Wollo University), Gə‘əz Language and Literature BA (Aksum University) and Gə‘əz Language and Literature BA (Gondar University, in Progress). In addition, four research institutes which focus on the Gə‘əz language and manuscripts have been opened. These are: Zar‘a Ya‘əqob Center for Medieval Studies (Bahir Dar University), St. Yared Center for Ethiopian Philology (Mekelle University), Haddis Alamayehu Institute of Cultural Studies (Debre Markos University) and Abbay Cultural Studies Center (Bahir Dar University). The majority of these academic establishments were founded by the alumni of the Philology unit of the Department of Linguistics at Addis Ababa University.

5. Challenges

The written heritage that stood the test of time is the identity and source of pride to generations of this ancient country. As it was brought to the attention of the reader above, the heritage reached us passing through

incessant endangerment. To better ensure preservation, the following are the main challenges that need to be overcome.

5.1 Lack of clear policy

Although Ethiopia is a country rich in and known for written heritage, it has no comprehensive policy related to the latter. This is a major stumbling block.

5.2 ‘Hide and lock up’

The ‘hide and lock up’ strategy of the custodians of the manuscripts has been a problem all along to even research the literature let alone sparing it with the modern technology. As instructors who want students get practical experience working with physical manuscripts, we usually send them to different archives. The report we get is mostly depressing. Keepers of the manuscripts are not willing to open up their archives for research. This weakens the motivation of the students who aspire to unfold the knowledge and wisdom of our ancestors.

5.3 Unpleasant experience

Projects related to Ethiopian manuscripts are always faced with challenges. If we see the most successful project which could have documented about 10,000 manuscripts—EMML—as one good example, the initiator and leader of the project, His Holiness Abuna Tewoflos, the martyred Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

was heavily accused of selling the country's heritage which was one of the long listed accusations which resulted in his execution by the military junta. That phony accusation and the result it brought might have sent a signal of precaution to the leaders of the Church who came after him.

5.4 Lack of skilled manpower

As pointed out above, until the establishment of the Philology unit at the Department of Linguistics, AAU, there was no center for training experts with the knowledge and skills of working with manuscripts. If there were few scattered efforts by Ethiopians, they were by two pioneer Ethiopian philologists namely Prof. Emer. Getatchew Haile and the late Dr. Amsalu Aklilu. Those from the field of history were Prof. Taddesse Tamirat, Dr. Sergew Hable Sellassie and Ato. Tekle Tsadiq Mekuria. Currently, thanks to the establishment of the Philology unit, there are quite a number of young philologists. Now, what is yet to be dealt with is overcoming the problem of getting to the manuscripts. The new generation of philologists should be able to access the archives in the country and their expertise should be taken advantage of.

5.5 Lack of collaboration

Apart from EOTC which takes the greater share in producing and documenting Ethiopic literature, there are institutions that claim to be engaged in listing, documenting, safeguarding, and preserving

manuscripts. However, there does not seem to be co-operation among the institutions. There were times when one was accusing the other as intervening in its responsibilities. The issue between the EOTC and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) is a case in point.

6. What should be done?

The challenges, which obstruct the efforts to preserve and explore manuscripts should be dealt with. Below are some proposed actions.

6.1 Keeping the momentum

All the positive developments discussed above should be pursued and more effort should be made. The concerned institutions should build their capacity both in professional manpower and resources. The manuscript wealth of this country needs more infrastructure and fora. Hence, more attention and resource are required from all those concerned.

6.2 Workable policy

If we are to change the worrisome conditions our heritage is in, we need to have a workable national policy in place. A couple of articles that are in the country's legislative documents have very little to do with conservation and preservation of manuscripts and facilitation of research. An attempt has been made to initiate policy proposal in the

First International Conference of Ethiopian Manuscript Heritage to which a positive response is expected.

6.3 National mission

It is high time we forged a national mission which brings all stakeholders on board to think and act together so as to rescue our heritage. The mission would be engaged in, among other things, surveying, documenting and cataloguing Ethiopian manuscripts in the country and abroad, and compile a National Electronic Database (NED). Furthermore, it would facilitate preservation mechanisms incorporating both modern and indigenous methods and through training, awareness building and financial support, provide ready access to manuscripts through digitization and publication. Other achievable objectives are promotion of scholarship and research in the study of Ethiopian languages and Manuscriptology, setting up a National Manuscripts Library (NML), facilitating public engagement concerning manuscripts through lectures, seminars, publications, exhibitions and other outreach programs as well as campaigns in various ways.

6.4 Strengthening international co-operation

Even though we are proud of our written wealth, it is obvious that we lack resources. Therefore, working in co-operation with those who have the expertise and resource that can help us do the job is necessary. Of

course, that should be done without compromising our national interests and the integrity of the custodians that played an irreplaceable and ever celebrated role in keeping the wealth till now.

7. Conclusion

The concern for the written heritage of this country is not at all due to affiliation to this or that religion or ethnic group. It is not even limited to national interest at the level of Ethiopia. It goes beyond as the heritage is ultimately that of humanity in general. The heritage crucially important not because it is a source of pride, but it is essentially a source of valuable knowledge sought by various academic disciplines. Therefore, let us unite to preserve and explore the knowledge our forefathers produced and left to us.

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Language and Society in Ethiopia

Zelealem Leyew

1. Language

Language is a systematic means of communication used by human beings. The system is its grammar. From the outset, language is societal as its acquisition is possible only when a child is exposed to a certain speech community. That a child cannot acquire any language in isolation implies that there is no language without speakers and there are no speakers without language (Coulmas 1997; Sapir 1921). Among the characteristics of language suggested by Hockett (1958), humanness, healthiness and exposure to a certain speech community are the key properties that set a human language apart from animal communication, and are the most indispensable to acquire language. Even animals with enormous brain and amazing intelligence can never be successful in one thing: acquiring language. The innateness capacity to acquire and use language is exclusively human (Chomsky 2000; Steinberg 1993).

2. Language inventory

Ethiopia is one of the linguistically diversified countries in sub-Saharan Africa. There are about eighty plus indigenous languages spoken in its territory including the Ethiopian sign language (CSA 2007). Having taken one million as the baseline (Stewart 1968), Ethiopia has about ten

major languages, namely Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali, Sidaama, Wolaitta, Gamo, Hadiyya, Afar and Gedeo. Several languages are spoken by their respective speakers whose numbers range from few thousands to hundreds of thousands. Other languages are spoken by small speech communities ranging from dozens to several hundred. The exact number of languages spoken is, however, not yet known mainly for two reasons. The first reason concerns the theoretical controversy underlying the boundary between language and dialect. This theoretical issue has so far prevented clearly identifying independent languages from dialects and hence impedes the inventory of Ethiopian languages. The Gurage and Ometo clusters are good examples in this respect. The second reason is lack of recorded documents on individual languages. This linguistic situation hinders the efforts to determine the genetic affiliation of languages. The cases in point are Birale/Ongota (Fleming 2006, Savà and Tosco 2003) and Shabo/Mekeyir (Anbessa and Unseth 1989, Kibebe 2015). As found out by these researchers, the advanced stage of endangerment that the languages have faced has also hampered collecting authentic data which is imperative to determine their genetic affiliation. Bender (1994) writes that the lack of sufficient data and information has kept Birale/Ongota to be a ‘mysterious’ language or a ‘language isolate’ of Ethiopia. To determine the status of a language, the attitude of the speakers could also play a significant role. Such attitudes are sometimes too subjective that could contribute to reduce an independent language to a dialect or to elevate a dialect to an

independent language. In these situations, there could be discrepancies between the evidence-based findings of a linguist and the subjective judgements of speakers (Wolfram 1997).

A point worth mentioning that has complicated the inventory of the Ethiopian languages so far is the multiplicity of glottonyms under the cover term ‘alternative names’ which also contain names with pejorative connotations. Obviously, each ethnic group has a self-name (ethnonym) and a name for its language (autonym). At different points in time, however, missionaries, researchers and members of other ethnolinguistic groups used to give different names to languages and their speakers. In Gordon (2005), most Ethiopian languages, including Amharic, have more than five names. Languages such as Dhasaanach and Gumuz are designated by as many as fifteen ‘alternative’ names, most of them imposed by outsiders (Ahland 2012, Tosco 2003). Most of these names are either alien or offensive. These nomenclatural confusions must be cleared and ethnonyms and autonoms should be taken as the ‘standard’ representations. It is appropriate that they be uniformly used by researchers, research institutes and government bodies such as census offices. It is natural to name ethnic groups and languages by modified forms (using affixes) or, rarely, by different names. If a name has to be modified, the self-name ought to be used as the basic form. If a different name is bestowed, it should be agreed to by the natives. It is also advisable to stop using pejorative names as a

way of introducing a language or an ethnolinguistic group on the first pages of academic publications in a statement which mostly reads as *The name of the language was formerly known as 'X' and the ethnic group '-X-', both pejorative names were given by the neighboring ethnic group 'Z'*. Such expressions are harmful in creating uneasiness among ethnolinguistic groups. The 'hate-speech law' passed by the parliament recently could be taken as a legal ground to ban pejorative names and stick to self-names.

3. Language diversity

An important sociolinguistic phenomenon that we Ethiopians should bear in mind is that our country is a mosaic of 80 plus languages and an unknown number of dialects. Multilingualism in Ethiopia is hence a norm, not an exception. Most Ethiopian languages are spoken by a small portion of monolingual speakers. People tend to be monolingual when their movement is restricted in their localities and their interaction with speakers of other languages is very limited (Wolff 2000). Apart from their own language, the majority of Ethiopians speak a language spoken by the neighboring ethnolinguistic group and languages of wider communication at regional and national levels. Ethiopia has, therefore, much to offer with regard to individual and societal multilingualism expediting the day-to-day interaction of its peoples. At the individual level, the diversity of languages has created a large number of bilinguals who can speak two languages and who are

polyglots speaking more than two languages. People are able to speak more languages mostly through informal interactions. A person who speaks two or more languages has many advantages in the globalized world. Such a person feels more connected with more people; is able to know more cultures and ways of life; can develop a better cognitive capacity; can have more access to political, economic and social power; can have better opportunities in education and integration; and can be accepted better by various speech communities (Kembo-Sure & Webb 2000). Bilinguals or polyglots also have more job opportunities than monolinguals. To benefit from all these advantages, the number of bilingual and polyglots is outnumbering the number of monolinguals in most parts of the world (Paulston and Tucker (2003). Ethiopian individuals, families and the entire society should be able to realize the advantages of being a bilingual, trilingual, quadrilingual, etc. and become the mainstream of the society and the globalized world at large. The youth, in particular, should be open-minded to know more languages and benefit from the multiple economic, political, social and psychological advantages. In a nutshell, individual and societal bilingualism/multilingualism should be encouraged now rather than later in present-day Ethiopia.

Another phenomenon worth knowing is that Ethiopia is a *de facto* and a *de jure* multilingual country. As mentioned in Article 5 of the 1995 constitution, ‘All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state

recognition'. Article 39:2 of the same constitution states that 'Every nation, nationality and people shall have the right to speak, write and develop its language and to promote its culture, help it grow and flourish, and preserve its historical heritage.' Irrespective of these constitutional grants, there is skepticism among some citizens that multilingualism is an obstacle to peace and development. They point fingers to linguistic heterogeneity as the major factor for ethnic tensions that can seriously hamper the efforts of nation building. Takkele (1985) remarks that language-related problems are graver when the country in question is multilingual and at the same time underdeveloped. Fishman (1968:60) considers multilingualism as a problem and writes, "Linguistically homogenous polities are economically more developed, educationally more advanced, politically more modernized, and ideologically-politically more tranquil and stable." Ricento (2006:14) doubts Fishman's generalizations and writes that "The ideologies of monolingualism as a necessity for social and economic development were imposed on new states comprised of multiple national (and linguistic) groups." Having mentioned the complicated economic, political and social problems facing Africa today, Ricento (2006) has pointed out that these problems cannot necessarily be connected to language diversity. Haugen (1972:40) also argues, "Language diversity is not a problem unless it is used as a basis for discrimination." Kembo-Sure and Webb (2000) state that if language is used to deny peoples' access to information or to separate one group of people from the other,

it may lead to serious social, political and economic problems. The crux of the matter is that, so long as language and ethnic diversity are perceived as natural phenomena, so long as languages and ethnic groups are treated equally, and so long as language is not used as a dividing tool, linguistic heterogeneity can be an asset than a problem.

The most cited example in which monolingualism does not necessarily guarantee peace and development is the linguistically and ethnically homogenous Somalia that could not be spared from war and disintegration. On the contrary, Indonesia and India are hugely linguistically and ethnically heterogeneous countries but with reasonable economic, political and social advancement. The Ethiopian citizens of all ethnic groups should be further educated that language diversity is not a problem. It is rather a normal phenomenon in most parts of the world. Diversity is a blessing as it is a source of enrichment and unity is a guarantee for invincibility.

4. Language variation

Language variation from within is an important social foundation which is relevant in the Ethiopian context. The variation exhibited at the level of an individual's language behavior is known as idiolect while the variation exhibited at the societal level of language behavior is known as dialect (*Wardhaugh 2006, Wolff 2000*). As pointed out by Wolff (2000:299), "No two speakers of the same language speak alike; nor

does the same speaker use his/her language the same way all the time”. According to *Wardhaugh (2006)*, we all speak a dialect and dialects of the same language are determined either socially or geographically. Whereas a social dialect (also known as sociolect) refers to a variety determined by social variables such as age, sex, education, occupation, etc., the geographical variety (also known as dialect) is determined by geographical (regional) factors, namely place of birth and residence. Irrespective of some lexical and grammatical differences, speakers of different dialects understand each other (*Milroy and Milroy 1997*, *Wolfram 1997*). In the Ethiopian context, the geographical varieties are better studied than the social varieties. Naturally, big languages spoken in a large geographical area such as Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya and Somali have a wide array of dialectal differences. Though there are a few dialectological studies available on these languages, they are not exhaustive and hence the exact number of dialects each language has is not yet known.

Identifying the dialects of a language is particularly important to determine the standard variety of a language. The experiences so far prove that a standard variety can be attained in two ways (*Wardhaugh 2006*, *Milroy and Milroy 1997*). The first is picking up one of the varieties which may be considered as being in a relatively better position to satisfy speakers of the other dialects. Amharic, of which the Addis Ababa variety has become the standard variety, could be an

example. The second way is the composite or eclectic method which involves the formation of a standard variety by including representative linguistic units from the various dialects of the concerned language. Raising a dialect to the standard level based on its importance in education, mass media and administration, including in the other dialect areas, is ideal and hence a widely accepted practice around the world. The number as well as the economic, social and political role of its speakers and the location where it is spoken (mostly major cities or capitals) may also contribute in the selection of a standard dialect. In the efforts to standardize a language, language planners should study the language, choose a more realistic approach to introduce the standard variety and make sure they win the hearts and minds of the speakers of the language as a whole.

5. Language use

Another quite interesting issue in multilingual Ethiopia is language use. Fishman (1965) has identified home, public, school, court, worship, market and administration as the major domains of language use. To describe and determine language use, responses to the Wh-questions - ‘who?’ (speaker), ‘to whom?’ (listener), ‘which?’ (language), ‘what?’ (topic), ‘where?’ (setting), and ‘why?’ (purpose) - are essential. In the Ethiopian context, all languages are used in various domains. Each language is used at home. The same language is likely to be used in the market, worship places and recreational centers by members of the

speech community. While some languages may be limited to the preceding domains, others may be used at higher levels of formal interactions such as educational establishments, mass media and government offices. A language like Amharic serves as a vehicular language or a lingua franca among speakers of different languages. Except for very few cross-border languages like Oromo, Afar, Berta, Nuer and Tigrinya, the overwhelming majority of the Ethiopian languages are spoken within the Ethiopian territory. About half of the Ethiopian languages are written and used in schools as well as other public domains while the other half are yet unwritten and serve their respective speech communities in oral communication.

The question of lingua franca is also an issue in relation to language use in multilingual countries like Ethiopia. By definition, a lingua franca is a language which enables speakers of mutually unintelligible languages to communicate with each other (Wolff 2000). The dramatically increasing movement of people, the frequent contact among speakers of different languages and the need to effectively communicate and understand each other obligatorily require a common or vehicular language. According to Bamgbose (1991) and Ndoleriire (2000), if people cannot communicate and understand each other, nation building faces a huge challenge. Lamb (1987) underscores the importance of Kiswahilli in Tanzania and Kenya not only as a language of wider communication but also as a unifying language in all aspects of nation

building. Concerning the importance of a lingua franca in the Ethiopian context, Cooper (1976:187), who conducted extensive research in Ethiopia, writes that “In a linguistically diverse nation, a shared language can serve as an agent of unification, a facilitator of economic development, and a symbol of nationhood. The government of a linguistically diverse country, therefore, often has an interest in promoting the shared knowledge of a single language.” In the Ethiopian situation, Amharic has played the most important role in this respect. It is the working language of the Federal Government. It is the regional working language in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz regional states. In the SNNPR, where there are about forty-five languages, Amharic is not only the regional working language but also the lingua franca. In the case of Gambella regional state, speakers of Anywa, Neuer, Majangir and Opuo and in the case of Benishangul-Gumuz regional state, speakers of Berta, Gumuz, Komo, Mao and Shinasha, mostly use Amharic as a lingua franca. The role Amharic in the urban areas of Afar and other regions is still vital. The other major Ethiopian language that has become one of the five working languages of the Federal Government, Oromo, also serves as a lingua franca among many ethnic groups. There are also many other lingua francas used in smaller areas when speakers of different languages converge in a market and worship places as well as meetings.

As already mentioned, language use encompasses a wider array of domains including educational establishments. Language use in the school domain directly addresses the language-in-education issue and has long attracted linguists and educators. That is due to the assumption that unlike monolingual countries multilingual and multicultural African countries can face complex educational challenges. As stated in Jane (2000) and Kembo-Sue and Webb (2000), in multilingual African countries, failure in education implies failure in language management. As optimal education is the key to sustainable development, it is imperative that language-in-education deserves due attention. The prominent Africanist linguist Ekkehart Wolff (2006:9) writes that “Language is not everything in education but without language everything is nothing in education.” In Ethiopia, the use of nearly half of the languages in schools as mediums of instruction and school subjects is one of the major ground-breaking actions in language development efforts. Hoben (1994) points out that mother tongue education has been promoted for its pedagogical, psychological and political advantages, and as a means of empowering minority ethnic groups. Nonetheless, the smooth-running of mother-tongue education may be jeopardized by linguistic and non-linguistic challenges. The number of languages which, in the majority of cases, includes the mother-tongue, Amharic and English, and in some instances a regionally important language, could be too much for students to accommodate. Huegh et al. (2006:126) notes, “A multiple language

option or set of options is unavoidable. The challenge is in the management of the linguistic resources of each country in order to make best use of how languages open and shut local, regional and national doors to employment and development.”

Concerning the choice of a second language, Heugh (2006:126) observes that “The next best language for teaching and learning is another language which is widely used in the local environment, and which is already known by the student when s/he enters school”. That is not all in language choice in education. Since language is a bridge to cognitive development, the transitional stages from L1 (first language/mother tongue/native language) to L2 (second language) and then to L3 (third language) need to be handled methodically. With due appreciation to the concrete efforts to develop individual languages and the increasing loyalty among speakers of the Ethiopian languages, there are still challenges in solving language-related problems in education. This includes language choice, script choice, training of teachers, attitude of parents, teachers and students of L1 and L2, preparation of primers and textbooks, compilation of dictionaries, and so on. Another problem aggravating the educational crisis in Ethiopia is massification of intakes merely for statistical satisfaction. Massification, particularly in language learning, yields negative results with regard to proficiency, attitude and, above all, cognitive development of students. This is observed at all levels of education including the tertiary level of the

flourishing private- and government-run colleges and universities. The proficiency level of our students in reading and understanding materials in English has been at stake for long which calls for an immediate intervention by the government and other stakeholders.

Yet another problem area related to language-in-education is decision making. There have been criticisms that primary education in particular has been vulnerable to subjective decisions of politicians. This is particularly true in language and script choice. In these situations, the involvement of parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders is minimal or even null. Such one-sided political decisions that exclude the main actors in education could lead to irreversible crises as witnessed in the case of WO-GA-GO-DA which claimed a huge amount of resource and, above all, human life in 1998/99 (Abbink 2011, Hirut 2016). The abrupt decision to introduce the hybrid acronym of Wollaita, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro ethnolinguistic groups was taken as disrespect and ill-suited. As mentioned in Hirut (2016), the action was an attempt to “blend and crush distinct identities into one” (Hirut 2016:304). All such issues need to be addressed in present day Ethiopia. The research outcomes of professional linguists on corpus and status planning issues need to be seriously considered. The advice and contributions of professionals are indispensable to describe the sound systems of languages and design reasonable orthographies, to compile

wordlists and write dictionaries, to document texts and prepare primers, to gather adequate data and write grammars and textbooks.

6. Language and identity

The function of language in society is a crucial issue worth addressing in multilingual countries like Ethiopia. Language has communicative and symbolic functions (Fishman 1997, Tabouret-Keller 1997). The communicative function refers to the role of language to facilitate the communication needs of its speakers. The symbolic function refers to the role of language as a manifestation of identity. Through the symbolic function of language, people tend to bind themselves and feel more alike or separate themselves and feel more different. According to Tabouret-Keller (1997:315) “Language acts are acts of identity” and hence the relationship between language and identity is undeniable. It should be underlined, however, that language is not the only manifestation of identity. In addition to a linguistic identity, we can also talk about ethnic identity, national identity, geographical identity, professional identity, psychological identity, physical identity, etc. by which individuals identify themselves from others (Crystal 1997). Identity can be dynamic and hence multiple identities may develop. Identity can be perceived or given (Tabouret-Keller 1997). The multiple identities of the same person and the discrepancy between what a person perceives himself/herself to be and what others give him/her may contradict and jeopardize smooth relations.

The relationship between language and identity is not inextricably linked. In Ethiopia, there are people who do not speak their ethnic language but assume to be loyal to their ethnic membership. Those who try to maintain their ethnic membership even after the extinction of their language could fit to this group. There are people who are native speakers of a language but deny ethnic membership. Another case is that of those who speak their ethnic language but hide their linguistic identity. Tigrinya speaking Ethiopians expelled from Eritrea in 1991 and Eritreans, including those who could not speak Tigrinya, sent back to Eritrea in 1998 can also be taken as good evidence that linkage between language and identity cannot be considered inextricable. In multilingual countries, the relationship between language and identity is very complex and sensitive. Ethiopian citizens have been victims of formidable exclusion and expulsion for being native speakers of another language or for being members of another ethnic group, even for having personal names in a different language (Takkele 1985). Kembo-Sure and Webb (2000:2) state that “The symbolic meaning of language can also have serious consequences, as happens in ethnic killings, when people are killed for speaking a certain language (because it symbolizes their membership of specific communities and therefore, supposedly, their political or ethnic loyalties).” As a matter of fact, neither a mother tongue nor an ethnic group is chosen but one is born into it.

It is customary that people talk about shared historical and cultural similarities among the Ethiopian ethnolinguistic groups. But, on the basis of linguistic non-intelligibility, they tend to believe that they have little in common in terms of common identity. The fact is, however, that the majority of the Ethiopian languages are either closely or distantly related and hence are sister languages. Sidaama, Hadiyya, Kambata, Gedeo and Burji are closely related sister languages that belong to the same parent. Oromo, Somali, Afar, etc. share the same distant ancestry with the preceding group. The Ethio-Semitic languages such as Argobba, Harari, Tigrinya, the Gurage languages and dialects, etc. can be taken as nieces which descended from the same proto-language. Wolaitta, Gamo, Gofa, Kafinoono, Bench, etc. are also of the same descent. From the history of Amharic, we understand that it has a Cush-Omotiic grammar and a Semitic lexicon (Baye 2000, Girma 2013). The substratum influence of the Agaw languages on Ethio-Semitic is well attested. All the preceding Ethiopian languages fall under the same parentage - the Afroasiatic phylum. They became mutually unintelligible languages through a long period of time and occupying distant habitats (Girma 2018). The Ethiopian languages: Gumuz, Berta, Anywa, Nuer, etc., with the Nilo-Saharan ancestry, also share a lot with the above ones as they are within the same linguistic area. Thanks to the contact among the speakers of the Afroasiatic and Nilo-Saharan languages from time immemorial, there are several shared features which make the Ethiopian language area a reality in addition to

common origin. In fact, as underscored by Noam Chomsky (1972, 2000) and his student Steven Pinker (1994), at the level of deep structure (DS), all languages are alike. Unfortunately, a diametrically opposite approach is promoted by the so-called “splitters” who are busy magnifying differences even at a dialect or accent level.

7. Language contact

In multilingual countries, the study of language contact is imperative due to its wide array of linguistic and social significance. As the interaction among speakers of different languages is inescapable in multilingual societies, language contact is therefore a natural phenomenon. According to Ndoleriire (2000), the extensive contact among ethnolinguistic groups causes, among others, linguistic and cultural similarities. Language contact results in borrowing, code-switching, pidgin and creole as well as language maintenance and shift (Kamwangamalu 2000, Weinreich 1953). Borrowing involves the transfer of words and parts of the grammar from one language to another. Due to frequent contact, one language takes words and other grammatical features from its neighbor and becomes more similar through time. The language which donates those items is a donor language and the other language which receives them is a recipient language. The Ethiopian languages, like the languages of the rest of the world, borrow and lend words and grammatical items. This phenomenon is inevitable so long as speakers of different languages

live in the same area and go to the same market and worship places, public gatherings, festivities, etc.

As a result of language contact, there are quite a large number of Cushitic and Omotic words and grammatical elements in the Ethio-Semitic languages. At the same time, there are Semitic words and grammatical elements in the Cushitic and Omotic languages (Bender 1983, Girma 2013). In places where the Afroasiatic and Nilo-Saharan languages are spoken, the two influence each other. In principle, there is no language deprived of borrowed elements. A close observation of the Ethiopian languages proves the presence of borrowed words in every language. Any language lends and borrows. This is a universal phenomenon including in the big languages such as English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese Mandarine, Arabic, KiSwahilli, Hausa, etc. The Ethiopian languages are no exception. A ‘pure’ language exists only in the Old Testament when the whole world was made to speak one language and the same words: “For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord.” Zephaniah 3:9. Some purists may yearn for a ‘pure’ language and complain about contamination of their language with words coming through language contact. They might say that is wrong; each should remain ‘pure’. The fact is that there is no ‘pure’ or ‘contaminated’

language. It is natural that languages influence one another and, as a result, each manifests, at least, a tint of the other.

Another interesting language contact phenomenon is code-switching. In any interaction, people freely use language. Whereas the linguistic behavior of monolinguals allows them to stick to their own language, the linguistic behavior of bilinguals and multilinguals allows them to switch back and forth between two or more languages. Mostly, people switch between matrix (one's own) and embedded (switched to) languages in order to fill lexical and semantic gaps in the former; to use more precise and economical words as well as quotations and proverbs from the embedded language (Eastman 1992). Unlike borrowing which is a stable language use involving monolingual users, code-switching is unstable and requires knowledge of at least two languages (Eastman 1992, Myers-Scotton 1997). In multilingual countries like Ethiopia, code-switching is an unstoppable phenomenon. Hence, for instance, there is Amharic in one's Oromo and vice-versa. In the border areas, there could be, for instance, Berta-Arabic code-switching. Educated Ethiopians switch between indigenous languages and English. Interestingly, whereas in other African countries, code-switching takes place between indigenous languages and ex-colonial languages (Myers-Scotton (1997), in Ethiopia, it takes place most frequently between indigenous languages. As a lingua franca for long, Amharic is, usually, switched to by speakers of the other languages. Depending on the level

of proficiency, the alternate use of languages could be at lexical or phrasal or sentential level. Lexical elements are mixed more often than phrases and sentences between the matrix and embedded languages.

Currently, in urban centers, code-switching has become a common practice among educated bilinguals in formal and informal situations. Colleges and Universities are particularly the most fertile places to study the code-switching phenomenon in Ethiopia.¹ In the majority of cases, monolinguals have a negative attitude towards code-switching. As in the case of disapproving borrowings, some speakers of a certain language may denounce the language behavior of bilinguals for switching between languages. The reason is, again, to guard the ‘purity’ of their language. Of course, unless a bilingual makes judicious choices, any unnecessary borrowing and code-switching, especially in formal settings, could disrupt communication.

As mentioned above, language maintenance and shift are manifestations of language contact. A language is said to be maintained mainly when it has a sizeable number of native speakers, when it is spoken by each age group ranging from children up to the elderly, when it is used in wider domains, when there is a continuous lexical

¹ The street between Arat Kilo and Sidist Kiloin in Addis Ababa is perhaps the place where code-switching is encountered most in Ethiopia.

development, when there is a continued transfer from generation to generation, when there is language loyalty by speakers and when there is no risk of bilingualism (Dorian 1992, UNESCO 2003). A language is said to be endangered when the above situations are reversed, that is, when the number of speakers shrinks, when there is an interruption of language transfer from generation to generation, when its use is limited to restricted domains, when there is no language loyalty, when a language ceases to develop and when there is a high degree of bilingualism. A massive infiltration of loanwords and a simplification of grammar are also indicators of language endangerment. The extensive interaction among ethnolinguistic groups can cause language shift (Dorian 1992, Sasse, 1992). There are a number of man- and nature-induced factors contributing to gradual language shift and eventual death. Nature-induced factors such as earth quake, flood, landslide and famine as well as man-induced factors such as genocide of speakers of a certain language are known to have caused language death. The other well-known factors which contribute to the gradual shift of speakers of a language to another one are the swamping effect of major languages, change in the ecology of a language, modernization, inter-marriage and movement of people (Dorian 1992, Haugen 1972).

There are four types of language death: sudden (abrupt disappearance due to death or killing of speakers), radical (rapid disappearance of a

language due to repression and genocide), gradual (slow disappearance of a language due to language shift to a dominant language) and bottom-to-top (the disappearance of a language from everyday use but retention only in specific contexts, such as a liturgical use) death (Campbell and Muntzel 1989). In Ethiopia, there are a number of endangered languages at different levels. Some of the well-studied cases of advanced stage of endangerment are Ongota/Birale (Savà and Tosco 2003), Argobba (Getahun 2009, Wetter 2010), Anfillo (Amanuel 2012), Haro (Hirut 2004), Kwegu (Dimmendaal 1989), Irob-Saaho (Esayas (2012), Kemantney (Zealelem 2003), Opuo (Melese 2017), Shabo (Kibebe 2015) and Zay (Meyer 2004). There are several other languages with symptoms of mild endangerment. All these languages are going through gradual shift to the dominant languages Tsamaako; Amharic; Oromo; Bayso; Mursi, Bodi, Kara; Tigrinya; Amharic; Komo; Majangir and Shekkacho; Oromo and Amharic, respectively (see Azeb & Zealelem *fc.*). Gafat, Mesmes and Woyt'o are reported to be extinct languages. Ge'ez, which was once the language of the ordinary people and the palace, ceased to be so after the 8th century AD and became a classical language. In the world where one language dies every two months and where only 5% of the six thousand or so languages are considered safe, any effort to salvage a language suffering from an advanced stage of endangerment of extinction is most unlikely to succeed (Dorain 1992). However, depending on wholehearted enthusiasm and tangible efforts of native speakers,

members of the ethnic group and professional assistance from linguists, reversing an encroaching death of a language might not be ruled out. In this regard, Hebrew is an example of a revived language. If salvaging a seriously endangered language is found to be difficult, an urgent documentation is a worthwhile undertaking before it is too late; that is, before the death of the last speaker(s).

8. Language change

Society is not static, nor is language. Because of their intimate relationship, the change exhibited in society is reflected in language and vice-versa. Language change is two-fold: structural and functional (Bright 1997). Whereas structural change is studied in Historical Linguistics and assumes a long period of time, functional change is studied in Sociolinguistics and it assumes relatively a short period of time. The latter is strongly tied to societal transformations and language contact. Ethiopian languages are no exception in this regard. Some languages may gain momentum, enjoy higher status and develop in their lexicon. Currently, the status of most Ethiopian languages has changed from vernacular to written and school languages. Some of these are being used in the mass media - print and broadcast. There are languages that are being used in government offices. There are tangible efforts to develop vocabularies so as to capture new concepts in the needy languages. In short, whether we talk about language development or decline, language change is an inexorable phenomenon.

Ethiopian languages are going through tremendous grammatical and lexical changes. It appears that the youth, who usually enjoy ease of articulation and morphological economization in their interest to be viewed modern, are among the actors of change. In Amharic, for instance, the following instances of language change are encountered.

- Replacement of /p’/ by /p/ as in ኢትዮፕያ [it̩iyopiya] instead of ኢትዮጵያ [it̩iyop’iya] ‘Ethiopia’;
- Replacement of /h/ by /k/ as in እንደምን ነክ? [ʔindämin näk] instead of እንደምን ነወ? [ʔindämin näh] ‘How are you?’ and አንተ መጣክ [antä mät’t’ak] instead of አንተ መጣህ [antä mät’t’ah] ‘You came.’;
- Confusion between ጋ /ga/ and ጋር /gar/ as in ሆስፒታሉ ጋር ቆሟል [hospitalu gar k’om^wall] lit. *‘He is standing with the hospital.’ instead of ሆስፒታሉ ጋ ቆሟል [hospitalu ga k’om^wall] ‘He is standing near the hospital.’.
- Omission of adpositions as in አስር ዓመት በፊት [ʔassir ʔamät bäfit] ‘before ten years’ instead of ከአስር ዓመት በፊት [käʔassir ʔamät bäfit];
- The greeting ሰላም ነው? [sälam näw?] ‘Is it peaceful?’ partially translated to English ፒስ ነው? [pis näw] lit. ‘Is it peace?’ widely used by the younger generation but rapidly spreading all over;
- Unnecessary subordination and verbosity as in ህዝቡ ተሳትፎውን ያረጋገጠበት ሁኔታ ነው ያለው ብለን ነው የምንወስደው [hizbu täsatfowin yarrägaggät’äbbät huneta näw yalläw bilän näw yämminniwäsdäw]

Lit. ‘We take it that it seems there is a situation that people are proving their participation.’. The statement could have been succinct as ህዝቡ ተሳትፏል። [hizbu täsatf^vall] ‘The people have participated’;

- Loan translation from English as in የአንበሳው ድርሻ [yä’anbäsaw dirfa] ‘the lion’s share’ and እዚህ ጣለኝ [ʔizzih t’alän] ‘Drop me here!’;
- Lexical semantic changes as in ሶስት ሰዎች የሞቱበት አግባብ ነው ያለው [sost säwwoch yomotubbät agbab näw yalläw] Lit. ‘There exists a **proper situation** that three persons died.’ The intended reporting is ሶስት ሰዎች ሞቱ [sost säwwoch motu] ‘Three persons died’; and ኢንዶኔዥያ የመሬት መንቀጥቀጥ አስተናገደች [indoneziya yämäret mänk’ät’kät’ ʔastänaggädäyf] lit. ‘Indonesia **welcomed** earthquake.’ instead of ኢንዶኔዥያ በመሬት መንቀጥቀጥ ተመታች። [indoneziya bämäret mänk’ät’kät’ tämättatf] ‘Indonesia was **struck** by earthquake.’

Several other phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic changes are triggered in the language by internal as well as external factors related to age, sex, education, occupation, place of residence, political affiliation, etc. The same situations apply to the other Ethiopian languages, thanks to language contact.

The rapid changes exhibited in the status and structure of Ethiopian languages, particularly in the lexicon, is attributed chiefly to the change of the political landscape of the country since 1991. The lexical and

syntactic changes are mostly attributed to the political cadres who are keen to speak like their big bosses and disseminate alterations speedily to the lower level in the political hierarchy. The unstoppable effects of globalization, the internet and the frequent movement of people are also among the major factors that accelerate language change. Quite a significant number of speakers of the Ethiopian languages believe that their languages are developing and hence feel happy. On the contrary, some people worry that their languages are changing atypically and hence suffering from linguistic turbulence.

9. Language policy and planning

Crawford (2005) defines language policy as an official policy document produced by a government to determine how languages are used in public contexts, to cultivate language skills needed for national priorities, to establish the rights of individuals or groups to learn, use and maintain languages and to take steps to facilitate clear communication among citizens. In short, it is a guideline set by a government regarding language matters. The Ethiopian language policy has been discussed by different scholars focusing on the Imperial, the Derg and the current language policies. That is so, because they are the overt official language policy documents in the long history of the country. The most cited works on the Ethiopian language policies are Cooper (1976), Tsehay (1977), Bender (1985), McNab (1989), Cohen (2000), Smith (2004), Derib and Getachew (2006), Bikale (2012) and

Zealelem (2012). The imperial language policy before 1974 was heavily criticized for recognizing and developing only Amharic at the expense of the other Ethiopian languages. It was perceived as an assimilationist language policy gearing speakers of other languages to abandon their own and become speakers of Amharic (Cooper 1976, Bender 1985, Tsehay 1977). Others consider the language policy of the Imperial regime as a policy which emerged out of the conception that multilingualism and multiculturalism were detrimental to unity and tranquility of the nation (Cohen 2000, Smith 2004, Zealelem 2012). It was believed that the one-language one-nation moto was introduced to avoid or lessen ethnic tensions. There were also few language development attempts during the Imperial regime. The ‘National Amharic Language Academy’ was established in 1972. It was, however, nominal with no involvement of experts and hence ended up producing nothing (Bikale 2012, McNab 1988). Apart from Amharic, such Ethiopian languages as Oromo, Afar, Somali, Tigre and Tigrinya and also such foreign languages as Arabic, English and French were broadcast on the radio from different stations (Cooper (1976). The first newspaper written in Tigrinya appeared in 1942 in Asmara. Missionaries were also allowed to translate the Bible into, for instance, Oromo and Tigrinya.

According to Ricento (2006:8), “Language policy debates are always about more than language.” As mentioned in Bahiru (2008), the

linguistic rivalry between the British who controlled northern Somalia and determined to promote English and the Italians who controlled southern Somalia and determined to promote Italian has contributed to lack of peace and tranquility even until today. There have been complex language related problems in sub-Saharan African countries immediately after their independence in the 1960s. Ethiopia is however unique in the sense that it introduced its indigenous language policies free from any intervention from any colonial power. Bahiru (2008:78) states “One has not seen in the Ethiopian case the same readiness to use the language of the colonial master that African nationalist leaders had shown in their use of English, French or Portuguese”. In 1941, the British army and diplomacy had considerably helped Ethiopia to drive the Italian fascist army out of its territory. By way of gratitude to the British for their assistance, the Emperor, after coming back from exile, changed his preference from French to English (Pankhurst 1974). Mengistu (1996) quotes his father who believed Ethiopians should learn English because the British were the ones who helped the patriots expel the Italian fascists. Among the most important sociolinguistic profiles that distinguish Ethiopia from the rest of sub-Saharan African countries are the historical development of an indigenous language as an official language, lack of any competing colonial language, a writing system whose origin dates back to centuries before the Christian era and the existence of two major languages at continental level, namely Amharic and Oromo.

The language policy of the Derg was far better than its predecessor mostly for enabling fifteen Ethiopian languages to be used as mediums of instruction during the National Literacy Campaign as of 1975 and even introducing newspapers in some of them. It was also a major breakthrough for standardizing these languages though Amharic continued as the lingua franca and the official language (Meyer 2006). According to Bikale (2012), “Another major step in the LP of the Derg period was transforming the former ‘National Amharic Academy’ into ‘The Ethiopian Languages Academy’”. Unlike the former, the latter was staffed with experts to study and develop Ethiopian languages. A weekly Oromo newspaper called Bariisaa “dawn” was in print for the first time in 1975 by the Ministry of Information. The language policies of the Derg and the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) are similar in the sense that their constitutions included articles that state respect for the rights of ethnolinguistic groups to use their own languages and promote their cultural heritage. In some cases, however, the current language policy has gone further than the Derg language policy. The wider application of mother-tongue education, the use of more languages in the mass media and the publication of enormous reading materials and dictionaries are among the major breakthroughs taken during the current regime. The measure taken recently to accommodate Oromo, Afar, Somali and Tigrinya as working languages of the Federal State is indeed one of the most important steps taken in the history of multilingual Ethiopia. Typologically, the current

Ethiopian language policy is *overt* (a written legal document) *pluralistic* (empowering languages), *multilingual* (recognizing all languages as equal), *symmetric* (providing equal treatment of languages), *promotive* (government supported), *egalitarian* (democratically treated), *endoglossic* (use of local language(s) for official function) and *territorial* (demarcation of regional/territorial boundaries by taking language as a major variable) (Zealelem 2012).

A publication of the European Commission states, “Though often ignored, languages and language policy are instrumental in shaping the society we want for the future.” (2010:5). It is believed that the complex linguistic ecology and the stereotype language attitudes have made it difficult for the successive Ethiopian governments to produce detailed language policy documents so far. Though a sound and commendable language policy is always important, problems could be encountered during implementation which may jeopardize the achievement of the set goals. However, with genuine involvement of the society and assistance from experts and facilitation by government institutions, a sound and detailed language policy is not something unattainable (Zealelem 2012). The solution is open public discussion, professional guidance and continuous policy evaluation and amendment.

Cooper (1989:8) defines language planning as “The activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the

guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community”. There are two types of language planning: corpus and status planning. The former refers to the structural aspects and the latter the place or standing of a language. Both, however, supplement each other. Phonological and grammatical descriptions, lexical development, dictionary compilation and orthography development are among the major corpus planning activities. Promoting a vernacular to a written language, using a language in education as school subject and medium of instruction, in the mass media and government offices at different levels are among the major activities of status planning. Whereas language policy is designed and implemented at a higher level of government agencies or offices, the actors of language planning are individuals, interested groups, language academies and research institutions (Ricento 2006, Spolsky 2009).

Any language planning activity, be it corpus or status planning, helps to inject a commendable language policy which takes the linguistic human rights into consideration (Philipson 1992). Ethiopia was officially mono-scriptual, but as of 1994, after the introduction of a new educational and training policy, it turned out to be bi-scriptual. The most competing ones are the age-old Ethiopic script and the Latin script (Azeb 2010, Meyer 2016). It was a perplexing situation in which politics and ethnocentrism played a role in the choice of the scripts. Some activists and non-professionals recommended the Ethiopic script

for the Semitic languages and the Latin script for the rest (Azeb 2010; Meyer 2016). The fact of the matter is that there are non-Semitic Ethiopian languages such as Awnji, K'abeena and Xhamtanga which are Cushitic, Benchenon and Koorete, Omotic and Anywa, Majangir, Me'en and Suri Nilo-Saharan that are successfully using the Ethiopic script (Azeb 2010). Due to external pressure, however, some of these languages had to change to Latin. In principle, any script can be used to reduce any language to writing. So, both the Ethiopic and Latin scripts can handle any of the Ethiopian languages. All we have to do is modify it based on the phonetic and phonological properties of the language in question. However, since the Ethiopian script is the pride of Africa reflecting culture and history of the Ethiopian people, it should be favored than the Latin script (Baye 1994). To choose and design a script for the best orthography, the intervention of language planners is important. Other tasks that need the follow up of language planners are description of least-known languages and description and documentation of endangered languages. As one of the indigenous languages, the Ethiopian sign language has been used at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education for the deaf. It is being used in various national television channels with interpreters. The Ethiopian Deaf Community has shown tremendous loyalty and positive attitude towards the Ethiopian Sign Language and it has gradually but surely become a marker of identity (Eyasu 2017). Much has been done by the staff and graduating students, especially at the master's and doctoral

levels, with respect to the description and documentation of the Ethiopian languages. To have complete pictures of the grammars and sociolinguistics of the Ethiopian languages, however, more work is awaiting us.

10. Final remarks

In Ethiopia, language is everything. The language we speak has become more expressive than our identification card. There are situations where individuals are identified by their accents. Language is amplified too loud to organize political parties, demarcate administrative divisions, make friends and foes and instigate ethnocentric feelings. At times, without considering any other credentials, people judge the political of individuals by virtue of the fact that (s)he is a native speaker of a certain language. Before 1991, Abraham (1990), expressed his fears that language-based ethnicity would be the prime cause of conflict in Ethiopia. His forewarning was way before regions were demarcated and political parties were organized based on ethnic and linguistic lines. Abbink (2011) also argues that ethnic-based federalism can potentially increase conflict, foster division and deepen ethnocentric identity and erode common national interests. In the education sector, in some cases, language and script issues are pushing the education system from crisis to the brink of collapse (Tekeste 2006). Even worse, the tugs-of-war between those who focus on similarities and promote unity and those who give more attention to language-based ethnicity are putting at risk

the stability of the country. It is high time that all those concerned and reasonable citizens come up with a viable and lasting solution.

The plethora of language-related problems in Ethiopia is strongly tied to politicians and activists who play a major role in influencing decision. Actions have been taken at the expense of the people, particularly students and the young generation at large. Unless we give attention to language education and, more importantly, language-in-education issues today, we will find ourselves, tomorrow, in a linguistically instigated quagmire. Language issues in Ethiopia need sober discussions among linguists and all those concerned with constant flow of encounters and lessons from the speakers of the languages. We have to realize that multilingualism is an Ethiopian phenomenon we cannot avoid. We live it and there are good reasons that it is not a curse but an asset to benefit from. Beyond economic, social and political advantages, knowing a language means knowing the philosophy, history, culture, medicine, astronomy, mathematics of the speakers (Sands 1999). The conviction to promote ‘unity in diversity’ should prevail. I am convinced that language planning issues need to be given the deserved attention within the socio-economic planning of this country.

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The Ethiopian Linguistic Area

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1. Definition of Linguistic Area

Languages may resemble each other due to four major reasons: (i) a common ancestor language, (ii) typological universals, (iii) borrowings due to language contact, and (iv) chance. The last reason, chance, can be ignored because it is always present to a limited extent. However, it

is not always easy to clearly distinguish between the remaining three reasons. Common ancestry is usually established through cognates, typically lexical items, but also through paradigmatic sets of bound morphemes, which show that the concerned languages most probably developed out of a single proto-language. With regard to Ethiosemitic and Cushitic, see for instance Kogan (2005; 2015), Hudson (1989) and Sasse (1982) for lexical cognates, and Hetzron (1972; 1975a) for the use of morphology for genetic classification. Typological universals, in contrast, are based on the comparison of genetically divergent languages which share similar grammatical structures and possess constituents with a similar functional range (see e.g. Comrie 1989).¹

Long lasting and intense contact between speakers of different languages, genetically related or not, usually results in widespread bi- and multilingualism and may also trigger various layers of multidirectional borrowing processes of lexical items and grammatical structures so that eventually the involved languages closely resemble each other—although it often remains unclear from which particular language or language group the concerned feature originates. Even if borrowing processes most commonly affect the lexicon (here particularly nouns and discourse particles), all parts of a language can

¹ An online database and description of typological linguistic features in a vast selection of the world's languages is Dryer & Haspelmath (2013).

be borrowed by contact-induced linguistic change (see e.g. Weinreich 1953; Thomason & Kaufmann 1988; Thomason 2001). If languages in a geographically defined area share one or more features, which cannot be explained through genetic ancestry or linguistic universals, then they might form a linguistic area or convergence zone. In an ideal situation, a linguistic area includes genetically unrelated languages that also have sister languages which are spoken outside the area. In this case, languages in the linguistic area can be compared with their siblings spoken outside the area to detect contact-induced changes. With regard to the Ethiopian Linguistic Area, for instance, a prominent feature is the SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) word order. It could be detected by comparing the ancient Ehtiosemitic language Geez with modern Ethiosemitic languages like Amharic as well as with the Semitic languages spoken in Asia, like Arabic, and the Cushitic languages (e.g. Oromo), as in (1).

(1) a. SEMITIC–ARABIC

VERB	SUBJECT	OBJECT	
<i>ʔiftara:</i>	<i>l-ʔabu</i>	<i>dadʒa:ɖʒatan</i>	<i>simi:natan.</i>
buy\PFV.3SM	DEF-father.NOM	chicken.SF.ACC	fat.SF.ACC

‘The father bought fat chickens.’ (Abu-Chacra 2007: 48)

b. ANCIENT ETHIOSEMITIC–GEEZ

VERB	SUBJECT	OBJECT
<i>räkäb-ä</i>	<i>Josef</i>	<i>mogäs-ä...</i>
find\PFV-3SM	Joseph	grace-ACC

‘Joseph found grace ...’ (Tropper 2002: 227)

c. MODERN ETHIOSEMITIC–AMHARIC

SUBJECT	OBJECT		VERB
<i>abbat-u</i>	<i>wäfram</i>	<i>doro</i>	<i>gäzza.</i>
father-POSS.3SM	Fat	chicken	buy.PFV.3SM

‘His father bought a fat chicken.’

d. CUSHITIC–OROMO

SUBJECT	OBJECT			VERB
<i>nam-ichi</i>	<i>Farda</i>	<i>guddaa</i>	<i>sana</i>	<i>arg-e.</i>
man-SNG.NOM	horse.ABT	big.ABT	DST.ABT	see-3SM.PFV

‘The man saw that big horse.’

The unmarked word order in Proto-Semitic was VSO (Huehnergard 2019: 69), as shown in (1a) for Arabic and in (1b) for Geez. However, the modern Ethiosemitic languages changed the word order to SOV, as in the Amharic example (1c), most probably through the influence of the Cushitic languages, which are of the SOV type, as Oromo in (1d). Thus, the geographically related languages Amharic and Oromo are

more similar to each other than the genetically closely related languages Amharic and Geez, or as Amharic and Arabic. This scenario suggests that Proto-Ethiosemitic might still have been of the Proto-Semitic VSO type but later changed through language contact to SOV.

2. The Ethiopian Linguistic Area

The Ethiopian Linguistic Area is found in the Horn of Africa in present day Ethiopia and Eritrea—sometimes it is also considered to include Djibouti and Somalia (e.g. Bender 2003).² It comprises languages from the Afroasiatic phylum (i.e. Ethiosemitic, Cushitic and Omotic) and Nilo-Saharan, and is often cited as a typical example for a linguistic area in Africa (e.g. Thomason & Kaufmann 1988). The Ethiopian Linguistic Area emerged through intense contact between speakers of Semitic and Cushitic languages, which to a lesser extent also affected neighboring Omotic and Nilo-Saharan languages, i.e. it is mainly based on Cushitic–Ethiosemitic comparison. As the Ethiosemitic languages have a number of particularities not found in the Asian Semitic languages, it is commonly assumed that lasting and intense linguistic contacts with the Cushitic languages triggered changes that made Ethiosemitic and Cushitic more similar to each other.

² Meyer & Wolff (2019: 297–300)—referring to Bender (2003)—call it Northeast African Linguistic Area, as it currently encompasses Ethiopia and the surrounding countries.

Early studies, which particularly deal with the Cushitic influence on Ethiosemitic, include Praetorius (1889; 1893), Moreno (1948), and Leslau (1945; 1952; 1959). Subsequently, Greenberg (1959: 24) proposed the existence of a linguistic area in (former) Ethiopia and Somali, based on the following features: (i) complex consonant system with glottalized sounds, (ii) absence of tone, (iii) predominance of closed syllables, (iv) phrasal order of determiner–determined, and (v) shared lexical idiomatic expressions. However, most of these features are too general to define the Ethiopian linguistic area and partly not true, especially concerning the absence of tone, and also many exceptions to (iv), e.g. Oromo and Somali. They reflect the then state-of-the-art in the 1960s, when only some of the Ethiosemitic and Omotic languages were known to a certain extent, while research on Omotic—the term itself was coined only years later (see Lamberti 1991)—and Ethiopian Nilo-Saharan languages was still in its infancy.

It was Ferguson (1970; 1976) who established the concept of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area through twenty-six phonological and grammatical features, which are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 *Ferguson's (1976: 69, 75) features of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area*

EIGHT PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES

1. The voiceless fricative *f* replaces the voiceless plosive *p* as counterpart to of *b*;
2. Presence of the implosive *d* as single implosive consonant;
3. Presence of the pharyngeal fricatives *ħ* and *ʕ*;
4. Presence of a series of ejective consonants contrasting with non-ejective consonants;
5. Presence of palatal consonants as phonemes and palatalization resulting from phonological processes involving alveolars;
6. Gemination as a phonemic feature in the lexicon and the grammar;
7. Presence of one or two non-low central vowels, *i*, *ä*;
8. Absence of consonant cluster with more than two consonants

EIGHTEEN GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

9. SOV as unmarked word order;
10. Subordinate clauses precede main clauses;
11. High frequency of converbs;
12. High frequency of postpositions;
13. Quoting clauses marked with the verb 'say';
14. Compound verbs (i.e. complex predicates) with the verb 'say';
15. Lexically/structurally distinct affirmative and negative copulas;

16. Use of singular (i.e. unmarked) nouns with numerals and quantifiers;
17. Occurrence of possessive suffixes;
18. Masculine/feminine gender distinction on personal pronouns and verb indexes of the second and third person singular;
19. Existence of a prefix conjugation in which the 2SM and 3SF subject is identically marked by *t-*;
20. Use of non-linear (or non-concatenative) morphology for word formation;
21. Occurrence of broken plurals;
22. Reduplication as marker of intensity;
23. Formal morphological distinction between imperfective verbs in main and subordinate clauses;
24. Use of singular feminine forms to mark plural;
25. Suppletive lexical item for expressing the imperative of the verb ‘come’;
26. Existence of basic nouns with a plural/collective reading from which a singulative forms can be derived.

Most Ethiosemitic languages and many Cushitic and Omotic languages exhibit several of these features, but they are less frequently found in Nilo-Saharan languages. For instance, the unmarked SOV word order—see example (1) above—is common in the Omotic languages and also found in a few Nilo-Saharan languages of the area, like Nara,

Kunama and Nubian, while elsewhere in Nilo-Saharan SVO dominates (Güldemann 2010: 574; Bender 2003: 33). Furthermore, Nilo-Saharan languages in close proximity to Ethiosemitic and Cushitic languages may also exhibit features (1) and (4).

The SOV word order change at the clausal level also affected the order of constituents at the phrasal level, although here the picture is still more divergent. Accordingly, the order MODIFIER-HEAD predominates in Ethiosemitic, Highland East Cushitic, and Omotic. The reverse order, HEAD-MODIFIER, sometimes occurs in Omotic languages (e.g. Aari, Sezo, Anfillo), but particularly in Lowland East Cushitic, e.g. Oromo. Uncommon mixed patterns are also found, such as ADJECTIVE-NOUN/NOUN-GENITIVE in Bayso (cf. Bisang 2006: 90–91) and Tigre/Tigrinya (which also have GENITIVE-NOUN) (Tosco 1998), or ADJECTIVE-NOUN beside common NOUN-ADJECTIVE/GENITIVE in Geez (Bulakh 2012: 171). Auxiliaries typically follow the main verb. Case tends to be marked by (inflectional) suffixes and postpositions. Case relators and determiners are usually attached to modifiers (2).

(2) AMHARIC (ETHIOSEMITIC)

SUBJECT	OBJECT		VERB	
<i>käbbädä</i>	<i>ʔad~addis-u-n</i>	<i>libs</i>	<i>ji-läbs</i>	<i>džämmär.</i>
Kebede.M	PL~new-DEF.M-ACC	clothes	3SM-wear\IPFV	AUX.begin(PFV)

‘Kebede started to wear (various pieces of) new clothes’

(Leslau 1995: 334)

In Ethiosemitic, case prefixes also exist but uniformly changed to suffixes in Harari (see Lehmann 2011: §4.1.2).

Feature (23) in Table 1—the morphological distinction between imperfective verbs in main and subordinate clauses—is a common phenomenon in Cushitic, Ethiosemitic and Omotic. That means, many languages grammaticalized clause-type markers distinguishing between subordinate and main clause verbs, e.g. the contrast between main- and relative clause verbs in (3) below. The lack of any additional marker on the verb in the Libido examples (3b) indicates that it is a dependent relative verb, while the main clause imperfective verb in (3a) contains an additional suffix. In other languages, like Amharic (3c–d), both, main and subordinate imperfective verbs contain additional markers, but their forms differ.

(3) LIBIDO (CUSHITIC)

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| a. <i>ʔit-t-aa-tt-oo</i> | vs. b. <i>hin-t-aa</i> |
| eat-2SG-IPFV-2SG-IPFV.DCL | dig-2SG-IPFV[REL] |
| ‘you eat’ | ‘you who digs’ |
| | (Crass 2014: 184, 186) |

AMHARIC (ETHIOSEMITIC)

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| c. <i>tibälalläh</i> | vs. d. <i>jämmi-tti-bäla</i> |
| ti-bäla-allä-h | |
| 2SM-eat\IPFV-AUX.NPST-2SM | REL-2SM-eat\IPFV |
| ‘you eat’ | ‘you who eats’ |

Feature (23) is probably not limited to imperfective verbs and the distinction between main and subordinated verbs, but also applies to the marking of illocutionary force, i.e. the distinction between declarative and interrogative clauses, as in (4) and (5), and the distinction between affirmative and negative clauses in (5):³

³ For further information on focus and illocutionary force in Zay, see Meyer (2002; 2006; 2014a).

(4) HAMAR (OMOTIC)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>a. <i>ʊf-ʌ=tɛ=ki=d-ʌ=d-ɛ</i>
 drink-PFV=LOC=3=be-PFV=be-IPFV
 ‘He is drinking.’</p> | <p>b. <i>taki ʊf-ʌ=tɛ=d-ʌ</i> <i>ʌyna</i>
 now drink-PFV=LOC=be-PFV who
 ‘Who is drinking now?’
 (Cupi et al. 2012: 188)</p> |
|---|---|

(5) ZAY (ETHIOSEMITIC)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>a. <i>fäfät näk’äl-ä-n-u</i>
 canoe take\PFV-3SM-FOC-DCL
 ‘He took the canoe.’</p> | <p>b. <i>fäfät näk’äl-ä-n</i>
 canoe take\PFV-3SM-FOC
 ‘Did he take the canoe?’</p> |
| <p>c. <i>fäfät ʔal-niqäl-o.</i>
 canoe NEG-take\JUSS-3SM:DCL
 ‘He did not take the canoe.’</p> | |

The various clausal status markers seem to have grammaticalized from a construction consisting of a lexical verb followed by an auxiliary or a copula in declarative clauses (see Tosco 1996; Crass 2013; Dimmendaal 2013; Meyer 2014b: §3.5).⁴

⁴ Note that cleft constructions very productively mark focus in the Ethiopian Linguistic Area (Appleyard 1989).

Most of Ferguson's features, however, have been criticized in the literature (for further details see Zaborski 1991; 2003; 2010a; 2010b; Tosco 2000; 2008; Bender 2003; Bisang 2006; Crass & Meyer 2008). Some of them are so common that they can hardly be used to delimit the Ethiopian Linguistic Area, e.g. features (5–8), (17) and (22) in Table 1.

Certain features have clearly a genetic origin, i.e. they are part of a common Afroasiatic ancestor language, e.g. features (3–4), (18–21) and probably (24). The distribution of feature (3) is very limited; it is usually found at the periphery, i.e. in North Ethiosemitic languages, Afar, Saaho, Somali and in South Cushitic languages, but not in central parts of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area. Therefore, Crass (2002) argues that the reduction of the various Proto-Afroasiatic gutturals and pharyngeals to *ʔ* and *h* in South Ethiosemitic and most Cushitic languages constitutes an areal feature. With regard to feature (4)—ejective consonants (which, however, correspond to pharyngealized consonants in Asian Semitic, e.g. Arabic)—early research on Proto-Semitic had assumed that pharyngealized consonants represent the proto-form and the ejectives are innovations in Ethiosemitic due to language contact with Cushitic (e.g. Leslau 1945: 61). However, the ejective pronunciation is also found in Semitic languages outside Ethiopia and is now considered to represent the original pronunciation in Proto-Semitic (see Kogan 2011: 59–61). Crass (2002) argues that

ejectives constitute an areal feature because they were lost diachronically in certain branches of Cushitic, particularly Agaw, but reintroduced through contact with Ethiosemitic (see e.g. Fallon 2015: 74–75 for Bilin).

Another group of features displays typologically universal tendencies and is also not well suited to define a linguistic area. For instance, features (10–12) are typical for languages with SOV common word order. Finally, some of the proposed areal features in Table 1, such as SOV word order, occurrence of postpositions, and use of quoting constructions, have a wider distribution in northern Africa and are probably part of a larger Chad–Ethiopia Linguistic Area (Güldemann 2010: 574–575; Heine 1975: 41–42).

Tosco (2000) and, recently, Güldemann (2018: 464–470) express serious doubt regarding the existence of an Ethiopian Linguistic Area. Tosco's (2000) main objection is that most languages of the area have the same genetic ancestor, Proto-Afroasiatic, and thus it is difficult to determine whether a feature is inherited or borrowed, while Güldemann (2018: 464–470) argues that Ferguson's (1976) features actually do not delimit the Ethiopian Linguistic Area but have a wider distribution or represent universal tendencies in linguistic typology.

3. Additional features of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area

As the actual extent of a large Ethiopian Linguistic Area is hard to define, several works focus on smaller sub-areas or contact/convergence zones within it (see Zaborski 1991; 2010b), such as Northern Eritrea (Tosco 1998; 2008), Highland East Cushitic–Gurage (Crass & Meyer 2008; and the contributions in Crass & Meyer 2007), Highland East Cushitic–North Omotic (Treis 2012), Highland East Cushitic–Gurage–Ometo (Tosco 1996), Surmic–Omotic–Cushitic (Dimmendaal 1998), and the Southwest Ethiopian Language Area (Sasse 1986; Ongaye 2009). The features suggested for these sub-areas often encompass complex constructions, which involve shared grammaticalization processes. For the Highland East Cushitic–Gurage sub-area, Crass & Meyer (2008: 244), for instance, describe the grammaticalization of an experiential perfect based on the verb ‘know’, as in (6), which Rapold & Zaugg-Coretti (2009) also confirmed for Omotic, and other Cushitic languages, like Oromo.

(6) a. OROMO (CUSHITIC)

ameerikaa deem-tan-i beek-tuu?

America go-2PL.PFV-CNV know-2PL.IPFV.Q

‘Have you ever been to America?’

b. AMHARIC (ETHIOSEMITIC)

amerika hedä-h t-awk'-allä-h?

America go\CNV-2SM 2SM-know\IPFV-AUX.NPST-2SM

‘Have you ever been to America?’

Other features contain additional modifications, not found in their original sense suggested by Ferguson (1976). For instance, quotative constructions based on a direct quotation as complement to the verb ‘say’ (7a) is an often cited feature, although these constructions are not limited to the Ethiopian Linguistic Area (Appleyard 2001; Cohen, Simeone-Senelle & Vanhove 2002; Meyer 2009).

(7) AMHARIC

a. *asfaw «gibir al-käfl- blo näggär-at.*

imm»

Asfaw tax NEG.1SG- say\CNV.3SM tell\PFV-

pay\IPFV-NEG SBJ.3SM:OBJ.3SF

‘Asfaw told her that he won’t pay taxes.’

b. *bärr-u «ali-kkäffät» ?al-ä-yn.*

door-DEF.M NEG.1SG-be_open\IPFV say\PFV-SBJ.3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I could not open the door (lit. The door said to me, “I won’t be opened.”)’

c. *lä-ne* ***bito*** *näw* *jä-mätt'a-w*

DAT-1SG say\CNV.3SM COP.3SM REL-come\PFV.3SM-DEF

‘He came for the sake of me.’

Quoting clauses further grammaticalized into a benefactive focus construction (7c) (Crass & Meyer 2008: 242), and other complex predicates, like the negative circumstantial in (7b), in which ‘say’ functions as light verb. Very often the coverb of the verb ‘say’ is an ideophone, like Amharic *hint’iss alä* ‘he sneezed’.

Converbs—i.e. dependent verbs with restricted person, TAM, or polarity marking used for clause-chaining or adverbial modification—are another often-cited feature of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area. Within Cushitic, Beja, Agaw and Saho-Afar have a separate converb paradigm, while Oromo changes a regular perfective verb to a pseudo-converb by lengthening its final vowel or adding epenthetic *i* to a final consonant, as in (6a). Ethiosemitic innovated converbs due to contact with Cushitic. Geez, Tigrinya, Amharic and Argobba grammaticalized original verbal nouns plus possessive suffixes as converb (see Meyer 2012; Weninger 2014). The remaining South Ethiosemitic languages have pseudo-converbs, marked by a suffix on inflected verbs: *-ä/-ani* in Wolane/Silt’e, and *-m(a)* (also augmented *-m tannä > -nta*, with nasal assimilation *m > n* before *t*) elsewhere (Meyer 2016: §4.4). Usually languages of the area have only a general converb, while Omotic,

Highland East Cushitic, and certain Western Gurage languages also have specialized converbs (Azeb & Dimmendaal 2006; Banti 2010; Hetzron 1975b; Völlmin 2010). According to Treis (2012: §5), converbs in Omotic and Highland East Cushitic distinguish between same- and different-subject, which is rare elsewhere in Africa. She therefore concludes that switch-reference, uniformly marked by **-n/*-m*, is peculiar to certain Omotic languages, from where it spread to Highland East Cushitic.

Another probable feature is the use of the similative marker ‘like’ as a marker of purpose and complement clauses, which is found in Cushitic, Omotic and Ethiosemitic languages in central Ethiopia, but less so on the peripheral regions of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area (Treis 2017). According to Treis (2017: 91), the similative-purpose multifunctionality is rare cross-linguistically.

Further features which might determine the Ethiopian Linguistic Area stem are lexical items which acquired multiple semantic senses. Hayward (1991; 2000), for instance, identifies similar conceptualization patterns in the lexicon of Cushitic, Ethiosemitic and Omotic languages, e.g. ‘go out’=‘go up’, causative of ‘enter’=‘marry’ (see also Appleyard 2001: 7). Further research in such conceptualization patterns will certainly enhance the characterization of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area.

Other features, which seem to be specific to the Ethiopian Linguistic Area, but still need further research, include the widespread use of associative plurals, i.e. affixes attached to proper names and pronouns expressing ‘X and peoples associated to X’, like Amharic *innä-käbbädä* ‘Kebede and his associates’ and *innässu* ‘they’ (from *innä-issu* AP-3SM), and copula splits in main and subordinated clauses, i.e. the occurrence of different copulas according to the clause type, e.g. particle copulas with no or restricted agreement in main clauses vs. fully inflected verbal copulas in subordinate clauses (8),

(8) AMHARIC

a. MAIN CLAUSE vs.

tämari n-äw

student COP-3SM

‘He is a student.’

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

tämari kä-hon-ä t’älla aj-t’ätt’a-mm

student if-**be(come)**\PFV-3SM beer NEG.3SM-drink\IPFV-NEG

‘If he is a student he does not drink beer.’

OROMO

b. MAIN CLAUSE vs.

fard-i *gurracch-i* *jabaa-dha*
 horse-NOM black-NOM strong-COP

‘A black horse is strong.’

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

barsiissa *yoo* *ta'-e* *farso* *hin-dhug-u*
 teacher.ABT if **be(come)**-3SM.PFV beer.ABT NEG-drink-3SM.NEG:IPFV

‘If he is a teacher he does not drink beer.’

Thus, despite the relatively extensive research over several decades, the Ethiopian Linguistic Area is still not sufficiently defined and needs further investigation.

List of Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	Person	M	Masculine
ABT	Absolute (case)	NEG	Negative
ACC	Accusative	NOM	Nominative
AUX	Auxiliary	NPST	Non-past
CNV	Converb	OBJ	Object
COP	Copula	PFV	Perfective
DAT	Dative	PL	Plural
DCL	Declarative clause marker	POSS	Possessor
DEF	Definite	Q	Interrogative

DST	Distal	REL	Relative verb
F	Feminine	SBJ	Subject
FOC	Focus	SF	Singular-feminine
IPFV	Imperfective	SG	Singular
JUSS	Jussive	SM	Singular-masculine
LOC	Locative	SNG	Singulative

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Ethiopian Sign Language

Pawlos Kassu Abebe

1. Introduction

It may not be overestimation to state that Sign languages are probably among the oldest languages on our planet. This is because Sign

languages exist wherever communities of Deaf people exist and Deaf people have always been part and parcel of humanity. Sign languages are languages that use the visual-manual modality to convey meaning. Sign languages are expressed through manual articulations such as handshapes, movements, location and orientation in combination with non-manual elements such as various forms of facial expressions, but they are not identical with the co-speech gestures in spoken languages. There is a myth that there exists a universal Sign language. However, this is not the case. Sign languages naturally evolved over time in Deaf Communities and are independent of the spoken languages that surround them geographically. Sign languages are not mutually intelligible although there are features shared all over the world. While Sign languages are used primarily by the Deaf and hard of hearing, they are also used by non-deaf individuals, such as families, friends, teachers of the Deaf, Sign language interpreters, etc. That makes speakers of Sign languages one of the biggest linguistic communities.

It is not clear how many Sign languages currently exist worldwide. Most countries around the world normally have their own native Sign language, and some have more than one. It is believed that between 138 and 300 different types of Sign languages are used throughout the world while new Sign languages frequently evolve amongst groups of Deaf children and adults (*Parkhurst & Parkhurst, 1998*). However, *Ethnologue* (2013) lists 137 Sign languages (*Lewis, et al. 2013*). Out of

this number at least 25 Sign languages are in Africa (Kamei, 2004:24). In addition to these 25 Sign languages at least 13 foreign Sign languages, mainly from Europe and the United States, have been introduced to at least 27 African countries, Some of the 23 African Sign languages documented by Kamei have originated from or have been influenced by the Sign languages from Europe and the United States (Kamei, 2004:26). Some of the Sign languages around the world have obtained some form of legal recognition while others have not. There are cases of countries sharing spoken languages but not Sign languages. For instance, while the official working language in USA, UK and Australia is spoken English each of these countries has its own Sign language respectively known as American Sign Language (ASL), British Sign Language (BSL) and Australian Sign language (Auslan).

Until a hearing professor of linguistics showed for the first time that Sign languages have their own linguistic structure like spoken languages (Stokoe, 1960), Sign languages were considered to be mere gestures consisting of unanalyzable signs. They were considered to have only lexicons (signs) not structures. In what is known as the first linguistic research on Sign languages, Stokoe (1960) showed that the signs in ASL were not holistic units but are made up of specific formational units which he identified as *designator* (specific combination of hand configuration and orientation), *tabulation* (hand location), and *signation* (hand movement). Later on, these came to be

known as handshape, location and movement, respectively. Over the years, Stokoe's claim has been refined and the formational structures have been renamed parameters of signs including handshape, location, movement, orientation and non-manual features as formational units of a sign.

Numerous researches which followed Stokoe's (1960) groundbreaking work have uncovered the complex nature of Sign languages virtually in all linguistic aspects. It has been confirmed that Sign languages are full-fledged natural languages with their own grammar and lexicon (Sandler & Lillo-Martin, 2006). Sign languages make use of word formation operations that are also found in spoken languages, but endow them with flavors that are available only to manual-spatial languages (Meir, 2012). Studies virtually on every linguistic aspect of Sign languages are being conducted around the world and knowledge about the linguistics of Sign languages is increasing.

The purpose of this brief paper is to provide an overview of the history of the Ethiopian Sign language (EthSL), its fingerspelling and the speakers of the language. Furthermore, the paper will give brief accounts of codification, the contributions of the Department of Linguistics of Addis Ababa University to the development of EthSL and the introduction of Sign language linguistics in Ethiopia; and,

finally, the paper will make mention of prospects of the language and the discipline envisaged.

2. Historical development of EthSL

As it is the case with all existing languages, it is hard to associate the beginning of EthSL to any date in history. What is known for sure is that EthSL came into the limelight in the mid-twentieth century with the commencement of the formal education of the Deaf in the country. Today it is confirmed to be one of the over-eighty languages spoken in Ethiopia. There had been a homegrown Sign language in Ethiopia long before missionaries came to Ethiopia with foreign Sign languages (Pawlos, 2015:58). As it has been proved in other countries, the Sign languages used in African countries before the introduction of foreign sign languages were also natural languages like the spoken ones (Nyst, 2007). Often this truth is overlooked and the history of EthSL is tied to the establishment of schools for the Deaf in Ethiopia by foreign missionaries. EthSL, however, has its roots in homegrown signs used by Deaf Ethiopians before the coming of missionaries who brought foreign Sign languages along with the formal education for the Deaf in the mid-twentieth century. The first missionaries who brought the education of the Deaf to Ethiopia and opened the first school for the Deaf in Keren (now in Eretria) were from Sweden. They used the Sign language of the Nordic countries at the time to teach the Deaf. The Americans followed the Swedish missionaries and opened two schools

for the Deaf in Addis Ababa. The language that was used at these two schools was American Sign Language (ASL) even though at one of the schools it was heavily influenced by the Oralism philosophy which requires using speech along with the signs. Although nothing is known about its contribution to the current EthSL, there is evidence that the Italian sign language was also used in the northern parts of Ethiopia, especially in the two port towns of Massawa and Asab, in the earlier periods of the 20th century (Pawlos, 2015:58). The contact between the students of the three mission schools in Keren and Addis Ababa and other Deaf who were not enrolled in these schools and used indigenous signs resulted in the language which is today known as EthSL. Like the other spoken languages in Ethiopia, EthSL exhibits variations that arise from schools attended, regional, social, ethnic and age differences.

In its early days, the language was called *Yedenakurt kuwanka* (Deaf persons' language). With the publication of the first dictionary in 1978, it was renamed "Amharic sign language" after the working language of Ethiopia. The choice of this name was a result of a wrong assumption held then about Sign languages in general around the world and an attempt by those involved in its production to create the impression that the dictionary is indigenous. At the time of the production of the dictionary there was an assumption that Sign language has only a lexicon (signs—meaningful units) not syntactic structure. Therefore, it was assumed that labeling the Sign language used in Ethiopia Amharic

sign language was in order. The second reason was the desire by those involved in the production of the dictionary to create the impression that the signs in the dictionary are indigenous signs which are different from the foreign signs used in the schools run by the missionaries. With a growing awareness about Signed languages all over the world and in Ethiopia, ‘Amharic’ was gradually dropped and the language was renamed simply Sign Language, sometimes National sign language. Despite the effort of enlightened individuals the former name persisted until the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf (ENAD) published its own dictionary entitled *Ethiopian Sign Language* in 2008. Today the language is officially called by this name.

Through the last six decades, the influence of the Nordic and American sign languages has diminished considerably and many of the borrowed signs have undergone metamorphosis by changing one or more of their parameters. What remained are limited aspects of their lexicons mostly that of the ASL lexicon. Today, EthSL is used across the states of the the countries federal system. Almost all the users, regardless of the different spoken languages in their areas, view EthSL as their native language (Pawlos & Andrgachew, 2014; Eyasu, 2018).

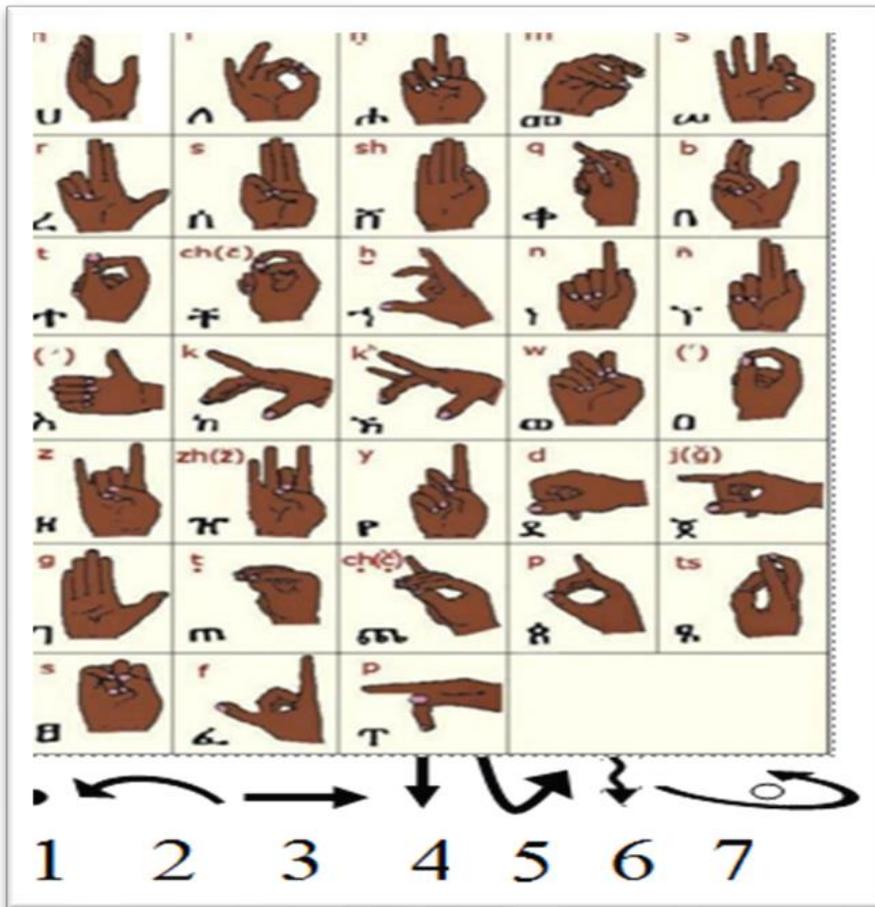
3. EthSL fingerspelling

Many Sign languages have a form of alphabet called fingerspelling which is also known as manual alphabet. The symbols of the

fingerspelling are handshapes made with fingers which are, among others, used for writing words in the air before the eyes of the addressee. As is the case with the alphabet of the spoken languages, the fingerspelling in relation to the Sign language is a recent invention. Except for EthSL, almost all Sign languages in Africa have no fingerspelling of their own. They, rather, use ASL, BSL or the Arabic fingerspelling.

EthSL fingerspelling was originally known as “Amharic fingerspelling” and then as “National fingerspelling of Ethiopia”. It was officially renamed EthSL fingerspelling with the publication of the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf (ENAD) dictionary. The fingerspelling was constituted from thirty-three hand configurations on the basis of the Ethiopic letters. They were designed in 1974 by three Deaf Ethiopians, namely Minasse Abera, Teklehaymanot Derso and Hailu Yesuneh (Pawlos, 2015:61). Only one hand is used to form all the signs of the fingerspelling. The hand shapes of the 30 out of the 33 signs of the fingerspelling are believed to be original and found only in EthSL, while the remaining 3 are borrowed from ASL (Pawlos, 2015:61). Unlike the Ethiopic letters of the syllabary (serving the purpose of an alphabet) each of which is manifested with the seven vowels of the script, in EthSL, the first fingerspelling is unmarked or marked by the absence of any movement, while six different directions are used to represent vowels as seen at the bottom right of figure 1. The

arrows representing vowels do not have signs like the vowels of ASL; instead, they are indicated by moving the particular handshapes to six different positions. The vowels of EthSL are, therefore, just movements.



Keys

Unmarked	U	I	A	E	E	O

Figure 1. EthSL fingerspelling and keys to the vowel-marking arrows

4. The speakers (Ethiopian Deaf Community)

Sign languages are preferred to the spoken ones by many Deaf people due to their inability to hear sounds of spoken languages. They are also ‘mother tongue’ language of many non-deaf people who were born in or grow up with Deaf family members. As a result, it is hard to pin down the number of people who use Sign language in a certain country such as Ethiopia. EthSL is spoken by the Deaf and hearing Ethiopians related to the Deaf in one way or another, virtually in all states of the federation regardless of the difference in the spoken languages in these states. The speakers of EthSL are known as Ethiopian Deaf Community. The community is comprised of the Deaf and those non-Deaf Ethiopians who speak EthSL, fully integrating its cultural components as compared to those who use the signed version of spoken languages. From the estimated 17% (Approximately 18 million) Ethiopians with Disabilities (WB & WHO, 2011), 19.2% are deaf (WIBDC, 2000, NSB, 1994), there are approximately over 3.5 million deaf citizens in Ethiopia. Although the percentage of the Deaf using EthSL is unknown, the majority of the Deaf in Ethiopia are believed to speak EthSL as their first language. As indicated above, the spoken languages in the various regions of Ethiopia have minimal influence on EthSL spoken by the Deaf signers who became deaf before they developed the spoken languages of the communities in which they were born and grew up (Pawlos & Andargachew, 2014; Eyasu , 2018). In addition, as pointed out above, EthSL is spoken by a number of non-

deaf Ethiopians including families, friends and teachers of the Deaf as well as a growing number of Sign language interpreters. The Ethiopian Deaf Community is very strong and well-connected across the states of the federation through their national association which has twenty-seven branches all over the federation, schools for the Deaf, other governmental and non-governmental organizations, etc. The community is also internationally well connected with Deaf communities of various countries. Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf (ENAD) is a member of World Federation of the Deaf (WFD).

5. Encoding EthSL

Encoding EthSL is, so far, limited to documenting the lexicon (signs) in a dictionary form. The first known resource for EthSL is the first dictionary published in 1978 which is entitled የአማርኛ የምልክት ቋንቋ መስማትና መናገር ለተሳናቸው 1ኛ መጽሐፍ (*Ye'amarigna Yemilikkit Qwanqwa Mesmatinna Mennager Letesanachew, Andegna Metsihaf*) (Amharic Sign Language for the Deaf and Dumb, Book One). The dictionary was jointly prepared by the Ministry of Education, ENAD and the two schools for the Deaf established by the American missionaries in Addis Ababa. It contains one thousand and nine hundred signs in fifteen chapters. There are hand drawn signs with arrows to show the directions of the movement of the signs in the dictionary along with equivalent Amharic words under each sign. This dictionary is popular even today in spite of the publication of a new dictionary by ENAD. Most of the

signs were borrowed from ASL, sometimes with minor modifications of one or more of the parameters. In 1994 another dictionary was prepared by Addis Ababa education office but was not published. However, the manuscript is available and is used by those who could not get either of the two published dictionaries. The most recent resource is the dictionary published solely by ENAD in 2008. It is entitled የኢትዮጵያ ምልክት ቋንቋ መዝገበ ቃላት (Ethiopian Sign Language Dictionary). The dictionary consists of 1322 signs in 25 chapters. Unlike the first dictionary in which hand drawn pictures were used, this dictionary is illustrated with images of three Deaf language models who produced the signs in front of a camera. Both English and Amharic words are used to indicate the meanings of the signs/pictures.

In addition to the above-mentioned dictionaries, there are also some resources in digital forms produced by individuals and NGOs (Non-governmental organizations).



Figure 2. The two dictionaries of EthSL

6. Contributions of the Department of Linguistics

EthSL was brought to a greater prominence with the launching of a bachelor's degree program in EthSL and Deaf Culture in the Department of Linguistics, Addis Ababa University, in 2008. Inspired by the growing recognition of Sign languages around the world, the leadership of ENAD started lobbying the university to include the study of EthSL in its program of studies. Considering the fact that no such program existed in Africa, the request looked ambitious. However, in 2004, the university granted the association permission to offer EthSL as a non-regular course to students and staff of the university on Saturdays and provided a classroom and other facilities. Simultaneously, the association's leadership worked closely with some staff of the Department of Linguistics (now Department of Linguistics

and Philology) to achieve the goal of opening a regular program. The department secured funding from World Bank and developed a curriculum for EthSL and Deaf Culture which was approved by the university and the bachelor's program was launched in 2008. The BA program was acclaimed to be the first not only in Ethiopia but in the whole of Africa. The launching of the program made EthSL the fourth indigenous language to be studied at the university; the other three being Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya.

The contributions of the department through its Program Unit of EthSL and Deaf Culture to the development of EthSL are numerous; chief among them are manpower development, research and encoding as well as documentation. Concerning manpower development, it could be said that the department single-handedly laid the foundation for professionalizing Sign language teaching and interpretation in Ethiopia. Even though Sign language teaching and interpretation are professions that require extensive training, both were done by laymen before the bachelor's program was launched. Consequently, the teaching of EthSL was reduced to teaching of signs out of context which resulted in language lag in Deaf children. The interpretation service provided to the Deaf was also below standard. The training offered by the department which aimed at producing professional sign language teachers, interpreters and deafness-related consultants changed the situation to the better. Since its establishment, EthSL and Deaf Culture

Program Unit in the Department of Linguistics and Philology has graduated over 200 Sign language teachers and interpreters who are now revolutionizing Sign language teaching and interpretation in Ethiopia. Its graduates have taken over the teaching and interpretation of EthSL in primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. They work in every domain including the mass media and the parliament.

In the area of research and documentation of the linguistic aspects of EthSL, a formal research in the linguistics of EthSL commenced in the department involving senior students and staff. Accordingly, each of the over 200 graduates had conducted research on EthSL teaching, interpretation, and Deaf culture. Furthermore, preliminary researches on the phonology and morphology of EthSL have paved the way for in-depth researches. Along with teaching and advising students, the staff also have been producing ground breaking researches revolving around EthSL. The first nationwide survey on usage and perspective towards EthSL was conducted by the staff of the Program Unit (Pawlos & Andargachew, 2014). The outcome of that research helped the federal ministry of education to make a decision on the request of the Deaf community to include EthSL in the regular school curriculum. It was that research which proved formally that the sign language used in Ethiopia is the same one all over the country. The finding was, actually, what the ministry wanted and, based on that, it approved immediately

the inclusion of EthSL into the regular school curriculum. The staff and graduates of the Program Unit were solely responsible for the production of textbooks from KG to grade twelve. To aid the initiative of the government and the revolutionization of teaching EthSL a staff member published a book which contains the history of the Deaf community and EthSL as well as the modern methods of sign language teaching (Pawlos, 2015). Another staff member conducted a PhD level sociolinguistic research which documented the much-needed information for policy making, curriculum design, language documentation, etc. (Eyasu, 2018). Currently, four PhD researches are in progress. Three are by full time staff members and one by a graduate of the Program Unit. The researches include morphology, phonology, lexicography and sign language interpretation models. Each is the first of its kind in the history of EthSL. It can be generalized that researches conducted in relation to EthSL so far are either by staff or graduates of the Program Unit of the department.

7. Prospects of the Ethiopian Sign Language

The Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) has widened its domains of use and has won recognition from schools, mass media and the parliament, to mention but a few. It is being taught in more than 300 schools where the Deaf are educated either separately, in special classrooms or in integrated classrooms, in six colleges of education and five universities as well as at a number of non-governmental organizations such as the

Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf (ENAD) (Pawlos, 2015). There is high demand for EthSL teachers in colleges as well as universities and for researchers capable of conducting in-depth studies on the structures of EthSL. The Department of Linguistics and Philology is working towards launching an MA program in Sign Linguistics. The aim is to establish a center for higher-level sign linguistic training and research in East Africa of which neighboring countries could also take advantage. With the department, the Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) has yet a brighter future.

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Linguistics as a Dynamic Science

Derib Ado and Feda Negesse

1. Introduction

Linguistics cannot remain stagnant dwelling only on the scientific description of the grammar of a human language. It has to be a dynamic science expanding its scope of inquiry as the need and interest to better understand language for the benefits of its speakers increases. A human language is a very complex phenomenon, requiring different scientific methods in order to get deep insights into its multiple aspects and to increase its functions and effectiveness as a tool of communication. The existence of different subfields, taking cognizance of the complex nature of language and its social roles, is a good indication of the dynamic nature of Linguistics. A brief description of what the subfields study may suffice to illustrate this nature.

2. Laboratory Phonology and Experimental Phonetics

The tradition of using an experiment for linguistic analysis dates back to the works of Rousselot (1891; 1904) where phonologists started applying instruments in a laboratory to study the physical features of speech sounds by recording samples. Most phonologists agree that phonology studies the logical, functional and behavioural aspects of speech sounds. Such studies require the categorization of sounds or features and imply mental representations and other cognitive aspects

of speech sounds. Phonology deals with the description and the comparison of the sound systems of human languages. In early times, it was thought these two tasks were better done with the aid of an experiment and thus laboratory phonology was established to promote this endeavour.

The formation of Experimental Phonetics was accompanied by an interest to investigate the physical nature of speech sounds. Experimental phonetics employs modern instrumentals to examine the articulatory, aerodynamic, acoustic and perpetual characteristics of speech sounds and as well as prosodic features.

This scientific endeavour greatly contributes to a profound understanding of human speech. The contributions of experimental phonetics in phonology are particularly tremendous. Thus, in a scientific study of language, phonology without the phonetic dimension of linguistics would be incomplete. Likewise, phonetics without phonology would not bring much to the understanding of elements or features from which language is built. Phonetics is a useful tool for phonologists while phonologists still show an interest in empirical and experimental paradigms for exploring the mental aspects of speech sounds. Since they belong to an independent subfield of language sciences, phoneticians do not likely consider this effort of phonologists as a big threat encroaching on their area of research.

3. Experimental Psycholinguistics and Clinical Linguistics

The experimental study of language production, comprehension, representation and acquisition means largely to ask what processes are involved, what mechanisms underlie and what factors contribute to the phenomena explored. Therefore, an experiment is one of the most important methodological approaches within of Psycholinguistics. Its objective is to systematically manipulate certain variables while controlling for the effects of others as a way of dealing with a research problem. If we are to find out how and why something occurs, we need to compare different conditions with respect to their effects on the phenomena under investigation and that's what experiments are about. Relying on strong research traditions in the cognitive sciences, particularly Experimental Psychology, Experimental Psycholinguistics can access and investigate our mental processes to better understand language production and comprehension. The research outcomes of experimental Psycholinguistics can be used by Clinical Linguistics, which aims to understand and treat various difficulties in the use of language. People who have speech-language problems need the professional assistance of experts in Clinical Linguistics.

4. Documentary Linguistics

About half of the more than 6000 languages of the world are estimated to be extinct within the 21st century (UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group

on Endangered Languages 2003). UNESCO has listed in its Atlas of Languages in Danger, 2464 languages as endangered worldwide; of which 28 are in Ethiopia alone (Moseley 2010). Looking at the rate at which languages are disappearing from the world, several institutions have started making coordinated efforts to audio and video record speakers, annotate the recordings, prepare metadata for the recordings and annotations and archive them for future use. As a response to the need to engage in multimedia documentation of languages, a new subfield of linguistics, called Documentary Linguistics, emerged in the mid 1990's (Austin 2010).

The Department of Linguistics launched MA and PhD Programs in Documentary Linguistics and Culture in 2007 in collaboration with the then Ethiopian Languages Research Centre, now Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures, and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES). Courses in technology of documentation were offered by expatriate staff at the beginning of the program; but soon, capacity was built and local staff took over as of 2012 academic year.

When the program was revised in 2015, its scope was narrowed down to focus on the documentation and revitalization of endangered languages leaving the culture aside due to the study of culture being taken up by various other institutions in the university. Currently, the program constitutes one of the tracks under PhD program in

Linguistics, which has the following four tracks: theoretical and descriptive linguistics, applied linguistics, experimental phonetics and documentary linguistics.

5. Computational Linguistics

Computational Linguistics is a subfield of Linguistics that aims to enable computers analyse and process human language, and ultimately model human language processing on computers. The principal areas of study of Computational Linguistics are speech recognition, speech synthesis, machine translation, data mining, and natural language interfaces to software. The use tools developed by computational linguists has become very important in our daily lives. From the help provider of Apple's Siri to Microsoft's Cortana and narration systems, spell checkers and grammar checkers that are now integrated in Microsoft Office Suit for English and many other languages of the developed world and the free translation service of Google we enjoy everyday are examples of applications that we cannot think to live without. There are several assistive technologies that improve the lives of people with disabilities.

The Department of Linguistics has been engaged in major language technology research and development activities in two major projects, namely the Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia (LCB) and the Core Natural Language

Processing (Core NLP) projects. In the LCB project, which is a joint project with Hawassa University, University of Oslo and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, the department has been involved in the development of web text corpora for Amharic, Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya¹ through the collaboration of the LCB² and Habit³ projects. Spoken corpora for eleven Ethiopian languages⁴ (Amharic, Oromo, Somali, Tigrinya, Sidama, Gamo, Hadiyya, Kambaata, Gumer, Muher and Hamar) are being developed with technical help from the Text Lab, University of Oslo. In the Core NLP project, the department is involved in the development of grammar checkers for Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya in collaboration with the Information Network Security Agency (INSA).

6. Linguistics Lab at the Department

Ethiopia is a linguistically diverse country in which over 80 languages are spoken. Since its establishment in 1978, the Department of Linguistics at AAU has busied itself with the huge task of describing the grammars of these languages. Inspired when he was doing his PhD studies at the University of Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, Dr. Moges

¹ <http://habit-project.eu/wiki/SetOfEthiopianWebCorpora>

² <https://www.hf.uio.no/iln/english/research/projects/linguistic-capacity-building-tools-for-the-inclu/index.html>

³ <https://habit-project.eu>

⁴ <http://tekstlab.uio.no/ethiopia/>

Yigezu took the initiative to set up the Phonetics Laboratory at the department in 2005. The department welcomed and supported the initiatives in recognition of the need to embrace experimental linguistics. The Lab was installed by Gordon Ramsay of Haskins Laboratories, Yale University, who was also in Belgium for PhD studies with Dr. Moges. The lab was officially opened by the late Peter Ladefoged, a renowned professor of phonetics at UCLA. The establishment of the Phonetics Laboratory has marked a historical breakthrough in launching experimental linguistics at the Department of Linguistics. The Lab was used by the late Prof. Wedekind to train the first batch of students in Experimental Phonetics.

The Lab is housed in a medium-sized room in the old building customarily called ILS (Institute of Language Studies) Building. Currently, it is equipped with digital recording devices, desktop computers, speech analysis tools, speech perception tools, and software packages. Accordingly, Computerised Speech Lab, EGG, digital audio taps, nasalization visualization system, airflow and air pressure acquisition device for speech aerodynamics, digital speech audiometer and E-prime are among the equipment found in the Lab to carry out experiments. With the aid money from the Norwegian government, the department is renovating and furnishing the Lab with state-of-the-art equipment to make it a suitable and attractive place for researchers. The

department is proud of its modern Lab, which is equipped with advanced hardware and software to conduct effective experiments.

With the aid of the Lab, the department launched new PhD programs namely Experimental Phonetics, and Documentary Linguistics and Culture in 2008. As per the staff development scheme of the department, some staff members with keen interest in Experimental Linguistics, joined in-house postgraduate programs at local and international universities. Now, the department has trained manpower to carry out experiment-based training and research in the lab. The staff profile of the department shows Derib Ado and Feda Negesse have joined Dr. Moges Yigezu by doing their PhD studies in Experimental Phonetics. Mulugata Tarikegn and Ababayehu Mesele did their PhDs in Experimental Psycholinguistics and Clinical Linguistics, respectively. Having graduated with a PhD in Computational Linguistics, Demeke Asres has become part of the scholars who actively uses the Lab to teach postgraduate students and run experiments.

7. Summary

Linguistics is a dynamic science expanding its scope of inquiry in response to the need to better understand language and put it at the service of its speakers. Linguistics embraces experiment to help us get a deep insight into language by providing adequate evidence from

multiple types of data or by testing subtle phenomena, which could be difficult or impossible for grammatical analysis. The insights and tools from experiments and Computational Linguistics are used to treat speech impairments in the domain of Clinical Linguistics. Due to interaction and economic integration, people may start to speak other languages and gradually abandon their own. The shift, usually, results in endangerment and extinction of the latter. In such conditions, Documentary Linguistics comes in to archive and prepare the endangered languages for revitalization.

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Clinical Linguistics

Abebayehu Messele Mekonnen

1. Introduction

Linguistics, as a science which studies the structure and function of languages, has full potential over the lives of human beings. Over the years, in addition to extensively describing and theorizing about how languages operate, remarkable developments have resulted which contributed to the application of Linguistics for the investigation, identification, and proposal of solutions to language-related problems. Such practices have further given rise to interdisciplinary sub-fields in linguistics such as Clinical Linguistics. David Crystal, who is widely considered as the father of modern Clinical Linguistics, defines the discipline as “the application of the theories, methods, and findings of linguistics to the study of those situations where all language handicaps are diagnosed and treated” (1984:31). The most direct professional manifestations of Clinical Linguistics are Speech and Language Pathology, Speech and Language Therapy and Special Needs Education. In the latter, Clinical linguistics has a lot to offer in assessing and managing a wide range of specific learning disabilities, particularly language-based learning disabilities such as dyslexia. Clinical

Linguistics is, nonetheless, a distinct discipline that is not in any way subsumed under Speech-Language Pathology. It is a sub-discipline of Applied Linguistics applying linguistic theoretical knowledge to Speech-Language Pathology by way of describing, analyzing and treating communication- as well as language-related disabilities.

In what follows, the historical development of the discipline Clinical Linguistics, its dimensions and scopes, the need for working as a team to deal with communication disorders, and the status of Clinical Linguistics and/or Speech-Language Pathology in Ethiopia are discussed.

1. Brief history

Although Clinical Linguistics does not seem to have received a systematic attention from the perspective of historiography, Perkins (2011) and Duchan (2012) shed light on the subfield.

Modern Clinical Linguistics has its roots in the second half of the 20th century. Widely credited as the ‘father of clinical linguistics’, Crystal's book, *Clinical Linguistics* became one of the most influential books in the subfield.

Roman Jakobson, a Russian structural linguist, was one of the first to try to apply linguistic theory to the study of Speech-Language

Pathology. Published in 1941, his book *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze*, recorded the results of his analysis of language use in child language acquisition and in adults with acquired aphasia. Although Jakobson's book only gained influence in the Anglophone world following the publication of the translated version *Child Language, Aphasia and Phonological Universals* (Jakobson, 1968), its impact was felt in the United States (Ingram, 1976) and the United Kingdom (Grunwell, 1982) among others, where changes of approach were adopted for phonological, grammatical, semantic and other areas of language impairment. Jakobson's observation that “atypical” sound patterns followed similar rules to those of regular language systems remains a guiding principle in Clinical Linguistics even today. Most notably, the same approach was also adopted by Crystal and his colleagues in their development of a set of language ‘profiling’ procedures (Crystal, 1982).

Currently, Clinical Linguistics is being discussed in international research circles. The International Clinical Phonetics and Linguistics Association has been in existence since 1991, (ICPLA, <https://www.icpla.info>). The association’s official monthly journal, *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics*, was founded by Martin Ball. Other prestigious journals featuring matters relating to communication disorders include: *Advances in Speech Language Pathology*, *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, *International Journal*

of Language and Communication Disorders, Journal of Intellectual and Development Disability, Journal of Multilingual Communication Disorders, Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology, Aphasiology, Brain and Language. There is also the Erasmus Mundus European Master's degree in Clinical Linguistics (EMCL) run by the Universities of Potsdam (Germany), Milan-Bicocca (Italy), Groningen (Netherlands) and Joensuu (Finland). Early contributions by David Crystal and his colleagues in the United Kingdom laid the ground for universities in UK to launch doctoral programme earlier than universities elsewhere (Crystal, 1981, 1982, 1984, 2001; Crystal Fletcher and Garman, 1976). Today, there are a number of universities in various parts of the world running doctoral programs in Clinical Linguistics.

2. Dimensions of Clinical Linguistics

Clinical Linguistics, which has increasingly become an essential branch of Linguistics, is a bidimensional discipline, as its name suggests. Although the conceptual root of this field is in Linguistics, its domain of application is the vast array of clinical disorders. Both dimensions of Clinical Linguistics can be addressed through an examination of specific linguistic deficits in individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders, craniofacial anomalies, adult-onset neurological impairments, psychiatric disorders, and neurodegenerative disorders. Clinical linguists are interested in the full range of linguistic deficits in these conditions, including phonetic deficits of children with cleft lip

and palate, morphosyntactic errors in children with specific language impairment, and pragmatic language impairments in adults with schizophrenia (see Section 4 for elaborate account of domains of Clinical Linguistics). Some of the communication disorders have their onset in the developmental period (developmental language disorders) while others occur for the first time in late childhood and adulthood (acquired language disorders).

Like many applied disciplines in linguistics, Clinical Linguistics is at the intersection of a number of fields. The relationship of Clinical Linguistics to the study of communication disorders and to speech-language pathology are two particularly important points of intersection. Speech-language pathology is the area of clinical practice that assesses and treats individuals with communication disorders. All language disorders restrict an individual's ability to communicate freely with others in a range of contexts and settings. Hence, language disorders are first and foremost communication disorders. To understand language disorders, it is useful to think of them in terms of points of breakdown on a communication cycle that tracks the progress of a linguistic utterance from its conception in the mind of a speaker to its comprehension by a hearer. This cycle permits the introduction of a number of important distinctions in language pathology, such as the distinction between a receptive and an expressive language disorder, and between a developmental and an acquired

language disorder. The cycle is also a useful model with which to conceptualize a range of communication disorders other than language disorders. These other disorders, which include hearing, voice, and fluency disorders, are also relevant to Clinical Linguistics.

Clinical Linguistics draws on the conceptual resources of the full range of linguistic disciplines to describe and explain language disorders. These disciplines include Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics, and Discourse. Each of these linguistic disciplines contributes concepts and theories that can shed light on the nature of language disorder. A wide range of tools and approaches are used by Clinical Linguists and Speech-Language Pathologists to assess, diagnose, and treat language disorders. These clinical practices normally involve the use of standardized and norm-referenced tests, communication checklists and profiles (some administered by clinicians, others by parents, teachers, and caregivers), and qualitative methods such as conversation analysis and discourse analysis. It is important to note that, inasmuch as Clinical Linguistics employs linguistic descriptions and theories to understand and manage linguistic disorders of all sorts, it also contributes enormously to our understanding of how human language is typically processed and executed, by analyzing patterns of atypical forms of communication.

3. The Scope of Clinical Linguistics

As noted above, the communication disorders dealt with in the domains of Clinical Linguistics are generally classified into language and speech disorders.

4.1 Language Disorders

Language disorder an abnormality that is found in the development or use of the knowledge of language. It involves breakdown in the development of language abilities on the usual developmental schedule. Abnormalities that come under language disorders are Autism, Learning Disability, Mental Retardation, Specific Language Impairment (such as dyslexia), Developmental Phonological Disorders, Aphasia, Schizophrenia, Dysarthria, Dyspraxia, etc.

4.2 Speech Disorders

Speech disorder are abnormalities in which the speech mechanisms like the soft palate, tongue, lips, etc. are the locus of delay. They can be further classified into: articulatory disorders, fluency disorders, voice disorders—each of which is briefly discussed below.

4.2.1 Articulation disorders

They are the disorders that occur due to the problems that arise in the movement of the various structures of speech mechanisms such as the soft palate, tongue, lips, etc.

4.2.2 Fluency disorders

The effortless and continuous speech with rapid speed is called fluency. If there is a problem in the effort, continuity and speed, it is said to be a fluency disorder. Stuttering and cluttering are two types of fluency disorders.

4.2.3 Voice disorders

If the pitch, loudness or quality of the voice differs from that of the normal/ standard voice due to abnormalities in the vocal mechanisms, it is said to be a disordered voice. The two types of voice disorders are phonation and resonance.

4. Roles of a Clinical Linguist

Clinical Linguistics deals only with communication disorders which have linguistic symptoms. Hence, apart from speech-language pathologists and Clinicians, there is a major role for a clinical linguist to be played in clarifying, describing, diagnosing, assessing and providing intervention to the disorders. The terminologies given for each disorder are often confusing, overlapping and also misinterpreted.

For example, ‘Learning Disability’ is now widely used as an umbrella term for the listening, reading, writing and mathematical disorders in individuals with no apparent deficits in general cognitive abilities. However, it is also common to find in the literature (e.g., Cummings, 2008) that the phrase “learning disability” being confused with significant delay or deficit in cognitive abilities. Thus, these confusions can be resolved by involving clinical linguists for providing systematic linguistic descriptions as they relate to the communication disorders.

Moreover, linguists also provide data on normative models of child and adult language, which could serve as references to measure delay in language acquisition or disorder in expressive and/or receptive perspective at various ages. The role of a clinical linguist is enormous particularly in terms of diagnosis and assessment of communication disorders. In clinical settings, disorders are often classified in terms of medical terminologies, which could be easy for clinicians to label the conditions. However, when a language delay or disorder occurs with no apparent medical explanation, clinicians would often try to transfer their burden to speech language pathologist without any explanation. If such communication disorders are classified at linguistic levels, such as phonetic, phonological, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, etc., then it is better to list out the deviant linguistic features and understand their problems and then to go for appropriate intervention strategies.

5. Working as a Team

When a patient comes to a clinic with a complaint of speech or language disorder, the usual thing that happens is finding the medical/clinical cause. Whether the cause is found or not, physicians often refer the patients to speech-clinicians for further assessment and remediation. A clinical linguist or speech-language pathologist can only identify the language problem, but may not know whether psychological and/or sociological background interferes or not. Without such knowledge, the intervention provided may ameliorate the problem but will not eradicate it. Hence, a clinical linguist or a speech-language pathologist has to coordinately work with a psychologist, teachers, and parents for the assessment and to provide remedial measures. If the problem is found in a schoolchild, for example, the intervention provider may be an educationist who must also work in coordination with the above-mentioned team. This holistic approach should be followed in the discipline. Otherwise, problems could not be solved.

6. Clinical Linguistics and/or Speech-Language Pathology in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, a country with vast linguistic diversity and an estimated population of more than one hundred million, the issue of communication disorders has so far received no attention whatsoever. Thus far, no academic institution offers a training program in Clinical

Linguistics, despite enormous demand for services by individuals with communication and language-based learning disabilities. A decade ago, the Department of Linguistics, Addis Ababa University, came up with a strategic plan to launch a master's program in Clinical Linguistics. In order to realize the envisaged program, a number of preparatory activities were conducted. They include: training core staff that could take part in teaching, research and supervision; devising the master's curriculum in collaboration with partners from universities in the UK and Canada. Despite all those efforts, the program did not materialize. It is hoped that the program, which is the first of its kind in Ethiopia, will be approved by Addis Ababa University sooner rather than later, and produce professionals who will provide quality services to countless Ethiopians suffering from a wide range of communication- and language-based learning disorders.

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Early Publications in Ge‘ez*

Shimelis Mazengia

The classical Ethiopian language, Ge‘ez, ceased to be spoken towards the beginning of the second millennium A.D. but continued as a liturgical and literary language. The first printed book in Ge‘ez was issued in 1513. It was printed in Rome by Johannes Potken (German) in collaboration with the Ethiopian Christian community in Vatican. The contents of the book are the Psalter along with some canticles. Potken was acquainted with and learned Ge‘ez from the Ethiopian monks at their church, Santo Stefano degli Abissini, which was granted to them by Pope Sixtus IV in 1479. Potken’s teacher of Ge‘ez was Abba Thomas Welde Samuel who was the guest of Pope Leo X. Potken had to get letters cut in Ge‘ez script for printing the book as there were no books printed in the language before. The Psalter, which was printed in the book, is still found in the Vatican Library (Vat. Etiop. 20). The language in which the texts were written was strangely considered to be Chaldean, the Neo-Aramaic language (Semitic). Three years later after publishing the book, Potken went back to Germany and published the

* Source: - Bulakh, Maria. 2019. Geez Research History. In Wolff, H. Ekkehard (ed.) *A History of African Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 87-90;

- King’s College (London)

<https://kingscollections.org/exhibitions/specialcollections/psalter1513/>

Psalter in Hebrew, Greek, Ge'ez and Latin (1516) with the texts side by side.

Among the Ethiopian monks, who were then in Vatican, was Tesfa Tsiyon (also known by various other names based on his monastic name, P'et'ros) with whose effort the New Testament was printed in Geez (Petrus 1548, 1549). Also, with his support, the first grammar of Ge'ez was published by the Italian Mariano Vittorio (1552). The metalanguage was Latin. In 1638, the first Ge'ez dictionary was published by the Dutch Jacob Wemmers who also learned the language, possibly, from the Ethiopian monks of Santo Stefano.

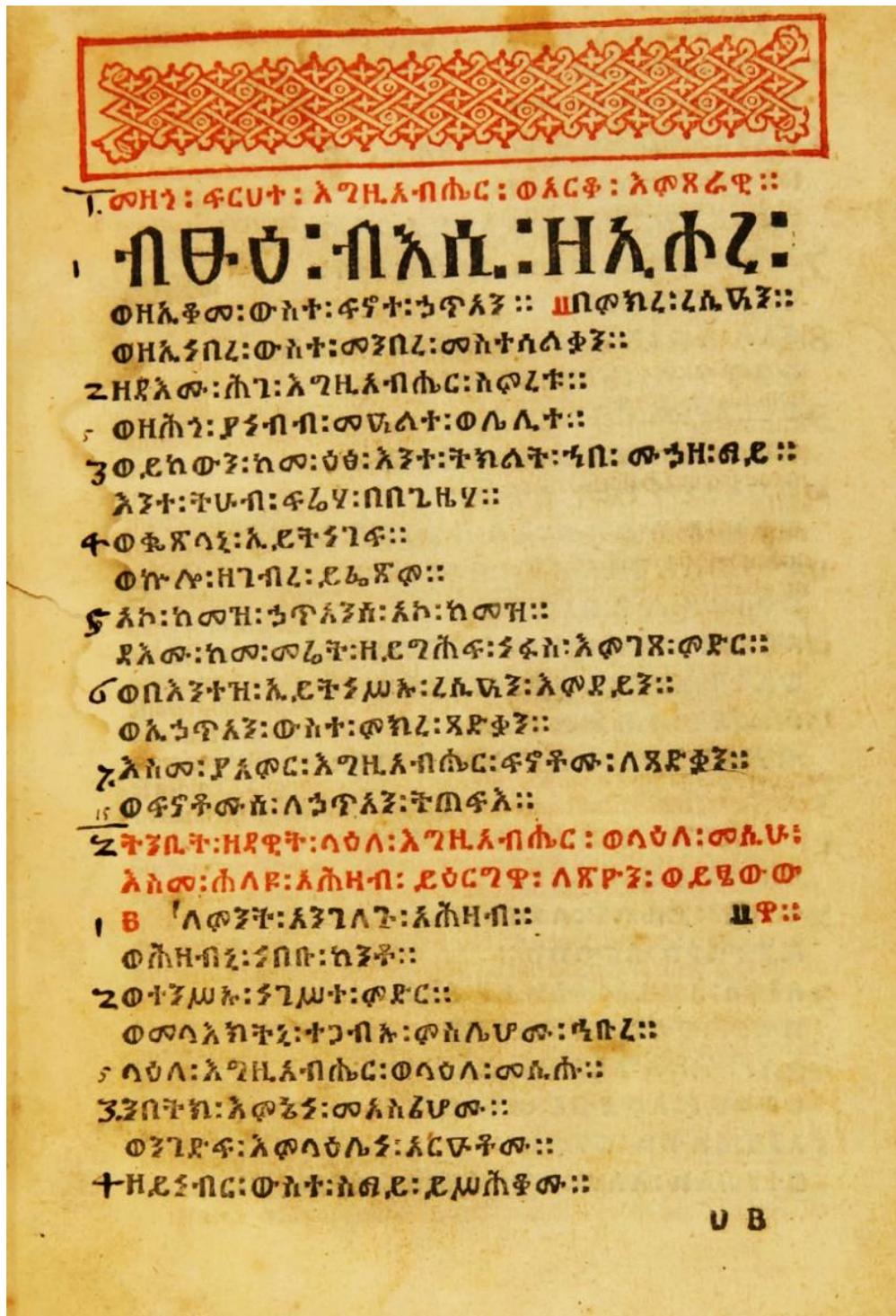
It was the German, Hiob Ludolf, who laid the foundation for linguistic research on Ge'ez. He was taught the language by the Ethiopian monk, Abba Gorgoryos, at Santo Stefano. Ludolf published a Ge'ez grammar and a lexicon in 1661 which served as standard reference for two centuries. In the nineteenth century, the German, August Dillmann, published a Ge'ez grammar (1857) and a lexicon (1865). The grammar was republished with additions and corrections by Carl Bezold in 1899 and it was revised and translated into English by James A. Chrichton in 1907. Both works of Dillmann are unequalled in extent and profundity to date.

Images of some pages of the first printed book in Ge'ez (1513) and those of the first Ge'ez grammar in Ge'ez (1552) are seen below.

Pages from the first printed book in Ge‘ez (1513)

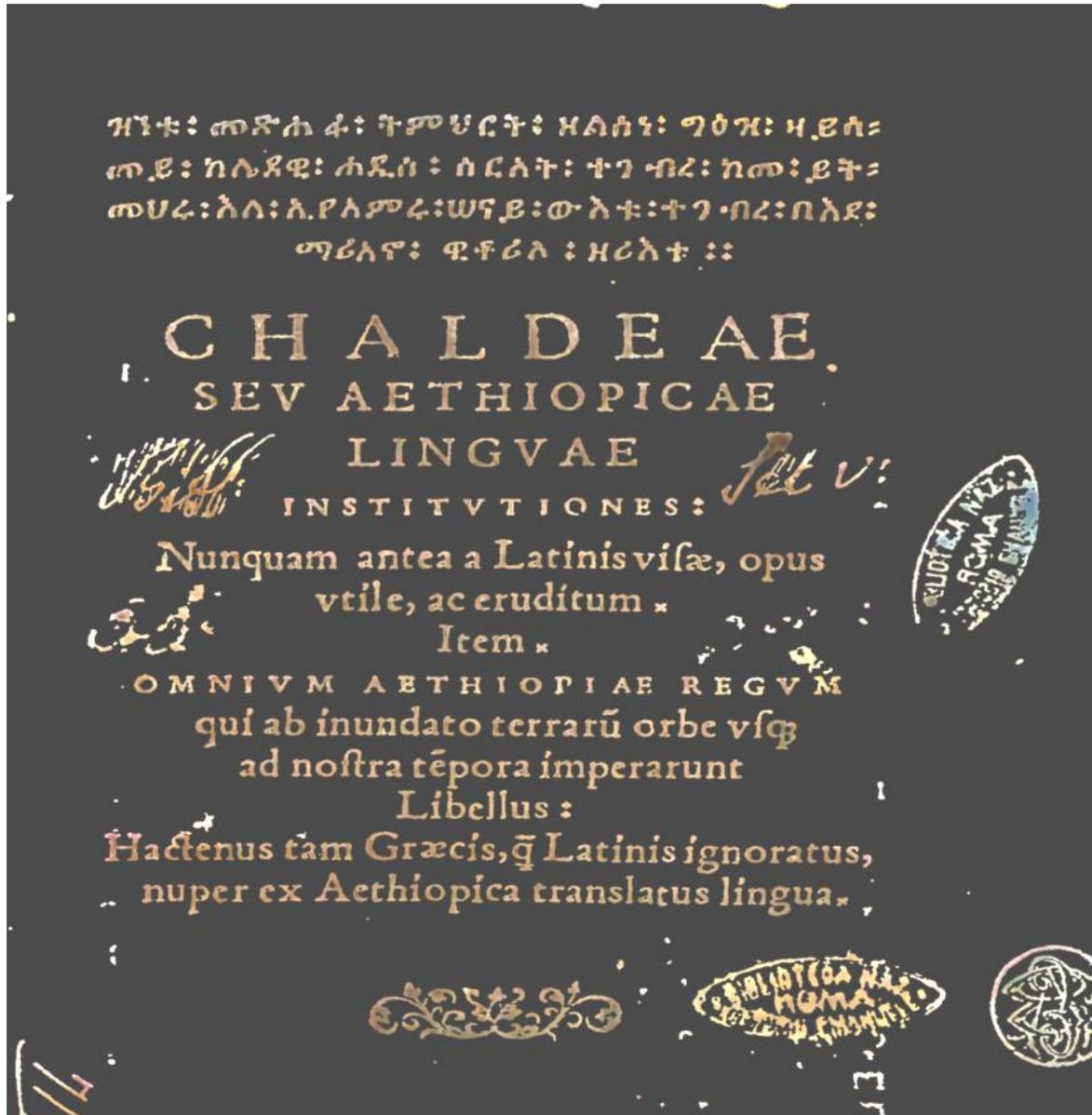


The First page – King David playing the harp

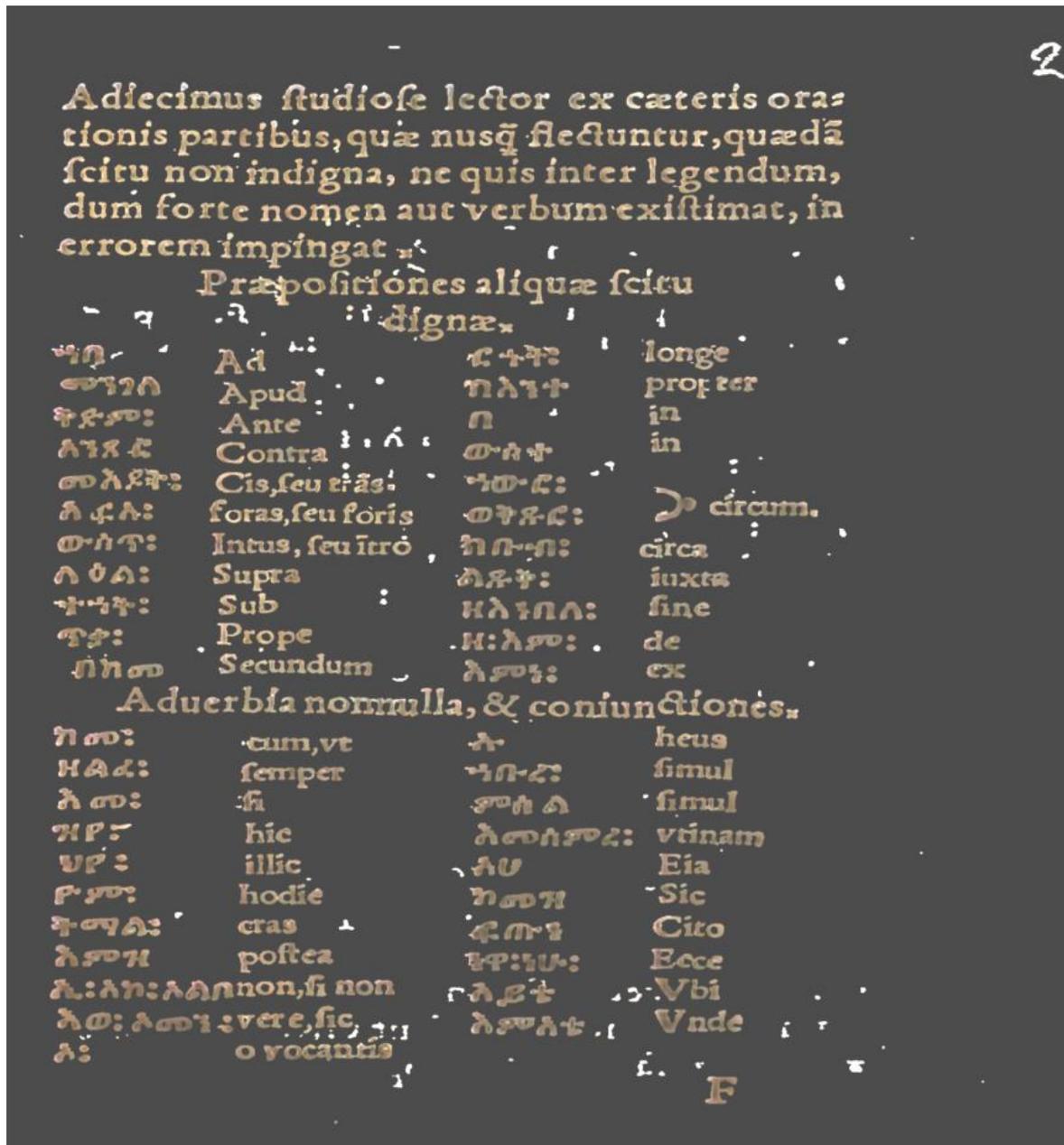


The first page of the Psalter

Pages from the first printed grammar in Ge'ez (1552)



Title page of the first published Ge'ez grammar (1552)



An inside page of the first published Ge'ez grammar (1552)

cipibus simul cū populo aduersus Dauidicā
sobolem rebellantibus, puer quidam in Re-
gia sede positus fuit: verū diuino aliter or-
dinante consilio; auctores rebellionis capti
fuere, regnumq; accepit .
Zaralacob rectæ fidei homo ab Aethip.
cognominatus, imperauitq; annis .xxxiii.
BetcMariam annis decem, mensibus duo-
bus, & diebus quatuordecim .
Schender annis .xv. mensib. vi.
Amdezeon mensibus sex .
Nahod annis .xiii. mensib. ix.
Lebnadenghel, Dauid cogn. annis .xxxvi.
Claudius, qđ est baptismi nomē, & tate no-
stra regnat: vocatur aut̄ altero noīe a paren-
tibus ei natiuitatis tpe imposito Aznaphsa-
ghet, cuius expositio est, adoratur a finibus
terræ. Sunt aut̄ numero oēs Reges, q; vsque
ad nostra tpa rerū Aethiopiæ potiti sunt.
C. LXV. Quibusdā q; socii in regno fuere
minime hac in supputatione connumeratis.
FINIS .
Impressit oīa quæ in hoc libro cōtinentur .
ex primatū licentia Valerius Dori-
cus Brixien. opera Angeli .
de Oldradis H
Romæ Anno a natali Christi . M. D. LII.

Colophon of the grammar book: Rome, in the year of the birth of Christ 1552.

Phonetics Lab Equipped with New Apparatus

Derib Ado

The phonetics laboratory of the Department of Linguistics and Philology has been upgraded with support from Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for Inclusive Development in Ethiopia (LCB) project, funded by NORAD. The upgrading includes renovation of the room, purchasing work stations, a managerial work station, Core i-7 HP desktop computers, power stabilizers, and a medium sized server. The LCB project also purchased lab equipment through the University of Oslo as the devices are specialized and need to be purchased directly from the companies that produce them. The total cost of renovation amounts to NOK 937,000.

The LCB project has already purchased high definition video recorders, Zoom H1 digital audio recorders and mosquito mics that are used in the development of speech corpora for 11 languages. The gadgets used by staff and PhD students for collecting audio-video data for research purposes.

Currently, the Phonetics Laboratory of the department is equipped with the following apparatus:

1. CSL 4400 four channel data acquisition device
2. Airflow and Air pressure acquisition device
3. New Model EG-PCX2 Electrograph
4. The Nasalance system
5. Waveview system components
6. EPRIME 3 with Chronostat
7. MA 42 Two-Channel Audiometer with Tone and Speech
Audiometry
8. Flexi instant vocal booth

With subsequent research grants, regular government budget, and good team spirit, the department can make a further advance in diversifying its programs following trends in natural language processing and communication technology for all of which extensive descriptions and analyses of natural language data using available and accessible tools and soft-wares are essential. The department should look ahead and strive to keep abreast of advances in the cognitive sciences and their impact on the social sciences. Language is a biological necessity for a sociological purpose, as I see it, and we are as yet grappling with its sociological purpose, not so much with its mental structure.

The following are some of the apparatus which equipped the Phonetics Lab of the Department of Linguistics and Philology.



CSL 4400 four channel data acquisition device



Airflow and Air pressure acquisition device



Components of the new model EG-PCX2 Electrograph



The Nasalance system



Wave view system components and Flexi instant vocal booth



Chronostat used with EPRIME 3: Front view (left) and back view (right)

Linguistic Capacity Building Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia

Derib Ado

The Linguistic Capacity Building project (hence forth LCB) is a collaborative project between Addis Ababa University, Hawassa University, University of Oslo and Norwegian University of Science and Technology. LCB set off as a five-year project from 2013-2018; but, later on, extension by two years was granted, i.e. till December 2020 with a total grant of NOK 20,488,339. The project is funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development cooperation through NORHED (The Norwegian Program for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development).

The project aims at building capacity at AAU and HU through training MA and PhD students at the involved institutions, and offers new linguistic knowledge to local teachers and educators. The three cornerstone outcomes of the project are capacity building for:

- (a) disadvantaged spoken languages,
- (b) Ethiopian Sign Language,
- (c) new language resources to local educators and authorities.

Capacity building will be achieved through building and strengthening partnerships at three main levels:

- a) building genuine partnership between participating Ethiopian and Norwegian universities,
- b) strengthening collaboration among Ethiopian universities and
- c) forging collaboration between Ethiopian higher education institutions, and local educators and administrative units.

The following are the main activities accomplished by LCB so far:

1. Five PhD students, four of whom are female, supported by the project successfully defended their dissertations and earned their doctoral degrees at Addis Ababa University.
2. Twelve MA students supported by the project completed their studies at Hawassa University.
3. More than 25 articles and book chapters have been published and more than 10 are in press. The publications can be seen at the following link:
<https://www.hf.uio.no/iln/english/about/organization/text-laboratory/projects/Ethiopia/publications.html>
4. Trainings have been given to local educators in different areas: lexicography, mass media, mother-tongue education, orthography, textbook preparation, the use of speech and text corpora, dialect and standardization. The beneficiaries of the trainings are mainly the Sidaama, Hadiyya, South Omo, Gamo and Gurage zones of the South Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional States and the Culture and Tourism Bureau of Oromia National Regional State.

5. Web-archived text corpora for four Ethiopian languages: Afan Oromo, Amharic, Somali and Tigrinya have been developed in cooperation with the Habit Project hosted by the University of Masaryk. The text corpora can be accessed from the following website: <http://tekstlab.uio.no/ethiopia/>
6. Six of the eleven speech corpora being developed are now available for comments though the development stage has not been completed. The speech corpora can be accessed at <http://tekstlab.uio.no/ethiopia/>
7. Two Kambaata reading books and Aari-English-Amharic Dictionary have been published with editorial assistance from LCB members: Dr. Shimelis Mazengia and Dr. Girma Mengistu. LCB covered the cost of publication for free distribution of the copies to schools and the communities.
8. A short grammar of Gurage has been published by Dr. Fekede Menuta with LCB covering the cost of publication.
9. A Sidaama Grammar and Dictionary has been published by Kjel-Magne Yri. The work is available at <https://dictionaria.clld.org/contributions/sidaama>
10. A short monolingual Oromo dictionary and a primer on folktales are being processed for publication with editorial assistance from Dr. Feda Negesse and Dr. Tadesse Jaleta. They will be published with the financial assistance of LCB and will be handed over to the Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau.

11. The Phonetics Laboratory of the Department of Linguistics and Philology at AAU has been upgraded at a cost of NOK 937,000 (about Eth. Birr 3,185,800).

The five-year project, LCB, which was launched in 2014 was due to be completed in 2018. But, due to unforeseen circumstances which hampered fieldwork, the term was extended to 2019. The project period was extended again by one year and will terminate in December 2020. Currently, the project is coordinated by Dr. Derib Ado. When the project started, the coordinator was Prof. Hirut Woldemariam, now Minister of Science and Higher Education. Dr. Binyam Sisay, who replaced Prof. Hirut moved to UNESCO in 2016. The post was taken over by Dr. Ronny Meyer; again, who moved to INALCO, Paris.

Note from the Editorial Committee

At present, the staff members of the Department of Linguistics and Philology are running five projects with international and domestic collaboration.

1. Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for Inclusive Development in Ethiopia; partners: Hawassa University (HU), University of Oslo (UiO), Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and Center of Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (Funding, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD));

2. Core NLP Project: Investigation and Development of Local Language Resources for Predictive and Information Systems; partners: Information Network Security Agency (INSA) (Funding, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology);
3. Beyond Access: Improving Quality of Early Years Reading Instructions in Ethiopia and South Sudan; partners: Bahir Dar University, University of Juba (South Sudan), University of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, the latter two from Norway (Funding, NORAD);
4. Addressing Development Challenges in Linguistics; partner: Institute of African Studies, Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main (Funding, DAAD (Deutsche Akademische Austausch Dienst) GAES (German Academic Exchange Service).
5. Deaf-Blind project: Deafblindness: Theory and practice in the Ethiopian context; partner: Kentalis International Foundation (Funding, Vrienden van Effata (VvE) the Netherlands)

Pioneers

At the 40th anniversary of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, it is appropriate to honor the founding staff who explored the landscape of Addis Ababa University and secured a settlement for Linguistics. It is also befitting to respect the first batches of their disciples, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, who ventured to make the dreams of the founders come true. Below are pioneers of the various categories.

Founding Staff

1. Dr. Tadesse Beyene (Chair)
2. Dr. Demissie Manahlot
3. Ato Habtemariam Markos
4. Dr. Hailu Araya (also the first dean of ILS)
5. Dr. Jerard Despaty
6. Ato Mulugeta Etafa
7. Ato Takele Taddese

First batch of graduates

BA (1981)

1. Aster Taddese
2. Aster Zewdie
3. Bizuwork Gonfa
4. Haileyesus Engidashet
5. Kebede Hordofa

MA (1981)

1. Alemayehu Haile
2. Assebe Buli
3. Baye Yimam
4. Derrese Endeshaw
5. Eshetu Kebede
6. Girma Halefom
7. Lulseged Erkihun
8. Nigusie Welde Sillasie
9. Tsegaye Weldeyesus
10. Wako Tola

PhD (1986)

Baye Yimam (School of Oriental and African Studies
(SOAS), University of London)

PhD (joint) (2001)

Zealelem Liyew (Addis Ababa University & University of Cologne,
Germany)

Meritorious Service

The Department of Linguistics and Philology has benefited from both senior and young staff. Brief biographies of the two most senior ones who rendered meritorious long and productive services are given below.

Prof. Emeritus Baye Yimam was born in 1953 in a small farming village in North Wollo, some 15 km west of Woldia. He spent his early



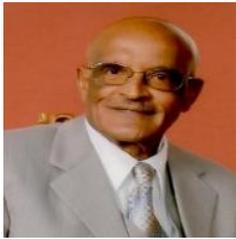
childhood in the village and then went to Woldia where his uncle was living. He went to a church school and learned the *fidəl*. After one year in Woldia, he discontinued learning because of health reason and went back to his village. When he regained his health, he went back to Woldia and started schooling at Etege Taitu Bitul Elementary School. When he completed elementary school, he went to Desie and started his secondary education at Woizero Sihin Secondary School. At the same time, the Etege Taitu Bitul Elementary School became a secondary school and he decided to go back to Woldia and continued learning there with the help of his uncle until he completed grade eleven. While in grade eleven, he was selected to join Prince Bəidə Mariam Laboratory School, where he completed grade twelve and joined the Faculty of Education, Haile Sillassie I University, to become a secondary school teacher. He did English for a major and graduated with a B.A. degree in 1977. He taught for one year in Finote Selam, Gojam.

In 1978, He was employed as a graduate assistant by the Department of English, of what had become Addis Ababa University by then. The following year, he joined the School of Graduate Studies, which had just been launched. He completed a master's degree courses in

Linguistics in 1981. After two years of teaching in the Department of Linguistics, he went to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and did syntax. He came back in 1987 and has ever since been serving Addis Ababa University in various capacities.

His research interest is in the Morphosyntax of Afro-Asiatic languages, Semantics and Pragmatics. He has taught Syntax, Semantics and Anthropological Linguistics at both undergraduate and graduate levels and also published articles on issues within each field. In 1998 he became full Professor and in 2012 Professor Emeritus. He was the first to be promoted to the rank of professor and become professor emeritus in the Department of Linguistics and Philology as well as in the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication. Professor Baye enjoys Ethiopian classical music in serenity and solitude. He is married and has three sons, one of whom is a faculty member of Addis Ababa University and the other two IT professionals abroad.

Dr. Takele Taddese was born in a village near Wolliso (western Shoa). He was introduced to education in a priest school in the Merkato area, Addis Ababa. After a while he went back to his village and continued his education with another priest. After having been able to recite the Psalms of David in Geez, he moved to an elementary school in Addis



Alem (west of Addis Ababa) where he was admitted to grade three. But before completing the grade he went back to his village. Next he was brought to Addis Ababa and joined Omar Semeter School (Markato) where he was admitted to grade four. Again, before the academic year was over, he went back to his village. Following the advice of a Technical School (Addis Ababa) student, he, again, came to Addis Ababa and joined Menelik II School. He was admitted to grade two which he completed having stood first and getting a prize from the hands of his Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I.

The next academic year, he moved to Wolliso where his new friends urged him to join grade eight; because he seemed to be better than they were in English. He told the assistant director (Indian) that he was in grade five in Menelik School and was admitted to grade six. When the director (British) came from vacation, he told him to be in grade seven as he was a big boy. He did, and after two years he took the grade eight National Examination (1954). He passed and joined Haile Selassie I Secondary School (Kotebe). From grade eleven, he quitted and became a teacher. He taught English and other subjects for four years. He attended summer school in grades 11 and 12 and managed to join the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA). He did well and graduated in 1964. He was then approached by the Jimma School of Agriculture and was sent to Teachers College, Columbia University.

He returned after getting his MA in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). He taught English at the Jimma School of Agriculture for some time and moved to Haile Selassie I University.

After he taught for five years (1969-1973), he was sent to Georgetown University in Washington DC for a PhD. But he returned after completed the course work because of the outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974. He was told by the university to join a campaign dubbed Campaign of Knowledge and Work for Development through Cooperation. Accordingly, he went to Bedele (Illubabor, western Ethiopia). When the Campaign was over, he returned to the university. After a while, he joined the Department of Linguistics which was one of the four departments of the then newly established Institute of Language Studies (ILS). He taught Linguistics and English Linguistics courses and, most importantly, Sociolinguistics. He retired in 2000. When the department opened a PhD program, he joined and earned his doctoral degree. He is grateful to the then President of the university, Prof. Andreas Eshete and the Department of Linguistics. He is enjoying his retirement considering it as a time when one is free to do whatever one wishes.

Exemplar Alumni

The Department of Linguistics and Philology has graduated hundreds with BA, MA and PhD degrees in Linguistics, Philology as well as Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture. The graduates are engaged in professional and academic undertakings at home and abroad. Below are brief biographies of a few of the exemplar alumni.

Prof. Hirut Woldemariam is currently minister of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (SHE) the establishment of which she



was in charge. Earlier, she was minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as well as minister of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. She was born in Debremarikos (Gojjam) on 5th June, 1968. For her elementary education, she went for both her elementary and secondary education to schools in Addis Ababa—Taitu Bitul and Entoto Comprehensive Secondary School. She received both her BA and MA degrees in Linguistics from Addis Ababa University. She did her PhD in Linguistics at the Institute of African Studies, University of Cologne, Germany, in a joint program with Addis Ababa University. She served in the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, as a lecturer, researcher and head of department. At the university level, she served as Director of the AAU Anti-Corruption and Ethics Office, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for International

Relations, Partnership and Strategic Planning, as well as Vice President for Institutional Development. She was the first woman Vice President at Addis Ababa University. She has published over 30 articles and a book. Her research interests include descriptive linguistics, comparative linguistics and sociolinguistics with focus on language policy and linguistic landscape. She has received a number of awards and recognitions for her contributions in academia and public services, among which is Doctor Philosophiae honoris causa for 2020 from University of Oslo. Prof. Hirut is married and has three children.

Dr Azeb Amha is researcher and lecturer at the African Studies Center at Leiden University. Her research focuses on Omotic languages of



Ethiopia and on language-culture interface, e.g. through research she conducts on discourse and rhetoric of inclusion and alienation in (public) speeches, analysis of linguistic structure and music. Azeb's publications include *The Maale Language* (2001) which is her PhD thesis defended at Leiden University, several articles on the grammar and typology of Omotic languages, and co-edited books, such as *Omotic and Cushitic Languages Studies: Papers from the Fourth Cushitic Omotic Conference, Leiden, 10–12 April 2003* (2007, with Maarten Mous and Graziano Savà) and *Converbs, Medial Verbs, Clause Chaining and Related Issues* (2007, with Sascha Völlmin, Christian Rapold and Silvia Zaugg-Coretti). Azeb is co-editor of the *Journal of African Languages*

and Linguistics (since 2006). She is currently working on a multi-modal documentation of Zargula, an endangered Omotic language spoken in South-west Ethiopia, a major documentation project supported by the ELDP at SOAS

Tigist Negash Wodajo currently resides in Silver Spring, MD, USA. She was born and grew up in Ethiopia. After completing high school



and learning Ethiopian Sign Language, she enrolled at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Addis Ababa University, and earned a BA degree in Ethiopian Sign Language and Deaf Culture. The department offered her a scholarship and pursued her studies for a master's degree in Linguistics. But in the second year she moved to the US. In Ethiopia, she served the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf (ENAD) in various ways and became a role model for girls and the youth. She traveled to Finland, Tanzania, Kenya, and Switzerland to attend conferences representing ENAD. In the US, she studied Social Work at Gallaudet University and earned another degree. While studying as a full-time student she also worked as a part-time student clerk, a team leader for computer programs, note-taker and consultant for Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL). She also served as Vice President for ASU (African Student Union) at Gallaudet. In addition, she was working closely with deaf friends to organize the Ethiopian Deaf Communities in the US. She also engaged in teaching basic Ethiopian sign language

to hearing members of the Ethiopian community. Now, she is working for a master's degree in the advanced program at Gallaudet University. She was a perfect child till the age of ten when she became profoundly deaf due to meningitis. Since then, life was never easy for her. She completed her middle and high school life communicating through lip-reading. She said that although the journey was rough, faith, hope, and family support helped her to overcome obstacles. She is married and has two teenage boys, 15 and 14.

Prof. Getahun Amare is professor of Linguistics at Addis Ababa University. He attended his undergraduate studies at the Department of



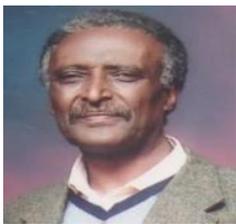
Linguistics, AAU, and graduated in 1982. He did his master's degree in Linguistics at Addis Ababa University and graduated in 1991. He received his PhD degree at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology,

Norway, in 2009.

He has worked as a Lexicographer at the Ethiopian Languages Academy, a Senior Lecturer at Kotebe College of Teacher Education (KCTE) and he is now working as a Senior Lecturer in teaching a wide range of courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels at Addis Ababa University. He has served in different leadership positions in addition to academic engagements.

He has published focusing on morphology, syntax and Applied Linguistics. He has authored three books: a bilingual dictionary, *English-Amharic Idioms Dictionary* and two others on Amharic grammar. He has also published more than 15 articles and a book chapter. Currently, he is dedicated to grammar teaching and testing as well as pursuing research on endangered languages.

Abera Nefa served as a chairperson of a standardization committee (Koree Waaltinaa) which was charged with standardizing Oromo sine



1992 till his retirement in 2012. Among what the committee standardized are the days of the week and the months of the year. The committee has coined a large number of terms which are found appended to each issue of the journal *Wiirtuu* (Central). Abera was chief editor of *Wiirtuu* and of various other publications including: *Afoola* (Folk literature), *Mammaaksa* (Proverbs), *Walaloo Sirba Warroommii* (Wedding songs), *Walaloo Geerarsaa* (Battle songs), *Hiiphoo* (Riddles). Among the achievements of the committee are also the publication of *Caasluga Oromo* (A Grammar of Oromo) (1995) and *Galmee Jechoota Afaan Amaaraafi Oromo* (Amharic-Afaan Oronoo dictionary). Abera was also chief editor of *HIRKOO: Galmee jechoota Afaan Engilizii Oromofi Afaan Amaaraa* (English-Oromo-Amharic dictionary) as well as *Galmee Jechoota Oromo* (A Dictionary of Oromo) (2010), Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Culture.

Abera was born in 1947 in Abuna Gindebert district, west Shoa. He was educated at Kachisi Elementary School, Giinchii Junior High School, Ma'regehiwot High School and Harar Teacher Training Institute. He served as an elementary teacher in Sidaama region from 1964 to 1971 (E.C). He enrolled at the Department of Linguistics, AAU, and earned a BA degree in 1982. Upon graduation, he was assigned to the Academy of Ethiopian Languages (then under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism) where he worked on Oromo. With fellow researchers he compiled a monolingual dictionary. He did his MA in Linguistics at AAU and graduated in 1988. It was as a result of change of government in 1991, when professionals were reallocated from ministries according to their mother tongue and region of origin, that he was transferred to the Oromia Regional State where he was assigned to the Oromia Culture and Sports Bureau.

Dr. Anbessa Teferra enrolled at the Department of Linguistics in 1981 and got his B.A. in June 1984. Upon graduation, he joined the



department as a graduate assistant. After a year, he became a lecturer. He got his M.A. in linguistics in 1987. In 1989, he moved to Israel for family reasons.

In 1994, he enrolled for his doctoral studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and got his PhD in 2000. At Hebrew University, he was an external lecturer for several years and then moved to Tel Aviv University in 2009.

Currently, he teaches in the Department of Hebrew Language and Semitic Linguistics (The Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies and Archaeology, Tel Aviv University). He was also a chief supervisor for Amharic instruction in Israeli schools for more than 15 years. His interests include the linguistic description of Sidaama, sociolinguistics, Hebrew-Amharic linguistic interface, lexicography and Ge'ez grammar. He is also a professional Hebrew-Amharic translator. He wrote many articles on Sidaama and some on Amharic. He also published (with Grover Hudson) *Essentials of Amharic* (2007), *A Grammar of Sidaama: Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax* (2012), *Sidaama/Sidaamu Afoo* (2014) and (with Muchnik, Niznik and Gluzman) *Elective Language Study and Policy in Israel: A Sociolinguistic and Educational Study* (2016).

Dr. Fekede Menuta earned his bachelor degree from the Department of Linguistics, AAU, in 1989. He taught English at high schools in



Debub Gondar and Kambata Zone. He also taught English at Hawassa College of Teacher Education. He enrolled for a master's degree at the Department of Linguistics, AAU, in 2000 and graduated in 2002. He joined Debub University (now Hawassa University). For his PhD, he enrolled in Applied Linguistics and Communication, a jointly run program by the Department of Foreign Language and Literature (DFLL) and the Department of Linguistics, AAU, in 2009 and

graduated in 2013. He has published books on grammatical descriptions including *Murle Document* (2009), *Aari Language: A comparative grammar* (2011), *Halabissa Grammar* (2012), *Kontatsuwa Grammar* (2015a), *Intergroup communication among Gurage: A study on intelligibility, inter-lingual comprehension and accommodation* (2015b) (his dissertation) and *Qarenda: Guragina Grammar* (2018) written in the Gurage language. He has also published a number of articles. He was promoted to the rank of associate professor as of November 2016. He has served at Hawassa University (HU) at various posts. He has also been coordinator of the HU branch of the Linguistics Capacity Building: Tools for Inclusive Development of Ethiopia project collaborating with Addis Ababa University, University of Oslo (UiO), Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and Center of Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (funded by NORAD). Dr. Fekede was born in Gumer district in Gurage Zone where he studied his elementary and upper primary education. He completed his high school education at Emdibir Comprehensive High School in 1985.

Dr. Hagos Abrha is currently a postdoctoral researcher at Hamburg University, Germany. He was born in 1985 in Hargusat, a hamlet in



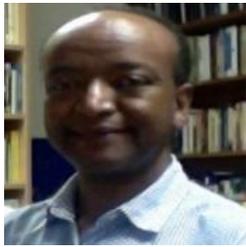
Wäjjärat Isra Addi (south eastern Tigray). From his early age, he was a shepherd. For his elementary education he went to Gänti near his village in 1993 where classes were conducted under a big tree. For

grades 4-6, he moved to Sän‘alä, and for grade 7-8 to Däbub (Baḥri Ḥaṣäy). He attended grades 9-10 at Addigudäm Secondary School in 2000-2001. He attended his preparatory education (grades 11-12) at Quiha Weldunigus Secondary School in 2002-2003. In summer, in addition to shepherding, he was active in the Orthodox Church Sunday schools.

He earned his bachelor’s degree in English from Jimma University in 2006. After teaching English for a year at Mekelle University, he did his MA in Ge’ez Philology at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Addis Ababa University and graduated in 2009. After working for two years at Mekelle University, he, again, enrolled for his PhD in Philology at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, and completed his studies in 2014.

He taught Ge’ez, translation, linguistics, and other courses at Mekelle University and headed St. Yared Center for Ethiopian Philology and Manuscript Studies (Mekelle University), a research center for the establishment which he played a leading role. For research on manuscripts, he traveled to 260 monasteries in Tigray, Ziway, Lalibela, Ṭana, Hayq (Desse), and Gonder (Belesa, Infranz, Gondi). He has digitized hundreds of manuscripts and published three books and some articles on philology, manuscript studies, linguistics and culture in Amharic, Tigrigna and English.

Dr. Mengistu Amberber completed his BA in Linguistics at the Department of Linguistics, Addis Ababa University, in 1984. He also



did his MA at the same department and graduated in 1989. He completed his PhD studies at McGill University (Montréal, Canada) in 1996. He worked as a research associate at the Australian National University (Canberra, Australia) till the end of 1997. In 1998 he was appointed as lecturer at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, where he has been teaching a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in theoretical and applied linguistics. His main areas of research are morphology, syntax and lexical semantics with particular reference to Amharic. He was the editor of *The Language of Memory in a Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (2007), and co-editor (with P. Collins) of *Language Universals and Variation* (2002), (with H. de Hoop), *Competition and Variation in Natural Languages: The Case for Case* (2005), and (with B. Baker and M. Harvey) *Complex Predicates: Cross-linguistic Perspectives on Event Structure* (2010).

Muhammad Seid is Assistant Professor of Philology. He earned BA in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Karachi University, Pakistan, in



1994 and MA in History and Civilization from the College of Dawa, Tripoli, Libya, in 2001. He, then, return home and got employed by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DFLL), AAU,

where he organized an Arabic unit and has been serving since. In 2006, he enrolled for another master's degree in Ethiopian Philology at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, and completed in 2007.

The Arabic Unit, where Muhammad has continued working, has produced numerous BA graduates who are serving in various institutions including the mass media. Outside the Arabic Unit, Muhammad has trained the staff of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) in the utilization of local Arabic historical sources. Extending AAU's services to different public institutions that need working knowledge of modern Arabi, he has trained the staff of the Ethiopian National Museum, the Ethiopian Custom's Authority and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Arabic Unit has assisted five public universities to open a BA program. The universities that have followed the example of AAU are: Haramaya University, Jigjiga University, Jimma University, Samara University and Wallo University. Muhammad is, currently, enrolled at the International African University (Khartoum, Sudan) and is engaged in a preliminary research leading to doctoral studies concerning usage of Arabic for diplomatic purposes. He has published several articles in Arabic, Amharic and English. Muhammad Seid was born in 1964 in Dessie, Wallo. He received elementary education at Qidamie Gebeya Elementary School and secondary education at Hote Intermediate High School and Yekatit 66 High School in Dessie.

Dr. Renato Tomei completed his PhD studies at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, in 2013. Currently, he is Adjunct



Professor of English language and Translation at the University for Foreigners of Perugia, Italy, where he teaches ESPs (English for Advertising, Business English, Professional English, Legal English). As a

researcher, he has conducted extensive research in Africa and Jamaica in the field of Afro-Caribbean and postcolonial studies and World Englishes. He is the author of *Jamaican Speech Forms in Ethiopia* (2015), the editor of *Advertising Culture and Translation* (2017), and the co-author of *Law, Language and Translation* (2015) and *Description and Translation in the Caribbean* (2016). Renato Tomei is also a social activist and music author and performer, with the name of Ras Tewelde.

Dr. Tesfay Tewolde Yonannes was born in Eritrea. He completed elementary school in Asmara, junior high school in Mendida (near



Debre Berhan) and senior high school in Harar. He earned his BA in Ethiopian Languages and Literature and MA in Linguistics from Addis Aaba University.

He did his PhD in comparative linguistics at the University of Florence, Italy. He had served as an elementary school teacher in dawint (Wollo) for one year and as an elementary and junior high school teacher in Raya Kobo (Northern Wallo) where there were

speakers of Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya, Agaw, Afar.... some Christians and some Muslims. He recalls that the Wallo region was a university where informal education concerning the key to harmonious coexistence could be obtained.

He worked in the Academy of Ethiopian Languages as a lexicographer and head of the department of lexicography. He taught at Kotebe Teachers' College and at the Institute of Language Studies (ILS), Addis Ababa University. He said although distance kept him apart, his Addis friends, Raya, Wollo, Ethiopia and Ethiopians will always and forever be embedded deep in his heart.

He also taught at Asmara University and Adi Keih College of Arts and Social Sciences. Currently, at Florence University (Italy), he is working as an expert of Ethio-Semitic languages; teaching Amharic and Tigrinya Grammars, comparative Ethio-Semitic and also research and thesis writing. Besides, he is a member of the committee for the coordination of seminars for PhD students of Linguistics. He has published several articles and books. Among his publications, are: *A Modern Grammar of Tigrinya* (2002), *DPs, Phi-features and Tense in the Context of Abyssinian Semitic Languages* (2016).

PhD Graduates of 2012 (2019/20)

The PhD graduates of this academic year from the Department of Linguistics and Philology are 23. Eighteen in Linguistics and five in Philology. Of the Linguistics graduates, one specializes in Sign Language.

	Name	Dissertation Title	Sponsor
	Linguistics		
1	Amanuel Kebede	Grammatical description and documentation of Dorze	Aksum University
2	Andualem Adal	A Descriptive Syntax of Naayi	Wollo University
3	Aynalem Girma	Information structure in Oromo	Bahir Dar University
4	Bahire Araya	Gura documentation and description of morphology and syntax	Woldia University
5	Dagnew Mache	Documentation and Linguistic Analysis of Discourse Markers in Rayya Tigrinya	Arba Minch University
6	Dawit Tilahun	A Grammar of Gede'o: A Highland East Cushitic Language	Dilla University
7	Desalegn Haile	Ideophones in Kambata	Hawassa University
8	Eba Teresa	Typology and Structure of Eventuality in Afaan Oromoo	Wollegga University

9	Eyilachew Tamir	Language use and attitude among Berta-Arabic bilinguals in Benishangul Gumuz regional state	Assosa University
10	Gashaw Arutie	The Semantics and Pragmatics of Amharic Spatial Expressions	Arba Minch University
11	Habtamu Anbessie	Developmental Influence Between Academic Language Proficiencies Across Multiple Languages: Borna, Amharic, and EFL	Ambo University
12	Hagos Gebre-Egziabher	Discourse analysis of Waddi man, oral game of honeymoon in the Eastern Tigray	Wolkite University
13	Kuri Baysa	Documentation and description of the entire parchment making and calligraphy writing culture (As observed at ለሳፋ 'Istie', district South Gonder)	Addis Ababa University
14	Pawlos Kassu	Aspect marking in Ethiopian Sign Language	Addis Ababa University
15	Tsehay Abza	Descriptive Grammar of Inor	Hawassa University
16	Wendimu Habte	Descriptive Grammar of Ennar (Peripheral Western Gurage)	Wolaita Sodo University
17	Wossen Mekonnen	Description and grammatical description of Oyda	Woldia University
18	Yemane Tesfay	Assessment of the Genetic Status of Ge'ez within Ethiosemitic: A Lexical Approach	Mekelle University

II Philology			
19	Asfaw Tilahun	Tarikä Nägäst of Zuramba Monastery (South Gondär) Edition, translation, and historical analysis of the interpolated short chronicles	Wollo University
20	Nuraddin Aman	Manuscripts of Oromo history recounted by Šayġ Abū-Baker ‘Otmān: Text edition, analysis and annotated translation	Addis Ababa University
21	Sisay Zelalem	A comparative content analysis and linguistic description of the chronicle of Emperor Tewodros II with translation and annotation	Aksum University
22	Tibebu Anteneh	The Ethiopic version of the Alexander Romance by Pseudo Callisthenes: Critical edition with annotated translation	Woldia University
23	Wosenseged Kidane	‘Eṣä Däbdaabbe: Philological and Anthropological Analysis with annotated translation	Heritage Authority

Staff Profile (2019/2020)

1. Academic Staff

I. Professor Emeritus

Baye Yimam

PhD, SOAS, London University, Syntax

II. Full Professor

Zelealem Leyew

PhD, Addis Ababa University and Cologne University, Sociolinguistics

Interest: Language description, Language and society, Language and culture, Language change

III. Associate Professor

Endalew Assefa

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Ethio-Semitic Linguistics

Mersha Alehegne

PhD, Hamburg University, Philology

Moges Yigezu

PhD, Laboratoire de Phonologie, Université Libre de Bruxelles,
Phonetics and Phonology

IV. Assistant Professor

Abebayehu Messele

PhD, University of Sheffield, UK, Clinical Linguistics

Bedilu Wakjira

PhD, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Morphology

Abba Daniel Assefa

PhD, Catholic Institute of Paris, Philology

Demeke Asres

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Computational Linguistics

Derib Ado

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Experimental Phonetics

Desalegn Hagos

PhD, Stockholm University, Sweden, Descriptive and Comparative 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

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Descriptive Linguistics

Mulugeta Tarekegn

PhD, Leiden University, Netherlands, Psycholinguistics

Muna Abubeker

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Philology

Pawlos Kassu

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Sign Linguistics

Abba Petros Solomon

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Philology

Samuel Handamo

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Sociolinguistics and language planning

Shimelis Mazengia

PhD, Addis Ababa University, Descriptive, Comparative and Typological Linguistics

V. Lecturer

Abay Tesfaye

MA, Addis Ababa University, Linguistics

(In-house PhD candidate)

Andargachew Deneke

MA, Addis Ababa University, Special Needs Education

(In-house PhD candidate)

Dessie Keleb

MA, Addis Ababa University, Philology

John Koang

MA, Addis Ababa University, Linguistics

(In-house PhD candidate)

Samrawit Bekele

MA, Addis Ababa University, Linguistics

(In-house PhD candidate)

VI. Graduate Assistant

Ababo Tura

BA, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopian Sign Language & Deaf Culture

VII. Home Base

Elizabeth Demissie, Lecturer

MA, African Languages and Applied Linguistics

MA, Journalism and Communication (Broadcast stream)

(In-house PhD candidate)

Mulugeta Seyoum, Associate Professor

PhD, Leiden University, Netherlands, Descriptive Linguistics

Wondwosen Tesfaye, Associate Professor

PhD, Norwegian University of Science and Technology,

Morphology & Syntax

1.1. Technical and Administrative Staff

I. Technical Assistant

Leul Zeray

BA, Addis Ababa University, Sign Language

MSc student, Computational Linguistics

Mihret Daba

Diploma, Africa Beza College

II. Administrative Staff

Tigist Negash, Secretary

Rahel Demissie, Messenger

1.2. Project assistants (employed by projects on contractual basis)

Biruk Hailemariam, LCB, NORAD funded project.

Elshaday Negash, BEYOND ACCESS, NORAD funded project.

Current Department Head

Desalegn Hagos (PhD)

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Services we offer

- Orthographic development
- Dictionary making
- Noise control
- Sign language training
- Language description
- Speech-language therapy
- Pedagogical grammar
- Language technology
- Literacy material development
- Ge'ez and Arabic manuscript editing
- Language documentation
- Corpus development