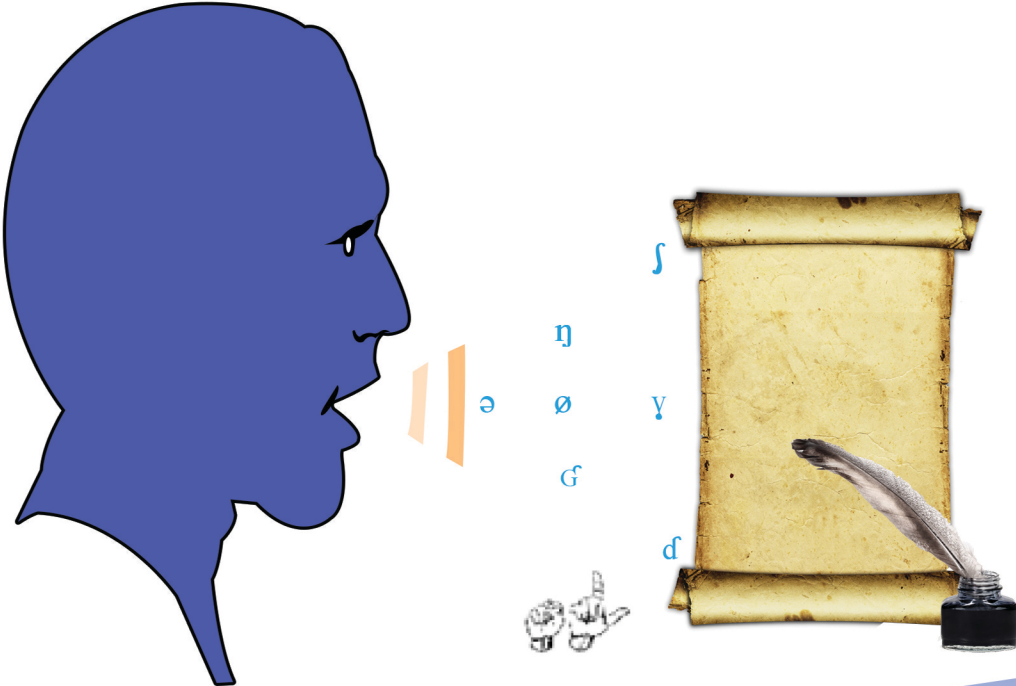


Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics and Philology

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics and Philology



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

Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics and Philology

Editorial Committee

Shimelis Mazengia

Derib Ado

Abebayehu Messele

Girma Mengistu

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

P.O. Box 1176 Tel. (251-1) 23 97 55

Email: linguistics@aau.edu.et

Web: <http://www.aau.edu.et/chls/academics/department-of-linguistics>

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Editorial**Scaling Academic Standards**

Apart from teaching and engaging in research, the level of the academic activity at the Department of Linguistics and Philology continues to increase. Since the last issue of BDLP a significant number of the staff members published articles including in two books entitled *Time in the Languages of the Horn of Africa* (2016) and *Multilingual Ethiopia: Linguistic Challenges and Capacity Building Efforts* (2016) along with scholars of foreign universities. Winning research projects is one of the major achievements of the period. Among the projects won is “BEYOND ACCESS: Improving Quality of Early Years Reading Instructions in Ethiopia and South Sudan” which involves international scholars from Ethiopian, South Sudan and Norwegian universities.

Participating in academic conferences both at home and abroad is a tradition at the department. Over the last one year, in addition to participating in local conferences, many staff members took part in conferences held at various universities around the world. Among the international conferences in which staff members participated are those held at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia (January 4–7, 2016), Indiana University, USA (June 6 -10, 2016), New York University in Abu Dhabi, UAE (January 14-17, 2016), Oxford University, UK (May 31 - June 5, 2015), and Leiden University, the Netherlands (August 29-31, 2016). Participation in training programmes abroad was also another engagement of some staff members. Mention could be made

of the Summer School of Cognitive Science Research Platform, University of Vienna, Austria (August 26 - September 2, 2016) and Hamburg University, Germany (September 26 - October 1, 2016).

The nomination of Dr. Hirut Woldemariam and Dr. Moges Yigezu as fellows of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences as of 12th November 2016 is among the important events of the period under review. It is also to be noted that Professor Baye Yimam is one of the founding members of the Academy. The recognition given to the scholars is yet another indicator that the Department of Linguistics and Philology is contributing its share to scaling the academic standards at Addis Ababa University.

News

Dr. Moges and Dr. Hirut become Fellows of Ethiopian Academy of Sciences

Dr. Moges Yigezu, a staff member of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, and Dr. Hirut Woldemariam, who



Dr. Moges Yigezu

was also a staff member of the Department but has been appointed as Minister of Culture and Tourism, have been selected to be Fellows of the



Dr. Hirut Woldemariam

Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS). The selection took place at the fifth General Assembly of the Academy on 12th November 2016. In letters written to Dr. Moges and Dr. Hirut on December 8, 2016 by Prof. Tsige Gebre-Mariam, president of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, it is stated that the selection was made in recognition of their impressive publication record, outstanding contribution to their profession, their international stature as scholars and their service to the community at large.

The Editorial Committee of BDLP congratulates Dr. Moges Yigezu and H.E. Dr. Hirut Woldemariam on the recognition of their scholarly achievements by the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS).

According to the information obtained from a document of the Academy (Annual Report 2014/2015):The Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS) is an autonomous, non-profit, non-governmental organization established by Proclamation 783/2013 in March 2013. The Academy was founded on 27 March 2010 by a group of prominent scholars and launched on 10 April 2010. The initiative to establish the



Headquarters building of EAS

Academy began in 2007 through informal discussions among concerned scientists who felt the need for promoting a culture of science and science-based development in the country.

EAS aims to provide evidence-based advice to the government and to promote the development of the sciences and their applications. It plans to do this by undertaking consensus studies, organizing conferences and workshops on significant national issues, awarding prizes in recognition of excellence and publishing reports, periodicals and books. EAS also aspires to promote literature and the arts and make a contribution to cultural revival through the cultivation of the arts and generation of public interest and engagement.

Core NLP Project Workshop Conducted

Core Natural Language Processing (NLP) project, which is run by experts from the Department of Linguistics and Philology (AAU) in collaboration with experts from Information Network Security Agency (INSA), conducted a workshop at Desalegn Hotel, Addis Ababa, on 30th March 2017.



Prof. Zerihun opening the workshop

The workshop was formally opened by Prof. Zerihun Woldu, Director of Research, AAU, who expressed his trust in the researchers of the project that they would bring the project to fruition.

Following Professor Zerihun's opening speech, the project coordinator, Dr. Demeke Asres, from the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU (host institution of the project), presented the overview of the project activities. He pointed out that the project, whose title is *Investigation and Development of Local Language Resources for Information and Predictive Systems*, is targeted to investigate and adapt three Ethiopian languages—Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya—to engineer models in NLP tools and applications.

After Dr. Demeke outlined the tasks of the three themes of the project, a) Linguistic Investigation b) Computational



A view of the workshop

Investigation and c) Tool Development, the respective coordinators of the teams made presentations with respect to what have been done so far and what are planned for the future. The accomplishments and plans of the linguistic investigations were reported by Dr. Derib Ado, Ato Abebe Keno and Dr. Shimelis Mazengia, coordinators Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya teams, respectively. Similarly, the accomplishments and plans of the computational investigations and tool development were reported by Dr. Demeke Asres and Ato Samuel Tamirat, respectively.

Based on the presentations, participants of the workshop discussed the results achieved so far and the future plans. The research project, which is sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology, FDRE, was launched on April 1, 2016 and is expected to be completed by the end of March

2019. Among the participants in the workshop were representatives of the Ministry of Science and Technology, INSA and Orommia Cultural Centre. The project is now, as of 1st April 1, 2017, in its second year.

International Multidisciplinary Experts Win NORAD Project

A team of international multidisciplinary professionals from four universities comprising linguists, applied linguists, social workers, gender specialists, experts in pedagogical sciences and cultural studies won a project from NORAD (Norway). The multidisciplinary experts are from Addis Ababa University, Bahir Dar University, University of Juba (South Sudan) as well as the University of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, the last two from Norway. The project will be funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD).

The project entitled "BEYOND ACCESS: Improving Quality of Early Years Reading Instructions in Ethiopia and South Sudan" was submitted in response to NORAD's call—"NORHED 2016-2021: Education for Development"—in February 2016. NORAD announced the selection of the project in a letter written to Dr. Moges Yigezu, principal investigator of the project, on August 8, 2016 (Ref. No. 1600153-4). The funding allocated for the project is 15 million NOK (Norwegian Kroner) (over 40 million Birr) for a period of five years and will be distributed to the partner institutions.

The project aims to improve the quality of primary education by capacitating higher education institutions, facilitating the production of quality reading materials in eight mother tongue languages, producing evidence-based scientific papers on early years reading instructions and methodologies, creating awareness on reading culture and increasing knowledge in reading instructions in higher education institutions in Ethiopia and South Sudan.

AAU is the grant recipient and the agreement partner institution which signed the agreement with NORAD in November 2016. The project commenced on December 15, 2016. In the competition of the year, NORAD selected four projects for funding, of which AAU and Bahir Dar University won one each while the remaining two projects were won by institutions from Malawi and Nepal.

BDLP (Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics and Philology) congratulates the partner institutions as well as the members of BEYOND ACCESS project research team on their achievement. The host, the Department of Linguistics and Philology, and the Agreement Partner Institution, AAU, deserve to be applauded for initiating the project and forming a vital partnership within the region and beyond. The Department of Linguistics and Philology has also been hosting a five-year NORAD funded project since 2013. The project—*Linguistic Capacity Building—tools for the inclusive development of Ethiopia*—is run in collaboration with Hawassa University and two Norwegian Universities, University of Oslo and NTNU.

Linguistic Capacity Building Project Conducts Annual Meeting

Linguistic Capacity Building—Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia conducted its third annual meeting at Soramba Hotel (Addis Ababa) on 14 October 2016. The main



A view of the meeting

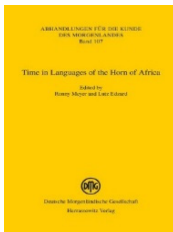
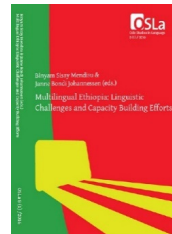
goal of the five-year project (2014-2018) is to increase resources and opportunities for children and adult speakers of disadvantaged spoken and signed languages to use their mother tongue. The project is financed by NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) through NORHED (Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development). It is run collaboratively by Addis Ababa University, Hawassa University, the University of Oslo and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

Dr. Binyam Sisay, the then coordinator of the project and who later moved to UNESCO, presented at the meeting a progress

report of the project for 2015/16 budget year. He reported that in August/September 2015 for three weeks the researchers and PhD scholarship beneficiaries of the project took part in a workshop organized in Rondane (Norway). He also pointed out that, on the same leg, the researchers presented papers at the Nineteenth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (19th ICES) which took place in Warsaw (Poland) while the PhD candidates were consulting with their supervisors in Norway. According to the report, again on the same leg, the project reached a collaborative agreement with HaBiT project (Masarykova University, Czech Republic and University of Oslo) to put efforts and resources together to prepare text corpora for four Ethiopian languages—Amharic, Afaan Oromoo, Tigrigna and Somali.

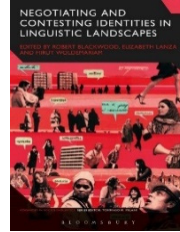
It was reported that over the last one year three books and some articles were produced. The books are:

(a) *Multilingual Ethiopia: Linguistic Challenges and Capacity Building Efforts* (eds. Binyam Sisay and Janne Bondi Johannessen)



(b) *Time in Languages of the Horn of Africa* (eds. Ronny Meyer and Lutz Edzard, published by Harrassowitz Verlag)

(c) *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscape* (eds. Elizabeth Lanza, Hirut Woldemariam and Robert Blackwood, published by Bloomsbury Publishing)



In mid-May 2016, the Ethiopian Minister of Education, His Excellency Mr. Shiferaw Shigute and other high ranking officials of the ministry visited University of Oslo, according

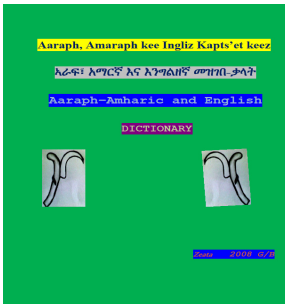


A view from the visit of the Minister of Education to Norway

to Dr. Binyam's report. At a seminar which was attended by the delegation, Prof. Janne Bondi Johannessen gave a talk on what the Capacity Building project is engaged in to support the development of education in Ethiopia. Dr. Binyam indicated that among the collaborative activities are short visits. Accordingly, visits with academic purposes from both the Ethiopian and Norwegian sides as well as Summer and Winter School attendance by PhD candidates took place

during the budget year. Furthermore, fieldwork activities, joint publications, various capacity building training programmes, corpus building and research workshops have been conducted. It was reported that a workshop on a newly designed MA in signed language linguistics curriculum was among the activities of the year. It was also stated that the project has given scholarship opportunities at MA level to six regional and zonal bureaus which involve covering tuition fees and research expenses.

According to the report, one of the significant achievements of the project over the last one year was the assistance given



Ari-Amharic-English dictionary



Ari children of a beginner class

to launch the teaching of the Ari language (in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region) in all 88 primary schools of South Ari Woreda (district) as of the beginning of the academic year 2009 E.C (2015/2016).

It was reported that Pawlos Kassu and Andargachew Deneke, staff members of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, played a key role in the preparation of Ethiopian Sign Language (ESL) textbooks at the Ministry of Education. Grade 3, 4 and 8 textbooks were prepared by the two staff members.



Amharic sign language textbook

Dr. Binyam, wound up his report by pointing out the challenges faced during the budget year and by stating the preparedness vis-a-vis the way forward.

Dr. Meyer Takes over Project Coordination Responsibility

Dr. Ronny Meyer has taken over from Dr. Binyam Sisay the responsibility of coordinating *Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for the Inclusive Development of Ethiopia* as of November 2016. The five-year project (2014-2018) is a collaborative undertaking between Addis Ababa University (AAU) and Hawassa University (HU) on the Ethiopian side and University of Oslo (UiO) and Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) on the Norwegian side. It is funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) through the programme for Capacity



Dr. Ronny Meyer

Development (NORHED).

Dr. Binyam transferred the responsibility of coordinating the project to Dr. Ronny as a result of joining UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) as of November 1, 2016. Dr. Binyam, who was a teacher, researcher and project coordinator, was employed by the UNESCO's institute as a programme officer for teacher education and curriculum development. The institute is the only Category One UNESCO institute in Africa and is mainly concerned with teacher education and development.

College Annual Research Day and Conference to be Held

The 3rd annual Research Day and the 25th annual conference of the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication (CHLSJC) will be held on April 26, and April 27-28, respectively. The venue for both academic events, which will be organized by the Office of Associate Dean for Research and Technology Transfer of the college, will be the main campus (Sidist Kilo).



Addis Ababa University
College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism
and Communication

Third Annual Research Day

Events

Keynote speeches
Poster presentations
Paper presentations
Academic discussions

April 19, 2017
NBR BLDG
Nelson Mandela Hall

The Research Day celebration will include reporting on the results of completed research projects and the status of those

in progress. In addition, panel discussions will be conducted and new publications will be displayed. At the 25th conference, the theme of which is *Language and Communication in Multilingual Ethiopia*, twenty-seven papers will be presented. Apart from those concerned and invited guests, it is expected that staff and students, including from other colleges, will participate in the events.

13th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium to be Held in May 2017

The 13th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium will be held in Addis Ababa, at Desalegn Hotel, May 4-6, 2017. At the international colloquium, which is to be hosted by the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Addis Ababa University, 57 scholars are expected to present papers on the languages of the Nilo-Saharan phylum.

According to the chairman of the organizing committee of the colloquium, Dr. Moges Yigezu, the participant scholars will be coming from Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Nigeria, South Africa, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, USA, UK, Australia, Austria, Denmark and Philippines.

Allowance Awarded to Ten Female Undergraduate Students

Ten female undergraduate students of the Department of Linguistics and Philology were awarded allowance as of January 2017 by the project *Beyond Access: Improving Quality of Early Years Reading Instructions in Ethiopia and South Sudan* which is hosted by the department. The idea was



Allowance awardees with Dept. Chair and Undergrad. Progm. Coordinator initiated by a letter (Dec. 26, 2016 Ref.: 005/2016) written to the department from the project coordinator Dr. Moges Yigezu stating the need to narrow the alarming gender gap among the staff and graduate students of the department and enhance gender equality by encouraging undergraduate students to work hard and join the graduate programmes in the future. Dr. Moges requested the department to select ten high-performing 2nd and 3rd (final) year female students from the

general linguistics programme. Accordingly, the department chair, Dr. Girma Mengistu, responded (Dec. 27, 2016 Ref.: DLing/2009/180/06) to the project expressing gratitude and

Congratulations!!!

**The Department of Linguistics
awards**

the following high-achieving female undergraduate
Linguistics students, through a NORAD funded project!!!

Recipients of the award

Name	Year
1. Kokab Shimelle	3rd year
2. Tigist Getachew	3rd year
1. Danot Tesfaye	2nd year
2. Lipbrehan Abera	2nd year
3. Rediat Negaasa	2nd year
4. Haimanot Abirat	2nd year
5. Berehan Keasay	2nd year
6. Abeba Girma	2nd year
7. Mebrhit Tesfaye	2nd year
8. Betelehem Getachew	2nd year



The Department of Linguistics
January, 2017

Congrats!!!

identifying ten high-achieving female students on the basis of their cumulative grade point average (CGPA), 2.75 and above.

The award is a monthly transport and book allowance of ETB 1000 (Birr one thousand) for each of the ten high-achieving female students. The allowance is subject to review of their performance at the end of each semester. The funding of the allowance is from NORAD (Norway) through the project *Beyond Access*. The awardees are listed in the table below.

N ^o	Student I.D.	Name	Sex	CGPA	Year
1	LJR/1861/07	Kokeb Shimels Hailemaryam	F	3.07	3 rd
2	LJR/0772/07	Tigist Getachew Demissie	F	2.77	3 rd
3	LJR/9926/08	Danat Tesfaye Andegbay	F	3.66	2 nd
4	LJR/7725/08	Liyubirhan Abera Sigatu	F	3.40	2 nd
5	LJR/0965/08	Rediate Negassa Gemechu	F	3.33	2 nd
6	LJR/5085/08	Haimanot Asrat Weldemichael	F	3.29	2 nd
7	LJR/5555/08	Berhan Kahsay Abera	F	3.18	2 nd
8	LJR/5392/08	Abeba Girma Gedelew	F	3.05	2 nd
9	LJR/6939/08	Mebrhit Tesfaye Gebrehiwot	F	2.82	2 nd
10	LJR/6918/08	Bethlehem Getachew Raga	F	2.80	2 nd

Three Staff Members with Fellow Researchers Win Thematic Research Grants

Three staff members of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Dr. Mersha Alehegne, Binyam Ephrem (a PhD candidate) and Dr. Endalew Assefa, each one of them in a separate team of researchers from different institutions, have won thematic research grants from Addis Ababa University. The title of Dr. Mersha's team is *The Abay Quest in the Ethiopian Popular Imagination and Ecclesiastical Scholarship and Art* (September 2015-August 2018) while that of Binyam's team is *Development of Resources of*

Ethiopian Languages: Natural Language Applications and Speech Processing Tools (January 2016-June 2018) and that of Dr. Endalew's team is *The Nexus between Religio-Cultural Practices and Development in Amhara Region: Trends, Challenges and Prospects* (September 2016-July 2018).

The thematic research of Dr. Mersha's team, of which he is the principal investigator, consists of three sub-themes: a) The Place of Abay in the History of Ethiopian Imperial Court, b) Abay as Expounded in the Ethiopian Oral Imagination, Narratives and Music, and c) The Abay in the Ethiopian Ecclesiastical Scholarship: Orature, Literature and Art. Out of twelve participants in the thematic research ten are staff members from the Department of Linguistics and Philology, College of Educational and Behavioral Studies, College of Performing and Visual Arts, Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Culture as well as Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES). In addition, one participant is from the Ethiopian Press Agency and another one, a PhD candidate, is from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. Apart from the preceding researchers from various institutions, Bahir Dar University is affiliated to the project as a collaborator. More information is available on the website of the project, www.aau.edu.et/nile.

The thematic research of Binyam's team, of which the principal investigator is Dr. Solomon Teferra Abate from the School of Information Science, consists of four sub-themes: a) Morpho-syntax, b) Dialog System, c) Machine Translation and d) Mobile based Speech Processing. Six staff members

from the School of Information Science, Department of Computer Science and Department of Linguistics and Philology are involved in the project. In addition, eight PhD candidates from Addis Ababa University, Mekelle University, Jima University, and Wolaytta Sodo University have been taken aboard.

Dr. Endalew's team, the principal investigator of which is Dr. Yohannes Adgeh, from the Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures, is also subdivided into four: a) Socio-cultural, b) Economic, c) Psychological, and d) Theological themes in relation to development. Dr. Endalew Assefa is the coordinator of the sub-thematic research group which focuses on social dimensions of religio-cultural practices. The participants in the project are eight staff members from the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Culture, Office of the Director Research, College of Educational and Behavioral Studies, College of Development Studies, School of Commerce and one PhD candidate from College of Education and Behavioral Studies. The annual disbursement to each of the three projects is ETB 400,000-500,000.

Dr. Shimelis and Dr. Feda Participate in IOS Founding Conference

Dr. Shimelis Mazengia and Dr. Feda Negesse participated in the first international conference on Oromo studies at which the Institute of Oromo Studies (IOS) was launched. The conference was organized by

Jimma University (JU), May 21-22, 2016. The two staff members presented papers entitled *Time Expression in Oromo* and *Lexical Distance in Oromo as a Function of Geographic Distance*, respectively. Overall, thirty one papers were presented at the plenary and four parallel sessions. The theme of the conference was *Oromo Knowledge Systems and Practices*. The conference commenced with the blessings of Abba Gadas and an opening speech by Professor Fikre Lemessa, President of Jimma University. Among the guests of honour present was Dr. Kaba Urgessa, State Minister of Education of FDRE. After certificates were awarded to paper



Partial view of the founding conference of IOS at Jimma University presenters and institutions which sponsored the conference, Dr. Taye Tolemariam, Vice President for Academic Affairs of Jimma University, wrapped up the conference by delivering a closing speech.

Four Staff Members Win Adaptive Research Grants

Four staff members of the Department of Linguistics and Philology won research grants in 2016. The title of the grant which was offered by AAU Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer was “Adaptive Problem Solving Research Grant”. The amount of each grant is ETB 100,000. The staff members and their respective research projects are:

1. Dr. Zelealem Leyew, Dean of College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication (CHLSJC), *Handbook of Linguistics (For use in Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia)*, September 2016- July 2017;
2. Dr. Mersha Alehegne, Associate Dean of Research and Technology Transfer Office (CHLSJC), *Asset Based Educational Development for Ethiopia: the Abännät in Focus*, September 2016- July 2017;
3. Dr. Endalew Assefa, *The Impact of Gender Stratification on Women’s Psycho-Social Well-being in North-West Ethiopia: The Case of East Gojjam*, September 2016 -July 2017;
4. Binyam Ephrem (PhD candidate in Computational Linguistics), *Developing Small Size Annotated Treebank for Amharic*, January – July 2016. Binyam Ephrem completed and submitted his research output in July 2016.

Dr. Zelealem Publishes an Article, Participates in a Conference and a Seminar

Dr. ZelealemLeyew, Dean of the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication (CHLSJC), AAU, and who is also a staff member of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, published an article entitled *The Description of Color Terms in Ethiopian Languages* in Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review (EASSRR) Vol. XXXII, No. 2 (2016). Dr. Zelealem also participated in a conference and a seminar which took place, respectively, in Naivash, Kenya (April 6-8) and Tianjin, China (May 31-June 7, 2016). At the conference, he presented a paper entitled “Color terms in Ethiopian Languages: An Anthropological Linguistic Approach”. The theme of the conference was *Research & Networking: Laying the Foundation for a Sustainable Development Goals* while that of the seminar was *Seminar on Chinese Culture and Higher Education*.

Dr. Meyer Produces Several Publications in 2016

Dr. Ronny Meyer produced a number of publications in 2016. He co-edited one book, wrote two articles and two reviews, and co-authored one article. Dr. Meyer’s contributions over the last one year are:

1. Meyer, Ronny & Edzard, Lutz (eds.) 2016. *Time in languages of the Horn of Africa*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
2. Meyer, Ronny. 2016. Aspect and tense in modern Ethiosemitic languages. In Lutz Edzard (ed.), *The morpho-syntactic and lexical encoding of tense and aspect in Semitic. Proceedings of the Erlangen Workshop on April 26, 2014*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 159-239.
3. Meyer, Ronny. 2016. The emergence of tense in Ethiosemitic. In Ronny Meyer & Lutz Edzard (eds.), *Time in languages of the Horn of Africa*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 179-236.
4. Meyer, Ronny. 2016. Review: Ali Naji. 2012. Breakdown of Harari grammar. *Journal of Afroasiatic Languages* 6(1). 111-113.
5. Meyer, Ronny. 2016. Review: Zuckerman, Ghil'ad. 2012. Burning issues in Afroasiatic Linguistics. *Journal of Afroasiatic Languages* 6(1). 105-110.
6. Fekede Menuta & Ronny Meyer. 2015. Sonorant alternations in Muher. In Lutz Edzard (ed.), *Arabic and Semitic Linguistics contextualized. A Festschrift for Jan Retsö*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 531-553.

Four Staff Members Defend Their PhD Dissertations

Four staff members defended their PhD dissertations over the last one year. Dr. Desalegn Hagos defended his dissertation on May 27, 2016 and earned his doctoral degree at Stockholm University, Sweden. On the other hand, Demeke Ayele, Samuel Handamo and Muna Abubeker successfully defended their dissertations at the department respectively on August 9,

2016, January 11, 2017 and February 24, 2017. Dr. Desalegn specializes in Theoretical Linguistics while Dr. Demeke in Computational Linguistics, Dr. Samuel in Sociolinguistics and Dr. Muna in Philology, respectively. After having done his PhD at Stockholm University, Dr. Desalegn returned to AAU and is now working as an instructor and researcher at his department. In the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Dr. Demeke is the first PhD Computational Linguist while Dr. Muna is the first PhD woman Philologist.

The titles of the dissertations of the four staff members are:

1. Desalegn Hagos: *The Inceptive Construction and Associated Topics in Amharic and Related Languages.*
2. Demeke Ayele: *Knowledge Acquisition Framework from Unstructured Biomedical Knowledge Sources.*
3. Samuel Handamo: *Contrastive Analysis of Lexical Standardization in Amharic and Hadiyya.*
4. Muna Abubeker: *Text Edition and Annotated Translation of a Court Registry (Diwan) Manuscript of Harar.*

Summaries of the dissertations of the four staff members are available in this issue under the heading **Synopsis of Doctoral Dissertation.**

Dr. Mersha Participates in Conferences and Presents Papers

Dr. Mersha Alehegne gave talks on various topics in 2016 both at home and abroad. At the Faculty of Humanities, University of Southampton (UK) he lectured on *The Enormous Wealth of the Not Wealthy Nation: Ethiopic*



Conference participants

Literature, 12 October 2016. At the same university, in the Institute of Developmental Sciences (IDS) Building, Southampton General Hospital, Dr. Mersha also participated in a conference—Non-Communicable Diseases in Rural Ethiopia—13 October 2016. The focus of the conference was reviewing the challenges faced to apply modern medicine in rural Ethiopia to cure non-communicable diseases and to generate ideas for accelerating progress in the application of traditional healing mechanisms. Dr. Mersha's input was related to the healing tradition in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Locally, Dr. Mersha participated in four annual conferences: Annual *Fidel* conference, Bahir Dar University (May 9-10, 2016), The 24th Annual Conference of the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University (June 9 -10, 2016), Annual Ge'ez conference organized by the FDRE Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Jimma (June 9-11, 2016), and Annual Conference organized by the Haddis Alemayehu Institute of Cultural Studies, Debre Markos University (June 4-5, 2016). Dr. Mersha, respectively, presented papers at the conferences which were entitled: *ይሁንታ ስለ ግእዝ ፊደል* 'Consent to the Ge'ez syllabary', *Towards the Ethiopian Inter-University Collaboration for Humanities and Social Science Research [Ei-UCHSSR]: A Proposal*, *ምንት ንግበር በእንተ ሁበተ ግእዝ ኢትዮጵያዊ* 'What could we do concerning the wealth of Ge'ez of Ethiopia', and *ሐዲስ ዓለማየሁ የባሕል ማእከል እንደ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ባሕል ማእከል* 'Haddis Alemayehu Cultural Center as a University Cultural Center'.

Ten Staff Members Publish Articles in a Book Launched at Oslo University

Ten staff members of the Department of Linguistics and Philology, along with other scholars, published research outputs in a book entitled *Multilingual Ethiopia: Linguistic Challenges and Capacity Building Efforts* which came out as Oslo Studies in Language (OSLA) 8 (1) / 2016 (University of Oslo). The staff members of the Department of Linguistics and Philology and the titles of their contributions are:

1. Baye Ymam: *Phonological Features of the Amharic Variety of South Wello*
2. Girma Mengistu: *Tone in Sezo*
3. Binyam Sisay Mendisu: *Negation in Hamar*
4. Moges Yigezu: *Aspects of the Morphology of Hamar*
5. Ronny Meyer: *The Ethiopic Script: Linguistic Features and Socio-cultural Connotations*
6. Feda Negesse & Derib Ado: *Visual Recognition of Graphic Variants of Amharic Letters: Psycholinguistic Experiments*
7. Shimelis Mazengia: *Some Observations on Handiyisa Orthography*
8. Zelealem Leyew: *What is in a Name? Personal Names in Hadiyya*
9. Hirut Woldemariam: *Language Planning Challenged by Identity Contestation in a Multilingual Setting: The Case of Gamo*

Of the above staff members, two have shifted to other responsibilities. Dr. Hirut Woldemariam is now a minister



Participants in the book launch celebration

heading the Ministry of Culture and Tourism while Dr. Binyam Sisay is a programme officer at UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA). Oslo University launched the book on multilingual Ethiopia, the editors of which are Binyam Sisay Mendisu and Janne Bondi Johannessen, on March 24, 2017. It builds on the project Linguistic Capacity Building —Tools for the inclusive development of Ethiopia, which is financed by NORAD (The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation), within the NORHED programme (The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development).

At the launching ceremony of the book, some contributors, both from Norway and Ethiopia, were present. Speeches were delivered by Eirik Welo, Vice Dean for Studies at the Faculty of Humanities, Jeanette de Silva, senior advisor at NORAD, and Janne Bondi Johannessen, who is one of the two editors of the book. The book is an open access publication available at: <https://www.journals.uio.no/index.php/osla/issue/view/250/showToc>.

Dr. Amsalu Co-organizes International Workshop and Makes Presentations

Dr. Amsalu Tefera, who is on a postdoc research leave at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), co-organized an international workshop on “Angelology” together with his scientific host Prof. Dr. Loren Stuckenbruck. The workshop, which was titled *Representation of Angelic Beings in Early Jewish and in Christian Traditions*, was held

at the main building of LMU, Gschwister-Scholl-Platz 1 from February 13 to 15, 2017. The workshop aimed to explore the representation of angels in Second Temple Judaism and Christian traditions focusing on the Christian Ethiopia. The workshop was organized to support the ongoing research project of Dr. Amsalu on “Angelology in Ethiopian Christian Tradition”. A total of ten papers were presented by scholars who specialize in Second Temple Judaism and Ethiopian Studies. Dr. Amsalu presented a paper entitled “Angelology in Ethiopian Christian Tradition with Reference to the Homily of Uriel”



On March 24, 2017 Dr. Amsalu gave two talks at his former university—University of Florence, Italy, at the conference titled “Seconda Giornata di Studi Etiopici”, dedicated to the late Prof. Paolo Marrassini. Dr. Amsalu’s first talk was on his own first book *The Ethiopian Homily on the Ark of the Covenant: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Dərsanä Şəyon* published by Brill in 2015. The second talk entitled “A 15th century Ethiopian Homily on Uriel: Some Reflections” was on his recent findings on the homily of Uriel. Dr. Amsalu also presented a paper on “The Relevance and Urgency of the Ethiopic Literary Resources for Theologians”, at the First Theological Assembly of EOTC-

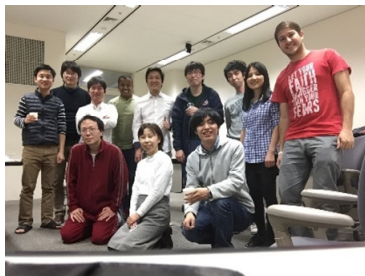
TGA-Europe held in St. Ephrem Syrian Orthodox Monastery, Glane, The Netherlands, Sep.2-5, 2016.

Dr. Amsalu Tefera has published as of the last issue of BDLP:

- Amsalu Tefera. (2016). የግሪክ ሥርዐተ ጽሕፈት በኢትዮጵያ ቤተክርስቲያን ሊቃውንት እይታ ‘Amharic Orthography from the point of view of Ethiopian Church Scholars’. *Journal of Ethiopian Church Studies*. Vol. 4, pp.79-105.
- Amsalu Tefera. (2015). “‘Cycles of Zion’ in Ethiopic Texts”, in *Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies, Proceedings of the International Conference ‘Manuscripts and Texts, Languages and Contexts: the Transmission of Knowledge in the Horn of Africa, Supplement to Aethiopica—International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies*, Vol. 4, pp. 145-152.

Binyam Ephrem Engages in Lab Work at Natl. Inst. of Informatics, Tokyo

Binyam Ephrem, a PhD candidate who is doing research on a topic in Computational Linguistics, is in Tokyo, Japan, for a six-month internship, February 14-August 12, 2017, to do research on "Syntactic/Semantic



Binyam Ephrem with his supervisor and lab colleagues

Parsing". He is doing the research, which is part of his PhD undertaking, at the laboratory of his external supervisor Dr. Yusuke Myao, National Institute of Informatics, Tokyo.

Binyam Ephrem has published online a paper titled "Morpho-syntactically Annotated Amharic Treebank", which he presented at Corpus Linguistics Fest (CLiF), Indiana University, USA, June 6-10, 2016. The paper is available at <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-1607/>.

Dr. Abestayhu Participates in Academic Events and Selected as Fellow Abroad

Dr. Abestayhu Messele participated in a conference, summer school and workshops abroad. The conference, entitled *The 16th International Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics*



Dr. Abestayhu in Cognitive Sciences Lab, Univ. of Vienna

Association Conference, took place in Halifax, Canada, June 15-18, 2016. Dr. Abestayhu presented a paper entitled *Aspects of Phonological Acquisition in Sidamo Afoo*, one of the Highland East Cushitic languages of Ethiopia.

The organizer of the conference was School of Human Communication Disorders, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

The Summer School on Cognitive Science, in which Dr. Abebayehu participated, took place in Vienna, Austria, August 26 - September 2, 2016. He presented a paper entitled *The Effects of Writing System on Dyslexia*. The Summer School was organized by the Cognitive Science Research Platform, University of Vienna.

The workshop, in which Dr. Abebayehu participated, was held at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA, from February 28 to March 2, 2017. The focus of the workshop, which was organized by the Oak Foundation, was on individuals with learning and communication problems. The second workshop in which Dr. Abebayehu participated while in the US involved a short-term training on current approaches to evaluation and intervention of speech, language, and literacy disorders. It was organized by George Washington University and the International Diagnostic Solutions, Washington DC, March 14 - 17, 2017.

Dr. Abebayehu was selected as a fellow of the Africa Science Leadership Programme which was hosted by the University of Pretoria, South Africa, March 22-27, 2017.

Three Staff Members Publish Articles in *Time in the Languages of the Horn*

Three staff members, along with another five scholars, published their research outputs on various topics of Linguistics in a book entitled *Time in the Languages of the*

Horn of Africa in 2016. The staff members and their contributions are:



1. Dr. Derib Ado: Metaphors of Time in Amharic
2. Dr. Ronny Meyer: Emergence of Tense in Ethio-Semitic
3. Dr. Shimelis Mazengia: Aspect and Tense in Oromo

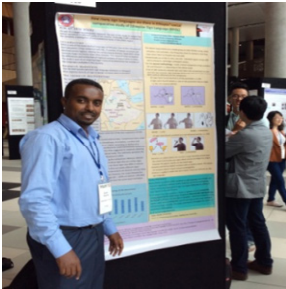
Apart from contributing an article, Dr. Ronny Meyer co-edited the book with Prof. Lutz Edzard (Universities of Erlangen (Germany) and University of Oslo (Norway)). The contributions in the volume emerged from presentations made within the panel “Time in the Languages of the Horn of Africa” at the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Warsaw, August 24-28, 2015) under the theme *Ethiopia: Diversity and Interconnections through Space and Time*.

Dr. Eyasu Presents a Poster at TISLR 12, Australia, Attends Global Sports and Mentoring Programme, USA

Dr. Eyasu Hailu presented a poster with multifarious topics related to the Ethiopian Sign Language at the forum of the 12th Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research (TISLR 12) which was held at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia—January 4–7, 2016. The title of Dr. Eyasu’s Poster was *How many sign languages are there in Ethiopia? Lexical Comparative Study of Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)*. His

presentation underscored that although lexical variations are observed in many parts of the country there is generally mutual intelligibility.

Dr. Eyasu was re-elected to the advisory board of Sign Language Linguistic Society (SLLS) representing the African



Dr. Eyasu presenting his poster

continent during the period 2016 – 2019. There were over 200 presentations in paper and poster format on 32 sign languages of the world. The next TISLR (TISLR 13) will be hosted by the University of Hamburg, Germany and TISLR 14 by the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku), Osaka, Japan. TISLR is conducted

every three years focusing on the linguistic research of sign languages of the existing six continents. Dr. Eyasu is grateful to Grant Coordination Office of Addis Ababa University for covering his travel and conference attendance expenses.

Dr. Eyasu has published an article entitled “The Use of Ethiopian Sign Language” in *Sign Language Studies*, Volume 16:3, 307-329, Gallaudet University Press, Washington DC.



GSMP 2016 participants

On another leg, Dr. Eyasu Hailu, along with Ato Alemayehu Teferi, president of Ethiopian Deaf Sports Federation, attended

an adaptive sports and mentoring programme in the United States. The Global Sports and Mentoring Programme (GSMP) took place at Gallaudet University in Washington DC and the University of Texas in Arlington for five weeks (May 12 - June 17, 2016). During their stay in the US, Dr. Eyasu and Ato Alemayehu attended training programmes and gained practical experience concerning Adaptive Sports and visited several institutions.

Dr. Eyasu and Ato Alemayehu said that the GSMP participants designed action plans which target the empowerment of Deaf people through sports. The Ethiopian group had the opportunity to exchange experiences with 15 other delegates from thirteen countries.

Five Staff Members and Two PhD Candidates Participate in a Workshop in Czech Rep.

Five staff members and two PhD candidates participated in the HaBiT (Harvesting big text data for under-resourced languages) Project Evaluation Workshop 2017. Another participant, a staff member of Jigjiga University was also with the group. The workshop took place at the Centre for Natural Language Proceeding (Faculty of Informatics) at Masarykova Univerzita in the city of Brno (Czech Republic) from February 16 to 21, 2017. The workshop was part of the research project HaBiT which is supported by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. The group from Ethiopia participated as expert evaluators with linguistic expertise in four of the Ethiopian languages: Amharic, Afaan Oromoo, Tigrinya and Somali.

The five staff members who participated in the workshop were: Dr. Derib Ado, Dr. Feda Negesse, Dr. Girma Mengistu, Dr. Endalew Assefa and Dr. Shimelis Mazengia while the PhD candidates were Tsegay Woldemariam and Taddese Weldegebreal. The participant from Jigjiga University was



Some of the participants of the HaBiT Workshop

Ahmed Yusuf Hirad. The group expresses its gratitude to the Czech colleagues, especially, Prof. Karel Pala, Dr. Aleš Horák and Dr. Pavel Rychlý, who organized the workshop and made the funding of the travel and accommodation of the Ethiopian group possible. The group is also grateful for the financial support of the HaBiT project and is appreciative of the interaction with Prof. Janne Bondi Johannessen (University of Oslo), Prof. Björn Gambäck (NTNU) and Dr. Utpal Kumar Sikdar (NTNU).

Muna Abubeker Attends Summer School at Hamburg University

Muna Abubeker attended a Summer School programme held from September 26 to October 1, 2016 at Hamburg University, Germany. The programme was organized by Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies (HLCES), which is an affiliate of Hamburg University. It was organized under the title *Ethiopian and Eritrean Manuscript Studies*. The purpose of the programme was to train graduate students in research and skills necessary for theoretical and practical tasks in the field of manuscript study.

The courses, which focused on philological knowledge and skills in relation to Ethiopic and Arabic manuscripts, were conducted by prominent Ethiopicist scholars of the centre and a professor from Copenhagen University (Denmark) who specializes in Arabic philology.

The courses addressed many of the philological issues related to Ethiopian manuscript study, i.e. concerning codicology, paleography, text criticism and edition as well as hagiography. Theoretical and practical aspects of cataloguing and digitalization of manuscripts were also discussed.

The Summer School programme was attended by young scholars in the field of Ethiopian manuscript studies who came from different countries including Ethiopia, Sweden, US, UK and Italy. A young scholar from Eritrea also participated in the programme. The Ethiopian participants were from Addis Ababa University, Mekelle University,

Bahir Dar University, Gondar University and from two theological institutions—The Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology and Capuchin Franciscan Research and Retreat Centre, in Addis Ababa. A female Ethiopian PhD candidate from Princeton University also attended the programme. The participant from the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU, Muna Abebeker, is grateful to Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies and Office of Graduate programmes, AAU, for covering her travel and accommodation expenses.

Four Staff Members Participate in *Fidel Gub'e*

Four staff members participated in Fidel Guba'e (conference) which was held in Bahir Dar, May 9-10, 2016. The four staff members and the titles of their papers are:

1. Dr. Girma Mengistu, “ጎደሎ” ፊደላት በአማርኛ ስርዓተ-ጽሑፊት ውስጥ ያላቸው ሚና፣ ስነ ድምፀ ልሳናዊ አንድምታዎች (The role of the labialized syllabographs in Amharic orthography: Phonological implications) focusing on the phonemic status and word formation of Amharic words.
2. Dr. Bedilu Wakjira, የአማርኛ ሞክሺ ፊደላት ሥነ ፍቺያዊ አንድምታ (Interpretational implication of graphic variants of Amharic letters)
3. Dr. Derib Ado and Dr. Fedu Negesse, የአማርኛ ሞክሺ ሆሜያትን በፍጥነት የመለየት የሥነ አለምድራዊ ሥነ ልሳን ጥናት (Visual Recognition of Graphic Variants of Amharic Letters: Psycholinguistic Experiments) in which they dealt with the frequency of graphic variants in an on-

line Amharic corpus and the reaction time that each variant took in recognition in alphabetic and lexical decision tasks.

The Conference was organized by the Amharic Language Development Centre of Bahir Dar University.

Mulugeta Participates in Two Conferences Abroad

Mulugeta Tarekegn Tsegaye, who is at the final stage to complete his studies for PhD in Psycholinguistics, participated in two conferences which took place in Abu Dhabi (UAE) and Leiden (the Netherlands). In Abu Dhabi, at the New York University conference—*Experimental Approaches to Arabic and other understudied Languages (EXAL+)*, January 14-17, 2016—he presented a paper entitled “Plural as an exponent of gender in Konso: Evidence from picture-word tasks”. The aim of EXAL+ is to broaden neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic horizons so as to include languages and dialects so far not given attention in relation to experimental investigation. At the Leiden University conference—*46th Colloquium on African Languages and Linguistics (CALL)*, August 29-31, 2016—which was organized by Leiden University, the title of Mulugeta’s paper was “Picture-word tasks support plural as a category of gender instead of number in Konso (East Cushitic)”.

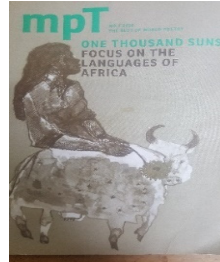
Dr. Bedilu Publishes Poems in UK

Dr. BediluWakjira published three of his poems in *One Thousand Suns: Focus on the Languages of Africa*—issue N^o 2, 2016 of *Modern Poetry Translation (mpT): The best of world poetry*. Dr.



Dr. Bedilu Wakjira

Bedilu's three poems, which were translated from Amharic into English by Fasika Ayalew and Chris Beckett, are: 1) *If*



People were Rocks; 2) *Longing for Spring*; and 3) *What You Say to Me*. The publisher is Charlesworth Press, Wakefield, UK.

Dr. Bedilu, who specializes in Linguistics and Literature, is known for his articles in the press on social and political issues. He has published in Amharic three collections of poetry, short stories and essays.

Dr. Hirut Woldemariam Assumes Ministerial Post

Dr. Hirut Woldemariam has been appointed as minister of Culture and Tourism. She is one of the twenty-one new cabinet ministers whom Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn presented to the parliament and were approved on November 1, 2016. Before her appointment as a minister of Culture and Tourism, Dr. Hirut had served in Addis Ababa University assuming a number of leadership posts, the last

one being Vice President for Institutional Development. Dr. Hirut had also been actively involved in teaching courses,



Dr. Hirut Woldemariam, first on the left

mainly at graduate levels, advising masters and PhD students, and conducting research at the Department of Linguistics and Philology. Her current appointment to the ministerial post is a testimony for her remarkable performance over the years. Dr. Hirut is one of the three women appointed as ministers. The Department of Linguistics and Philology, her home base, warmly congratulates and wishes her success in her new undertaking.

Prof. Baye's 3rd edn. of Amharic Grammar is on the Market

The revised 3rd edition of Prof. Baye's የአማርኛ ሰዋሰው (Amharic grammar) has come out and is available on the

market. The book is structured and authored based on the scientific methods of Linguistics. It is the first of its kind both in methodology and in comprehensiveness with respect to the grammar of Ethiopian languages. The book is a vital companion for both instructors and students as well as researchers and those generally interested in the language.



Prof Baye's revised Amharic grammar

Scholars Give Talks

Prof. Baye Gives Talks at Four Universities

Prof. Baye Yimam gave public lectures on various topics at Gondar, Addis Ababa University, Hawassa universities and a keynote address at Mekelle University. The topics were:



Prof. Baye Yimam

1. *Modernity, Language and Identity*, Gondar University (June 3, 2016);
2. *Language, Folklore and Literature*, Mekelle University, Keynote address, (June 20, 2016);
3. *Humanities in the Era of Growing Policy Debate*, AAU (March 31, 2016);
4. *The Place of the Humanities in Policies of Modern Education*, Hawasa University (December 21, 2015).

At all four universities, the public lectures were attended by students and academics of the concerned departments.

Dr. Treis Gives Two Talks on Kambaata

Dr. Yvonne Treis, a research fellow and deputy director of the French research centre LLACAN (*Langage, Langues et Cultures d'Afrique Noire*) of the CNRS (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*), gave a talk on “Presentative Demonstratives in Kambaata” at the Department of

Linguistics and Philology, AAU, March 13, 2017. Kambaata is one of the Highland East Cushitic languages of Ethiopia spoken in the southern region of the country.

Dr. Treis stated that while many European languages have one, at most two grammaticalized presentatives at their disposal—see French *voilà / voici*—Kambaata has a dedicated paradigm of twelve presentative forms, which are used to point out and call attention to an entity or event. She said that presentatives in Kambaata specify the approximate location (proximal, medial, distal) and provide information about the gender and number of the presented



Dr. Yvonne Treis

entity. According to Dr. Treis, the Kambaata presentatives are one type of demonstratives besides attributive and pronominal demonstratives. The talk was attended by staff members and postgraduate students including PhD candidates.

Earlier, 3rd March 2016, Dr. Treis lectured on another topic, “Eat me, ground!”—Orders, blessings and curses in Kambaata—at the same venue. She discussed the contextual use of orders, blessings and curses in the language. She also illustrated how Kambaata has recently grammaticalised a full paradigm of preventive verbs which serve to encode warnings and threats.

Dr. Redleaf Lectures on Cochlear Implantation

Dr. Miriam Redleaf, head of the Otology/Neurotology programme and the Audiology Division at the University of



Dr. Miriam Redleaf

Iowa Health, gave a lecture on cochlear implantation whether it is an option for restoring hearing. She discussed the possibility of using a cochlear implant to restore hearing and the surgical risks involved in the implantation process.

Under the direction of Dr. Redleaf, a support system for cochlear implant—Happy Ears on Taylor Street, in USA—has been established and is helping children and families to embrace the world of hearing.

Dr. Redleaf delivered the lecture at Addis Ababa University Main Campus, OCR 119 on October 19, 2016. The lecture was attended by students from the Department of Linguistics, academic staff, hearing aid providers and dispensers, medical students specializing in ENT at St. Paul Millennium Medical College (St. Paul Hospital), a plastic surgery specialist as well as people with cochlear implants. The lecture was interpreted for the Deaf participants in both Ethiopian and American Sign Languages. It was organized by the Associate Dean for Research and Technology of College of Humanities, Languages Studies, Journalism and Communication

(CHLSJC). Dr. Redleaf has published extensively, having authored and co-authored more than 40 scholarly articles.

Prof. Vossen Delivers Series of Lectures on African Languages

Prof. Rainer Vossen, director of Institute of African Studies, Goethe-University, Frankfurt, delivered series of lectures on Typology and Dialectology in relation to African languages as well as on African Linguistics in seven sessions in March 2016. The lectures were attended by the academic staff and postgraduate students of the Department of Linguistics and Philology. The venue was OCR 119, Sidist Kilo Campus.



Prof. Rainer Vossen

Prof. Vossen has over one hundred publications to his name including four books. He has researched on various African languages of the families of Mande, Nilotic, Bantu, and Khohisan. His field experience is focused on West, Northeast and Southern African regions. Prof. Vossen specializes in Comparative Linguistics, Areal Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Language and History, Language and Identity, and Development Communication.

Dr. Jama Gives Speech on Somali Corpus

Dr. Jama Musse Jama, founder and director of REDSEA Cultural Foundation, Hargeysa, Somaliland, gave a speech on Somali Corpora at the Department of



Dr. Jama Musse Jama

Linguistics and Philology, AAU, Room 119 on February 24, 20117. His talk focused on the tagging of five million Somali words and the challenges faced as well as the opportunities ahead. Dr. Jama underscored that developing IT resources requires well-described languages with long tradition of writing

and with a large number of speakers. He also pointed out that one of the main challenges for the languages with recent writing tradition is the lack of enough data for successful statistical approaches.

According to Dr. Jama, the construction of the Redsea Cultural Foundation's Somali Corpus (RCF-SC) is conducted in collaboration with Oriental University of Naples, Italy. Dr. Jama informed the audience including students and staff members that the first edition of the Somali corpus, containing three million tagged and grammatically annotated words is available online at www.somalicorpus.com.

Synopses of Doctoral Dissertations

Knowledge acquisition framework from unstructured biomedical knowledge sources

Demeke Asres

In biomedicine, the explosion of textual knowledge sources has introduced formidable challenges for knowledge-aware information systems. Traditional knowledge acquisition methods have been proved costly, resource intensive and time consuming. Automation of large scale knowledge acquisition systems requires narrowing down the semantic gap between biomedical texts and structured representations. In this context, this study proposes a knowledge acquisition framework from biomedical texts. This contributes towards reducing efforts, time and cost incurred to minimize ontology acquisition bottlenecks.



The proposed framework approximates, models, structures and ontologizes implicit knowledge buried in biomedical texts. In the framework, the semantic disambiguator approximates biomedical artefacts from biomedical texts. The conceptual disambiguator models and structures the biomedical knowledge abstracted from the domain texts. Ontologization presents an explicit interpretation of biomedical artefacts and conceptualizations. The components of the framework are instantiated with scientific and clinical text documents and produced more than four million concepts

and five million associations. This set of artefacts is structured into the lower ontological knowledge structure where the upper ontology structure is reused from existing ones. The conceptual structure is represented with graph formalism. The formal interpretation is based on OWL DL language primitives and constructs, which generates a set of OWL DL axioms. The set of OWL DL axioms is referred to as the OWL ontology (K_o).

The extent of approximation and quality of structural design are evaluated using criteria-based methods. A set of metrics is used to measure each criterion and showed encouraging results. Correctness measurements for concept entity are 70% for accuracy, 82% for completeness, 68% for conciseness and 100% for consistency. Quality measurement showed complex ontology structure with metrics values of 986,448 for vocabulary size, 18.73 for connectivity density, 145,246 for tree impurity and 226, 698 for graph entropy. The ontology schema potential metrics values were also 0.80 for relationship richness, 3 for attribute richness and 13,253 for inheritance richness. Ontology clarity showed an average readability, which is 3 attributes on average. The proposed framework has limitations to address the acquisition of individuals and entity attributes, losing cardinality information in the acquisition of the ontological knowledge. These lead to limitations on the formal interpretation of biomedical semantics, which in turn lead to deploy only existential restriction based interpretations. Thus, a way forward has been recommended to enhance semantic disambiguation and ontologization of the proposed framework

so that they enable to accommodate the acquisition of cardinality and attribute information.

Keywords: semantic disambiguation, conceptual disambiguation, ontologization, knowledge acquisition framework, biomedical knowledge source, ontological knowledge.

The inceptive construction and associated topics in Amharic and related languages

Desalegn Hagos



The dissertation is an inquiry into the syntactic features, range of functions, and historical development of a rarely occurring construction type known as the *inceptive construction*. It is based on a grammaticalized use of converbs of ‘get up’, ‘pick up’, ‘grasp’, and ‘take’. The languages under investigation are a small family of Semitic languages spoken in Ethiopia, known as Transversal South Ethio-Semitic (TSE) languages. They include Amharic, Argobba, Harari, Zay, Silt’e, and Wolane. The study mainly focuses on Amharic and as far as Wolane is concerned very little first-hand data was collected. The overall data were drawn from free conversation and narrative recordings, analysis of written materials, and elicitation of relevant linguistic examples.

The analysis shows that the converbs identify the initial phase of the event encoded by the main verb; hence the name ‘inceptive construction’. This is based on a linguistic notion

where events are considered to consist of three basic sub-events, namely inceptive, core, and terminative sub-events, and where each sub-event can be independently identified by distinct verb forms. The converbs in TSE are further associated with nuances like volition, surprise, and emphasis. The presence of such interpretations as surprise and emphasis appears to depend mainly on the context, while volition is inherent to the construction.

Syntactically, the construction displays diagnostic properties of a complex predicate where the converb and main verb are unable to be negated separately; share the same subject/object; and have the same tense (but not necessarily the same aspect and mood). The converbs in this use are also regarded as light verbs, as opposed to auxiliaries. This is due to their functions, co-occurrence restrictions (e.g. transitive converbs, like *jiz-a* ‘grasp (-3FSG.GEN.SBJ)’ in Amharic, occur with transitive reference verbs, like *k’iwwut’ arg-a* ‘rock (-3FSG.GEN.SBJ)’), and verb forms (e.g. they do not show a deformed paradigm, are form-identical with a main verb counterpart). Note, however, that no strict dichotomy between light verbs and auxiliaries is assumed, and it is acknowledged that light verbs could in principle diachronically develop into auxiliaries.

The construction generally does not show much variation between or within the languages under investigation. However, there is a notable difference in some co-occurrence restrictions. For instance, while the light verb for ‘pick up’ *bidiggarigg-e* (-1SG.GEN.SBJ) can co-occur with a reference verb for ‘say’ *al-ku* (-1SG.SBJ) in Amharic, this is not allowed in Harari. On the other hand, in Harari and Zay, there is

variation among the consultants as to which converbs they use.

It is difficult to know the origin and development of the inceptive construction in these languages. This is partly because of lack of adequate historical data and partly because of the rarity of the construction. There are only some traces of the construction in Amharic in the 15th century. It is assumed, however, that collocation, frequency, and speakers' conception of the action of the converbs are possible factors that lead the verbs to grammaticalize into markers of the inception phase.

There is also a construction on par with the inceptive construction called 'the terminative construction' in Amharic (but assumed to exist in the other TSE languages as well). Here, instead of the inceptive phase, it is the final or terminative phase of an event that is identified. It involves the verbs for 'rest', 'remain', 'sit down', 'be quite', 'throw', and 'leave'. Like the inceptive construction, the terminative construction has associated interpretations, i.e. surprise/emphasis and detriment.

The converb is the principal form of the verb used in the inceptive construction, although other verb forms are allowed, such as those that take an iterative marker and a coordinating conjunction in Amharic and Argobba. This verb form has a variety of other uses in TSE languages that include being lexicalized/grammaticalized as an adverb, adposition (i.e. circumposition), causative, conjunction, and part of a lexical juxtaposition. The converb is a type of 'general converb' in

that it takes no special marker for each role. However, it presents differences in other morphological/syntactic features. So, for instance, converbal conjunctions cannot be negated, whereas adverbs can; converbal causatives can be combined with the reference verb by a coordinating conjunction in Amharic, whereas adverbs cannot.

The nature of the Amharic conjunction =*na* ‘and’ is among the topics probed in this thesis. The reason for this is its role in alternative inceptive construction where it links a semantically bleached and a functionally modifier light verb with a lexical and modified reference verb. It is also used in causal (purposive) and conditional coordination where the verbs have a modifier-modified relationship, too. Generally, the conjuncts in the inceptive construction are analyzed as the ‘same type’, as they basically share the same verb form. In addition, the use of the coordinating conjunction signals that the light verb is not completely bleached. The case with the other constructions is different. The conjuncts may lack tense iconicity and can take variable positions. This suggests that =*na* ‘and’ is ‘polysemous’. The =*na* ‘and’ in the causal and conditional clause can be taken as a subordinator. Furthermore, there is homonymy in which =*na* takes a non-conjunctive function as an emphatic marker.

Finally, the thesis deals with an issue that is not central to the inceptive construction as such, but is nonetheless crucial in understanding the nature of the verb form dominantly used in the construction, i.e. the converb. The converb in Amharic at times is used as a main verb, which makes it less converb-like. For instance, it can take a negation marker. This is

because the main verb or auxiliary it depends on gets omitted over time, a phenomenon widely known as ‘insubordination’. An insubordinated converb comes to function as an expression of surprise/exclamation, interrogation, rhetorical questioning, wishing, and resultative/perfective. The main point is that this is a separate historical process that cannot hinder us from using the notion of ‘converb’ in the inceptive construction (and in other uses or construction types).

Contrastive analysis of lexical standardization in Amharic and Hadiyya

Samuel Handamo Godisso

This dissertation contrasts lexical standardization in two Ethiopian languages, Amharic (Semitic) and Hadiyya (Cushitic). Compared to Hadiyya, Amharic has a longer written tradition. The Amharic orthography, evolved from the Ge’ez script, had gone through important processes. Amharic has developed symbols for palatalized and labialized sounds. The Amharic script, however, has been criticized for many years for representing redundant symbols. This study has also confirmed that the major problem of the Amharic script is inconsistency of spelling due to the presence of redundant symbols. The Academy of the Ethiopian Languages had proposed the reduction of redundant symbols in 1973 to make spelling more efficient, consistent and economical. However, the proposal still has not been practically implemented in domains



such as education, administration and print media due to resistance from different scholars and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Hadiyya appeared in writing for the first time in a modified Ethiopic script in 1927 E.C. Following the downfall of the Derg, the current Roman-based script was chosen for Hadiyya in 1985 E.C. Then, it was revised after eleven years (in 1996 E.C). The reforms of the Hadiyya Roman-based script were concerned with the addition of symbols, namely <p> [p], <v> [v], <ts> [s'], <ny> [ɲ] and <zh> [ʒ]. These consonants are still in the process of becoming part of the consonant phonemes in Hadiyya as a result of linguistic contacts with Amharic and English. The palatal nasal <ny> does not exist in Hadiyya except in the geminated form of few ideophones.

The assessment of the Roman-based Hadiyya orthography shows that there are gaps in the principles of economy and transfer of reading and writing skills. In Hadiyya, a problem of economy arises in the gemination of digraphs which are represented by full reduplication, as in <chch>, <shsh>, etc. Such representation is time consuming for writing and costly for printing. With regard to the principle of transfer, there are graphemes in which different phonetic values were assigned in Hadiyya compared to English. Particularly, the Hadiyya ejectives <x> [tʰ], <q> [kʰ], <c> [tʃʰ] and <ph> [pʰ] are problematic for Hadiyya children when they read English words containing these graphemes.

Regarding lexical elaboration strategies, both Amharic and Hadiyya extensively use language internal and external

resources. Based on language internal resources, semantic transfer, and compounding are very common methods of lexical expansion whereas abbreviation and blending are less common ones. Borrowing and loan translation are identified as the most productive language external means of lexical elaboration.

As to semantic transfer method, extensions from human body parts, from farming and animal breeding activities, from parts of plants, from sociocultural practices, reuse of special designation and redefinition of general vocabulary are commonly attested mechanisms in Amharic and Hadiyya whereas conversion, as semantic transfer method, is not attested in both languages. Hadiyya, more than Amharic, employs the semantic transfer method, e.g. semantic broadening (i.e., part-to-whole relationship), which was not attested in Amharic data.

Both Amharic and Hadiyya employ compounding as another major method of lexical elaboration. In both languages, the constituents of compounds involve nouns, adjectives, verbs and ideophones. Adpositions as constituents of compounds are attested in Hadiyya, but not in Amharic. Nominal compounds, followed by adjectival and verbal compounds, are most common in both languages. Verbal compounds in both languages are of composite type (i.e., ideophone + verb 'to say/to do'). As regards formal changes or phonological modifications, Hadiyya, compared to Amharic, employs more strategies on word boundaries. Both languages use endocentric, exocentric and appositional compounds though the degree of productivity is different. Amharic has right-

headed and left-headed endocentric compounds while Hadiyya has only right-headed compounds.

In addition to language internal resources, Amharic and Hadiyya extensively borrowed from Ethiopian and foreign languages. Amharic borrowed words mainly with modifications and only in some instances without modifications. Unmodified borrowing was not attested in Hadiyya. In Hadiyya, impermissible word initial consonant clusters are adjusted by inserting the epenthetic vowel [i] whereas in Amharic loanwords with word initial consonant cluster are commonly written without epenthetic λ [i], yet sometimes optionally used. Derivational and inflectional morphemes of the source languages are usually replaced by equivalent native morphemes in Amharic and Hadiyya. Superfluous borrowings are attested in the presence of equivalent native words in both languages. Moreover, loanwords and native equivalents are attested in parallel usage in Amharic and Hadiyya which call for standardization of such terms.

As regards source languages, both Amharic and Hadiyya mainly depend on foreign languages, such as English, Arabic, French and Italian, which are well developed in expressions of scientific and technological concepts compared to Ethiopian languages. Amharic uses more diverse sources than Hadiyya due to the former's wider linguistic contacts with European languages. Most of the European loanwords entered Hadiyya via Amharic since Amharic had been the medium of instruction in primary schools until 1991, in addition to its role as a language of wider communication in Ethiopia. The

incorporation of Arabic loanwords into Hadiyya is considered direct borrowing due to religious or cultural contact. Amharic exploited Ge'ez, which is a genetically related language, for the designation of a number of concepts. However, Hadiyya did not exploit related languages such as Kambaata and Oromo as a source of borrowing as much as Amharic exploited Ge'ez.

Loan translation is also used as a language external means of lexical elaboration in Amharic and Hadiyya. English has been used as a source language of loan translation for Amharic whereas both English and Amharic have been source languages for Hadiyya. As compared to other Ethiopian languages, the role of Amharic is imperative in developing the Hadiyya language as a source of lexical expansion especially through borrowing and loan translation.

Hadiyya could share vital experience from the development of Amharic. The latter has established lexical and terminological development principles. In Hadiyya, however, there are no clearly stated or established lexical and terminological development principles during the development of textbooks. In other words, the use of language internal and external resources is explicitly mentioned for the development of Amharic (cf. Amsalu, 1980:2) while it is not for Hadiyya. Thus, there is a need of principles of lexical elaboration for the future standardization of Hadiyya.

***A Court (Dīwān) manuscript of Harar
text edition and annotated translation***

Muna Abubeker



The dissertation presents an Arabic manuscript of a court registry in Harar city state written by a *šarī'*acourt secretary, covering the period from 1827 to 1837. It is the first attempt to introduce a diplomatic Arabic text of an earlier time in the Arabic stream of the philology programme at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, AAU. The codex is a day-to-day registry of the court activities mainly focusing on trust kept at the treasury section of the court, land transactions, inheritance, marriage and divorce cases. The text also highlights other duties of the court like book sale agreements, rental issues, loans and donations as well as guardianship. It demonstrates the culture and level of civilization of the Harar city state at a time when literacy was very low in the region.

Description of the manuscript

Author: *Qādī* ('chief judge') Abdurahman bin Muhammad (probably the one who dictated the manuscript).

Scribe: Not mentioned, but a man of Harari ethnic group.

Material: Paper.

Date: 1827-1837; No specific date could be determined for termination of the office.

Size: 21.5 cm X12.5 cm.

Pagination: The manuscript was not paginated originally but page numbers were given for a research purpose by a different hand in Indo-Arabic numerals. It has 313 pages as a bound codex. In addition, there are 10 pages inserted as loose leaves which focus on inheritance cases. Yet, another 12 pieces of different sizes, which have no relationship with the manuscript, are found at the end of the *qāḍī* of the codex.

Catch words: Catch words are found at the bottom left of some pages where a case is not completed in the same page and continues to the next page.

Lines per page: The smallest number of lines in a page is six and the biggest is thirty three but the majority have twenty five lines per page.

Paleography: The letters are legible and clearly written with *nashī* script, medium in size.

Orthography: The text is not vocalized except for rare cases of personal and place names. Three Harari consonants (𐌆, 𐌇, 𐌈) which are not represented in Arabic letters are represented in a strange orthographic representations using the Arabic letter ج [ǧ]. The letter 𐌆 is represented using the basic shape of the Arabic ج and putting the Arabic consonant ط above it. The letter 𐌇 is represented by using the basic shape of ج and putting the Arabic consonant ك above it. The letter 𐌈 is represented by using the basic shape of the Arabic ج and putting the Arabic consonant ش above it. There are also alteration of the shapes of the Arabic numbers 4 and 5 to the shapes of earlier stage. There are spelling, grammar and sentence construction deviations from the standard Arabic either because the secretary was not proficient in Arabic or

that the nature of the work was considered not to be deserving serious attention.

Rubrication: Rubrics are employed irregularly in relation to case headings, new months and new years, bars over main words in cases, the initial words of cases, sentence and paragraph separating markers.

Decoration: None.

Marginal notes: The four margins are often crowded with additional information, insertions and headings of cases.

Colophon: Unlike the traditional practice, it is found in the middle of the text. It states the appointment of the new *qāḍī* by the supreme leader, the Amir, after the death of the long-serving *qāḍī* who was himself the father of the new *qāḍī*. The date of the appointment of the new *qāḍī*, the registry by the new *qāḍī* and his brief biography are included.

Binding: The binding of the pages and the leather cover is done with a white string which is well-woven and not so visible. The front leather cover and the first folio, similarly the back leather cover and the folio preceding it with a piece of cloth between each set are glued together.

Condition: Generally good.

Content Analysis: The manuscript records the daily routines of the court: marriage and divorce cases are accurately registered including the names of the couples, date of marriage or divorce, dowry involved or property settlements in cases of divorce, trust in the custody of the *qāḍī*, complex inheritance distributions, sales of books and other materials.

The manuscript displays the cultural as well as the linguistic aspects of the city state of Harar in the 19th century before the advent of the Egyptian rule in 1875. It reflects the material as well as non-material culture of Harar. The document is

especially important vis-a-vis gender studies and economics. The role of the *qāḍī* was far beyond the role of the present judiciary system of Ethiopia and many other countries. He was the guardian of those like orphans and women who needed protection. Such instances as the conversion to Islam, especially among the upper military personnel, and that the new converts were assimilated with the society easily are found in the document. The cases of divorce, women's initiative to divorce and its consequences, social interactions with different ethnic groups, many toponyms that indicate the geographical expanse of the city state are registered. Another significant aspect of the manuscript is its mention of personal names with attributive adjectives denoting professional, military and religious associations that could further indicate the social and geographical origin of the inhabitants Harar at the time. In the codex, it was gathered that there were local as well as foreign currencies; nonetheless, the local currency, *Ašraf*, was the most commonly used. The foreign currencies were *Qarš*, *Riyāl* and, in some cases, the French Franc. There are no significant cases of bartering encountered in the manuscript.

Translation: The whole text is digitally presented and fully translated from Arabic into English with some annotations. The first part of the manuscript translation is from page 1 to 28. It covers mainly issues related to properties deposited with the *qāḍī*'s trust. It consists of a total of 85 cases: 50 of them are directly trust related and the rest are miscellaneous subjects. The inheritance cases, which 99 in number, are found in pages 29 to 99. Land transaction cases, which are 63, are found from page 100 to 120. Of the total land transactions, 30 are of miscellaneous cases. Marriage takes the

majority of the cases in the manuscript. It includes 1905 cases registered in pages 121 - 292. The divorce cases appear in pages 296 - 313 with 138 cases.

To sum up, the dissertation, investigates the social issues of the ordinary citizens of early 19th century Harar city state and provides the English translation of the manuscript with relevant annotations. I believe that the study would pave the way for further interdisciplinary research.

Enrolment

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

1. PhD

Field of Study (Track)	Year of Entry																		Total			
	2004 (2011/12)			2005 (2012/13)			2006 (2013//14)			2007 (2014/15)			2008 (2015/16)			2009 (2016/17)						
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T				
Applied Linguistics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	1	12	2	-	2	14
Descriptive & Th. Ling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	14	4	2	6	20
Documentary Ling.	9	1	10	9	-	9	6	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
Experimental Phonetics	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
General Linguistics	2	1	3	5	1	6	5	-	5	18	5	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
Philology	3	-	3	5	-	5	9	-	9	7	-	7	-	-	-	8	-	8	-	-	-	32
Total	14	2	16	19	2	21	22	-	22	25	5	30	8	-	34	8	-	34	6	2	8	131

2. MA

Field of Study	Year of Entry										Total					
	2007 (2014/15)					2008 (2015/16)						2009 (2016/17)				
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M		F	T			
Linguistics	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3		
Philology	-	2	2	5	1	6	5	-	5	-	5	-	5	13		
Total		2	2	8	1	9	5	-	5	-	5	-	5	16		

3. BA

Field of Study (Track)	Year of Entry															Total					
	Pre-2007 (Pre-2014/15)					2007 (2014/15)					2008 (2015/16)						2009 (2016/17)				
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T		M	F	T		
Linguistics	-	-	-	1	7	8	-	23	23	12	18	30	61								
Sign Language	6	2	8	5	4	9	5	5	10	11	8	19	46								
Total	6	2	8	6	11	17	5	28	33	23	26	49	107								

Staff Profile (2016/17)

I. Full Time

1. Professor

Baye Yimam

PhD, SOAS, University of London, *Syntax*

2. Associate Professor

Gerald Heusing

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

Moges Yigezu

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

Ronny Meyer

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

Zealelem Leyew

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

3. Assistant Professor

Abebayehu Messele

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

Bedilu Wakjira

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

Demeke Asres

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *IT PhD*

Derib Ado

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Experimental Phonetics*

Desalegn Hagos

PhD, Descriptive linguistics, Stockholm University, Sweden, *Descriptive Linguistics*

Endalew Assefa

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Descriptive Linguistics*

Endris Mohammed

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

Eyasu Hailu

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Sign Linguistics*

Feda Negesse

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Experimental Phonetics*

Girma Mengistu (Currently, Department Chair)

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Descriptive Linguistics*

Mersha Alehegne

PhD, Hamburg University, *Philology*

Muna Abubeker

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Philology*

Samuel Handamo

PhD, Addis Ababa University, *Sociolinguistics*

Shimelis Mazengia

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

4. Post-doctoral Research Leave (abroad)

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

5. Lecturer (PhD candidate)

Abay Tesfaye

MA, Addis Ababa University, *Linguistics*

Andargachew Deneke

MA, Addis Ababa University, *Special Needs Education*

Binyam Ephrem

MPhil, University of Tromsø, Norway, *Computational Linguistics*

Dessie Keleb

MA, Addis Ababa University, *Philology*

John Koang

MA, Addis Ababa University, *Linguistics*

Mulugeta Tarekegn Tsegaye

MA, Addis Ababa University, *Linguistics*

Pawlos Kassu

M.Ed. University of Jos, Nigeria, *Sign Linguistics*

6. Lecturer

Samrawit Bekele

MA, Addis Ababa University, *Linguistics*

II. Home base

Hirut Wolde-Mariam, Associate Professor

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

Mulugeta Seyoum, Assistant Professor

PhD, Leiden University, Netherlands,
Descriptive Linguistics

Wondwosen Tesfaye, Assistant Professor

PhD, Norwegian University of Science and
Technology, Norway, *Morphology & Syntax*

III. Technical Assistant

Leul Zeray

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

Mihret Daba

Diploma, Africa Beza College, Information
Technology

IV. Administrative Staff

Brook Hailemariam,

Administrative and Finance Assistant (Linguistic

Capacity Building: Tools for Inclusive Development
of Ethiopia, NORAD funded project)

Malefia Shiferaw, *Janitor*

Mekdes Girma, *Secretary, Part-timer*

Rahel Demsie, *Messenger*

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- **Linguistic documentation**
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