

AN ANALYSIS OF AWINGI PROVERBS

TEFERI GETAHUN

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TEFERI GETAHUN

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AN ANALYSIS OF AWNGI PROVERBS

**BY:
TEFERI GETAHUN**

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND
LITERATURE INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES**

Approved by

Dr. Yimer Kifle
Advisor


Signature

Dr. Abiyu Daniel
Examiner


Signature

Melakneh Mengistu
Examiner


Signature

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this thesis is analysing form and content of Awngi proverbs. As part and parcel of culture, Awngi proverbs exist and used under cultural sets of principles.

They are performed as responses to communicational needs. They are expressive items used in daily conversation. As a result, the analysis is carried-out under the socio-physical context of the communication events. Hence, basic cultural and social systems that govern a communication process as well are taken into account during analysis of the situations of proverb application. The information about those cultural intents is also important to indicate the ways to approach the community at times of effective pedagogical and other development planning and implementation.

As rhetorical devices, Awngi proverbs are used to effect the purpose of persuasion. They are applied in situations of tension, crisis or conflict. Hence, they are used to solve problems. Their instructive content is embedded in each item (text) Awngi proverbs are concise in form. They are poetic in character and sometimes in form, too. In short, they are poetic in character, rhetorical in purpose, instructive in content and applicable at times of crises.

Key to Transliteration

Most transcription is made in popular alphabets. But Awngi phonemes which have no English equivalents are transcribed with IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) signs.

1.	<u>Vowels</u>	<u>English Alphabet</u>	<u>IPA</u>	<u>Examples</u>
	a	a	ʌ	some
	ä	-	/ä	tower
	e	e	e	pen
	i	i	i	lip
	o	o		ball
	u	u	u	good
	i	-	i	እርሳስ (Amharic)

2. Awngi has consonants that do not occur both in English and in Amharic.

<u>Consonants</u>	<u>IPA</u>
h	x
N	
t ^s	t ^s
q	q

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study of folklore in Ethiopia seems to be relatively new. According to Fekade (1999: 41), "... still there is no organization or governmental body that has understood its importance [in national development] and thus foster researches in the field. Despite this situation, however, some expatriates and native scholars as well as many students at Addis Ababa University have made considerable attempts to collect and analyse some genres of some ethnic groups. However, the quality of most of those works remains to be largely questionable. Because most works have disregarded social and cultural situations or contextual variables which are extremely important for folklore research. In other words, the investigation of performance situations and the communicative processes have been overlooked (Fekade 1984: 13), for the researchers themselves were not properly trained in the theory and methodology of what the works demanded.

Apart from this, the generic and ethnic coverage of those researches as well seems to be not adequately well

designed. Because Ethiopia, as a multinational country has a diversity of culture and hence of folklore. But the researches carried out in this field of knowledge are so limited in variety, quality and ethnic coverage. For instance, only two hundred and forty-three essays and theses were submitted to the Institute of Language Studies until the end of 1998 (Fekade 1999: 43-5). Out of this sum, only seven M.A. theses are at advanced level. As to the generic and ethnic distribution of those works, Awngi, which has only one research on folktales and none on other genres can be taken as a case in point.

Conversely, this situation indicates the degree of emphasis required to appropriately undertake research on folklore in general and unexploited genres of minor languages in particular. This is because the study of folklore is a means to know the culture, the history and the psychological make-up of the people under study. As to the importance of studying folklore many scholars, for example, share the idea that folklore is an integral part of culture whereas culture is the total life way of people. In accordance with this view, any form of study carried out in any genre of folklore would manifest the various aspects of life including beliefs, experiences, wisdom, norms and

values of that people. Ben-Amos (1979: 430) reinforces this view as,

... folklore is a sphere of interaction, a mirror of culture, a perspective screen of personality." Folklore is also a response to individuals' needs and desires and an artistic expression with its own structure and aesthetics" (Brunvand 1979: 426).

This view suggests that culture is a broad field where folklore is performed by its people. Of course, culture is not only the play ground but also the source of both the needs and the rules by which the actualization of interaction is governed. Culture, therefore, generates both the needs and principles for folklore to respond as well as to act accordingly. In short, culture is a stimulus and a director whereas folklore is a respective response to those stimuli. In other words, folklore is an emotional, verbal, spiritual or physical response or activity based on the requirements of that culture. Such an activity would, no doubt, reflect the insights of the individuals and the group including the working out of those cultural sets of principles. Hence, any form of folklore study would illuminate its culture as well as the bearer folk. Abrahams (1979: 393) also agrees with this view by saying that "... every artefact and entity within a culture potentially reflects the whole make-up of that people. Emphatically

stating on the importance of the study of oral literature Fekade (1998: 10) also shares this view in such a way that "... studying the oral literature of a given people or a group may be of a paramount importance to understand and appreciate its values, history, philosophy, wisdom ...".

Similarly, then, this research on Awngi proverbs (expressive genre) that has not been studied hitherto becomes of a significant value. Because these genres, according to Abrahams (1968), as expressive devices, are believed to bring out cultural and institutional sets of principles as well as behavioral attitudes into action during their performance. Put in his own words,

... the study of expressive genres is of a great importance to the student of expressive culture, for it is through such traditional forms that the basic institution of the society are often put into practice." expressive genres are proverbs, prayers, superstitions, and curses (Abrahams 1968).

Moreover, this situation, when it comes to the folk of undocumented cultures, becomes more meaningful and significant, for it is the only means to know about the people and their tradition. Foster (1968: 280) also emphatically states it as follows "... in a largely undocumented minority culture these people [tradition

bearers] are not only our artists and historians; they are also the live books and manuscripts that enshrine materials and much of the scholarship." In light of this, the research on Awngi proverbs (expressive genre of undocumented culture) would reveal basic information about the life of its people. Wilson (1979: 458) also underlines the importance of folklore in the identification of both the emotional and the material situation of the people. "... if we are to know the hearts and minds of our people we must know their folklore."

As a facet of culture, reservoir of wisdom and experience, Awngi proverbs as well reveal traditional wisdom as well as current practices of their people. Above all, as expressive genres of oral tradition, they become important sources of basic information. When viewed from the angle of the fate of the language, that is existing on the verge of extinction due to the ever increasing process of assimilation into Amharic, the role of this research becomes of a great practical value.

Awngi is one of the Agaw languages of the central Cushitic family. It is spoken in the north western part of the former Gojjam. This area is currently known as Awi

Administrative zone. Awngi is an unlettered language and has no written literature. As a result, its cultural legacies are found orally. According to a couple of studies undertaken on the language its future fate seems to be unreliable. For instance, Hetzron (1969); Taddesse (1984); Gamst (1969; Worku (1986) and Melakneh (1990) agree on the point that drastic effect of assimilation of Awngi into Amharic. Gamst (1969: 24), above all, points out the situation very clearly as follows:

Amharization has not and probably will not affect the various other ethnic groups in Ethiopia as drastically as it has affected the Agaw... The reason why most Agaw groups have been so effectively Amharized to the point of total assimilation is that they have had a continuous contact with the Amharic over a span of many centuries.

Taking those suggestions into consideration, therefore, this project primarily attempts to preserve one of those oral priceless treasures (proverbs). Proverbs, as expressive genres and the outcomes of a series of historical events, life experiences, observations of nature and accumulated wisdoms are believed to better show the insights of the tradition and the people. Because apart from the points discussed earlier according to Foster (1968: 278), folklore help understand the broad sociology of a community ...". As to

him, the importance of the study of tradition is irreversible "... tradition is the historical process of reinterpretation through which a community links the past to the present." Because it is through tradition that a community sustains its social and moral identity in the face of socio-historical circumstances. Ben-Amos (1976); Williams (1977); Bauman (1986); Hanks (1987) and Foster (1968). Particularly, Foster clearly explains the value of studying any genre of folklore within their context or tradition as follows:

Always reacted, always remade, tradition is the community's frame-work not only for measuring continuity and change but also for authorizing them as well.

Accordingly the Awi tradition also shows reasons, time, manner and the effect of application of Awngi proverbs as well as their place in the community.

Hence, the thesis is primarily concerned with elucidating occasions, factors causing proverb performance as well as the users, the audience and the purposes of citations. The questions about the circumstances in which the proverb citation takes place or the physical and social context of proverb applications which were least informed in

previous studies, therefore, are given a due emphasis in this work. Moreover, the textual analysis of forms, the basic purpose of proverb application and the effect of proverbs on audiences are adequately considered. The literary significance of Awngi proverbs is also one of the focal points of the research.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Field experience has proved that Awngi abounds in proverbs of a great practical value. Awngi proverbs serve in the daily communication of the people. They are used in ordinary verbal conversation which is one of the compulsory requirements of human life. Communication is an indispensable activity of social beings, for there is no other way for the exchange of views and opinions so as to facilitate their living. Wilson (1988: 158) emphatically states this view as "... communication is one of the imperatives of human existence, one of the things humans have always to make in order to exchange views in order to be human...".

Proverbs, then, are additional tools of communication that work in such an imperative human practice - communication. That is, switched into the primary medium of

exchange (language) itself. In other words, proverb application in the Awi society is a form of social interaction via language based on social conventions or cultural sets of rules that are adhered to or recognized by all members of the group as well as the society at times of communication process. Proverbs, as rhetorical devices, are applied mainly for persuasion or argumentation in a situation of crisis in order to convince, reinforce or stabilize, in a word to alter the position or the attitude of an addressee. Hence, Awngi proverbs are aspects of the language. They are normally parts of ordinary conversation that play significant role in persuasion of one kind or another. As far as de Caro (1984: 181) is concerned, they are short-hand methods of communication. They are ready-made statements that convey a culturally agreed upon idea when an already ongoing conversational situation requires their application. Time and space of proverb saying is thus situational. They are applied when the communication situation comes across a conflict, tension or the need of ornamentation.

Apart from this, Awngi proverbs reflect the grammar of the language, the artistic wisdom and history of the people. Their internal structural complexity, conforming with most

characteristics of poetry, also shows the literary quality of Awngi proverbs.

Regardless of such important contributions, however, no attempt has hitherto been made to collect, record and analyse them.

Cognizant of this situation, therefore, this paper primarily attempts to preserve those priceless public heritages before they are lost due to the repeatedly suggested process of assimilation of the language into Amharic. On top of that, the work as well attempts to throw light on the forms, contents and functions of Awngi proverbs. It also attempts to reveal some social and literary information underlying their structural and functional features. In other words, it shows their social and literary significance by examining their structures and occasions of applications.

In short the study ⁰⁷⁹⁷endeavors to answer the following questions:

Questions

1. Why do the Awi people use proverbs?
2. Who uses them with whom and for what purpose as well as where; when and how?

3. What effects do they have on listeners?
4. What does their structures look like?
5. Is there any literary significance in them?

In a nutshell, the work attempts to examine the social, temporal, spatial and literary features under which the Awngi proverbs are applied in the society.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This project has a multi-dimensional importance. It attempts to conserve some of the social heritages before they are lost due to the assimilation of the language into Amharic. On top of that, according to the recent trends of proverb studies, as this work as well relies much on the tradition bearers (the folk), it brings out some relevant information that help to know more about the life of the people in question. Because the study of the setting where the performance style of proverbs in relation to the audience response is carried out, shows the social systems including their norms and values which guide culture-governed situations of communication process. In other words, proverb texts as well as their situational contexts reflect common philosophy of life through conventionally set verbal performing processes. Hence, the physical and social

study of contexts shows cultural and historical position of the society under discussion.

This knowledge of the society, in turn, would contribute a great deal to the governmental and non-governmental bodies which are interested in carrying out studies in the area for economic and pedagogical reasons. Furthermore, as proverbs are language phenomena, propositions and conclusions (logical units) as well as artistic miniatures (that reflect living reality in finely etched forms) Permyakov (1979: x), the study would evoke the interests of scholars from various directions including literature, linguistics, anthropology, history and ethnography. The study can also contribute its share to the related works that follow it.

Above all, as it is carried out in the society that has no written tradition, this study of expressive genre (proverb) would not only reveal but also introduce the insights of the people. Because as Kliever (1979: 24) pointed out, folklore conveys not only the substances but also a wide variety of mood and attitudes such as happiness, sadness, optimism, morbidity, anger, tolerance... that are important to know more about the nature of the people. It is

these characteristics that differentiates folklore from other disciplines like history. Unlike history, for instance, folklore conveys not only the fact or the content of the idea but also the form, the mood and the attitudes of the concerned people. Thus, this study would appeal not only to the Awi people but also to others, for human-beings share most social and psychological traits.

In short, as devices of basic and choiceless human activity — that is, communication, proverbs are important to reinforce the language in the daily conversation of the Awi people.

Bearing in mind the important points discussed so far, the thesis has the following specific aims: aimu

1. It attempts to collect, record and preserve Awngi proverbs before they disappear due to the progressive assimilation of the language into Amharic.
2. It examines the purpose and function of Awngi proverbs in the daily life of the concerned people.

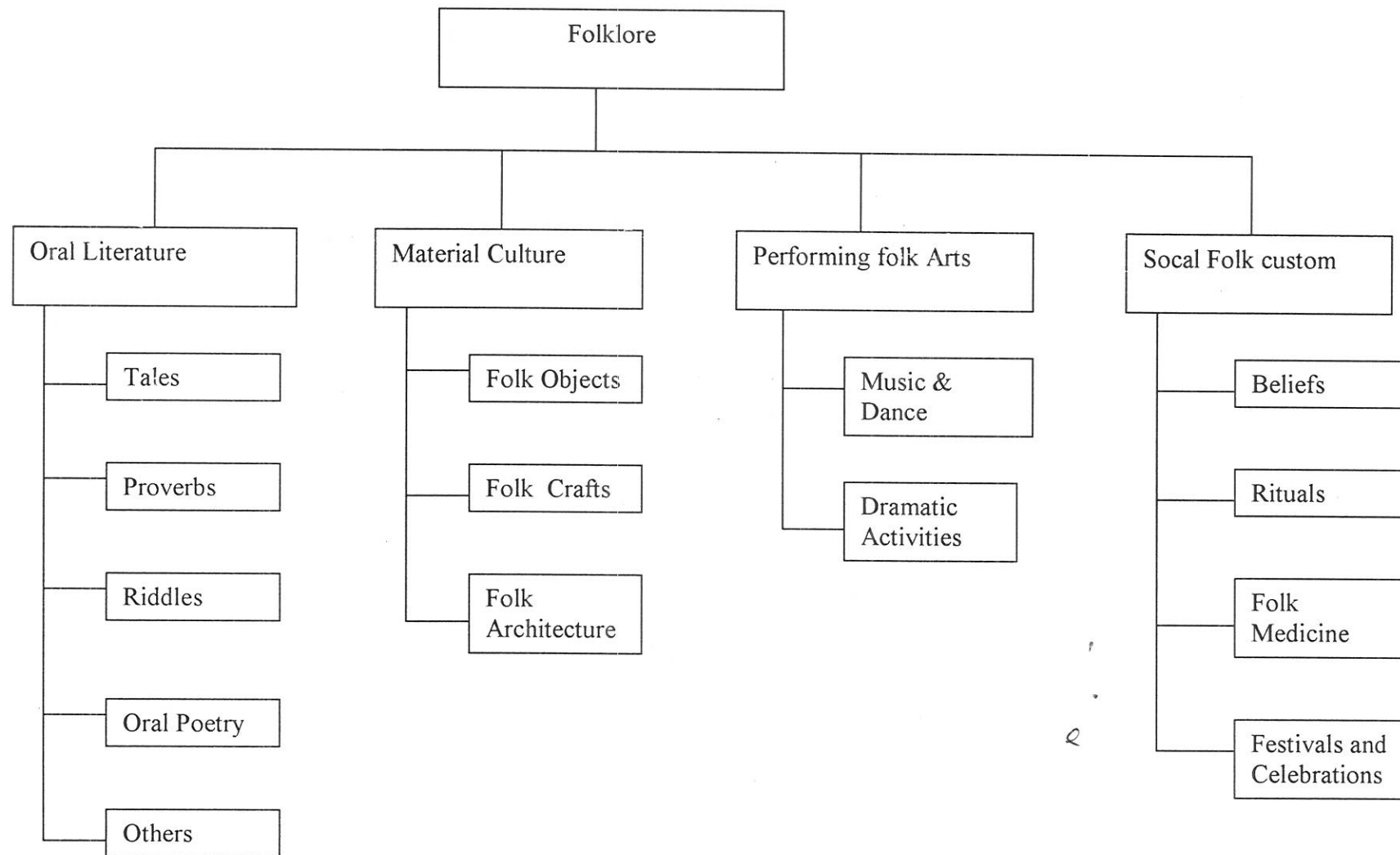
3. It as well analyses their forms and the contents in order to assess their literary and rhetorical significance.

1.3 Definition of Terms

1.3.1 Folklore

Folklore is a compound word built up from "folk", referring to some group of people who have something called "lore" and "lore" referring to learning or knowledge, especially, handed down from past times or possessed by a class or group of people (Oring 1984:1). But, according to Dundes quoted by Oring, 'folk' is "any group of people who share at least one common factor that creates a sense of collective identity ... such salient social factors as ethnicity, occupation, kinship, religious beliefs, sex, age. Thus, as to Oring, 'folk' referring to any group based on any factor would not seem to contribute significantly to the definition of folklore. The definition of folklore, therefore, seems to depend on the notion of 'lore' which according to Dundes means an itemized list of genres (Oring 1984: 2), which consists of fifty-four items including proverbs.

Dorson (1972: 1-2), on the other hand, classifies folklore into four broad categories. These are oral literature, material culture, social folk custom and performing folk arts. Each category further contains lists of genres in its domain. The category of oral literature, for instance, embodies oral poetry and oral prose narratives such as songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, legends The category of material culture as well includes folk objects, folk crafts, folk architecture and the like. Performing folk arts, on its part, consists of items that are artistically performed like music, dance, and other dramatic activities. And finally, social folk custom constitutes those customary practices like annual or occasional celebrations, festivals, rituals, beliefs, folk medicine and other related forms. This classification can be summarized as follow.



The enumerative list of Dundes as well as the systematic classification of Dorson each has its own merits. The classification of extensive folklore items into manageable categories based on their relations in content, form, or performance style, for instance, shows relationships within a class than others outside the category. Hence, this suggests a systematic approach to such a vast field of folklore. This list on the other hand, presents a distinct list of items of folklore that Dorson's classification does not show (exhaust). Hence, each seems to serve the interest of the scholarship as required.

For the purpose of this research, however, folklore is adopted to mean the lore (learning or knowledge) of a community who shares common social factors as ethnicity, occupation, kinship, sex, age, beliefs... that create a sense of collective identity.

1.3.2 Proverbs

A proverb, is difficult to define. The attempt of almost every scholar in the field to define it asserts this difficulty. This researcher has come across various definitions among which some are indicated below for the sake of comparison as well as the benefit of readers.

- Proverb is a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense and salt and distinguished by popular truth tersely expressed in it (Finnegan 1970: 393).
 - A proverb is a concise sentence often metaphorical or alliterative in form which is held to express some truth ascertained by experience or observation and familiar to all (Oxford English Dictionary).
 - Proverbs are language phenomena logical units (propositions and conclusions), artistic miniatures (that reflect living reality in a finely etched forms/Permyakov 1979: 4/.
 - Proverb is a statement, a traditional statement passed on in a fixed form by oral transmission and assumed to convey some ethical or philosophical truth (some other wise observations about life, the world or human nature) (de Caro 1984: 184) (emphasis mine)
- Proverbs are short, ready-made sententious statements of common truth constituted from life experience and used in rhetorical or conversational situations of formal or informal events. (Abrahams 1968: 119)/ Emphasis mine/.

Most definitions above, show the conciseness or brevity of proverbs. They also share the idea of their origin as (observation about life, the world or human nature — i.e., experience). Moreover, almost all of them agree on their contents as "common truth." However, definitions particularly, given by Oxford English Dictionary, de Caro and Abrahams seem to be more inclusive. OED, for instance, asserts one of the basic characteristics of Awngi proverbs such as the "metaphorical or alliterative in form" which shows their poeticity and sophistry in form and meaning. de Caro also shows their "traditional oral transmission" as well as their conveyance of "ethical" content. Finally, Abrahams indicates their purpose as "rhetorical" context as "conversational situation and their purpose as ready-made "means of communication. This work, thus, eclectically relies on those three definitions to distinctly identify its subject from other related forms as well as to carry out its purpose of form and content analysis in the natural setting of Awngi proverbs.

1.4 Review of Related Literature

According to Meider (1997), proverbs are the oldest collections in the history of humankind. The fascination of

Reviewed Literature

man on proverbs can be traced back to the earliest records, notably to the Bible. Ancient Sumerians that were known to include small proverb collections on their "Cuneiform tablets" (1997: 3) were also notable for their earlier practices in the collection of proverbs. Moreover, the Greek and Latin proverb collections of the classical period could as well show the high regard that the antiquity had given for this formulaic traditional wisdom as far as Meider is concerned.

Apart from the interest to collect its proverbs, the Elizabethan England was also known for its making of schoolboys to memorize hundreds of proverbs, for proverbs were believed to be the carriers of the wisdom of the folk (Berman and Berman (1997: XIX). Hence, the appearance of proverbs in literary works dating from classical times and the Bible to that of the medieval period clearly illustrates the significance or value each society had given to its proverbs.

From this, it is possible to say that proverbs always had a strong hold on cultures throughout the world. This is not only because that they are memorably phrased ready-made rhetorical tools, but it is also because that they are

collective folk wisdom that people quote the better to express themselves. Proverbs are also equated with parents and teachers that advise their young communities what to do how to cope with harsh reality and how to get along with all kinds of people (Bermans 1997: XI) what people get from proverbs in addition to such instructions include precision of phrasing, the musical alliteration, the felicity of verbal counterpart and balanced construction (1997: XIX) in short their formal and tonal beauty are also from those qualities that have evoked the interests of various scholars since the antiquity. Proverb scholars have long recognized that these age-old experiences and traditional wisdoms play a significant role in everyday oral and written communication. Hence, the interest of collecting and using proverbs seems to be timeless. Because, proverbs are equally important in the oral and written communication of the current society as well. Meider quoted in Bermans (1997: XIX-XX) underlines this point in the following way:

proverbs are small pieces of human wisdom
that have been handed down from
generation to generation and valid even
in our modern technological age.

This unfading and current use of proverbs is further observed in the spheres of literature and politics. Mildred A. Hill (1975: 111-134) has shown that Chenu Achebe has used

227 proverb in his four novels. According to the above information, Achebe has used 29 proverbs in Things Fall Apart, 42 in No Longer at Ease, 129 in Arrow of God and 27 in A Man of the People. No doubt, he has deliberately used them for better effect and to add local colour to his fictional works.

This certainly shows that proverbs are important to enrich written literatures as well as oral conversations provided that they are consciously and effectively applied. The importance of proverbs is also significant in the area of politics. Politicians, reformationists and humanists, for instance, use proverbs to persuade or convince their people toward their goals. Cicero, Erasmus and Luther, who were notable orator, humanist and reformer respectively in their times can be taken as cases in point to use proverbs in order to fight their rhetorical and intellectual battles (Meider 1997: 4). Meider further unfolds that the politics of the 19th and 20th century also saw Abraham Lincoln, Ottovan Bismark, Theodore Rosovelt, V. I. Lenin, Adolf Hitler, Winston Churchill and many others who appreciated proverbs as ready-made tools to effect their political mission (1997: 5). Hilter, who was aware of the propagandistic value of proverbs, had repeatedly used in his book. "Mein Kampf"

(1925-6) to exact his political objectives and his invictiveness against the Jews (1997: 5).

The applicability of proverbs to counter-attack a conflicting situation can be viewed from the side of Winston Churchill, who had read "Mein Kampf" and had understood both Hitler's evil designs and the power of proverbs in political communication. Subsequently, Churchill also had used his mastery of proverbs against Hitler so as to motivate his people to fight against the Plight (1997: 5).

In short proverbs can provide much insight into the literary craftsmanship and oral conversation. Furthermore, they can serve politicians, reformers, humanists, linguists, cultural historians, folklorists and similar others in addition to that of revealing the insights of their people.

Regardless of this timeless significance of proverbs in the rhetorical and academic sphere, the emphasis placed on it seems to be limited both in variety and quality as far as studies carried out hitherto in Ethiopia are concerned. Of course, works that range from B.A. theses to published ones are observed in this area. However, most works rely on bare texts disregarding important variables of social and

cultural situations of communication processes. In other words, they hardly, focus on physical and social contexts. For instance, according to Gezahegn (1981 E.C.) some six publications are seen on Amharic proverbs. They are Yesuf (1942); Mahteme Sillase (1943); Mogous (1959); Adnew (1961); Gorfu (1961) and Tilahun (1961). The common objectives of those writers are to hand the traditional wisdoms of the ancestors down to the growing generations. Another related objective is preservation of heritable legacies as they commonly say "በቃል ያለ ይረሳል፣ በመጽሐፍ ያለ ይወረሳል።"

Apart from those publications, some students at Addis Ababa University have shown some interest in the area since the last three decades. As to Fekade (1999: 4), twenty three B.A. and one M.A. Theses have been submitted to the Institute of Language Studies until the end of 1998. Those B.A. theses include Dereje (1963); yägaliNa tärät ina misalewoch (54) pages; Shimels (1965) yäsidamigna tärät ina misalewoch (1160 pages' Huseen (1968) bä arsi yätäsäbäsäbu tärät tna misalewoch (113) pages; Gessesse (1971) yätigirigna tärät ina ämisalewoch (121) pages; Wudneh (1971) stratin yämiantsäbarku ababaloch (64) pages' Teshome (1973) yadäregna tärät ina misalewoch (62) pages; Tsegaye (1973) yäguji tärät ina misalewoch (82) pages; Worku (1973)

yäsomaligna tärät ina misalewoch (47) pages; Gezahegn (1981) yätärät ina misalewoch nifet (165) pages; Mengistu (1986) yamargna ina yäktstantgna misaliawi anägagäroch tämäsaslo nitsitsirawi tinat (32) pages; Solomon (1986) Yamargna ina yäoromigna misaliawi nigigiroch nitsitsirawi tinat (40) pages.

The contribution of those papers, as far as collection of proverbs of different ethnic groups is concerned, is considerable. Added to this, they have as well attempted to introduce their target societies to the area of academics. However, most of them have collected their data from earlier published documents.

On top of that, they do not show their methodology of collecting, classifying and interpreting their data. In almost all of those works, the capacity of proverbs to reflect the traditions, beliefs, norms and values, feelings and thoughts of their target societies has been taken into account. In other words, the contents of proverbs, according to their understanding, have been presented. That is, most works attempt to simply give meanings based on their common sense to their data collected outside their contexts. But the deeper meanings of proverbs which exist beyond their

common senses cannot be understood without the analysis of the social situation or communication process to which they are appropriate. Above all, their basic role as tools of conversation has been overlooked. Their literary and linguistic significances as well are not taken into account. In short, the textual analysis of forms, their rhetorical purposes, their poetic characteristics, and the relevance of contexts are not considered in most of those works. They are rather concentrated on interpreting meanings and determining function based on their common sense.

However, unless their social, temporal, spatial and rational applications are not identified from the actual communication process or else, the meanings themselves are not collected from the tradition bearers, their attempt of content analysis at a point where these conditions are missing is pointless.

Yet, there are some peculiarities that avoid sweeping generalization to those works. The works of Solomon (1986), Mengistu (1968) and Gezahegn (1981), for instance, are comparative studies between Amharic and Oromifa. Amharic and kistaniNa, and within Amharic collections respectively. The aims of the former two studies are to identify the cross

cultural flow of proverbs and to explore the influence of one over the other. And that of the latter one is to sift out redundancies among its Amharic references mentioned earlier.

Teshome (1973) and Husen (1968), nonetheless, have shown a better understanding of the importance of context in data collection, though they fail to appreciate the native's perception and when, how and why proverbs in each society are used. Yet, Teshome speaks about the importance of discussing over their meanings with its informants." በትርጉሙ ላይ ከሰዎች ጋር ከተነጋገርሁ በኋላ የተስማሙበትን ወስኛለሁ።" (መግቢያ) /After I discussed with people over their meanings I have taken those meanings that they have agreed upon." Hussen, as well states the difficulty of collecting proverbs, for they have no definite occasion of application. Regardless of this problem, however, his report indicates that he has collected his data from their natural setting "ሰዎች በየተሰበሰቡበት ቦታ በመገኘት" (1968: 11).

Apart from those B.A. theses and published works discussed so far, a far advanced work on proverbs is Berhanu's M.A. thesis (1986) "An Analysis of Kambatta Proverbs". This work is unique in many respects as compared

to those previous works. It is the only work on the advanced level as to the knowledge of this researcher. Moreover, as indicated on its objectives, the paper attempts to show the social use of proverbs in cultural situations (contexts). By so doing the work tries to explore the relation of folklore to culture. Above all, the research shows the importance of collecting data (proverbs) from the actual context of use.

However, this project "An Analysis of Awngi Proverbs" depends on the entirely different setting. Its linguistic, social as well as spatial context is different from that of Behranu's which is on the Kambatta culture, people and language. Whereas the former is on the Awi culture, people and on Awngi proverbs. Hence, both the physical as well as the social settings are different though the two share the same field of study or genre (proverbs).

1.5 Methodology and Procedure

1.5.1 Procedure

Any systematic field work begins in a library. Because any field activity requires a necessary preparation as to how to handle the actual field work. For instance, a plan of work should be designed, data on background information

including theories, culture and history of the people in question must be collected and studied before setting into the field work. Accordingly, this work as well began by reading on relevant background information. In other words, documented data was collected, examined and used as a guide for collecting field data.

Yet, this research was fundamentally carried out based on primary data collected from two sample "woredas" in Awi Administrative Zone (Kosober in Banj-shikudad and chagni in Guangua). The cites were chosen to examine variations in proverb use, if any, due to expected dialectal differences between 'dirihi' (degagna) and 'kulisi' (koleгна) accents, represented by Kosober and Changi respectively. The field work however, has proven that there are no marked differences in proverb application between them. This is because of traditional homogeneity and insignificance of dialectal variation.

The idea of undertaking a research on Awngi proverbs was first conceived in 1995 when the researcher was working in the Culture, Information and Tourism Bureau of the Amhara Regional State. Accordingly, the researcher had paid a short visit to Chagni, Kosober, Zigem, Dangila and Gimjabet.

During this trip of survey some valuable data on traditional life ways of the people were collected from elders. However, due to the transfer of this researcher to another administrative zone the intended research remained unmaterialised.

Nevertheless, the researcher's knowledge of the abundance of proverbs together with previous survey evoked his interest when a research topic for Graduate Seminar I (March 1999) was sought for. Accordingly, respective instructors were consulted and they approved the topic. Since then reading on background materials was continued. Thus, after taking adequate information about appropriate methods of collecting and processing field data from the documented sources, the first round field work was undertaken from July 20, 1999 to August 23, 1999.

During this time, contacts with local officers and informants were established. Above all, informants like Yaregal, Embiale, Kinde and Bantihun who are well versed in their language and tradition as well as who were cooperative enough to assist the research were introduced to the objectives of the research. In addition to this, some relevant data were also collected from those informants.

Apart from this, considerable number of data were also collected from the researcher's residential area - that is, from friends, neighbours, parents and other family members. This was possible because the researcher is the speaker of the language, member of the culture and a traditional bearer himself. Thus, this opportunity enabled him to collect data from his casual encounters with people undertaking conversation in Awngi. Both the incidental method (collecting data from accidental encounters) as well as local method (collecting data from one's residential area) are very important means of proverb data collection, for proverbs have no designed occasion of performance. Moreover, some important data were also collected from researcher's own memory. When the researcher himself is taking part in discussions (conversations), a situation where proverb citation is required may arise for him as well just like a case in anybody else. Readings on proverbs also evoked memories of proverb citations by providing with similar instances. In other words, situations that evoke memories of proverbs as well as their appropriate applications by the researcher himself were as well important sources from where considerable proverbs were collected. This situation is also underlined by Lindfors (1977: 2) Goldstein (1964:IX) and

Wilson (1984: 123). Above all, Wilson clearly states it as follows:

Do not hesitate at times to interview yourself ... you should remember all kinds of folklore events in which you have taken part ... you do know how it affected you better than others tell you. Some of your text data come this way.

Accordingly, the present researcher's position of being a native of Awi tradition has helped him much in carrying out his analytic work.

The second round field work took place from January 8, 2000 to February 10, 2000. This period was crucially important, for some additional data were collected and above all, relevant discussions with those previous informants were made. On issues like how, when, where and why Awngi proverbs are used? Where and why they are used? What effects are observed on the part of a listener? Discussions were made and important points were collected as a result. In addition to this, discussions were as well made on the interpretations of proverbs. Finally, the information was used to organize the final work.

1.5.2 Methodology

This part attempts to show the methods used to carry-out this research. It is important to note that there is no single approach of research in the field of proverb scholarship. This seems to be because of multi-dimensional characteristics of proverbs. For instance, proverbs are logical units (propositions and conclusions); they are language phenomena; they are also artistic miniatures that show finely etched living reality (Permyakov 1979). Thus, their multi-facetedness entails the use of as many methods as possible depending on the objectives of the research. Accordingly, therefore, this study has required the assessment of rhetorical functional and structural approaches. These methods were used eclectically based on the objectives under discussion. "Eclecticism is the use of as many points of view as possible to cast light on [proverb analysis] and the culture within which they exist" Dundes (1979: 390). Thus, eclecticism was used to analyse and illuminate the data under study.

As proverb data includes text and context, that is, proverbs themselves and the locale, time and situation of proverb, performance, these situations were paid due attention. In short, the social and physical situations of a

communication process where proverbs are used were as well used as parts of proverb data. According to Abrahams (1968: 119),

... Each proverb is a full statement of an approach to recurring problems. It presents a point-of-view and strategy that is self-sufficient needing nothing more than event of communication to bring it into play.

Thus, proverb application is effected in culturally set communication processes. Cultural attitudes, rhetorical situations and aptitudes of interacting groups were, therefore, taken into account as basic variables that affect proverb analysis. Thus, these variables were used to carry-out the analysis. The opportunity of the researcher's being a native to the tradition has also helped him a lot, for a "native researcher is an integral part of the tradition, a chronicler and a reminder of the culture around him" Goldstein (1964: IX). Bearer of a culture is, therefore, better equipped to interpret that culture than an alien who has experienced its realities only vicariously Lindfors (1977: 2).

Based on his knowledge of the language and tradition the researcher has collected his data using methods that

include incidental (causal opportunities) as well as local methods (from residential areas) and his own memory of proverbs. Some of the data were also collected from the field through participant observations and interviews - of informants. Moreover, the background information (data) on the history of the Awi people, the Awi language as well as current proverb theories and guide materials were collected from documents through reading and note-taking.

Finally, based on both documented and field data, interpretation was carried out. For this purpose, some seventy proverbs were used as a sample. The sampling was made based on the representativeness of their form, content and purpose. Moreover, unique texts were treated similarly. Thus, unique texts and representative ones were analysed.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The main purpose of this chapter is to show the significance of the social and physical setting in ethnic proverb research. Basically, an ethnic group in which its proverbs evolved, practised and transmitted needs to be clearly defined. In other words, its local and social boundaries need to be demarcated. This is because the very subject "Awngi Proverbs" presupposes identification of its social and geographical limits. This condition is as well underlined by folklorists like Devos (1975); Dundes (1983); Dausinger (1983); Brük (1984); Blac (1985) and Lautman (1985). The reason for this is that the nature and continuity of the ethnic groups as well as their oral heritages depend on the maintenance of their local and social boundaries. Moreover, the community as well as its traditional arts have grown through time within those physical and social interactive situations that evolved the existing nationality. Historical and current observations are, therefore, interwoven to construct a coherent text that serves the ethnic group both in self-identification as well as its identification by others. This, in turn, reinforces

their self-image as a moral community and helps them to develop their self-reliance and to validate their cultural heritages.

Apart from this, folklore itself is an interdisciplinary subject. It shows strong relationship with anthropology, ethnography, history and literature. Hence, the study carried out in one of these disciplines requires evidence from the others. Accordingly, folklore serves, for instance, as evidence of history, for it indicates how and what people lived of providing clues that show how that community have endured through the major movements of history.

Bearing in mind the interdependence of folklore and socio-physical history, the socio-cultural background of the community in question is briefly discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Historical Background of the People

The Agaws were the central cushitic people that inhabited around the southern side of the Red Sea before their disintegration due to the settlement of the semitic people within their territories. The semitic people who began to settle within the Agaws (1500-1000 BC) formed an

intimate contact through time. This contact resulted in the fusion of the two cultures. And the Agaw people were more significant in the fusion Gamst (1969: 3), for instance, states "... The Agaw were one of the most important people in the history of Ethiopia." Taddesse (1988: 192) as well underlines it as "... among the many people of Ethiopia ... the Agaw constitutes one of the most ancient inhabitants of the area [where the fusion took place]. Bahru (1991: 5) also shows that "... of the cushitic speaking people historically the most important in ancient times were the Agaws..." According to Taddessee (Ibid), "The Agaw people are of crucial importance because they are the very basis on which the whole edifice of the Axumite civilization was constructed."

Based on historical evidence and ethnographical survivals, the formation of Abyssinia and its civilization is known to be the outcome of the fusion of those two cultures. However, in the process of fusion, the Agaw made vital contributions and the more significant ones were the following: The Agaw supplied the bulk of the population that determined the somatic characteristics of the Abyssinian people. Gamst (1969: 6); Taddesse (1988: 196).

As language is one of the basic attributes of people, the bulk population of Agaw also contributed a great deal to the development of semitic languages. This is reflected by the existence of Agaw linguistic characteristics in Semitic languages. Regarding this issue Kidane and Melaku (1988: 54 E.C.) quoting Taddesse Tamirat argue as **"... የነገደ አማራ ቋንቋም ሆነ ባህልና ልምድ ያቆጠቀጠው ብቻ ሳይሆን የነመራውም በአገው ሕዝብ መሬትና ቋንቋ ላይ ነው። ትግርኛም እንዲሁ።"**... the cultures and languages of Amhara and Tigre not only did grow but also did mature on the soil, the people and the languages of the Agaw./ This idea is as well emphasized by Melakneh (1990: 29) who quoted Ullendroff saying "Amharic is built on the substratum of Agaw since it presumably developed in a situation of imposition on Agaw speakers."

Another basic contribution of the Agaw lies on the area of agriculture. Ancestral Agaw not only domesticated but also spread basic crops including barely, wheat, nug, flax, rape seed .. Vavilov (1931, 1949); Saucer (1952: 78); Steihler (1948: 57); Murdock (1959: 181-3) as cited in Gamst (1969: 8). Above all, what Christopher (1976: 81) states seems to summarize this point:

The name of crops new to South Arabian immigrants such as teff, millet, wheat, flax, nug, ... came into Ethiopia from cushitic languages... the establishment and the spread of Ethiopic languages ... shows the Agaw as a base ... the semitic speakers added title, if any, new technological or agricultural knowledge to the already present to the south of the Red Sea.

Though, the facts and ideas raised so far indicate the vital contribution of Agaw to the Abyssinian Civilization, Murdock (1959: 182) shows his dissatisfaction on the information hitherto obtained about the legacy of this people put in his own words", ... lack of information about the people and their contributions is doubly regrettable since all indications point to the Agaw as one of the culturally most creative people on the entire continent."

With the advent of Christianity, however, the cultural dominance of the Agaw began to change slowly. The Axumite people (christians), who were pushed by the Beja and the Islamic expansion around the Red Sea had concentrated their forces toward the areas inhabited by the Agaw. Trimingham (1965: 47). This situation brought about the second fusion of the Agaw with the "Ethiopic" people, this time. Further inclusion of the Agaw into the proto-Amhara (second fusion) resulted in the cultural system of the Amhara proper. Gamst

(1969: 10); Trimingham (1965: 49). Through repeated acculturation, the Amhara proper grew larger and larger over the unsemticized Agaw. The influence of the Agaw, then, grew weaker and weaker following its ever dwindling population. As a result of this, therefore, the previous form of fusion is changed to assimilation of the Agaw by the Amhara Gamst (1969: 15).

2.2 The Culture

Just as stated in the beginning of this chapter, discussing the cultural background helps to distinguish the community in question from others. Moreover, it also assists to understand the contents of most proverbs.

As an ethnic community, the people of Awi shares cultural elements that define the social boundaries. These (elements) are linguistic, historical and artistic heritages. These social and local features are important marks to identify the boundaries of ethnic communities. As to Jones (1972: 43), ethnic groups maintain their identity through recognition of models composed of specific cultural criteria. In other words, this ethnic identity marks the social identification through shared sets of objective cultural manifestations like language use, holiday

celebration and mutual understanding of signs and codes. Accordingly, these cultural criteria help the members of Awi community to identify themselves as well as to be identified by others. Apart from this, culture is the product of human invention and discovery serving the biological, moral and spiritual needs of man and prompting his survival and enjoyment of life." Jones (1972: 43). Folklore, on the other hand, is a response to those cultural needs of life. The cultural needs of life are satisfied through creation and performance of folklore, for culture stimulates artistic creation and conditions its performance. This interaction and interdependence of culture and folklore, therefore, validates the role of culture in folklore research.

A brief cultural account of the community in question is, thus discussed in light of this fact.

The Agaw culture has undergone considerable changes due to the long historical contact and interaction with the semitic people. However, that part which has managed to escape the acculturation still distinctively exists. The Awi culture with its traditional peculiarities is a case in point. This culture, primarily, maintains its own language (Awngi) as well as folklore, traditional norms and values

that distinguish Awi from the rest. The folklore of Awi, therefore, works under the prescriptions of those cultural sets of principles to satisfy the cultural needs of the people.

Proverbs as well promote the interests of the group by virtue of their expressive quality. Awngi proverbs, as an integral parts of people's cultural and historical past, as well deal with cultural and historical events. For instance, see the following example:

Shew Shewdah Wachihu bishtan

The heart knows what is in side it, good morning
church,

This proverb points out the struggle of the Awi people against the expansion of Christianity over its culture. Its literal meaning shows that the relation of the Awi to this new religion even after conversion was not intimate (smooth). The proverb speaker simply greets the church like his fellow-man. He shows no respect. Rather, he suggests a sort of hidden enmity to the church.

Example 2:

"Kusko" nihu minishr

"Exterminate each other" said a fire arm

This proverb is a form of Wellerism. It is constituted from the roar of a fire arm onomatopically. It connotes the historical event when the so called "minishr" (a fire arm) is introduced to that locality. Furthermore, its meaning shows that the exchange of that fire was among the natives themselves. It refers to the time of Italian invasion where the natives exterminated one another divided as national patriots and bandits (traitors).

Example 3:

kampi kantas awile diNona

For the sake of cheese they drink up whey.

This proverb is basically constituted from the observation of its culture. In the culture of Awi cheese and whey are served together. One who wants to eat cheese must drink up the whey first. Because the cheese sediments beneath the whey and spilling the whey is culturally forbidden.

Hence, one cannot really know what proverbs mean without the information of shared cultural elements such as language, background knowledge, beliefs, norms and values.

Awngi proverbs also show "esoteric" and "exoteric" (Jones 1972) beliefs. These esoteric-exoteric interactions are expressed through proverbs to create a self-portrait or a portrait of another group. See the following two examples.

Slami miriktani Nitals fir gisha kase

When an Islam is starved he goes to dig up his father's tomb.

taika kichada fiyāla amhara

within the sheep a goat is an Amhara (civilized).

Sheep represents naivety but goat, in this proverb, represents an active behavior. Hence, an Amhara is taken for active or civilized. The two proverbs are exoteric (the former in terms of religion and the latter, in terms of people).

Example 7:

~~Agaw sisälätin Amara Yasläkisa~~

When an Agaw enlightens he outsmarts the Amhara.

Example 8:

Agaw yafuachäwn saizäfinäw aikärim

When an Agaw intends to do something he never leaves it unperformed.

Examples 7 and 8 are esoteric proverbs of the Awi that serve to show their self-image,

Esoteric-exoteric proverbs, therefore, serve as a boundary maintenance devices which function both to signal and perpetuate distinctions between local groups.

To conclude, proverbs as social invention and discovery, serve their society. Hence, their entire life and meaning depend on their culture where they are evolved, practised, transmitted and conditioned. Though it is not possible to give dates (Flavell 1993: v), "every item of folklore ... every item of tradition had its origin in the cultural history of man." Zguta (1971: 97).

The study of socio-cultural setting of the Awi community, therefore, sheds light on the understanding of its proverbs. The study of proverbs as well reveals the socio-cultural situation of its society. Abrahams (1979: 392) shows this mutuality as "... any agency, artifact and entity within a culture is potentially capable of reflecting the whole of the construct of the group within the culture it emerged."

Moreover, the study of socio-cultural history helps to define the boundary of a community whose folklore is under discussion. Ethnic groups through their culture have esoteric beliefs about themselves and exoteric beliefs about others. This serves as a boundary maintenance device between communities.

2.3 Social context ✓

The basic aim of this section is to show the relevance of context (physical and social situations in which proverbs are used) in proverb analysis. Proverb analysis includes the whole process of collecting, classifying, recording and interpreting the proverb data.

Proverbs, as basic components of folklore, are performed to satisfy the communication needs which are framed within as well as imposed by a culture. Hence, both the purpose of proverb usage and the way of application are culture bound just like the communication process itself. However, this cultural need and principle in which communication takes place and thereby proverbs are applied is not stable. Because the social background where that culture exists is dynamic, for it is steadily influenced by scientific and technological innovations that bring about

social developments. Those social changes, in turn, impose cultures to adjust themselves so as to accommodate those new social needs and attitudes followed by those changes. But the speed of social and cultural changes are not competitive. This is because tradition shows relative stability against the progressive social changes. Accordingly, then, these dialectically opposite phenomena exist as a form of process in any culture — That is, as dynamic unity of stability in tradition and changes in social spheres.

This dynamic unity of opposites (change and stability in a culture) is the core of survival and transmission of proverbs. According to Abrahams (1968: 24), it is not memory of tradition bearers that sustains folklore rather it is creation and recreation by the interactive groups in order to meet those social changes within the cultural context that maintains its survival. Moreover, not only their existence but also their meanings and functions are fundamentally rooted in the locale, time, language and other cultural sets of principles and rules of a communication process or event — meaning context. Thus, context includes cultural attitudes, social structures, rhetorical situations and individual aptitudes (Ben-Amos 1979: 430). Social

structures also include age, sex, status (cultural hierarchies) as well as other related factors that affect a given conversational situation. As Yankah (1979: 28) notes, therefore, "the proverb ethnographer better serves the interest of proverb scholarship and that of the people he studies if he accompanies the proverb citation with relevant social situations in which they occur."

The points discussed so far show that a large part of the life of a proverb exists in the social interaction where the circumstances about who uses the saying, with whom, how and for what purpose are distinctly reflected. As a result, this entails paying attention to the communication process where speakers and listeners interact in the process of proverb usage and interpretation. Because this situation elicits both the reasons of proverb citation and their interpretations due to the reason that the same proverbs may be used for different effects. For example, see the following instances.

1. aqi kranti kani duntanti
Man is mortal tree is falling

Though strong one seems to be on sight, a human being like a tree that falls and decays, is mortal. Hence, one's

strength, liveliness and other attractive features and attitudes are temporary, for one is not eternal. In this regard, these current looks are misleading as they conceal the inevitable disappearance of that person. From this general premise, therefore, the above proverb is used for different effects depending on the context under discussion. Hence, the proverb may be applied to suggest:

1. Use one (humanbeing) while one is alive.
2. Treat one, use the opportunity to take care or to please one while one is alive.
3. Do not trust one, for one dies unexpectedly. Thus, make necessary arrangements as soon as possible (in one's life time) so that you cannot be hurt at one's absence.
4. If you think of one as a burden, do not worry one will die.

Consider 2 and 4 above, they recommend opposite situations. Similarly, two or more proverbs may be found to suggest one attitude and others the precise opposite. For instance, compare the following two proverbs.

1. ildes ichihu shewdes iehi
Out of sight is out of heart

Jesus Christ
plz don't let me down

2. zahsta dunizi digNani inkan Nala

Relatives and potatoes dislike being together.

Relatives often pay visits to one another to refresh their mutual concerns. Because they know that if this condition fails to happen their relationship may grow colder resulting carelessness in their mutual concerns. To avoid this situation the proverb above (1) recommends the living together of relatives.

Potatoes, on the other hand, when put together (confined), they perish. Similarly, when planted closely they grow stunted and as a result, yield little. Thus, both storing as well as planting potatoes require setting them apart. According to this proverb, when relatives live together, conflicts may arise among them, for they have lots of common needs that they vie with one another for them (to win). Accordingly, the proverb above (2) suggests the relatives to live sparsed like potatoes.

The messages conveyed by contradictory proverbs like the above examples, however, indicate not the fallacies or fallabilities of Awngi proverbs. But rather they point out that life is not uniform; it is rather full of differences

and contradictions. What is true or good in certain circumstances may be the reverse in others, for "Circumstances alter cases" Meider (1997: xx). For this reason, a knowledge of situation in which proverbs are cited is an essential part of understanding their implication. Because, as indicated by the above examples, the same proverb may be used to suggest a variety of truth or even the opposite (1).

Apart from this, proverb citations may reflect different rhetorical strategies structured for different social orders. For instance:

intsaris inkre kantsiN tsintsas laheno kantsiN

Volunteering children to play with adults is showing a wound to flies.

Children may wrongly vie for taking turns in a conversation, for they hardly know the respective cultural norms. For similar reasons, they may not pay due respect to elders. They as well may not take care of secrets. Hence, they may spoil the conversation situation like flies that pester a patient restlessly because of his fresh wound. Taking this sort of situation into account, elders often



avoid children from their conversation. And the above proverb is mostly cited to justify that avoidance.

In other instances, the same proverb may be cited for advice, warning and instruction depending on the contextual circumstances, example :

imbita semetaha nihi lalegstamakre

He who wants to satiate quickly dies chocked

This proverb implies:

- Take ample time for everything (instruction)
- Do not rush. If you do so you may end up at a loss (warning)
- Consider the pros and cons of an issue (advice)

This shows that few, if any, proverb texts can be assumed to have a single categorical meaning. Thus, contextual data is central to the understanding of the expressive style of speakers, the ways in which proverbs are related to the value structure of the community as well as the daily manifestation and application of the institutional life.

Despite the fact that proverbs operate in contexts, they have no special occasions of revelation other than a communication event. And communication events can take place at any time, place and condition provided that any two or more people of the same reference group interact. The reference group, here, means people that speak the same language, share a similar background knowledge of the world as well as the same systems of signs and codes of social intentions or similar values and beliefs (Leiber 1984: 189).

Accordingly, therefore, context deals with situational factors that govern as well as facilitate proverb citations. These temporal and spatial conditions of social interactions may include meetings, get-togethers, work break, shopping travel, residences and other walks of life.

Usually, most communication events occur casually rather than in deliberately set occasions. And proverbs, as tools of communication, undoubtedly follow the same trend.

Apart from this, there are as well conversational situations where the recurrent use of proverbs take place. These are gutip (meetings of elders and adults), mabiri

(associational get-togethers), amet-bali (annual religious celebrations) and gebelt Ni (marketing activities).

gutip is a traditional administrative practice (court) of the Awi people. Every village has its own meeting place where elders and adults gather to settle social friction (conflicts) locally. This is typical and common practice in the community. The meetings are held usually in the mornings. Afternoons are not recommended because drunken people may spoil the cases.

People who have complaints go to these meetings to present their cases. The meeting allows the contendants to spell out their issues. The body of elders, then, examine the situation and attempt to solve the problems accordingly. In this condition, therefore, proverbs may be cited by any side of the participants depending on the direction of the cases or the attitude of conversation members either to retrieve the argument gone astray, to clarify confusions or to justify the causes. Accordingly, proverbs can be cited by elders to show their position in the on going argument, example:

liko agitsis jagi kamentsiNoki aneh aqa

If the womb open and shows the limbs it is not difficult to deliver the fetus.

By quoting such a proverb elders initiate the contentants to give them clues about the cases. If the elders are provided with necessary information, they assure that they can settle the problems safely. Hence, they urge them to avoid masks that conceal the truth so that they can arrive at stark truth which, in turn, enables them to settle the dispute.

The defendants may also use proverbs either to reaffirm their positions or to show their inclinations toward the persuasion of the elders, example:

haretiw tamblala

Where there is no scent there is no taste

'What the plaintiff argues has no any relation with me. And what is said so far does not refer to me. Thus, I have nothing hidden to uncover'. By quoting such a proverb the defendant reaffirms his position and further extends the dispute. In this case, the speaker shows his resistance to the persuasion made by the elders. Similarly, the

plaintiffs, observers and eye-witnesses may use proverbs depending on the situation.

Using similar procedures, therefore, the meetings deal with various communal problems such as farm-land-border disputes, conflicts between couples, marriage arrangements and other social friction. The meetings mostly draw arbitrations (reconciliations) between the parties. But some times they can pass valuable decisions over the calprits.

Mabiri (occasionally occurring associational get-togethers). Traditional associations are common in the Awi culture. They are established to create unity among the members. These social establishments can occur monthly or annually depending on the consensus of the partners. These situations as well allow extended meetings whereby discussions with proverb citation may take place, example:

qutsi impltani sbeto duntse

When united, nettles break a plowshare

A nettle is a plant that does not grow strong. But a plowshare is a metal which is strong enough to break the land. The proverb suggests, however, that when those weak

plants act together they can break metal. Accordingly, if people unite they can be strong enough to perform what is impossible for individuals. Thus, by quoting such a proverb, people reinforce the question of their unity as well as justify the importance of their associations.

Here, it is important to note that this setting is not limited to conversations related to the question of association and unity. In the mean time, members can take any issue from their daily life and talk over it. Such conversations as well may evoke situations of proverb citations.

gebeltNi (marketing activities). Local markets where the Awi people exchange goods and services; as well as the actual transaction activities are significant situations for proverb performances. The market places are located at considerable distances, for most people of Awi live in rural areas whereas markets exist at local towns. Thus, people travel those distances on foot forming groups and talking on various issues. Moreover, the actual activities of transactions let people make comments on the nature of objects, the attitudes of customers as well as the interaction itself while they are bargaining. Hence, these

events as well are important situations where various proverbs are applied.

The physical and social contexts discussed so far show the temporal, spatial and social situations in which proverbs are used. They as well indicate the reasons and purposes of proverb applications. This condition, therefore, suggests the possible ways of classifying proverbs. Because any systematic classification relies on variables that distinctly affect the function, the form as well as the life of the item in question.

Generally speaking, then, Awngi proverbs are rhetorical tools in purpose. They are used as tools of conversation in order to augment argumentations — That is, either to convince, to agree or draw attention of an audience. Hence, they are used to motivate, encourage, or approve depending on the contextual situations.

Awngi proverbs are also instructive in content. They suggest what to do, what not to do and when and how to act. Thus, they are applied to advise, warn, comment or criticize. In short, they are used to control the society so as to maintain peace and order. They also are used to

socialize the young generation by teaching the norms, beliefs and etiquettes of the community.

Some proverbs are as well used to embellish conversations for better effect. As far as their structures are concerned, most Awngi proverbs are poetic in character and some are poetic in form as well.

However, from 421 collections gathered during this research, most proverbs show the impossibility of classifying them based on their potential meanings.

Above all, the style of application as well as the contextual interpretation of the sample proverbs attested that the functional classification is impractical. Because the same proverbs are seen to advise, warn, comment or even to recommend different as well as opposite situations depending on different circumstances. Thus, selection of samples that represent the characteristics of most data has been found to be a better way than classification. Accordingly, representative samples are used in interpretation (textual analysis). In addition to this, texts that show unique characteristics either in form or content are included into the textual analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

PERFORMANCE AND FUNCTION OF

AWNGI PROVERBS

An Awngi term for proverb is 'sein.' The same term is used for tales and fables as well. The term seems to be derived from the word 'seiniN' which refers to both past time and eternity. For instance, 'seiNihu' means lived for time immemorial and 'siNi' means eternal. Hence, the literal meaning of 'sein' suggests the concept of antiquity and eternity of Awngi proverbs. In the conception of the Awi people the notion of antiquity and eternity refers to the proverb texts as well as practices, affairs and events that proverbs constitute. Thus, Awngi proverbs are used to examine problems at hand in light of ancestral wisdom. In other words, this temporal implication refers to the function of Awngi proverbs. That is, Awngi proverbs are cited in an intention to equate a current situation with the wisdom of the ages. Accordingly, the situations which Awngi proverbs gloss are viewed in the light of something that had occurred before or that of a universal process so that a situation (problem) at hand is categorized into them

resulting a situation where current problems are considered as universal phenomena. This, in turn, brings about a sense of consolation.

3.1 Performance

Proverbs are rhetorical or conversational devices. They are used to supplement communication. As expressive items, they operate in culturally set principles of a given communication situation. The conversation participants of any communication event understand each other only under the canopy of those cultural communication principles of contextual conditions. Context, in this case, refers to physical and social circumstances in which the conversation is held and governed. This includes a situation where the conversation participants belong to the same reference group — that is where they speak the same language; they share a background knowledge of a world view (a way in which the members characteristically envision their lives, their society and the reality around them. Hence, this is a situation in which members share similar values and beliefs as well as codes and signs for social intentions Leiber (1984: 189).

Apart from this, a particular conversational context is sensitive to other facets of social structure such as age, sex, and status. Those cultural principles monitor the application of conversation by these social classes. they prescribe as who speaks with whom, when and for what purpose. children in the Awi culture, for instance, are not allowed to join adults in a serious occasion of conversation. The following proverb, for instance, shows one of the reasons for excluding children:

tntsari Sirkune jime
children sing a secret

Adults in the community take proper care to keep secrets. However, children may not do so. Hence, adults tend to avoid children from having the access to a scene where a serious issue is being dealt with. For this purpose, the above proverb is applied in circumstances:

- The most common use of this proverb is by adults speaking to an adult (adults) while a child is there, that is, to indirectly inform him/her so that a child understands the meaning and leaves the scene as a result.
- The less common use is a situation in which the proverb is directed at a child by an adult in a sense of

telling him/her that the issue under discussion is not meant for children, for children cannot keep secrets. Thus, suggesting that may you leave us alone.

- The proverb is also applied to an adult, at an occasion where they could not avoid children from the conversation area. This time, it is to suggest that the situation is not appropriate to discuss such a risky issue in front of children, hence, better leave it for some other time.

The above instances show that adults cite proverbs to children. But the reverse is not true. No child is observed quoting a proverb to an adult listener. Yet, boys and girls (within the peer groups), may rarely quote proverbs related to their daily encounters.

Apart from the cultural and occasional circumstances, the inherent nature of proverbs as well is not convenient for children to use. Proverbs require competence in language use. The use of proverbs as well requires profound experience in social norms and values. Proverbs, on the other hand, are concise statements which embody the wisdom of ages. They are as well related to the value structure of the community. Children, on the other hand, are not

experienced in these requirements of proverb usage. This situation, therefore, hinders children to use proverbs effectively.

The women of Awi, however, are not overtly excluded from any conversation event due to their sex. Rather, the cultural division of labour that mostly limits them around the homes seems to be liable for their lower participation in public affairs than their fellow-men. Yet, women take part in various conversation situations and show appropriate use of proverbs, though, their usage seems to be less frequent than that of the men's due to their limited access and experience in public affairs.

Awngi proverb application is, therefore, the exclusive right of the adult society in general and that of the elders in particular. This is because elders are blessed with rich life experience, accumulated wisdom of the ages as well as social norms and values on which proverb applications are based. Hence, proverbs in the Awi society are the elder's form par excellence. The following proverb, for instance shows the value and acceptance of the elders over the young in the society in order to deal with public affairs

wufani aresachihuni biritā gusala

Though it can be yoked, a bullock cannot pull as an ox

Young bulls (bullocks) can be yoked just like oxen. They can be even more energetic than oxen. But their necks, unlike that of the oxen, are not so experienced to pull hard in order to break the field. In other words, due to their inexperienced necks they cannot pull properly and thus, spoil the plowing. This shows that the task requires not only energy but also adequate experience in the activity.

Proverb texts are metaphorical references of social contexts. Thus, the bullock: Ox pair in the proverb text refers to a similar relationship of the young: the old in the social context. As a result of this, the attributes of a bullock goes to the young while that of the ox goes to the elders. The proverb is, therefore, used to praise as well as to recommend the experienced elders over the young in order to properly handle public affairs.

Moreover, as rhetorical devices Awngi proverbs are used to effect persuasion. They are applied in a situation where a gap or crisis occurs in a conversation so as to bridge the gap or alleviate the crisis by attempting to convince,

reinforce or agree with a situation. Thus, they are used to supplement the argument. Example:

tibho kasihi biri iluwata kuwaye
a bull in a strange land mooes as a cow.

In normal circumstances a bull does not produce a weak voice of a cow. Rather, it roars like a lion. But as a stranger (in a country where it hardly knows the environment), it cannot roar. To suit itself to this strange situation, it controls its free activities.

In the social context, the proverb is used to suggest the inconvenience of a new place for strangers to spell out freely what they intend to. Thus, this proverb is used to console one who suffers from inability to speak out one's mind due to living in another's' country. In this situation, the proverb attempts to comfort the addressee by classifying the situation at hand with a general class of traditional problem. The proverb suggests the listener to see the situation in a wider perspective and to relate the problem at hand to the traditional truth and to alleviate the mental strain that he felt. This shows that proverbs are applied to effect persuasion.

awaho lila arfaho lila 14

The house of the sun is different from the house
of the moon.

This proverb is often quoted by the listeners to show their disagreements to the view points of the speaker. The listeners use this proverb as a feed-back. And it indicates the absence of a common point of view between the conversation dealers. For one strives to convince the other, its quotation heightens or reinforces their argument.

Hence, proverbs in the Awi community are applied in a situation of tension or conflict. The use of proverbs in such a situation has been time and again emphasized as well by important proverb scholars like Abrahams (1968); Grimblatt (1975) and Penfield (1983). Moreover, Awngi proverbs are as well used in complex or ambiguous situations in order to clarify or settle arguments exactly in a situation where Abrahams (1968) pointed out as follows:

Humans as cultural beings have a range
for order. Anxiety arises with
intuition of chaos [disorder]
disruption of the orderly process of
life and dissolution of group/proverbs
confront and attempt to control
recurrent anxiety situations... They may
handle problems in various ways
depending upon whether the situation is

being faced immediately or whether the crisis has already passed but left a residual feeling of disorientation.

Accordingly, Awngi proverbs are used to adjust this disorienting experience by reimposing a sense of order through referring the situation at hand to others of its class that had happened in the tradition previously. The following proverb can be taken as a case in point.

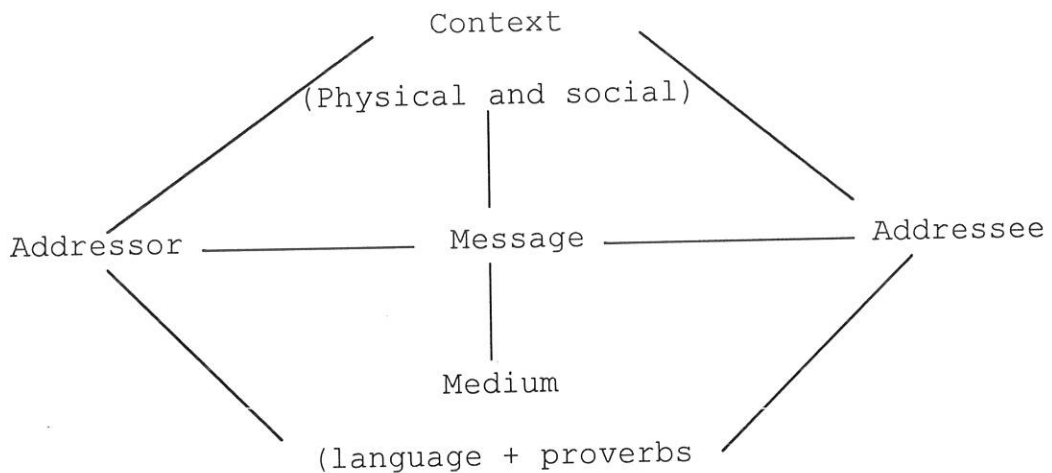
gomejitut kibtse lekemte
Hurry a laday downs and picks

6

- This proverb arises in a conversation in which a person is confronted with a problem of having to decide whether to rush a job or not. Then, the proverb recommends a specific and immediate course of action — that is, to take adequate time and do the job properly.
- This proverb is as well quoted at a point where the job was hastily accomplished but caused a costly mistake. The proverb is then applied to provide the consolation of placing the mistake in an understandable and controllable category of happenings. Thus, this situation becomes avoidable in the future following the prescriptions of the proverb.
- This same proverb is also used to justify the causes of the problem (haste, in this case) and the scarcity of

time for picking it) and at last to stabilize the emotion by clarifying the situation according to the traditional lore (where there is haste there is waste). In this regard, the proverb is also used to comfort the listener as there is nothing unique to this current problem as well.

Conversation participants, therefore, understand the whole intent of the proverbs cited in a specific social and physical contexts. Because they belong to the same reference group and share the contextual circumstances which are important factors for comprehension of a given communication process. Thus, the meanings as well as the purposes of Awngi proverbs depend on not only the completeness but also the appropriateness of those contextual situations or circumstances. Because proverbs are traditional "bons mots" often quoted to enable thoughts to be communicated without effort of formation and thus ready for instant use in an appropriate conversational situation (Meider 1997: 4). This effective conversation situation can be summarized as follows:



This model adapted from Mick Short (1986: 39), indicates that the participants of a given conversation share the same contextual circumstances. They also belong to the same reference group and perform the conversation by taking turns. In this conversational frame-work Awngi proverbs are used to effect communication. In other words, the performance and function of Awngi proverbs follow the same trend of the execution of the Awngi language for exchange of views. Because both proverb citation and language usage are contextual. Above all, their function is either to bring the opinions of the interlocutors together (to effect an agreement), or to signal the end of peaceful relations (to effect disagreement), or simply to share the idea as in the following proverbs:

aqi dika smo ditse dihuri Shinganabite ditse

A wicked person defames the name a lame donkey
spoils the grazing (land).

The proverb analogically places a wicked person who defames one's reputation and a lame donkey that idly spoils a grazing land side by side. Since they are placed parallel the two situations are measured with equivalence.

A donkey, in the Awi culture, is an object of insult for low mental ability and indolence. Worse than that, the donkey in question is physically defective and worthless, for it is unable to move (work). Thus, it is a troublesome animal and is always there to expose the grazing land to danger of overgrazing. A person the proverb refers to is intended to take this situation of the donkey, for the proverb metaphorically refers to the similar social context. The proverb is then quoted: to console someone who is emotionally agitated due to gossip injected into him by somebody else. In this case, the proverb allows the injured party to view the situation in a wider perspective. Hence, it comforts the listener by providing him/her with a similar situation from the world of the wicked. By categorizing the

new situation with similar traditional situations, the proverb attempts to alter the attitude of the addressee, for it shows similar situation from the world of ancestors.

This proverb is also quoted to comment on such wicked people in general in the light of the current situation. As wicked people have no better issues in their minds, they always speak of other people. Hence, what else could be expected from such a situation? Commenting that way, the speaker attempts to effect an agreement between the self and the listener.

When this proverb is directly forwarded to the addressee it may become offensive. In this case, the proverb marks the end of a peaceful relationship between the conversation participants.

This shows that, in Awngi proverb usage, the same proverbs are applied to various situations. Because their formulaic metaphors, expressing in a vivid imagery, can substitute various repetitive patterns of the human behavior.

As far as the effects of Awngi proverbs on their addressees are concerned, it is proven that proverbs do not guarantee the automatic fulfilment of the performer's wishes. This is equally true in the use of any language as well. The attainment of the quoter's or the speaker's desire requires additional working out of thought and expressive faculties like strong reasoning and skilful applications. They also require the fulfilment of objective felicity conditions including source credibility as well as appropriate evidence and facts. Therefore, Awngi proverbs are applied only to validate and augment the trends of argumentation. Hence, they are used as additional rhetorical tools to supplement or reinforce conversation.

Nevertheless, Awngi proverbs successfully carry-out the purpose of persuasion that they are quoted for. Because they are familiar and traditional items that convey traditionally agreed upon ideas. Moreover, they are set to strive for no higher ideals that are difficult to attain or understand. Above all, they are perceived in the community as common truths that embody both the insights of the moment and the wisdom of the ages. Proverbs as well refer that particular context that they are quoted for to the ancestors. They seem to say that the problem that the proverbs are quoted for is

not new, for it is as well experienced in the world of the ancestors. Thus, proverbs, in this case, are authorial Leiber (1984: 189). When people use proverbs they are also referring the problem to the authority of the ancestors. Because proverbs imply the user to mean that "it is not I who tell you this" (the message what proverbs convey) 'It is rather the wisdom of the ages (ancestors) that tell you'. In this case, it shifts the responsibility from the current speaker to the forefathers that experienced the problem and passed down the proverb. For instance, see the following proverb.

bthuri	semeta	lamgis	zemetse
Satiation with porridge makes one to campaign without holding provisions.			

The proverb is analogically set as follows

Belly filled with porridge (A): drives one to campaign without provisions (B)

Overriden by temporary satisfaction (X): Committed costly mistake (Y)

Then text: context (A:B) $\Rightarrow$ (X: Y) (Setel 1977). When the stomach is excessively filled, hunger seems to never come again. In this case, this temporary contentment drives

one to make an adventurous and hasty decision of campaigning carrying no food and water. In reality, however, as soon as digestion is over, the desire for food reappears irrespective of whatever the previous decision may be. But in this case, it is impossible to feast the hunger, for no food is available. As a result, the subject suffers from starvation caused by thoughtless and emotional decision. Hence, the proverb is quoted.

- To advise one in order not to be carried away by casual satisfaction to the extent of making a blind decision. Instead, it suggests one to think of bad conditions that may follow (The advisor is the age-old traditional wisdom, not anybody else).
- To make comments on some one who faced a problem due to uncontrolled emotion of pleasure which drove him/her to make a faulty decision that brought him/her trouble. Hence, it is quoted to suggest that it was his/her mistake. So he/she has reaped the result of his/her stupid decision. He/she deserves it (The third person pronouns are impersonal "one").
- When one's emotion is over ridden by temporary satisfaction, it may conceal one's power of reasoning. Similarly, this problem as well is the result of such a

Handwritten scribbles and marks, possibly a signature or initials.

mistake. Hence there is nothing special with this one. So take it easy, for it is common truth that exists in the world of the ancestors as well.

3.2 Function of Awngi Proverbs

This section attempts to show major functions of Awngi proverbs. Awngi proverbs, as repeatedly mentioned, are rhetorical devices mainly used to effect persuasion or argumentation. They are applied when crisis or a gap arises in a conversation in order to alleviate the crisis or to clarify the gap (enigmatic situation) in the light of traditional wisdom. In addition to persuasive purposes, proverbs contain as well instructive content. In other words, instructive moral values are embedded in every Awngi Proverb. These the basic functions of Awngi proverbs are discussed in detail on this section.

3.2.1 Persuasion and Argumentation

Awngi proverbs are rhetorical tools. The word 'rhetoric' means the art of using language with much display and ornamentation (OED). Thus, rhetoric refers to effective use of language for persuasion in a goal oriented speech situation to produce a particular effect in the mind of the

addressee (Leiber 1984: 186). The definition of rhetoric, therefore, seems to suggest the task of its tool (proverb application) in a conversation. Accordingly, proverbs are ready-made tools of rhetorics that are applied in situation of tension in order to persuade listeners by clarifying events and social situations in the light of traditionally accepted truth. The rhetorical power of proverbs, then, lies in their function of interpreting the situations at hand in terms of their traditional equivalents. In other words, proverbs interpret current situations by transforming into a particular instance of more general class which is existing in the traditional lore (1984: 186).

For Example:

✓ Firistine gabgab tsani likus gemama giNe
When greed prevails it makes a horseman dismount from the horse and run on foot.

Horses are common means of transportation in the Awi culture. They are usually preferred for their energy and swiftness. Not only this, horses are as well marks of prestige and success in life. However, this proverb indicates one's excessive desire for something that conceals one from logical reasoning which derives to make a faulty decision of not using a horse to achieve one's desire

quickly. The proverb is applied, therefore, in various situations of tension to convincingly present the bad effect of greed. According to Seteil (1977: 76-7), as a proverb text is related to a social context with equivalence or cause-effect manner, it interprets the situation at hand as follows: In this particular case, the text and the context are linked with a causative phrase 'gabgab tsani'/'when greed prevails/. Thus, firistine gabgab tsani (A): likus giNe(B)

As the first part is linked with a causative phrase to the second one, the relationship requires an effect from the other side. The strain of the excessive desire of the horseman to reach quickly drives him to make a faulty decision which is dismounting from the horse and running on foot—that is to save time (to attain it quickly).

This textual analogy is directly related to the social context (1977: 76-7). Hence,

proverbs (textual) situation: social (contextual situation)

(A:B)

(X:Y)

when one is excessively desirous: One takes a faulty choice
to attain it quickly

(X)

(Y)

Therefore, $(A:B) \Rightarrow (X:Y)$

N.B. $\Rightarrow$ means "refers to"

As the proverbial text is a metaphorical reference to the social situation, it enables one to interpret the social tension (situation) at hand in the light of its proverbial equivalent. Furthermore, by classifying the contextual tension, into a more general and traditional category, it attempts to convince the interlocutors. By so doing, the proverb maintains its rhetorical or persuasive functions. And it is used to strengthen the power of argumentation in various instances so as to convince the counter speaker. Accordingly, it is quoted.

- To effect the purpose of warning, which is its most common context. Mostly people tend to go beyond the natural limits of things emotionally driven by something that they heard, saw or achieved. Hence, they fail to calculate risks that their excessive desire brings about. At those instances, the proverb is quoted to convince people in order to see ahead before resting on their intended decision.
- This proverb is also applied to make a comment on one who failed in one's attempt of gaining something quickly either having enough of it or else could

achieve it through time. This proverb is, particularly, used when that faulty attempt has brought a bad effect like imprisonment, loss of treasure or even loss of life.

- . This proverb is cited as well to console one suffering from regret due to one's faulty choice and the subsequent loss.

By suggesting such a stabilizing advice, the proverb user calls for inaction or resignation of the feeling of the victim. This is possible because proverbs attempt to effect their task of persuasion by providing the new situation with a traditional equivalent that indicates the origin of the problem in the traditional practice. In this case, the implication is to say that the problem has arisen before and the past practice has come up with a new workable situation. Hence, there is nothing new with this one as well.

The conversation dealers understand the purpose of proverb use from the context under discussion, for they recognize that the speaker is not talking about that particular greedy horseman. For the addressees, the speaker is rather telling that the one to whom the proverb is applied to is like a person in the position of the greedy

horseman. On top of that, the dealers can understand beyond its literal meaning, for they belong to the same reference group. For them proverbs are ready-made statements that convey culturally agreed upon ideas (Michael D. Leiber 1984: 186). Its application, therefore, directs a future activity to avoid such faults. Similarly, it attempts to alter an attitude toward something that has already occurred

Persuasion or argumentation is basically designed to convince or to attain a specific goal by clarifying the problem at hand in terms of traditional lore. As it has been already mentioned earlier, the basic method of proverbs to disambiguate human predicaments and situations, therefore, lies in the analogical structure of proverbs which, in turn, can be directly related to the contextual elements. To make it more clear one more example is cited below.

ihwe dtki ntNs Nino tsafirs limana

To blame a hyena they lock their door with a leather
(strap)

A hyena lives on pieces and bits of bones, hides and other left overs and waste materials. Thus, usually it goes to villages for the litter thrown out from homes. Of course,

it some times hunts domestic animals. For this biological need it often roves villages at night. Meanwhile, when it finds entrances it may go into houses. For fear of such instances, people usually lock their doors. According, to this proverb, the door was locked with a leather strap, an item which the hyena seriously looks for. This situation initiates the hyena to commit the action of breaking into the house.

According to the principle of proverb usage, this text is as well a metaphorical substitution of a similar instance in the social situation. Hence,

ihwe dtki ntNs (A): Ntno tsafirs ltmana (B)

The causative phrase 'ntNs' (to blame) connects the two sides of the text. The object 'tsafir' (hide/leather/. On the other side of the text agitates the emotion of the beast to dart at breaking the lock (strap). And this action, no doubt, exposes the house to danger.

Then, according to the principle (text: context)

(A:B) $\Rightarrow$ (X:Y) in the social situation

A blame worthy hyena : a door locked with a hide
(consumer) (A) : (Prey) (B)

A blame worthy man (X) : exposed tantalizing material
 objects (Y)

As to the text, the hunter found its prey exposed and suitably placed for its easy access. For this, one who locked the door with that leather shares the responsibility of the broken door or the damaged treasure. Similarly, therefore, one who puts attractive material objects exposed and easily accessible is equally liable for their loss or damage (in the social situation).

This proverb as well is applied in various social situations to validate the purpose of argumentation or persuasion — that is, to alter the attitudes or opinions of the addressees, or, to convince at times of warning those who put their belongings carelessly or to advise them to keep their attractive (vulnerable) things out of sight. The proverb is as well quoted to make the owners share the responsibility of the danger committed to something due to their fault of putting it in an attractive way. The proverb, therefore, comments on careless people who allowed the

danger by putting those attractive things visible and easily accessible.

All Awngi proverbs are not metaphorical. There are also non-metaphorical proverbs that persuade or argue through direct statements of presumed truths that supposedly apply to social situations rather than by invoking a poetic image to which that situation is compared metaphorically. These proverbs as well encapsulate important ways through which persuasions are facilitated in a given conversation. In this case, the classifiable ambiguity or gap lies in a strategic word or phrase which a proverb is basically constituted from. See, for instance, the following text.

Mencho finjuh implo iemla

One who chases many catches none

One cannot take many and various directions at once, for one's both mental and physical capacity is limited. Hence, chasing one at a time is more advisable than doing many at once. Because the objects chased may take different directions leaving the chaser behind in a worry of indecision which one to follow or attack first. In the meantime, the chased may escape leaving the chaser to remain unsuccessful. But had he/she chased one he/she could have

caught it. As a matter of fact, this time, one has chased many and has missed all (caught none).

Thus, this proverb is quoted mostly to effect the purpose of advice by reminding the audience of their mental and physical limits to handle many issues in a specific time. The proverb is as well used to advice the youth who flirt with ladies in stead of making stable relation with one. Hence, the proverbial situation attempts to convince by clarifying social problems at hand in terms of the traditional wit.

Apart from those metaphorical and non-metaphorical instances, some Awngi proverbs perform their persuasive purposes through suggested stories in them. In other words, some proverbs suggest or constitute traditional stories that help to interpret a situation at hand accordingly Wellerisms are cases in point. In Wellerism (after Samuel Weller), a proverb is considered to have been uttered by a specific speaker. Hence, the quoted works are mostly followed by a mention of the speaker. The speaker usually is an allusion to the context. Some Wellerisms involve a reference to ancient fables in which animals often speak for example:

"yitka tniti" niho nun di hori

"Mine is this one" said a donkey

Here, the speaker is a donkey that performed the task shown within the quotation marks. According to the background of the proverb, a donkey was said to have distributed male sex organs to all male creatures. After the distribution is over, its friends reminded him for fear that it might forget taking one for itself. But it had taken one (the biggest) earlier. However, complaining of its being very small, it drew out to show from where he had hidden it.

From this fable, a satirical comment on distributors who take a greater share is forwarded by the use of this proverb when a similar situation arises. The proverb is mostly applied as "dihori bena" (donkey's distribution) to wittily show that particular social situation.

With such a persuasive or rhetorical power, Awngi proverbs are used for various occasions including arbitration (reconciliation) instruction and other situations that require the conviction of the counter-speakers. So far as the instances shown so far indicate, Awngi proverbs mostly interpret a current social problem

through their metaphorical analogy. And this characteristic of proverbs is the basic virtue of their rhetorical strategy to effect reconciliation which demands an oblique approach rather than a straight forward injunction. Through this metaphorical interpretation of the current contextual tension, contenders are brought to view the dispute in a wider perspective and be more ready to come to terms.

3.2.2 Controlling and Criticism

Basically, Awngi proverbs carry out rhetorical or persuasive purposes, for they are ready-made statements, that carry traditional wisdom of the ages accrued through the past practices of the community. This merit of proverbs in turn, enables the listeners to view the current situations from the vantage point of the traditional wisdom and get persuaded. Thus, providing the contenders with a wider perspective it draws them into conviction. Apart from conveying culturally agreed upon idea, Awngi proverbs shed light on the way current gaps are interpreted. (They are propositions and conclusions that reflect similar relations of thoughts and events in the social situation (context).) Awngi proverbs are used in situations that are enigmatic (difficult to easily describe) and as a result of this their rhetorical strategy (power) helps to clarify the situations

that they are quoted for. Awngi proverbs are, therefore, descriptions that propose an attitude or a mode of action in relation to a current social situation.

Arising in a current problem situation, proverbs are used as controlling devices as well. Furthermore, using cause and effect techniques and direct statements of presumed truth of argumentations they attempt to propose possible solutions to the situational (social) problems. As a result, they express a general truth, praise or recommend virtues or attitudes toward problems and situations that they are set to solve. Here is an example.

tiNNuda lahen zikthu giseN ShewNa befala
Having a wound on the anus, a dog cannot properly bark.

The task of a dog is barking at dangerous encounters which threaten its surroundings. But as to this proverb, a dog wounded on its hinds hardly barks well, for when it attempts to do so the wound gives it a stifling pain at the back.

The proverb metaphorically refers to a similar social problem. Arewa 1970); (Setel 1977). Then tiNuda lahen ztkhu giseN (A): ShewNabefala (B). A defective man (X): cannot

freely perform his task (Y). As textual analogy is applicable to the social one:

$$(A:B) \Rightarrow (X: Y)$$

Therefore, in a social situation, similarly, when one has weaknesses of one's own, one cannot act properly on the faults of others. In order to freely pronounce on the faults of others, one should be free from one's own mistakes. Accordingly, the proverb is applied in various social situations where one's own weakness stifles one's free activity. That is, to effect an advice as one should keep oneself free from faults in order to comment on others. It is as well used to criticize someone who could not control the mistakes of others due to one's own vulnerability. The proverb is as well applied in a situation where a criticism is forwarded by someone who oneself suffers from a similar mistake. The following situation is a case in point. Say, "A and B' are talking about C's criticism of D'. A' is telling B' that C' is not in a good position to comment on D' because C' as well is in a similar problem. In other words, C' cannot comment on D' being open to criticism himself. The reason is that a person who did have an overt weakness ought to be worried of commenting on other people, or his own fault makes him vulnerable to a similar attack. Apart from

its clearly set criticism, the proverb also attempts to control people from committing faults by showing vividly the situation that one's own faults stifle one's freedom of expression of truth or feeling. Example 2:

digides zurtsatiw abalami bino kaye

A herds man who does not check his cattle when they are near crosses a river

A herdsman, by the very nature of his job, must be curiously watchful. He must carefully look after his herd in order to avoid danger that his carelessness may bring about. Otherwise, the herd may damage farms. Unless they are checked in time, the herd may even disappear and get exposed to wild beasts. In both cases, the herdsman is in danger, for he is responsible for both the damaged farm and the lost animals.

From this situation, the proverb is equally applied to other similar social situations as well.

- It is used as warning to caution those people who are negligent in their duties; hence, to avoid their carelessness and taking appropriate measures before things (faults) grow to an irreversible degree,

- It is also quoted as advice and to convince people so as to check on their faults at the very start suggesting that if they do not do so they may run a risk of a total loss.
- The proverb is also said to comment on people who do not check their faults when they can be avoided but encounter problems as a result of their negligence, hence, to suggest that they deserve it, for it is their own mistake that brought them such trouble.

Example 3:

ahu bambante huwe

| Water drowns a swimmer

A swimmer enjoys swimming. Hence, swimming an activity where a swimmer relaxes and shows his expertise in water. However, accidents may happen, for no one is immune from the unforeseen. Conditions where his knowledge of swimming may fail to save him may happen unexpectedly.

The proverb is, therefore, used to give advice that one's knowledge must be used with due care, for at times it becomes difficult to know which way errors may come. Added to this, sometimes one's knowledge may fail to avoid them as

well. Hence, the proverb suggests that, no matter how much one is knowledgeable, one must be careful when applying it. By suggesting such a point, the proverb attempts to control the adventurous application of one's little knowledge.

From the examples discussed so far it is possible to identify two general directions in which Awngi proverbs attempt to control the social problems or situations — that is, by directing a future activity and by attempting to alter an attitude toward something that has been already occurred in the tradition.

3.2.3 Ethical and Instructive Functions

Most Awngi proverbs are rhetorical in purpose, instructive in content and concise in form. Didacticism is embedded in the content of each Awngi proverb just like the rhetorical value discussed earlier. Proverbs are traditional statements that embody ethical or philosophical truths or observations about life, the world or human nature de Caro (1984: 184).

Similarly, Awngi proverbs as well are the store-houses of accumulated wisdom of the ages. Hence, they are related to the value structures of the community. Based on those

traditional life experiences and wisdom they express a general truth, praise accepted social norms and values, condemn vices and recommend virtues , for example:

ilo shure aqi Shewo Shure divan kante

As man can see the cross-eyed God and cross-hearted

Literally, the proverb suggests that overt marks or activities are visible by the visual faculty of an ordinary man while the covert ones are by the Almighty God. Thus, nothing remains hidden, though it seems to be so. Because no one or nothing can be beyond the knowledge of the omniscient God. No one can, therefore, conceal one's sins and crimes from Him, though it may be possible from man. Ultimately, in the world of God and man nothing can remain hidden, for visible wickedness are visible to man and those hidden ones are to God.

Accordingly, the proverb is quoted to avoid the youth from vices. Conversely, the proverb is then, used to instruct the youth in virtuous norms, beliefs and values of the community. Example 2:

tsaN sebhudes itsi Sebhu Keshe

Better be stung by a worm than by a tongue.

Some biting worms are poisonous and many be even fatal. Yet, the proverb prefers being stung by a worm to a tongue. Traditionally speaking, however, the choice is advisable. Because in the traditional belief of the community in question being stung by a tongue is so serious, for the danger is not limited to the immediate victim unlike that of the worm's. In the case of the tongue, the danger is communicable down to the victim's children and grand children. Thus, the whole intent of the proverb becomes meaningful in the community in this way. Hence, the proverb is used to arrange the young society so as to pay due respect to the words and actions of elders so that the youth can conform with traditional expectations of the community. This proverb, therefore, gives a vivid instance of one of the main features of Awngi proverbs, as it attempts to cultivate the etiquettes of the young in order to socialize them.

As Bermans (1997: IX()) highlighted, Awngi proverbs as well, like parents and teachers claim to indicate what people must always do, how they to cope up with harsh reality as well as how to get along with all kinds of people

Example 3:

basihu Niqasarada lengedte

One who has no choice becomes a guest of his ex-wife's husband.

In normal circumstance, no one goes to the house of one's ex-wife's husband as far as the community's norm is concerned. But when there is no choice, it happens. The proverb is then applied to remind the motives something happened.

Example 4:

Wogeshit iluwa wula dontena

Each cow of a massage is lame

A massage presses and rubs the body of animals as well as people to lessen the stiffness and pains of muscles and joints. Hence, he has an important knowledge. However, unwise application of this knowledge is dangerous. The proverb indicates that the cows of such a skillful person are all broken. Thus, the proverb suggests that, no matter how important one's knowledge may be, it requires a wise application. The proverb is quoted to instruct one who tends to over use one's little knowledge.

The instances above show that Awngi proverbs are value laden statements, Hence, they reveal society's morals, values and attitudes from which people can learn to adjust themselves accordingly.

CHAPTER FOUR

FORM AND LITERARY SIGNIFICANCE

This chapter attempts to show the structure and literary relevance of Awngi proverbs.

4.1 Form

As it is discussed in the preceding chapters, Awngi proverbs are additional tools of conversation. They occur with the language to effect their purpose of persuasion as well as instruction. They can be generally identified from the ordinary language of conversation by their unique semantic and syntactic designs. They have a distinct structure which is different from the ongoing conversation. For instance unlike the ordinary conversation, some proverbs are tonal and rhythmic. They also convey a message of different content but analogically related to that conversation. In short, most Awngi proverbs show many features that are related to the structures of poems. These features include unusual construction such as inverted word order, ellipsis as well as melodic elements such as metre,

rhyme and rhythm. They also have artistic patterns of parallelism such as binary construction and balanced phrasing. See, for instance, the following example.

Wulo baitsiN	Yima kasiN
Duty forgetting	going begging

This proverb perceptably pauses in the middle (wulo baitsiN / Yima kasiN]. The middle position at which a pause occurs is known as caesura (Abrahams 1972: 120). In this case, this point divides the proverb into two parts known as dipods (Ibid). The two parts of this proverb are rhyming. Because wulo baitsiN / Yima kasiN

[cvcv cvcvc / cvcv cvcvc]

shows the identical rhythmic flow of the two sides. As rhythm is a basic element of poetry, the proverb, therefore, shows poeticity, in this respect. Each side of this proverb also repeats identical vowel-consonant order (pattern) of sound systems which produce a melodic rhyming.

Moreover, the two dipods are linked by a verb of equivalence 'baitsiN' /forgetting/. Hence, the elements in each side of the caesura ('wul' duty and 'yim' begging) are set parallel. As they conform with rhythmic, rhyming and metric requirements the two dipods are as well balancedly

phrased. The two sides are, therefore, set parallel. And this binary construction shows a clear relationship (equal position) between the two sides. This sort of relationship is a means by which the strategy of clarification is put into effect as indicated in chapter three of this thesis, for example, see the following instance:

Proverb text	⇒	Social context
(A:B)		(X:Y)
Wulo baitsiN	:	Yima kasiN
(A)		(B)
Wrong investment of :		brings wastage
time		property
money		life
labour		honour
.		.
.		.
.		.
(X)		(Y)

This shows that the appearances of clarification is produced by casting the proverb in a witty form as the effect of balance.

The following example also shows some additional poetic elements.

inkurtifi / ankirtiti

She who does not keep safe will go searching for
it.

inkurtiti / ankirtiti

[vccvccvc / vccvccvcv]

This text has 4/4 countable syllables in each dipod.
The length of vowels and ease of pronunciation is identical.
As a result it is rhythmic and rhyming. As rhyme and rhythm
effect melody, this proverb is melodic as well. This proverb
as well is balancedly phrased.

Some Awngi proverbs also show unusual word order in
construction, example:

gumju ihuwi isano iNe

Hastey a hyena bites on the nose

Like the preceding examples, this proverb as well is
paused in the middle. gumju ihuwi / isano iNe

The conversational sentence structure of Awngi is
(SOV), meaning, the pattern of a conversational sentence is
subject—object—verb.

eg. 1. Ni giseNo kuha
 He dog (the) kill (did)
 S O V
 He did kill the dog
 He killed the dog

eg. 2 Ni tsarke giseNo kuha
 He black (the) dog (the) kill (did)
 S(noun) adj (article) noun (article) verb (article)
 S noun-phrase verb-phrase
 S O V

The two examples of Awngi sentences above show the common word pattern in a sentence as (SOV). However, the above proverbial sentences:

gumju	ihuwi	isano	iNe
hasty	hyena	nose (the)	bites
Adj	noun(s)	NP (object)	VP (verb)

deviates from the conversational syntactic pattern of the language. In example 2, the adjective (black) describes the noun (dog) which is the object. Hence, the position of the adjective in the ordinary pattern is preceded by the (NP)

object it describes as (S — adj. — NP (obj.) — VP). But in the proverb, above, the adjective comes before the subject. It takes the initial position, which is the usual place of a subject in ordinary construction. The subject in any sentence, as a performer of the action, takes the leading position for the sake of emphasis. But in this case, the emphasis shifts from the subject to its emotional state of that particular time. As a result the qualifier that describes that eagerness takes the leading position of the proverbial sentences for similar effect (emphasis). And this unusual poetic expression (word order) is true as well in the case of (Red as a rose is she).

In this proverb, the idea of commenting on activities that involve risks of allocating choices due to time and emotional commitment is more significant than the usual activity of a hyena. Hence, the descriptive word that vividly shows the emotional state of the subject in that particular instance is underlined instead of the subject which is victimized due to the overriding emotion that led to the wrong choice.

Ambiguous construction as well is usual in proverbs just like in poetry. Ambiguity (multiple meaning) gives room

for alternative reactions to the same piece of language. an ambiguous statement is an expression with several relevant suggestions or incompatible (different and independent) meanings. This is one of the basic forms in which Awngi proverbs occur. Ambiguity both for proverbs and poetic works is a quality, for it involves compression of thought. Because of its intricate and equivocal nature ambiguity requires careful treatment and handling. It is through this technique, therefore, that proverbs and poetic structures attain conciseness in form as well as depth and variation in meaning.

This formal ambiguity of proverbs suggests similar characteristics in social situations that they gloss. Hence that is why Awngi proverbs are applied in ambiguous or equivocal contextual situations. They are mainly applied to resolve, clarify or disambiguate such a delicate social situation in a given conversation event. For instance:

dunge tagit sendNarada Seno tagit Ni Narda

She who does not know girdling, on the bosom,

She who does not know proberbing, on herself

This proverb, just like others pauses in the middle

dunge tagit sendNarada / Senotagit NiNarada

It is also poetic, for all the reasons discussed so far. The proverb, as most Awngi proverbs, is ambiguous.

eg. According to the established formula:

text : Context

(A:B) $\Rightarrow$ (X:Y)

dunge taqit SendNarada : Seno tagit Ni Narada

The two parts (dipods) are linked with equivalence

One who does not know the right	puts or throws
place (position) of action of	= wrong way (on his own)

Comment	family
gossip	relatives
laughter (X)	oneself (Y)

Thus, due to its multiple meanings this proverb can be used to clarify various social ambiguities (situations) depending on the contexts. For instance, it is applied to advise one who is in indecision between opting desires either to make a comment on somebody or not. Someone who knows the effect that may follow the comment tells one either not to act or else think of ahead before making the comment. Because that comment may be reflexive and may hint at one's own domain. It is also used to advise one so as to

keep one's secrets. The proverb is as well quoted for warning one against something that may reflect on oneself (expose one's own mistakes). This proverb is similarly cited to express one's regret after the effect of exposing one's own mistakes and the injury that followed.

All this is possible due to the multiple meanings embedded in the textual ambiguity of girdling wrong and proverbs wrong on oneself. This textual ambiguity is metaphorically associated with similar social situations. Thus, the analogy between the social and textual ambiguities that suggests various incompatible expressions due to its indeterminacy, enriches the proverb to apply in various contexts.



The other formal feature in which Awngi proverbs are suggested is paradox. A paradox is a seemingly self-contradictory statement. It is, of course, a form of ambiguity. As an ambiguity, paradox is rich in meaning, for it suggests at least two seemingly opposite ideas, example:

icha kanti digida che

One who wishes much achieves little

As a paradoxical construction, this proverb contains two seemingly contradictory ideas (claiming much and achieving little) However, their connotative meaning knitted between claim (Hope or intention) and actual achievement brings out sensible and significant meanings that validate the paradoxical construction of this proverb. The proverb is used in various similar social situations to comment on one who desires beyond the situational limits. It is also quoted to advise a person in order to examine the actual situation instead of distant or remote hopes. In this case, it recommends to abandon unattainable wishes and work on the actualities at hand instead. It is equally used as regret after a misfortune followed from ignoring actual businesses at hand wishing to achieve something better but which is remote Thus, it is this richness in meaning that makes paradoxical constructions legible for proverb texts as well as poetic works.

The other basic form of Awngi proverbs is analogy. Analogy works with help of metaphor. A metaphor, by its very nature creates associations between proverb texts and social contexts that are analogically set parallel. In this case, traditional practices, events, animals, birds, insects ... which are familiar in the communal tradition are used. Due

to their long relation with those situations people observed their behavior attitudes and situations and drew lessons from such experiences in order to apply to their own encounters, example:

wuje kache nunu giseN Shentels bukho

A dog intended to hunt a lion is found being chased by a rabbit.

This proverb, as usual, is perceptably paused in the middle.

wuje kache nunu giseN / Shentelas bukho

(A)

(B)

The noun (dog) links the two sides of the dipod, for he reacts between both a lion and a rabbit. Of course, with a hope (A) and actual situation (B). The text compares a lion which is strong and furious with a rabbit which is weak, timid and small. The owner of the dog had a strong hope to hunt a lion with his dog. But in reality the dog was found being chased by that weak and timid animal before his encounter with a lion. Thus, the hope of the owner becomes futile as a result. Accordingly, then, as the text has a metaphorical association with social context, the analogy

The proverb is used to comment on situations where descendants (sons and daughters) of people known for their wickedness also commit (create) such problems. It suggests that nothing good is expected from the line of those bad people.

Example 3:

Mure kuwama Nigimbali

Having killed a snake, throw away the stick too.

Though scientific studies show that most varieties of snake are poisonless, traditionally any snake is believed to be poisonous. As a result, hostility of mankind to this creature is very strong. Hence, no body in the tradition leaves it unkilld when it is seen. Traditionally, as each snake is poisonous, a stick used to kill it is as well considered poisonous. Hence, it is usually thrown away so as not to use it any more.

Based on this traditional practice the proverb is used with metaphorical meaning in the society. Inflicting injury upon some one is a serious problem. It may result in legal punishment or may bring an act of retaliation. Thus, one who committed such a serious crime should be careful to avoid any bits and pieces of clues that may hint at the plight.

Above all, one should as well interrupt relations with the victim's family, for nothing good could be expected thereafter.

The proverb is, then, used in such serious situations either to warn, comment or advise depending on contexts.

Allusions and Wellerisms are also forms in which Awngi proverbs occur. Some proverbs suggest or refer to stories or fables that evoke associations to similar contextual events, happenings, or encounters, example.

Wogel genah chahe wite

As this is not the last hot iron, donot
exhaust your urine.

This proverb suggests a traditional story. Unless the story is known or told it is difficult to identify its semantic content or its application. As the story is traditionally well known, however, the proverb is applied without any difficulty. The story is:

Women who committed adultery were used to get branded with hot iron bars around their sex organs. A man whose wife made such a mistake had inflamed some iron bars. So frustrated, the lady as she saw the first hot object, failed to control her urine. As he saw this, the husband cautioned her to save her fluid for the following branding iron as well.

Suggesting this story, the proverb is used to warn people against serious problems that are about to happen — that is, when people show frustration. And the proverb is applied to advise them face it courageously. It attempts to reaffirm their position so that they will not give up.

Example 2:

Sanu wufcha	wula kicha
Mills in summer	are equally busy.

This proverb as well suggests a story:

People in rural area (used to) grind their crops with home-made-grinding mills. This activity is associated with the availability of crops. During the harvest season grain is excess and the mills are all busy. But when winter comes most mills stop due to shortage of crops. Those home that are able to run their mills through out the year are reputable.

Based on this story the proverb is quoted to comment on people who act with their favourable time. It is synical and forwarded with contempt.

Example 3:

Nio /lmiNdes himbe limiN

(Better) shut the mouth than the door.

This proverb is elliptical. Its construction suggests a missing word. Hence, it requires an adjective that indicates the choice of closing the mouth. This form is as well one of the ways that some Awngi proverbs exist.

4.2 Literary Significance

Before making any attempt to show the literary significance of Awngi proverbs, it seems to be appropriate to show the relationship between the written and unwritten literatures.

Literature, referring to anything written down, tends to exclude unwritten forms from its domain. However, its technical definition attempts to correct this tendency. Though it is not easy to define literature, the following definition is chosen for this purpose, for it shows the

common characteristics between the written and unwritten forms.

According to Dictionary of Literary Terms, "literature is an imaginative fictional work in prose or verse form which has a considerable importance in the arrangement of sounds and richness of suggestions." This definition, therefore, does not exclude unwritten forms (oral literatures), for it contains characteristics that unwritten forms share with. When viewed from the vantage point of their language usage, their objectives and goals, both forms share important features. For instance, written literary works as well as proverbs use figurative language for image formation and emotional appeals. They are as well suggestive and they achieve it through artistic use of language. Hence, both literary works as well as proverbs use similar devices artistically. Metaphorical expressions, allusions paradoxes, and others discussed in the preceding section of this chapter, to show poetic characteristics of proverbs, can be taken as cases in point as far as this point is concerned.

Apart from those literary techniques, shown by textual analysis in section 4.1, Awngi proverbs also employ others like humor, irony and exaggeration, example:

Chih nirjades chih chiga male

In winter mud hits the target better than a man

In winter (June-September), people in rural areas of Awi are so busy. Because this time is an important period of agricultural activity. Plowing, harrowing, sowing and other important agricultural practices are carried out during this period of the year. Hence, the male society is completely engaged in this work. On the other hand, this period is a time when some sort of food scarcity is observed in some rural homes. Thus, people show physical weakness due to hard work and food shortage. It is from this situation that the above humorous proverb is suggested. As men are weak, they cannot actively act on sexual activities with their female mates during this season. Rather, in winter, squelching (mud) that splashes up when stepped on hits it better than men. The proverb is used by women to tease on men in winters for humorous effect.

Example 2:

qunzeka divanula qundaste

Even the God catches illness

This is an exaggeration. The proverb is applied at times of visiting patients. When patients are recovering or

in the middle of illness, the proverb is applied to console or encourage them. It suggests that, as to the illness, even God feels it. Hence, illness is not unusual but the main concern should be on its mercy.

Example 3:

malNa imbelanta mure fishte

A harrower who delves deep takes out a snake

Literaly speaking, the more a harrower delves into the work (harrowing), the better the effect. But, in this case, the proverb is applied ironically to comment on trespassing the limits. It is used to warn people who tend to go beyond the limits.

Moreover, proverbs according to Permyakov (1979: XI), are language phenomena, artistic miniatures (reflecting living realities) and logical units. Literary works as well are not exceptions to this opinion. The internal structural complexity of Awngi proverbs shows the artistic use of language like that of literary works. Both use non-literal connotative and associative language forms (figures of speech). Both of them are as well instructive in content.

Proverbs as well as literary works reflect a living reality. Both of them attempt to show a true picture of life which is constituted from the knowledge of mankind, his life ways as well as observations of nature through experience. Proverbs, like literary works, serve the society by offering models of thought, schemes of life or logical situations. Finally, both proverbs as well as literary works use impersonalized objective pronoun (one). Even if they use particular names or events, in reality, this does not mean that they are referring to those names and events. Actually, they are using them as models to represent the universal life situation at large.

The relationships between literary works and proverbs discussed so far, therefore, attest literary significance of Awngi proverbs. Accordingly, proverbs are used in written literary works to add flavor, reality as well as local colour to the artistic work. Proverbs also help to condense the kernel points from the extended presentation in written literature.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to analyse forms and contents of Awngi proverbs. Analysis includes collecting, classifying and interpreting proverb data. The analysis was, therefore, carried out in the physical and social setting of the community where proverbs are evolved, practised and transmitted both from person to person as well as from generation to generation.

Awi is an ethnic community where its people share geographical boundary, language, world views (beliefs), occupation and other common ethnic heritages. The artistic experiences, of the ethnic group, therefore, have grown through time within these physical and traditional ranges that make up the national identity of the Awi community. Hence, the participants of a given communication event share those cultural signs and codes that enable them to apply and interpret their proverbs effectively. In other words, as they belong to the same reference group where they share cultural sets of principles that govern a communication process as well as proverb application, conversation dealers understand one another without difficulty.

Apart from those sets of cultural principles mentioned above, physical and social setting or context includes time, place and condition (physical) as well as sex, age, status, occupation (social) situations of proverb application. Therefore, identifying when, where, how by whom and for what purpose proverbs are used in the community has a significant place in proverb analysis.

Accordingly, then the basic purpose of proverb application in Awi community is to effect persuasion. In other words, Awngi proverbs are rhetorical tools used to augment or foreground persuasion. Hence, they attempt to convince or alter the position of an addressee. Therefore, they are usually applied when a crisis or gap is observed in a conversation situation. That is, as conversational devices used for better effect, Awngi proverbs are quoted when complex, equivocal or chaotic situations appear in a given conversation situation. Thus, they are used to disambiguate as well as clarify those ambiguous or enigmatic situations. In other words, they are applied to resolve conflicts or to solve problems that arise during conversation.

Awngi proverbs usually, effectively carry-out the purpose that they are quoted for. Because they are strongly

associated with the real life experience of the people, they also embody wisdom of the ages and thus convey culturally agreed upon ideas. Moreover, they enable the audience to see a problem at hand in terms of traditional wisdom or wider perspectives. Above all, holding conversations on the right direction, Awngi proverbs enable the audience either to face those problems immediately or resolve strains suggesting that the problem is already passed leaving an instructive experience behind.

Thus, Awngi proverbs play an important role to effect local arbitration or reconciliation. Elders who are endowed with using proverbs in order to comfort, quieten or shed light on those conflicts or chaotic situations usually use proverbs in their conversation. However, children do not usually use them. This is because proverb application requires competence in language, social experience and cultural norms and beliefs which children are lacking. Thus, the situation makes them inappropriate to use proverbs in their conversation.

Awngi proverbs are instructive in content. They serve ethical and educational functions. As they convey culturally accepted truths to satisfy cultural requirements, they are

used to socialize or conform the growing generation (youth) with cultural norms and values that validate the social system. In this regard, Awngi proverbs provide the youth with thought models, schemes of some real life or logical situations. In other words, some proverbs acquaint the public with a picture of the world, some with rules of behavior and others with rules of reasoning. Thus, they serve a moralizing purpose. They praise or recommend any virtue or attitude toward certain situations. They also warn against all extremities. Thus, Awngi proverbs are used to struggle with ethical failures or social disorders (anxieties). Accordingly, they are applied to direct future activities or to alter an attitude towards something that has been already known in the tradition.

However, one proverb is used to recommend different or even contradictory situations depending on circumstances. Similarly, two or more proverbs are used to mean the same thing while some praise the precise opposite. These situation of proverbs, however, suggest the diversity of life and truth. In other words, as life is not uniform, proverbs convey their meaning depending on circumstances.

Awngi proverbs are concise in form. Moreover, they are poetic in character (form). Most Awngi proverbs use literary devices that are characteristically associated with poetry. They use metaphors, allusions, analogies parallel constructions, balanced phrasing and paradoxes. In short, they use most forms of figures of speech. they also constitute humor, irony and exaggeration.

To conclude, Awngi proverbs are witty and forceful forms of expressive lore. They are poetic (rhythmic and melodical) as well as familiar statements that are perceptible as eternal truths. This qualities of proverbs, therefore, makes them memorable and ready-made tools of conversation. In the process of application, they play an important role to reveal traditional norms and values of conversational reactions that help identify the community, for the process shows institutional rules and principles on action.

Precisely speaking, Awngi proverbs are basically poetic in character, concise in form, rhetorical in purpose, applicable in situation of tension, instruction in content and situational (contextual) in meaning.

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99.

List of Informants

R. No.	Name of Informant	Age	Level of Education	Residence	Occupation
1	YeneAbat Fanta	86	Able to read and write	Ankasha	Ex-Woreda Vice Administrator
2	Taddesse Jembere	79	Able to read and write	Chagni	Ex-Awraja Administrator
3	Tessema Jembere	87	Able to read and write	Gimjabet	Local teacher
4	Zegeye Yirdaw	76	Able to read and write	Kosober	A Retired Woreda Judge
5	Baynesagn Kebede	80	Able to read and write	Gimjabet	Merchant
6	Getahun Kassa	71	Illiterate	Ankasha	Farmer
7	Yaregal Alene	41	B.A. (AAU.) FLEn	Chara	Social Affairs Worker
8	Bantihun Mekonen	43	B.A. (A.A.U. EdAd	Zigem	Education Office
9	Tenaye Emire	35	B.A. (Pedagogics)	Kosober	Teacher
10	Kinde Admas	40	Diploma	Zigem	Teacher
11	Embiale Bogale	38	T.T.I.	Kosober	Teacher
12	Bitewlign Asrat	40	T.T.I.	Kosober	Teacher
13	Alga Beze	40	T.T.I.	Gimjabet	Teacher
14	Yitayih Admas	30	Student (A.A.U.)	Gimjabet	
15	Alemzerf Bogale	22	Student (A.A.U.)	Chagni	
16	Haile Kassahun	25	Student (A.A.U.)	Gimijabet	

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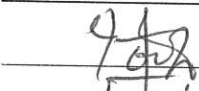
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DECLARATION

The thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in other university and all those sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name Teferi Getahun
Signature: 
Place: A.A.U.
Date of Submission May 19, 2000

This thesis has been submitted for examination under my approval as a research advisor.

Name: Dr. Yimer Kifle
Signature: 
Date: 20/06/2000