

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**

**NARRATIVE VOICE AS APPLIED TO DHABA WOYESSA'S  
GODAANNISA AND GURRAACHA ABBAYYAA: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY**

**BY:**

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**ADDIS ABABA**

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ABBAYYAA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
KEY TO PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION IN OROMO LANGUAGE (OL) ..	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem .....	1
1.2 Objectives of the Study.....	3
1.3 Research Questions .....	4
1.4 Methodology of the Study .....	5
1.5 Limitations of the Study .....	6
1.6 Significance of the Study .....	6
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	8
2.1 The Concept of Narratology and Narrative Fiction .....	8
2.2 The Concept of Narrative Voice .....	10
2.3 Voice Markers .....	11
2.4 Types of Narrative Voice .....	13
2.4.1 Narrator's Source .....	13
2.4.2 Narrative Levels.....	14
2.4.3 Narrator's Relationship with The text.....	16
2.4.4 Degrees of Conspicuousness.....	16
2.4.5 Time Relationship.....	17
2.4.6 Reliability .....	19
2.5 Review of Related Studies.....	20
2.6. Theoretical Framework.....	22

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE VOICE IN <u>GODAANNISA</u> (“SCAR”) AND <u>GURRAACHA ABBAYYAA</u> (“BLACK OF THE NILE”) .....	26
3.1 Narrative Voice in <u>Godaannisa</u> (“Scar”) .....	26
3.1.1 Source.....	27
3.1.2 Level.....	28
3.1.3 Relationship to the Story .....	29
3.1.4 Degree of Conspicuousness .....	31
3.1.5 Time Relationship.....	37
3.1.6 Reliability .....	40
3.2 Narrative Voice in <u>Gurraacha Abbayyaa</u> (“Black of the Nile”) .	43
3.2.1 Source.....	43
3.2.2 Degree of Conspicuousness .....	46
3.2.3 Time Relationship.....	52
3.2.4 Reliability .....	53
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSIONS .....	55
REFERENCES .....	61
APPENDIX 1: A SYNOPSIS OF <u>GODAANNISA</u> .....	68
APPENDIX 2: A SYNOPSIS OF <u>GURRAACHA ABBAYYAA</u> .....	70

## KEY TO PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION IN OROMO

### LANGUAGE (OL)

1. Oromo Consonants: B/b, C/c, D/d, F/f, G/g, H/h, J/j, K/k, L/l, M/m, N/n, Q/q, R/r, S/s, T/t, W/w, X/x, Y/y, Ch/ch, Dh/dh, Ny/ny, Ph/ph, Sh/sh
2. Vowels: A/a, E/e, O/o, U/u, I/i
3. Plosive d is written with dh in OL as in 'dhala', (son) or (daughter)  
  
Plosive t is written with x in OL as in 'xaba', (play)  
  
Plosive k is written with q in OL as in 'qara', (sharp) or (clever)
4. Vowel lengthening in AO is shown by doubling the vowel as in 'haaraa', (brand-new), unlike the short vowel in 'hara', (pool)
5. Consonants are doubled for gemination in OL as in 'ballaa', (wide) or (broad), unlike 'balaa', (danger) or (disaster)

*(Slightly adapted from: Asafa Tefera [2003])*

## **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to analyze how a narrative voice is manifested in two Oromo narratives: Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa, written by Dhaba Woyyessa. The intention is to show how an author applies different styles from text to text in terms of narrative voice. It is also attempted to indicate that the application of voice in a narrative can be analyzed not only irrespective of the medium but also irrespective of the language in which the narrative is presented.*

*When analyzed critically, as Genette (1980), Booth (1983), Phelan (1996) and Bal (1997) among others would argue, a narrative voice can help to understand the characteristics of a certain text. So to analyze the narrative voice in each selected narrative, source, level, text and time relationship, and degrees of conspicuousness and reliability of the narrator are used as criteria. The study revealed that the narrative voice in Godaannisa is a personified, extra-homodiegetic, overt, retrospective and unreliable while the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is unpersonified, extra-hetrodiegetic, moderately overt, retrospective and slightly unreliable.*

*The paper is organised into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the problem, objectives, research questions, limitations and significance of the study. The second chapter contains review of related literature where concepts related to narrative voice, an assessment of related studies and a design of a theoretical framework are presented. In the third chapter, an analysis of narrative voice in each selected narrative is presented. The fourth and final chapter consists of comparative summaries of narrative voices in the two narratives by way of conclusion.*

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims at introducing the current study. It is divided into six sections. The first section presents statement of the problem under where a background, reasons for conducting the current study and the problem are included. The objectives and the corresponding questions of the study are presented under the second and third sections respectively. The fourth section contains methods and procedures while limitations of the study are put under section four. The final section of the chapter consists of significance of the study where the benefits that the study is hoped to provide are presented.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The history of narrative techniques can not be seen separately from that of the novel. Scholars suggest that the novel started around the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hawthorn, 2001). From this, it can be inferred that the emergence of the study in narrative techniques goes back to that time. But as it rises, it is true that different factors compel changes in the elements. These changes can be due to “[...] the dominant modes of human communication [...] different world- views philosophies, and ideologies [...] readership patterns and habits [...] Larger changes in human life and modes of consciousness” (Hawthorn, 2001: 82).

And the conception of ‘narrative voice’ is one of the elements affected by these changes. There have been controversies in distinguishing it clearly from the other narrative techniques like ‘point of view’ or ‘focalization’. This is because the term point of view was viewed as encompassing different narrative techniques like voice and

focalization. Still some scholars are using the term in this sense. But the terms voice and point of view or focalization are two different techniques (Chatman, 1978; Hawthorn, 2001; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002 and Jahn, 2005). Recently, many scholars have come to treat the two terms separately. And researchers, for instance Yideg Alemayehu (2004) and Mebratu Gebreegiabher (2005) from Ethiopia, have conducted analysis using these techniques. In other words the custom of using narrative voice and point of view interchangeably seems to be changing in the stance of many scholars.

The recent conception of narrative voice is equating it with a narrator, i.e. an agent or a voice that tells a story. The fact that it is one of the recent literary phenomenon is one reason for conducting the present study. The researcher believes that any discussion of narrative techniques should consider narrative voice and point of view as separate elements working together for the development of a narrative. This means, each can be analyzed critically to construct the tones, feelings and attitudes reflected in the narrative. In other words, to arrive at a thorough understanding of the structures and their functions in a narrative fiction, the manifestation of each narrative technique should be studied critically. Even a narrative voice is “the most central concept in the analysis of narrative texts” (Bal, 1997: 19). That is one reason for the present study to focus on one of the techniques, i.e. narrative voice.

The other reason for the study is to apply modern theories of narratology to the studies in Oromo Literature. In addition to the lack of satisfactory quantity (Assefa Tefera, 2004), Oromo Literature has suffered from not being studied in terms of recent narrative techniques. In addition, so far the focus seems to be on the oral

narratives rather than the written ones (MA Thesis lists that are found in the ILS library of AAU can be evidence for this comment). However, as narrative voice is one of the contemporary literary techniques, it should be given attention in order to develop the written literature of a certain society.

In light of the above reasons, the present study focuses on narrative voice as applied to two Oromo novels: Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa. Both narratives are written by Dhaba Woyyessa in 1992 and 1996 respectively. As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, no one has studied these narrative texts in terms of their application of narrative voice. But the analysis of narrative voice, including any narrative techniques, can be applied to any narrative text irrespective of the language it is written.

In short, the current study attempts to analyze the narrator of each narrative, Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa, in a comparative way. Through the analysis, the study also attempts to show how the same author can apply different styles in terms of narrative voice according to the contexts and situations s/he wants to communicate.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of the study is to analyze the application of narrative voice in Dhaba Woyyessa's Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa. In other words, the general objective of the study is to show how voice is treated in the narratives. Through critical observation of the linguistic and textual signals in the narratives, the paper aims to attain the following specific objectives:

- ⇒ Determining the source of narrative voice in each narrative,

- ⇒ Examining the relationships between narrative voice and text (in terms of narrative level, participation in the story and the time of the narrated) in each narrative,
- ⇒ Deciding the narrator's degree of conspicuousness in his/her story in each narrative, and
- ⇒ Checking the reliability of narrative voice in each narrative.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

By analysing the selected narratives, Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What is narrative voice?
- What is the source of narrative voice in each narrative?
- What kind of relationship is there between the narrative voice and the story in terms of narrative level, participation and the time of the narrated? and
- How is narrative voice is manifested in terms of degrees of conspicuousness (overtness and covertness) and reliability (reliable and unreliable) in each narrative?

In short, attempts have been made to answer the above questions by analysing and comparing the data which are gathered during the study. The analysis is made through an examination of the linguistic and textual signals, which can indicate the 'what?', 'who?', 'from where?', 'when?' and 'how?' of the narrative voice, in each narrative.

## 1.4 Methodology of the Study

This section provides detailed information about the methods, samples and procedures that are used during the data collection and analysis. To begin with, the general method that is used for the research is document analysis. This means that the sources of data for the study are the novels by Dhaba Woyyessa: Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa. This is because the study focuses on analysing the voices in the selected narratives by the same author in a comparative way. So, the data which were found through reading the two narratives are analyzed and compared in terms of the application of the narrative voice in each of them.

In terms of sampling, the textual and linguistic signals in the narratives are used to reveal and compare the narrative voices. Since it is difficult to use all the data found in the narratives, the researcher has attempted to use the most telling extracts. Put another way, the researcher has attempted to use examples that he thinks would exemplify the discussion of narrative voices. This is done by giving attention to the textual and linguistic evidence in each of the narratives.

First of all both narratives are read by the researcher. Next data which can be exemplary for the discussion of the narrative voice are extracted from each of the narratives. Then, the extracts have been translated into the target language by the researcher, i.e., English. And then, the data are analyzed and interpreted in terms of the application of the narrative voice in each of the texts. The analysis is done by taking the typologies of narrative voice into consideration. This means, the voice in each narrative is classified in terms of its source, narrative level, text and time relationship, the narrator's

degree of conspicuousness and the narrator's reliability by a thorough investigation of the linguistic and textual evidences. Finally, conclusions are given regarding the application of the narrative voice in each narrative through comparison.

## **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited to only two Oromo narrative fictions: Dhaba Woyyessa's Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa.

The study also focuses on examining and classifying the narrative voice in the selected narratives. It does not include other narrative techniques like focalization and stream of consciousness in general; and other narrative communication levels like author, implied author, narratee, implied reader and reader in particular.

The reason for limiting the study only to a narrative voice is that if a detailed analysis is made using this technique, it is possible to arrive at the whole characteristics of a narrative fiction (Bal, 1997).

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The researcher hopes that the result of the study will have various advantages. To begin with, it will add to the attempts made by other scholars to maintain the study of Oromo Literature with contemporary literary techniques. This is because the concept of 'voice' is one of the contemporary phenomenon in terms of narrative techniques. So, it is hoped that this study can pave the way for the analysis of Oromo novels using narrative voice which is one of the contemporary techniques.

The study can also help different scholars or researchers by serving them as a reference when needed. Writers, students and teachers of

(Oromo) Literature may refer to the study whenever they need issues related to narrative voice in general and to the two novels under study in particular.

In addition, the study will play a role in publicizing Oromo Literature. The fact that it is conducted in the English Language may create the chance for this. Other scholars out of the society can be introduced to the two novels which are under study.

To conclude, the hope is that the significance of the study will be many-fold. It will serve the Oromo society, students and teachers of literature, individual or group researchers, and scholars in different purpose as stated above.

In this introductory chapter, the problem, objectives, questions, methodology, limitations and significance of the study have been dealt with. The review of literature related to the study is presented in the next chapter where different theories and related studies regarding narrative voice are assessed to lay a theoretical framework for the analysis of the narrative voice in Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The purpose of this chapter is to present reviews made on theories and studies that are related to areas of narrative voice. The chapter is divided into six subheadings. The first one presents general concepts about narratology and narrative fiction. The second subheading gives an operational concept of narrative voice after comparing and contrasting the definitions given by different scholars. Voice markers are listed under the third subheading. The fourth subheading contains typologies of narrative voice. The fifth one reviews the studies related to the current one, which are conducted by Ethiopian scholars. The last, but not the least subheading contains a theoretical framework that has been used to analyse narrative voices in the novels under study.

### **2.1 The Concept of Narratology and Narrative Fiction**

As narrative voice is one of the elements of narratology and narrative fiction, the concept of these two general terms needs to be introduced. Accordingly, narratology is the study of narrative structure (Lois, 2006). In other words, “Narratology is the theory of narrative, and it provides tools for analysing narrative texts” (Bal, 1993: 307). It began to take shape in 1966 and Tzvetan Todorov coined the term ‘narratology’ three years later (Jahn, 2005). However, such structuralist critics as Gérard Genette, Mieke Bal, Gerald Prince and others popularized the term in the 1970s (Onega & Garcia Landa, 1996).

Next to narratology, the term narrative needs to be defined before getting into the concept of narrative fiction. Some scholars like

Genette (1988), Simpson (1997), Toolan (1998) and Hawthorn (2001) seem to limit the concept of narrative to a verbal discourse.

For Barthes (1977), Chatman (1978), Onega and Garcia Landa (1996), Bal (1997) and Rimmon-Kenan (2002), everything that tells or presents a story, either verbally or non-verbally, is a narrative. In other words, narrative is "...a form of communication which presents a sequence of events caused and experienced by characters" (Jahn, 2005: 2). The sequence of events can be presented in a written form or in a spoken form. Thus narrative constitutes genres like newspaper reports, films, biographies, fictions, dances, etc. In short, narrative encompasses the whole range of fictional and non-fictional events. And since the current study analyzes two narrative fictions, i.e., Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa, it is worth defining the term clearly.

A fictional narrative contains genres like novels and narrative poems (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Specifically, narrative fiction is, "The narration of succession of fictional events" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002: 2). It is a presentation of a creative and an imaginary recounting of events in a story that happened in an imaginary world (Yideg, 2004). It is in this sense that the term narrative is used in the present study.

Finally, narratology, which is the study of narrative, can be divided into three fields: Tense, Mood and Voice (Genette, 1988; Yideg, 2004 and Jahn, 2005). Tense is concerned with the temporal relationships in the story. Mood deals with the restriction of the information in the narrative (Jahn, 2005). And voice refers to the narrator of the story (Chatman, 1978), (Hawthorn, 2001), (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002) and (Jahn, 2005). This study focuses only on voice and an attempt is made to give a detailed discussion of voice in the sections below.

## 2.2 The Concept of Narrative Voice

There has been a long tradition to treat voice, and point of view or perspective or focalization as similar or identical terms. Scholars have failed to make clear distinctions among them. For instance, scholars like Abrams (1999) and Gordon and Karen (1999) consider the term point of view as if it consists of different narrative techniques like voice, perspective, tone, mood, etc. But it is worth considering the following definitions, by other scholars, which account for the distinctions between narrative voice and point of view or perspective or focalization:

*Point of view is the physical or ideological situation or practical life orientation to which narrative events stand in relation. Voice, on the contrary refers to the speech or other overt means through which events and existents are communicated to the audience. Point of view does not mean expression; it only means the perspective in terms of which the expression is made (Chatman, 1978: 153).*

*The way the story is mediated is a key element in a fictional structure. This involves both the angle of vision, the point from which the people, events, and other details are viewed, and also the words of the story lying between us and the history. The viewing aspect is called the focus or point of view, and the verbal aspect the voice (Bain, et.al., 1987: 62).*

*The voice in a narrative is 'who speaks?' and the perspective is 'who sees?' (Hawthorn, 2001: 79).*

*Focalization is the perspective, angle of vision, or point of view from which events are related. In Genette's famous formulation,*

*it must be distinguished from the act of narration [or narrative voice] in the following way: When you read a discourse and ask “Who speaks?” or “Who narrates?” you are concerned with narration [or voice]. When you ask “Who sees?” or “Who thinks?” then you are concerned with focalization (Palmer, 2004)*

So, from the above definitions, it can be summarized that a narrative voice is the teller of state of beings and actions or events in a narrative. It should not be confused with the terms point of view, perspective and focalization which can be interchangeably used to refer to the angle from which the story is told. Thus, narrative voice is used in the study being equated with a narrator or teller of stories in a narrative fiction.

### **2.3 Voice Markers**

Not all narratives have narrative voice. Chatman (1978) argues that a narrative can be presented without a narrator or a speaker of the story. Even if some scholars like Rimmon-Kenan (2002) and Jahn (2005) do not agree with Chatman, his argument appears to be true in dramatic narratives. So, what signals the presence of narrative voice in a story is the question that should be answered clearly. Accordingly, the presence of narrative voice in a story can be detected by using different mechanisms. A critic or reader of narratives can identify a narrative voice by:

- Paying attention to the self-referential expressions of the narrator by the first person pronoun, or the use or avoidance of time summary, “expressions (or 'expressivity markers') that indicate the narrator's education, his/her beliefs, convictions,

interests, values, political and ideological orientation, attitude towards people, events, and things” (Jahn, 2005),

- Using pragmatic signals or speech acts like interpretations, judgments, general or moral observations, “expressions that signal the narrator's awareness of an audience and the degree of his/her orientation towards it”; because, “Verbal storytelling, like speaking in general, takes place in a communicative setting comprising a speaker and an audience (or, a bit more generally, in order to account for written communication as well, an **addresser** and an **addressee**)” (*Ibid.*), and
- Looking at the content matter or the general theme of the text. In short considering the subject matter. “Obviously, there are naturally and culturally appropriate voices for sad and happy, comic and tragic subjects (though precise type of intonation never follows automatically” (*Ibid.*).

Generally, as s/he is disadvantaged for not communicating face to face (by words of mouth) with narrators of written narratives, a reader is highly dependent on the words of a text to distinguish identities, characteristics and functions of narrators. Put another way, narrative voice can be identified and analyzed by critical observations and investigations of the linguistic and textual signals in the narrative. And this method is applied in this study.

## 2.4 Types of Narrative Voice

In search of criteria to analyse narrative voice in a narrative, one may face discrepancies among scholars in classifying narrative voice as precisely as everybody can agree upon. However, the need for analysing the narrative voices of the selected narratives critically made the researcher to search for more specific criteria. Accordingly, an attempt is made to arrive at the following considerations in order to classify narrative voice. The classifications are integrated from (Chatman, 1978), (Hawthorn, 2001), (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002), (Palmer, 2004), (Jahn, 2005) and (Microsoft Corporation, 2007). The classifications are summarized and discussed in the following subsections:

### 2.4.1 Narrator's Source

Hawthorn (2001) suggests that narrators should be identified in terms of their source. Here narrators can be divided into three continuum of possibility. These are:

- i. **Personified, named, and with a full human identity:** When the narrator is recognized as a distinct person with well-defined human characteristics. In addition to using 'I' frequently, the narrator has a name and tells us his/her personal history in detail. By doing so, he/she attracts attention of the narratee towards him/herself.

- ii. Personified but anonymous:** When the narrator identifies himself/herself as a person by seldom using 'I'. However, there is no detailed information about the narrator. Hawthorn (2001) identifies such a narrator as a human being. But it is difficult to be sure unless there is textual evidence either directly or indirectly because non-human narrators may also refer to themselves using 'I' in fictional texts. So the term 'personified' is preferred to 'human' because such a narrator at least uses the pronoun 'I' or 'we'.
  
- iii. Not fully comparable with any human perspective:** When it is confusing to tell whether the narrator is an individualized human being or not. The narrator does not refer to "itself" in any personal pronoun. There is no information about the narrator. Here, the critic's or reader's focus is on what is narrated rather than who narrates it. Such narrator is traditionally called 'authorial' or 'impersonal' or 'third person' narrator. But these terms have their limitations. "The first suggests identification with the real-life author, the second suggests a lack of intimacy which may be misleading, and the third excludes those first person narrators whom we are unhappy to refer to as 'personified'" (Hawthorn, 2001: 67).

### 2.4.2 Narrative Levels

It goes without saying that the idea of identifying narrators in relation to the level they narrate was first introduced by Gerard Genette in his *Narrative Discourse: An essay in Method*, which was published in 1972 and translated in 1980. Narrative level is concerned with 'subordination relations' of stories (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Or as Jahn

(2005) states, one can find story-telling on many different levels. Put another way, there can be stories within stories. “Such narratives within narratives create a stratification of levels whereby each inner narrative is subordinate to the narrative within which it is embedded (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002: 94). So in relation to the level to which the narrator is attributed, one can have the following types of narrators:

- i. Extradiegetic Narrator:** is a narrator who is ‘above’ or superior to the story he tells (Genette, 1980 and Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Put another way, an extradiegetic narrator is one who narrates a ‘first-degree narrative’ (which is not embedded in another narrative) (Jahn, 2005).
  
- ii. Intradiegetic Narrator:** is one who is also a diegetic character in the first narrative told by the extradiegetic narrator (Genette, 1980 and Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). In other words, an intradiegetic narrator narrates a second-degree narrative (which is embedded in another narrative) (Jahn, 2005). Such a situation occurs when “...the first narrator attributes the narration to secondary narrators, either implicitly (attribution indicated by dashes, quotation marks, italics, etc.) or explicitly (by declaratory discourse)” (Bal, 1981: 50). Needless to say that one can also find ‘narrators of a third degree (i.e. hypodiegetic), fourth degree (hypohypodiegetic), etc.’ (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).

### 2.4.3 Narrator's Relationship with The text

This is concerned with the involvement of the narrator in the story. According to Genette, Rimmon-Kenan and Jahn, both extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrators can be either absent from or present in the story they narrate. Accordingly, a narrator can be identified as:

- i. **Homodiegetic Narrator:** is the one who takes part in the story as a minor or major character. The narrator is involved in the events and existents of the story. The prefix 'homo-' indicates that the individual who acts as a narrator is also a character on the level of action (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002) and (Jahn, 2005). If homodiegetic narrators narrate their own story, acting as a protagonist, they are referred to as 'auto-diegetic' narrators (Ibid.).
- ii. **Heterodiegetic Narrator:** the narrator is out of the story. Even if there is a rare use of 'I', the narrator has no relationship with the events or actions that happened in the story. "The prefix 'hetero-' alludes to the 'different nature' of the narrator's world as compared to the world of the action" (Jahn, 2005). The narrator has no experience in the story; but he is a witness. In short, the narrator is absent from the narrated story (Ibid.).

### 2.4.4 Degrees of Conspicuousness

This deals with the narrator's self-expression and audibility. In other words, it deals with the narrator's extent of perceptibility. This kind of identification of narrators was first proposed by Chatman in his *Story and Discourse, Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, which was

published in 1978. In this regard, one can have the following two types of narrators:

- i. Covert Narrator:** this narrator hides himself/herself. Covertness and overtness are relative criteria (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002 and Jahn, 2005). Most of the time unpersonified narrators are considered as covert if they do not intrude into the narration in different ways. Even there is a possibility for a personified narrator to be seen as a covert if he/she does not give personal or detailed information about him or herself and does not intrude into the narration. “In covert narration, we hear a voice speaking of events, characters, and setting but its owner remains hidden in the discursive shadows” (Chatman , 1978: 197).
- ii. Overt Narrator:** this one gives detailed account of personal information or exposes himself/herself. A fully overt narrator is the one that participates in the story and never hides his/her appearance, personality and attitudes. A narrator’s overt presence can also be characterized by additional signs which Chatman (1978: 219–52) lists in ascending order of audibility: description of setting, identification of characters, temporal summary, definition of characters, reports of what characters did not think or say, and commentary.

#### **2.4.5 Time Relationship**

This considers the relationship between the time when the story happened and when it is narrated. “Since narration is an event like any other, it can entertain various temporal relations with the events of the story” (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002: 92). However, narratologists,

except Genette, do not seem to suggest time relationship as one criterion for the identification of narrative voice although they devote sections for the discussion of narration and temporal relations. But the researcher suggests that time relationship should also be taken into consideration while identifying narrators. Accordingly, one may have the following narrative voices:

- i. Retrospective:** such a narrator regards or reviews the past when presenting a story. In fact the past can be narrated by being connected to the present. But the narrator generally uses past tense sentences (Genette, 1980) and (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). However, a retrospective narrator can also be limited to contemporary story moments even if s/he may be allowed to range into past or future through specific scenes or summaries (Chatman, 1978).
- ii. Prospective:** this is the matter of projecting the future. Something which is expected to happen in the future is narrated. The narrator takes into account about what is going to happen in the future, 'generally using the future tense, but sometimes the present' (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002: 92).
- iii. Simultaneous:** this is when the narration and the narrated happen at the same time. The narrator dramatizes the events or actions (Genette, 1980 and Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). In short, a simultaneous narrator presents a narration which is "contemporaneous with the situations and events narrated" (Prince , 1987: 87)

- iv. **Interpolative:** here, the past, the present and the future are mixed. The story is narrated by connecting the present to the past and the future (Microsoft Corporation, 2007). In other words, the narrator does not tell and act at the same time but follows each other in alternation (Genette, 1980 and Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).

#### 2.4.6 Reliability

The idea of reliability of narrators was first touched upon by Wayne Booth (1983) and popularized by Chatman (1978) and Rimmon-Kenan (2002) as one of the main criteria for narrator identification. But Chatman discusses the concept as one criterion for deciding a narrator's overtness while Rimmon-Kenan considers it as a standing single criterion and gives it a separate section. Anyhow, two types of narrators are found in terms of reliability:

- i. **Reliable Narrator:** "is one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002: 103). Put differently, a narrator is '*reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms)' (Chatman, 1978 and Booth, 1983). For instance, "A covert extradiegetic narrator, especially when he is also heterodiegetic, is likely to be reliable" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).
- ii. **Unreliable Narrator:** "...is one whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002: 103). Chatman also states, "In 'unreliable narration' the narrator's account is at odds with

the implied reader's 'surmise' about the story's real intention" (1978: 233). There can, of course, be different degrees of unreliability. The narrator's 'limited knowledge', his 'personal involvement', and his 'problematic value scheme' can signal the presence of unreliability (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). On this base, "Intradiegetic narrators, especially when they are also homodiegetic, are on the whole more fallible than extradiegetic ones" (Ibid.).

## 2.5 Review of Related Studies

As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, no-one has conducted a research on the application of narrative voice to Oromo novels in general or the novels under study in particular at MA level. Zewde Tadesse (2004) investigates two Oromo novels: Kuusaa Gadoo and Dhaamsa Abbaa but his concern is on gender issue rather than narrative voice. Other scholars like Sahilu Kidane (1996) and Asafa Tefera (2003) are also concerned with the study of Oromo Literature but their focus is on oral narratives and oral poetry respectively.

However, two MA theses and one PhD dissertation which are conducted on the area of narrative voice but on narratives in English are found in the ILS and IES libraries of AAU. Yideg (2004) and (2005) compares two different narrative techniques: voice and focalization. The former is an MA thesis that analyzes the two techniques in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart; while the latter is a PhD dissertation that compares the same narrative (Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart) with Fikire Markos Desta's Land of the Yellow Bull in terms of the two narrative techniques (voice and focalization). Yideg (2009) is the development of Yideg (2004) and both focus on voice and focalization while the current study focuses only on voice. In addition,

both of Yideg's works do not take 'time relationship' and 'source' of a narrator along with the criteria for the analysis of 'narrative voice' while the current study takes them into consideration.

Similarly, Mebratu (2005) describes the narrative voice of five short stories by Sebhat Gebreegziabher, entitled Seed and Other Short Stories. The fact that Mebratu's work focuses on narrative voice only resembles it with the current study. However, like Yideg's works, Mebratu (2005) does not take the 'source' and 'time relationship' of a narrator among the criteria for analysing 'voice'. Moreover both Mebratu and Yideg worked on narratives in English while the selected narratives for the present analysis of narrative voice are written in Oromo Language.

The above three studies are more or less related directly to the current study as they make narrative voice the center of their analysis. But other studies are also found that seem to involve this technique among the narrative techniques in their analysis. Among them are Anteneh, (1993), Hailu, (2001), Yimam, (2008) and Tadewos, (2009).

Anteneh conducted his research on "*The Roles of Narrators in Geez Narratives and Early Amharic Didactic Prose Fiction*". He analysed the functions of the narrators in Geez narrative texts and the influence of Geez narratives on the earlier Amharic didactic narratives. Hailu worked on "*A Comparative Study of First Person Narrative Techniques in Four Amharic Novels*". The purpose of his study is to analyze "first person" narrative techniques and their advantages and disadvantages with regard to four Amharic narratives. Yimam assessed "*Narrative Techniques in the Holy Qur'an with Special Reference to the Five Surahs (Chapters)*" in which he equates narrator and author when he

discusses the narrative voice in the *Holy Qur'an*. But it is argued in the present study that narrators and authors should not be overlapped. Finally, Tadewos (2009) conducted a study entitled “*A Study of Narrative Techniques in the Chronicle of Yohannes I (zaalaf sagad)*”. He doesn't treat narrative voice separately but fuses it with point of view, which is a traditional perception in modern narratrive theories.

Thus, in one way or another, the current study is different from the studies conducted so far in the area of narrative voice. The language of the analyzed narratives, the focus of analysis, the conception of the technique (narrative voice) and the criteria applied to analyze the selected narratives are among the differences as has been indicated above.

## **2.6. Theoretical Framework**

So far in this chapter, issues related to narrative voice are discussed to give theoretical concepts in the area. As narrative voice is one of the techniques of narrative fiction, first it is attempted to introduce the concept of narrative fiction. Then the concept of narrative voice, voice markers and typologies of narrators are dealt with. Finally related studies are reviewed to show the similarities and differences they have with the current study. Now, based on the literature reviewed, it is time to lay a theoretical framework for the analysis of narrative voices in the selected novels: Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa.

Traditionally, narrators have been identified by literary critics as ‘first person’, ‘third person’, and ‘omniscient’ narrators. But narratologists like Chatman (1978), Booth (1983), Genette (1988), Hawthorn (2001), Rimmon-Kenan (2002) and Jahn (2005) suggest that these divisions have drawbacks. For example, the idea of ‘third person’ does not show

the narrator, but the characters. The fact that the narrator refers to the characters as 'he', 'she', 'it' or 'they' does not guarantee these pronouns are referring to himself/herself (the narrator). At least it is difficult to identify the sex of the narrator in stories which are narrated with third person pronouns. Jahn (2005) advises to use Lanser's rule (if the author is male, so is the narrator; and vice versa) to determine the sex of the narrator. But this is illogical unless there is a textual or linguistic signal that clearly implies the sex is found in the story. This is why (and to indicate that a narrator is different from its author) the narrator of Gurracha Abbayyaa is referred to as "It" (Bal, 1997: 16) in the analysis part of this paper. Another problem with the idea of identifying narrators as 'first person', 'third person' and 'omniscience' or 'limited' is that these terms are, in Booth's words, 'too simplistic'. They do not help to fully understand the full identity of the narrative voice in a narrative.

In addition, Stanzel's (1984) naming of narrators as 'authorial' seems unacceptable in recent narrative theories. This term confuses a narrator with the author of the text (Hawthorn, 2001). But narrators should be identified from their authors in clear terms as far as modern narratology would allow.

Again, naming narrators as 'omniscient' or 'limited' is also very vague. It is not clear to what extent is a narrator to be justified as 'all knower' or 'limited' as it is difficult to know everything about a person or something in the real life (Hawthorn, 2001). In addition, as Genette (1988) suggests, the terms 'omniscient' or 'limited', 'first person' and 'third person' are 'invariants'. Both 'first person' and 'third person' narrators have possibilities to be omniscient or limited.

As a result, narratologists have come up with other and different kinds of criteria for identifying the personality and functions of the narrative voice in a text. For instance, Booth considers dramatization and reliability while Genette takes levels of narration and the extent of the narrator's participation in the story as criteria. However Chatman (1978) rejects such typologies and suggests that narrators should be evaluated in terms of their degree of audibility in the story, i.e. in terms of covertness and overtness. Rimmon-Kenan has adapted four criteria from the previous ones. Hers are narrative levels, extent of participation degree of participation and reliability.

In this study, it is attempted to integrate the views of Chatman (1978), Genette (1980), Booth (1983), Hawthorn (2001), Rimmon-Kenan (2002) and Jahn (2005) to explore the theoretical framework for the analysis of narrative voices in Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa. The analysis starts with Hawthorn's criteria, i.e. by analyzing the source of the narrative voice in each narrative. Whether a narrator is personified or not personified is investigated here. Being personified a narrator can tell a story from a super-ordinate or subordinate position in which it is outside or inside the story and from prior or posterior the events. Since Hawthorn does not give a detailed account of this, Rimmon-Kenan's and Jahn's views, which are based on and further developed from Genette's, are applied to determine the level (extradiegetic or intradiegetic), the text relationship (heterodiegetic or homodiegetic) and the time relationship (retrospective, prospective, simultaneous or interpolative) of the narrative voice in each narrative under study.

But separate sections are not given for unpersonified narrator to analyze its level and text relationship because unpersonified narrators

are always super-ordinates to and out of the story they narrate, i.e. an unpersonified narrator is always an extra-heterodiegetic.

Identifying only the “What?”, “From where?”, “Who?” and “When?” of a narrative voice is not enough to analyze a narrative voice thoroughly and arrive at a text’s character; because, this does not go beyond naming or subjecting narrators. The “How?” has a paramount importance to thoroughly analyze a narrative voice’s qualitative factors, such as “tones” and “idioms” (Aczel, 1998: 468). And Chatman and Rimmon-Kenan seem to propose criteria that would help to respond to the “how?” of a narrative voice following Booth’s (1983) typology of narrators in terms of reliability.

Chatman fuses the idea of reliability into the criteria of audibility. But Rimmon-Kenan gives separate sections for both audibility and reliability among the criteria for the identification of narrators. To give emphasis for the “how?” of the narrative voice in each narrative, Rimmon-Kenan’s view is preferred to Chatman’s.

To conclude, the criteria which are used in the subsequent chapters for the analysis of the narrative voice in each narrative integrates theories of different scholars. But mainly Hawthorn’s view is used to indicate the source; and Rimmon-Kenan’s and Jahn’s views are used to analyze the level, text and time relationships, audibility and reliability of the voices in each narrative: Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa. Moreover, Bal’s (1997) view is used to grammatically personify the narrator of Gurraacha Abbayyaa.

## **CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE VOICE IN GODAANNISA (“SCAR”) AND GURRAACHA ABBAYYAA **(“BLACK OF THE NILE”)****

In this chapter, an attempt is made to present the analysis of the narrative voice in each of the narratives under study. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section contains the analysis of the narrative voice in Godaannisa while the second one contains that of Gurraacha Abbayyaa.

### **3.1 Narrative Voice in Godaannisa (“Scar”)**

The purpose of this section is to analyze the narrative voice in Godaannisa using the theoretical framework laid under the review of related literature (see section 2.6). The attempt is to investigate the personality, attitudes and functions of the narrator so as to indicate the main features of the narrative.

First the source of narrative voice (whether the narrator is personified or unpersonified) in the novel is indicated. Second the level (whether the narrator is intra- or extradiegetic) is identified. Third the narrator’s relationship to the story (whether the narrator is homo- or heterodiegetic) is assessed. Fourth, degree of conspicuousness (the continuum of overt – covert criteria) is considered to investigate the ‘how’ of the narrative voice. Fifth, the narrator’s relationship to the time of the narrated (retrospective, prospective, simultaneous or interpolative) is checked. Finally, reliability of the narrative voice (the continuum of reliable unreliable criteria) is verified.

In short, source, level, relationship to the story and time, and degree of conspicuousness and reliability (see section 2.4) are used as criteria to analyze the personality, attitudes and functions of the narrative voice in Godaannisa. Each is presented in one of the following subsections.

### **3.1.1 Source**

As indicated in the review of related literature, source refers to whether the narrator is personified or unpersonified (Hawthorn, 2001). Accordingly, a reader can identify the presence of a narrative voice in Godaannisa from the very beginning. This means its source is clear from the instance the narrative begins – the first page, first paragraph and first sentence.

Abdiisaa Soolan maqaa koo ti. Kan ani ittiin waamamu.  
Maqaa kana abbaa kootu naaf baase (p. 1).

Abdissa Solan is my name. The one I am called after. This name was given after me by my father (p. 1)<sup>1</sup>.

As it can be seen, the identity of the narrator is introduced by him by telling his name (Abdissa Solan) and by telling who gave him the name (his father). The name indicates that the voice telling the story is a male and from the Oromo society. The narrator also refers to himself using the pronoun “I” throughout the story. By applying a personified and named narrative voice, the writer (Dhaba) wants to attract the reader’s attention and to engage him/her in the ‘events and existents’ (Chatman 1978) of the story.

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<sup>1</sup> If only a page number is given hereafter under section 3.1, it will refer to the pages in ‘Godaannisa’.

The narrative voice also indicates the presence of narratee by using the pronouns “You” and “We” (p. 1). The function of using these pronouns is, in addition to attracting the reader’s attention, to foreshadow that what is going to be narrated in the story can be attributed not only to the narrator but also to everybody. Put differently, the purpose is to prepare the reader to share the joys, sorrows, sufferings, feelings, attitudes and everything that the narrator experiences.

The voice in the narrative does not only show the narrator is personified and named. He also narrates who he was in the past and who he is now (at the time of the narration). “Barataan ture. Barataa Yunivarsitii. Amma garuu hojjetaa dha. Hojjetaa mootummaa” (p. 1). (“I was a student of university. But now I’m a civil servant.”) (p. 1). So, the source of the narrator can be identified as, to borrow Hawthorn’s terms, a ‘personified, named and with fully human characteristics’.

### **3.1.2 Level**

Level in a narrative fiction deals with subordinating relations, i.e. whether a narrator is superior or inferior to the narrated story (see section 2.4.2). Abdissa, the narrator of the story in Godaannisa, has a control over the story he narrates. This means, he is the narrator of the frame narrative. There is no other narrator above him. What he was, what he is now and what he wants to be are narrated by him. In short the narrator presents his biography without being embedded in any other narrator. He narrates from a superior position.

..... Waan haaraan addunyaa kana irra hinjiru. Barreessuun waan haara utuu hinta’iin isuma jiru sana akka hundaaf mul’atutti akka hundaaf dhaga’amutti ifa baasuu dha. Kitaaba jireenyaa bananii, baala isaa tokko tokkoon garagalchani ilaalu ..... jireenya bitaa dhaa mirgaatti,

mirgaa dhaa bitaatti deebisanii xiinxaluu.... Isa argan – isa hubatan immoo beeksisuu dha’ murtii jedhu irrann ga’e. Yoos maaliifan kitaaba jireenya kootii bane hin dubbisu?’ Gaaffiin jedhus keessa kootti uumame. Ta’u illee eessaa akkan eegalu natti bitaacha’ee yeroo dheeraaf yaadaan ture..... (p. 7).

I have come to believe that, ‘.... Nothing is new in this world. Writing is reflecting what already exists so that everybody can see and hear the reality. By opening the book of life, it is possible to see every page ... to examine every turn of life .... And one should impart what he has seen, what he has recognized’ Then I wondered, ‘Why don’t I narrate my biography?’ But I was thinking for a long time from where to begin ..... (p. 7).

As clearly seen in the above extract, one can hear the voice of an ‘extradiegetic’ (to use Genette’s term) narrator. The voice tells us that he is going to narrate his own “biography”. By implication, he takes the responsibility of what is narrated in the story at the level of first degree narrative. The fact that it took him “a long time where to begin” shows that he is the one who decides what, where and when to tell.

### **3.1.3 Relationship to the Story**

A narrator’s relationship to the story s/he narrates is determined by the extent of her/his participation in the story (see section 2.4.3). As indicated earlier, the voice we hear in Godaannisa narrates his biography. He is also a participant in the story he tells, at the level of action. His job is not only narrating what he has seen, but also what he has done, what has happened to him and what he remembers. In other words, he is one of the characters in the story. Even he acts as a major character in the events and existents of the story. To use Genette’s term for such voice, he is a ‘homodiegetic’ narrator.

Lafti dhaloota koo Wallaga keessa, magaalaa Biilaa jedhamtuu dha. Akkaataa ani itti guddadhe keessa waan nama gamachiisu hinjiru. Abbaan koo waggaa saddeetii fi

walakkaatti haadha kootti na dhiisee du'e. Yeroo sana obboleettiin koo, Kuulaniin ijoollee waggaa ja'aa turte. Akka yeroon gadda isaa dhumeen haati koo hiriya qabatte. Maannaaloo Balaayi. Dargaggummaa isaatti hojii barbaacha Marraabeetee dhaa Gimbii dhufe (p. 7).

I was born in Wollega, Bila town. Nothing is joyful in the way I grew up. I was eight and half when my father left the burden to my mother and died. But my sister was six years old at that time. After the consolation period, my mother fell in love with Mannalew Belay, who came from Merrabete to seek a job (p. 7).

A reader starts to sympathize with Abdissa, the narrator in Godaannisa, in the second sentence in the above extract. His miserable life begins after the death of his father and continues through the end of the story in the narrative. The raping of his sister by Mannalew, Woynishet's refusal to his love request and his refusal at last, Talile's (the one who accepted his love offer) disappearance from the university due to pregnancy, his regression, etc. are all narrated by him. His struggles to overcome his life challenges are also narrated in the story by him. He closes his story by writing the word "Godaannisa" (p. 158) ("Scar [p. 158])" which he thinks to make the title of his book after a surprising encounter with his lost beloved, Talile. But he couldn't continue the writing.

Jabina dhabee lafti naan maree jennaan irree koo irratti gombifame. Imimmaan na hudhes ija kootti guute-Imimmaan gammachuus imimmaan gaddaas (158).

I felt weak and turned over my arm. I couldn't control my tears – tears of happiness and tears of sadness (158).

Despite the unexpected meeting of his beloved, the narrative voice seems to remain in mixed feelings. He is both happy and sad. Happy for what he has got and sad for what he has lost. And this mixed feeling puts Abdissa in a mood which he couldn't control and makes him to discontinue his writing.

The fact that the homodiegetic voice tells his biography in which he is the major character (a protagonist) makes him an ‘autodiegetic’ narrator – the highest form of homodiegetic narrators. In short, the narrator tells the way he grew up, his educational background, his love affairs, his cultural experience, his hope to be a writer, in general the ups and downs in his life.

### **3.1.4 Degree of Conspicuousness**

As indicated in section 2.4.4, conspicuousness deals with a narrator’s perceptibility in a narrative, i.e. whether a narrator is overt or covert. Chatman (1978) and Rimmon-Kenan (2002), among many others, suggest that a narrator’s perceptibility is a relative phenomenon. It can range from a highly covert to a highly overt narrator on the continuum of audibility. And it is the analysis of a narrator’s perceptibility that mainly helps a critic to arrive at his/her attitudes and functions in a certain narrative (Chatman, 1978 and Aczel, 1998).

Accordingly, the narrative voice in Godaannisa is highly audible. His perceptibility starts in the first sentence of the narrative from his introduction of his name and why his father gave him this name; ‘Abdissa’ means ‘hope’ and his father gave him this name in a wish that Abdissa would be a big man so that he would be proud of him. In addition to his participation in the story, Abdissa exposes his appearance, personality and attitude. The following long extract (the extracts under this subsection are longer than the others to stylistically indicate and emphasize the importance of the ‘how’ of a narrative voice) illustrates the overtness of the narrator:

Barataan ture. Barataa Yunivarsitii. Amma garuu hojjetaa dha. Hojjetaa mootummaa. Fuula koo ilaaluun jaalladha. Ganama ganama ka’ee daawwitii fuul-dura dhaabachuun

baay'isa. 'Maaliif?' jechuun keessan hin oolu. Gaaf tokko waan tokko katabuun yaada. Barreessaa ta'uuf hawwiin qaba, jechuu kooti. 'Barreessuus ta'e dubbisuu of irraa jalqabu' jedheen yaada. Kanaafan of ilaalu baay'isa. Fuula Koo dubbisuuf – Fuula koo qorachuuf! 'Hunduma dura of ilaali .... Hundumaaa dura of dubbisi ..... Eenyuun iyyuu dura of qoradhu' jedhama mitii!

Mana kitaabaa deemnee, kitaaba tokko dubbisuu barbaadnee, yeroo fuunu, dura qoola isaa ilaallee mata duree isaa dubbisna. Achii kitaaba isaa bannee baala isaa tokko tokkoon garagalchinee dubbisna.

Kana yoo namaan walbira qabnee ilaallu, qoolli kitaabaa fi mata dureen isaa bifa namaa isa diidatti mul'atutti yoo fakkeeffamu fuulli tokko tokkoon dubbifamu immoo keessa namaa, eenyummaa fi jireenya namaa yeroo dhaa yerootti mul'atutti fakkeeffama.

Mata dureen qoola isaa irratti barreeffame, dubbii keessa isaa wajjiin wal-fakkaachuus wal-fakkaachuu dhabuus ni danda'a. Namnis akkasuma. Bifti isaa irrakeessaas ta'e maqaan isaa dhugaa wajjiin wal-fakkaachuus wal-fakkaachuu dhabuus ni danda'a. Waan fedheef iyyuu osoo kitaaba bananii hin dubbisiin qoola isaa fi mata duree isaa ilaaluun hin oolu.

Namas waa'ee eenyummaa isaa fi jireenya isaa odeessuudhaan dura maqaa isaa fi bifa isaa kaasuun kan barsiifame dha. Anis egaa, kanaafan waan hunda dura bifa koo himuuf hariifadhe (p. 1 & 2).

I was a student of university. But now I'm a civil servant. I love to look at my face. I stand in front of a looking glass every morning. You might wonder 'Why?' I think I will write something one day. I mean, I wish to be a writer. I believe that 'writing or reading starts from oneself'. This is why I frequently look at myself. To read my face – To examine my face! It is said that 'Before all look at yourself ... Before all read yourself ..... Before anyone examine yourself!'

When we want to read a book, first we look at its cover and read its title. Then we open the book and read every page.

When we see this in analogous with human being, the cover and title of a book symbolizes the external appearance whereas the inside pages symbolize the day to day internal behavior, personality and life. The title written on the cover might be similar or dissimilar with its content. The

same is true for human being. His physical appearance and his name might match or mismatch the reality. Whatever, it is usual to look at the cover and title before opening a book.

It is also usual to introduce one's name and appearance before a detailed account of information about his personality and life experience. That is why I'm in a hurry to describe my physical appearance (p. 1 & 2).

As it can be seen in the above extract, the narrator exposes all information about himself. He was "a student", now he is "a civil servant" and he wants to be "a writer". He also reflects his attitude – he believes that "reading or writing starts from oneself." He associates a process of reading a book with a process of writing. He does this by comparing the external and internal appearances of a human being with the cover and inside pages of a book. One would normally start reading a book from its cover which may or may not be like the inside pages. And to write a personal experience, first the name and physical appearance should be exposed whether they reflect the person's internal humanity in a similar or dissimilar way. In general, the narrator is co-operative in giving any information about himself to the narratee.

The fact that the narrator describes settings, identifies the other characters, gives temporal summaries, defines the other characters, and gives commentaries from time to time in his narration also maintains the perceptibility of the narrative voice, in addition to his self-exposure. It is worth looking at the following extract:

Magaalli Baatii, Magaala xinnoo mooraa keenya fuul duraatti argamtu dha [...].

Kan yaadni koo gara mooraatti deebi'u, yeroo gabaan Baatii inni halkanii jalqabamuu dha. Kun haaraa isinitti ta'uu mala. Garuu dhugaa dha. Kan magaalattii adda godhu gabaa halkanii qabaachuu ishee dha. Namootni naannoo sanaa, erga lafti dukkanaa'ee hanga sa'aatii sagalii fi sa'aatii kudhaniitti, faanosii fi kurraazii ibsatanii wal irraa bitanii walitti gurguru.

Namni halkan gabaa batii ba'e kan barbaade bitatee deebi'a. Ani egaa, kanan galuuf ka'u yeroo faanosii fi kuraaziin gabaa Baatii ifuu jalqabu jechuu koo ti.

Guyyaa shan booda, Taliilee fi Waynisheetiin walbiratti argee immoo matumaa iyyuu nan raata'e (p. 46 and 47).

[...] Bati is a small town which is located in front of our campus [...].

I did not think about the campus until the evening market in Bati starts. You might be surprised but it is true. What makes Bati unique is that it has a night market. The local people exchange goods until it would be nine or ten in the evening using lamps and candles. One would find anything in Bati during the night. So my returning to the campus is simultaneous with the lighting of lamps and candles in Bati.

After five days, I saw Talile and Woynishet [his beloved and the one who backed his love offer, respectively] together and became crazy (p. 46 and 47).

In the above extract, the narrator describes 'Bati' as a town and its location including its status during the night. That is, Bati is a small town which is located in front of Abdissa's campus and which is very warm during the night, as the local people use to exchange goods at this time. According to Abdissa, the habit of trading during the night makes it different from other areas. And Abdissa does not leave for the campus until it gets dark and the night market in Bati starts. He says "my returning to the campus is simultaneous with the lighting of lamps and candles in Bati". The voice here associates the narrator's changing behavior and the deeds in Bati town to emphasize how much he has forgotten his education. The voice also gives temporal summaries (for instance, "After five days") to indicate ellipsis of stories that are similar with the previous narration. To see the narrator's other qualities of overtness, let us look at another extract:

"Meeroon kan jedhamtu hin beeku. Kan ani beeku Weejeeture. Isheen immoo hin jirtu."-n jedhe.

"Weejeen immoo kami?"

“Weejeen ree intala biyya koo turte. Maaloo mee na dhiisi ... Weejeen ree, intala amma Meeroniin of golgite, Meerooniin uffattee faranjii taate.”

“Maqaan ishee Weejee ture moo?” Tuujubaa dha.

“Ehee, ani kanan beeka egaa”

“Maalti si dhibe ree, yoo jijjiirratte?”

“Sammuun koo hin fudhatu. Fedhiin koo hin sooratu.”

Tuujubaan cal-jedhe. Ani garuu ittan fufe.

“Ishee fi isaan akka ishee, isaan warqee of irraa gatani, moofaa ormaa ofitti suphaa jiraatani. Faranjii gurraacha. Oromoo abashoome! ... Kan of baqataa oolu. Duwwaa kessi isaa waa hin qabne taateetti. Jarreen akka ishee, gara deemanitti of baqatu. Eenummaaisaanii isa dhugaa wajjiin fuul dura walitti dhufuuf, jabina hin qaban. Of abshaalanii, qaanii fi fafa isaanii huccuudhaan dhoksanii dabruu yaalu. Of sodaatu. Of arguu hin barbaadan.” Jedheen karaa foddaa diida diida ilaale.

I said, “I don’t know a woman called by Meron. What I know was Weje. She is not alive now.”

“Who is Weje?”

“Weje was a girl I know in my village. But she is hidden in Meron and has become a white now.”

“Was she called after Meron?” said Tujuba.

“Yes, that is what I know.”

“What is your business then, I mean if she changes?”

“My mind doesn’t accept. I have no appetite.”

Tujuba kept quiet. But I continued.

“She and her lookalikes replace their gold for worn-outs of the whites. Whiten black and abeshanized Oromo... They run away from the self. She has become an empty barrel. Her lookalikes, everywhere they go, they run

from the self. They can't stand in front of their realities. Teasing themselves, they try to repair their shame and maimed life by hiding under clothes. They fear themselves. They don't want to mirror themselves." Saying this, I looked outside through the window.

The above extract presents a conversation between Abdissa and Tujuba. Tujuba is trying to convince Abdissa to create a relationship with a girl who has changed her name from Weje to Meron. In addition to his identification and description of the characters, a reader hears an angry narrative voice that comments on those who are physically and psychologically alienated, and run from themselves by changing their names, personalities, wearing, in general by trying to replace the culture they belong to.

Abdissa does not like to see such people, leave alone making love with them. According to him, such people pass their life in exile by hiding and escaping from their real personalities in favor of dreaming for the aliens' ways of life. That is why he highly hates Meron despite her repeated trials to have a love affair with him. And this self-expressing of the narrator about his attitude by commenting on the events and existents in the story increases his overtness to the highest degree.

The foregoing discussions indicate the audibility of the narrative voice, Abdissa, in Godaannisa. The fact that Abdissa fully exposes or identifies himself by describing his appearance, personality, attitude, likes, dislikes, etc. already adds him to overt narrators. The description and identification of settings and characters, and commentaries on events and existents are only to upgrade him to the highest form of overtness. In other words, the narrative voice in Godaannisa is highly perceptible or highly overt.

### 3.1.5 Time Relationship

Here, the narrator's relationship to the narrated story in terms of time is considered (see 2.4.5). Generally speaking, the narrative instances in Godaannisa are narrated in past tense sentences. This indicates that the narrative voice heard in the story can be identified, in terms of temporal relations, as retrospective. Because most of the story – related sentences are constructed in the past tense, the narrator recounts his past life experiences starting from his birth to the time of narrating (the time when he is a civil servant and he highly aspires to become a writer). The following narration describes one of the events that contributed to the narrator's depressing life.

Kuulaniin osoo faltuu futtaafattee yoo isheen gara fuulduraatti utaaltu miilla ishee qabee jennaan takaalamtee fuula isheen lafatti rukutamte. Yoo achii kaatee tuftu ilkaan ishee fuul duraa tokko dhiigaan maramee lafa bu'e. Maannaaloon osoo kana illee arge hin jedhiin ol baatee siree irra ishee buuse. Kana booda fedhii isaa dhugaatiin how'e qabbaneesse. Abbaa ormaa ta'uu isaa qofa osoo hin taane bineensa seera namummaa gad dhiise ta'uu isaa mirkaneesse.

While Kulani sprinted forward to escape, he caught her leg and she hit the floor with her face. When she stood up, one of her front teeth was on the ground being covered with blood. Ignoring what had happened; Mannalew carried her to the bed. Then he quenched his desire which was already initiated by drinks. He ensured not only his un-relatedness but also his wilderness (p. 9 and 10).

All the sentences in the above extract are constructed in the past tense. They narrate the fact that Kulani, his sister, was raped by Mannalew, who was their stepfather, adds to the sorrowful life of Abdissa, the narrator. By raping Kulani, Mannalew showed both his "un-relatedness" and "wilderness". Here, the action of Mannalew

caused the narrator to have angry and disrespectful voice towards him.

The fact that Abdissa narrates his biography indicates the difference between the time of narrating and that of narrated. In other words, the narrating Abdissa and the experiencing one are different in age, physique, experience and attitude. Put another way, Abdissa has made different changes to develop into his present personality. This is also indicated in a passage of his narration:

Duraan yeroo hundumaa gatiin jireenya gaddisiisaa kana sammuu koo keessa nannessuuf, guyyaa onneen koo jaalalaaf mo'ame hin yaadadhu. Ergan mooraa yunivarsitii seenee garuu, utuu natti hin beekamiin waan hundumtuu bifa biraa qabate. Naannoon isaas – jireenyi isaas ni jijjiirama. Anis nama dha, nan jijjiirame.

Jijjiiramuu, jaallates jibbes, naannoon isaa, yeroon isaa fi haalli isaa dirqisiifnaan kan hin jijjiiramne hin jiru. Namni umuriin isaa dabalee yoo dhagnaan guddatu, fedhiin qaama isaa ta'e sammuu isaa jijjiiramaa deemuun hin haalamu. Waan tokko gochuuf utuu hin ka'in duraanis sababa isaa yaada [...] Hamma bilchina sababa kanaa ti egaa, kan jireenya daandii gaarii yookaan hamaa qabsiisu. Yookaan immoo carraa ta'uu danda'a ..... carraa jireenya murteessu!

Ani, yeroo sana, qaamni koo fi sammuu koo akkamitti akka jaalala dheechohuu fi beela'uu jalqabe amma afaan guutee dubbachuun na dhiba (p. 11).

Due to my earlier depressing life experience, I do not remember the day I surrendered to love. But after I joined university, things, including its environment and its way of life, began to change unnoticeably. Since I'm a human, I was also changed.

It is must to change according to the environment, time and situation. When one grows both in age and physically, his physiological and psychological needs also change. Before taking action, he examines the initiatives [...] It is the maturity of the initiatives that determine the way of life, whether good or bad. Or it might be luck that determines life.

I can't confidentially tell how my physique and brain were starved of love at that time (p. 11).

The voice in the above extract tells that different variables, “the environment, time and situation” can change a personality of someone. This is why he changed both “Physiologically” and “psychologically” as time passed and body grew. But not all changes of life are based on carefully investigated reasons. “Luck” can also determine the way life goes.

The last sentence in the above extract indicates the remembering of the narrator is limited to some extent when he says “I can't confidentially tell [...]”. It shows that the distance of time limits him to tell every event or happening in his life. This helps to associate him with a real person who can not recount every event and situation in the past life. And then the interaction between the narrative voice and real person is increased by this personalizing technique of the voice.

A reader can also hear double voice of the narrator in the narrative due to the difference in time between the narrating Abdissa and the experiencing Abdissa. This is shown when the narrator puts his speech in quotation marks. For instance:

“Uumatni Oromoo akkuma baayyina isaa lafa bal’aa waan qabuuf gar gar fageenyi kun afaan tokko keessatti garaagarummaan loqodaa akka uumamu godhe. Jechoota afaan isaatiinis soressa. Utuu hunda isaa beekanii hunda isaa dubbachuu danda’anii akkam namatti tola seete!” –n jedhe, dudduuba kootti hirkadhee.

“The fact that Oromo people are populated on a wide area created variety in its dialects. The Oromo Language is rich in vocabulary, too. You can imagine the pleasure it gives if one is able to acquire and speak all.” Saying this, I leaned backward.

A reader can hear two different voices of the same person in the above extract. The voice out of the quotation suggests that he was proud of the thing he told Talile. But the voice in the quotation indicates the attempt of Abdissa to win Talile's heart at least by pretending that he knows much and then certifying his superiority.

In addition to the generally used past tense sentences, the narrator occasionally uses present tense sentences. Such cases are when he describes events and existents in general and when he describes his personality and wishes, characters, settings, facts and the like in particular. For instance, "Barataan ture. Barataa Yunvarsitii. Amma garuu hojjetaa dha. Hojjetaa mootummaa" (p. 1). ("I was a student of university. But now I'm a civil servant." [p. 1]). The second sentence tells us the status of Abdissa at the time of narrating. The narrative function of using such present tense in a globally past tense narrative is connecting the past and the present. By implication, the voice in Godaannisa indicates that all the gains and losses, illness and health, successes and defeats ignorance and knowledge, destructions and buildings, happiness and sadness, etc. in the past still continue to the present.

### **3.1.6 Reliability**

Reliability of a narrator is analyzed in terms of whether s/he tells truths or lies with respect to a narratee's norm (see section 2.4.6). Like degree of audibility, the extent of reliability varies from narrator to narrator. A writer can choose from the continuum of a highly reliable narrator to a highly unreliable one. Accordingly, the narrative voice in Godaannisa attempts to be reliable to the narratee by telling honestly that his knowledge is limited. In one instance he says, "Ani bitaa fi mirgatti garagaleen ija koo keenyanitti babaasaa bule. Kan

ishee immoo hinbeeku” (p. 42). (“I passed the night turning left and right and staring at the wall. But I don’t know hers [Talile’s].” [p. 42]). Abdissa’s confession of his limited knowledge can indicate his reliability to some extent. In another instance, one may think that the narrator is unreliable when he is found narrating what he thought in the past. It reads:

Taliileen jaalala na argisiistee, jaalala koo ajjeestee, eenyummaa koo qullaa dhaabdee – eenyummaa koo eeboo natti gootee deemte. Eeboo yeroo hundumaa onneetti dhaabbatee onnee dhiigsu ... onnee dhiigee, dhiiga cobsee hin dhaabne natti dhiistee deemte. Jaalala isaas – miyaa isaas – rakkoo isaas – gidiraa isaas hundumaa natti baachiftee hirriba hin dammaqne rafte.(p. 100 and 101)

Talile has gone forever showing me love, burying my love, uncovering my personality – turning my personality into a spear. She has gone leaving me with spear that always stabs the heart ... the heart that never stops bleeding. She slept not to come back again loading me with its love – its tastes – its problems – its challenges (p. 100and 101).

But Talile is not dead. The narrator is mistaken due to his limited knowledge and on the basis of the evidence available to him at that time in the past. He reached the above conclusion when he heard that somebody was found dead while he was searching for the lost Talile, after she became pregnant. He did not see the body because the police had already taken it. He concluded Talile was dead only on the ground of the physical appearance that the shoemaker told him about the body which was found dead. But the shoemaker did not tell Abdissa the name of the dead woman because he did not know. This, the fact that the name of the dead woman is not identified, can be enough reason to suspect Abdissa on the part of a reader. However, this mistake is corrected as Abdissa himself tells us about his encounter with Talile at the end of the story. But he could have told us the truth from the very beginning as he is narrating his past experience. I mean

he knows at the time of narrating that Talile is not dead. But he narrates his mistaken thought purposefully to hold the narratee in suspense till the end of the story; and to attract the reader's attention towards what are recounted between the time of Talile's disappearance and reappearance.

In short, there is no way to label the narrator of Godaannisa as unreliable. No instance of narration that is fallible with a reader's norm is found in the narrative. The narrator neutrally presents the events and existents in the story. Even if he is a major participant in the story, he honestly narrates what happened to him in the past so that the reader can interact with him as a real person and share his experiences. In other words, the narrator of Godaannisa can be labeled as reliable in terms of degree of reliability.

Up to now, the analysis of narrative voice in Godaannisa has been presented. As a result it is observed that a personified, extra-hetrodiegetic, highly overt, retrospective and reliable narrator (narrative voice) mediates the events and existents in the story of the text. The next section is devoted to presenting the analysis of narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa so that it could be possible to compare it with the narrative voice in Godaannisa.

## 3.2 Narrative Voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa (“Black of the Nile”)

The purpose of this section is to analyze the manifestation of narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa. As in the previous section (3.1), source, level, relationship to the story and time, and degree of conspicuousness and reliability are used as criteria to identify and describe the personality, characteristics and functions of the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa. However, the narrator’s level and relationship to the story are not treated separately subsections because, in the case of narratives like Gurraacha Abbayyaa, these can be indicated in the analysis of the source. (And this is why the analysis of voice in each narrative is presented in separated sections in this chapter.) This section is divided into four subsections that mainly deal with source, degree of conspicuousness, time relationship and reliability (see section 2.4) of the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa.

### 3.2.1 Source

Unlike in Godaannisa, the source of the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is unknown. No self-referential expressions are found to tell the name, sex, personality and identity of the narrator. Despite the absence of personal pronouns that refer explicitly to the narrator, no doubt the text is mediated through a narrative voice. The presence can be detected starting from the first two pages:

Dhagaa guddaa tokkootti hirkatee dhagaalee laga gamaa fi gamanaa bifa addaa addaatiin mul’atan ilaala – Teetoon. Dhagaalee gugurraalee, dhagaalee a’adii, dhagaalee buburree – guguddoo, xixiqqoo 0 kanneen wal-wal irratti

fe'aman, kanneen qofa qofaa dhaabatan – kanneen jalli isaanii gophoo ... Cirraacha Abbayyaa kan ammaaraan hin fixne ... Biyyoo daalacha kan jiidhina hin mirgisine, kan marga hin biqilchine ... Kun hundi duraanis achuma turani – hin sochoonee hin buqqaane. Dhalatee of baree achumatti isaan arge. Lagni guddichi lamatti isaan tamsaasee malkaa bal'aa dhaalee danbali'us akkuma duraanii yaa'a. (p. 1).

Leaning against a big stone, Teto is watching the stones which are opposite from each other with respect to the river. Black, white, multi-colored stones – big, small that are put on top of the other, that stand alone – Pebbles of Nile that wouldn't end with as much scooping ups as possible... grey soil that wouldn't grow wet, that wouldn't grow grass ... this all was there even before he was born – it hasn't moved or been uprooted. He saw them there. The big river that separated them flows as before, too (p. 1)<sup>2</sup>.

The voice in the above extract approves its presence by telling what Teto, the major character in the story, is doing near the Nile River. It also describes the scenery that Teto is experiencing. But the voice does not explicitly depict its source. It could be possible to say that there is an implicit 'I' as every source of a narrative is always a first person irrespective of the pronouns used. Following Bal (1997)'s suggestion, the first sentence in the above extract would be recognised as "(I narrate:) Leaning against a big stone, Teto is watching the stones which are opposite from each other with respect to the river".

But the implicit 'I' does not expose the personality of the narrator. It is difficult to tell whether we hear a voice of human being. The fact that the narrator goes everywhere with everyone in the story and narrates everything puts its humanity in question. It is unusual to find such "all-knowing" quality with human beings. Such a narrator is, to put in Hawthorn's (2001) terms, 'not fully comparable with any human

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<sup>2</sup> If only a page number is given hereafter under section 3.2, it will refer to the pages in 'Gurraacha Abbayyaa'

perspective', since it is not personified in the story. The function of such a narrator is to attract the attention of readers towards the events and existents in the story rather than itself. So our attention is directed to the conflicts between two tribes (a group from Gumuz people and another group from Amhara people who are populated in Mattin and Attabala villages respectively) near the Nile River in Wollega; and the consequences of the conflicts, for instance, a whole village which is occupied by the Gumuz people is burnt and Teto is forced to migrate to another village with his sister, Docha. So by selecting unpersonified narrator, the author (Dhaba Woyyessa) has foregrounded the immediacy of the problem.

Since the voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is unpersonified, it is easy to identify it as extradiegetic (in terms of level) and heterodiegetic (in terms of its relationship with the story). Because as it has been attempted to indicate in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, unpersonified narrators are always extra-heterodiegetic to the story they narrate. In other words, they are always superior to and outside of the story. This is true for the narrator of Gurraacha Abbayyaa. This implies that devoting sections to discuss the level and the relationship to the text of the narrator is needless. The following section is devoted to analyzing the audibility of the narrator to arrive at its attitudes towards the events and existents in the narrative.

### 3.2.2 Degree of Conspicuousness

As indicated earlier in section 3.2.1, the narrator of Gurraacha Abbayyaa does not refer to itself either by telling its name or using self-referential subjective markers like ‘I’ or ‘we’. It does not also give any information about its personal information about itself explicitly. But this does not mean that the narrator is silent and inaudible. It hides itself at the expense of exposing the other existents and events in the story. To start from the least important criteria in signaling the audibility of the narrator, we find it setting descriptions in the story. To take an extract:

Dubartiin daraaraan ji’aa itti dhufe, ija namaa lagattee, qee baqattee saakuma ishee waliin laga teessi. Saakuma ishee malee kan itti hiqum hin jiru. Daakuu fi meeshaa fidee, bakka isheen jirtutti kan nyaata hojjetuufis kan tajaajilus saakuma ishee ti. Gaafa daraaraan irraa gale dhiqattee qulqullooftee, re’een qalamee, farsoon naqamee, hiriyoonna ishee sirbanii manatti galchu. Yoo daraaraan ishee isa jalqabaa itti mul’ate ta’e, sirbi shamaranii akka cidhaa how’a (p. 119).

When a [Gumuz] woman menstruates, she goes to a nearby stream with her best friend and stays there. No-one approaches her. Only her best friend serves her. When the menstruation ends and she is cleaned, slaughtering a goat and brewing ‘farso’ (local beer), her friends take to her home. If her menstruation is for the first time in her life, the girls’ dancing is as warm as a wedding ceremony (p. 119).

In the above extract, the narrator simply describes one of the traditions in Gumuz community. It tells us that Gumuz’s tradition does not allow a woman to live with the other people when she is in a menstruation period. But she receives a warm reception when she returns. The description shows that the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa fulfills the first criteria in the continuum of overtness at least in a weak form (because “Descriptions exist also in a non-narrated stories” [Chatman, 1978: 219]). But the explicit description

of the Nile River on the first page of the narrative can indicate the presence of an overt narrator.

To pass to the next criterion, we hear the voice identifying the characters in the story. This starts in the first line on the first page of the narrative. For instance, “Dhagaa guddaa tokkootti hirkatee dhagaalee laga gamaa fi gamanaa bifa addaa addaatiin mul’atan ilaala – Teetoon” (p. 1). (“Leaning against a big stone, Teto is watching the stones which are opposite from each other with respect to the river” [p. 1]). Teto is identified as one of the characters (he is the protagonist in the story) in this sentence. Bachangire (Teto’s father), Docha (Teto’s sister), Gebru Teferra, Yeenche, and Gonfaa Ganna are some of the proper names which frequently appear in the narrative. This naming of the characters can surely increase the presence of an audible voice.

The third criterion to detect the overtness of the narrator is the use of temporal summaries. The following extract exemplifies this:

Yeroon isaa yeroo hojii ti. Yeroo jirbii funaanan. Ol jedhee ganda ilaale. Hamma iji dhaqqabsiisuu dadhabutti jirbiin dhodhohe lafa addeessee jira. Qaamawwan gugurraaleen keessa was an immoo goondaa wayyaa adii irra yaa’u fakkaatu. Daboo jirbii funaansaa ti. Gumuz qobaa hojjechuu hin barre. Gamtaadhaan hojjetu, gamtaadhaan nyaatu. Yoo waliin oolan, xabaa fi weedduu malee lolaa fi takaroon hin dhaga’amu (16).

It is the time of harvesting cotton. He [Teto] looked at the surrounding as far as he can see. It is covered by cotton. The black bodies that move on the garden are like black ants on a white cloth. Gumuz do not work alone but in collaboration. They work in groups, eat in groups. When they are together, fighting and nagging have no place but playing and dancing (16).

The first sentence, “It is the time of harvesting cotton” suggests that the narrator has something to tell what frequently happens during this time (when cotton is harvested). The time summary functions as

indicating the traditional way of Gumuz's life, working in such a joyful, collaborative way, is not an event that happens once. It could not be possible to present the habitual events devoid of using a time summary.

The narrator's definition of characters is the fourth indicator for the prominence of an audible voice in the narrative. We hear the voice telling us the qualities and attitudes of the existents. For example, "Baayyee jarjaraa tahuu baatu iyyuu miyaan qooqa isaa akka ulullee waarii qalbii hata"(p. 17). ("Even if he [Teto] is not hasty in nature, his musical tone causes anybody to lose sense."[p. 17]). This sentence characterizes Teto as having the quality of being calm and having an attractive voice when he speaks and sings. To add another example, "Waan hunda xiiqi qabata. Dhukkuba foon isaatti dhaga'amuuf illee harka hinlaatu" (p. 4). ("He [Bachangire] is a man of grudge. He does not surrender to a disease even if it is hurting his flesh and blood" [p. 4]). The voice shows how strong Bachangire is and it foreshadows the revenge that he takes on Gebru who kills his brother. Elsewhere we are told that Bachangire would prefer to commit suicide rather than returning home devoid of taking revenge on somebody who killed his brother (p. 25). So the narrator does not hide what the existents in the story are like. It exposes them through direct characterization. To exemplify further:

Gabruu Tafarraa nama laayyoo miti. Ijoollummaa isaatti warri isaa Gondorii godaananii, tulluu Axaballaa jala qubatan. Duris sanyiin isaanii namoota Walloo tokoo ajjeesanii, gumaa baqachuu akka dhufan hamatama. Yeroo ammaa kana wal horanii, hidda diriisatanii uummata naannoo wajjiin wal makanii jiru. Kun tahuus of tuuluu fi nama hidda isaanii hin qabne tuffachuun isaanii daran tahe malee hin wayyofne (p. 29&30).

Gebru Teferra is not an easy person. He was a kid when his family migrated from Gondar and settled at the bottom of Mount Attabala. There is a rumor that their ancestors killed men from Wello and came here running away from retaliation. Now they live breeding further, rooting deep and mixing with the local people. However, they haven't quitted extolling themselves and humiliating others who do not belong to their race (p. 29&30).

We hear an authoritative voice in the above extract that characterizes what some of the existents in the story are like. This voice increases the tension between Bachangire and Gebru because it characterizes Gebru as a strong person too. And this strength seems to be inherited from his family and ancestors who have "extolling" and "humiliating" qualities. That is why Gebru undermines Bachangire despite the latter's heroism among his own people.

The narrator also reports on what the characters did not think or say which could be taken as a fifth degree in an ascending order of overttness criteria. "Bagundoon akka aariin gubataa deemeef, mana Baanzii Daanyoo seena ture. Garuu, dabree gara mana isaa dhaqe" (p. 321). ("Bagundo would have entered Banzi Danyo's home as he went angrily. But he passed to his home" [p. 321]). Here the narrator tells what the character should have done but what he did not. When we see the situation in the text, we also anticipate that Bagundo would go directly to Banzi's home immediately. Because he warns Teto, whom he thinks has snatched his beloved, that he killed Banzi's son and that he will expose this secret. But Bagundo does not do this as soon as he reaches Banzi's home rather he passes to his own home. And we do not hear Bagundo saying this but the narrator exposed the character's unconscious mind. This shows how far the narrator goes to reveal its overttness. The function is that the narrative voice is superior to the events and characters in the story.

We have come to the most signaling criteria (in short of self-referential expressions) of the narrator's overtness, i.e. commentary. One can find the narrative voice frequently commenting on the story in the form of interpretation, judgment and generalization. The following extract can be used to exemplify this idea:

Garaan karaa hinlaatu. Eeboo isaatiin lafa irra ciisu gad qotee biyyoo diimaa baasee nyaate. Guyyaa sana cufa dhukaasaa fi sagalee sirbaa dhaga'aa oole . . . Isaaniif gammachuu isaaf ciniinsuu ture (p. 31).

Beggars can't be choosers. He [Bachangire] drilled the land which he was lying on with his spear and ate red soil. He passed listening to gunfire and songs all that day ... It was joy for them (Gebru and his family) but a labor for him (p. 31).

The first sentence in the above extract generalizes that one should accept what is available in difficult situations. As Bachangire is hiding to retaliate, he can't search for food to fill his belly because he might be seen and obstructed from his goal. So he has no better choice than eating the "red soil" under his body. Moreover, the narrator interprets what is meant by the whole day gunfire and songs from the perception of each character: for Gebru and his family, it is "joy" or happiness as they are celebrating Gebru's game winning by killing Badija (Bachangire's brother); for Bachangire, it is "labor" as he is expecting for a long time to avenge his brother's death. So we hear a commenting voice in the extract in the form of generalization and interpretation. This is not the only occasion in the narrative where the narrator comments on the story. The following can be used as another illustration:

Teetoon nama ... Nama jalqabaas nama dhumaas miti. Inni kan karaa guddaa irratti namaa fi uumamatti dabalamee, deemee deemee, henna daandiin naannoon bixxillee isaa irraa dhumtu immoo, maqee hafu. Kaleessas deema ture. Ammas deema jira. Maattinii ka'ee Chaagnii, Chaagnii irraa

Buree, Buree irraa Luqumaa . . . Luqumaa irraas . . . maaltu beeka? Qilleensa carraa tu murteessa (p. 122 and 123).

Teto is human ... He is not alpha and omega. He joined the journey on the big road of life and stops walking when his part ends, like any other creature. He was walking yesterday. He is also walking now. He started from Mattin, and then to Bure, then to Lukuma . . . then to . . . who knows? The breath of chance determines it (p. 122 and 123).

The voice in the above extract judges that Teto is a human being and anything that happens to human beings also applies to him. And by implication, anything that happens to Teto also applies to anybody. Nobody knows what will happen in the future. Elsewhere the narrator generalizes, “Jireenya keessatti kan otuu hin fedhiin godhan tu caala” (p. 160). (“The undesirables exceed the desirables in life.” [p.160]). The narrator comments that unwanted things are by far leading one’s life than the wanted ones. According to the narrator, most of the experiences in human life are determined by chance than plan.

To conclude, the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is undoubtedly overt, if not highly overt as it conceals its own information. It does not hesitate to narrate the story by giving any needed account of information to the narratee. Settings are described, characters are identified and defined, temporal summaries and commentaries are given, and what the characters did not say and think is reported in the story. This is done both by ways of intrusion and getting into anywhere and any mind, i.e. the narrative voice is dynamic. The overtness of the narrator by being dynamic can function as showing the differences in color, language, attitude and value, in general, life experience among human beings.

### 3.2.3 Time Relationship

As there is no self-referential information about the narrator, it is difficult to indicate the precise position of the narrator in terms of time, i.e. the distance between the narrator's time and the story's time can not be specifically located. But the fact that the narrative is globally narrated in past tense sentences indicates a retrospective narrator. The event and action involving sentences are generally narrated in the past tense forms.

Bacangireen raaree mudhii isaa irraa mannee isaa keessaa luqqisee dubuubbuu Gabruu bakka biqiltuutti irraa murate. Otuu yeroo hingubiin harka isaa lamaanis bakka ciqileetti irraa kukkute. Qawwee garuu, jaallan isaa harkaa fuudhanii baqatanii jiru. Bacangireenis faacha argate qabatee dukkana keessa baqate. Harki Gabruu yeroo qubni isaa goggogu, ibidda haadhuuf dhimma baasa. Dubuubbuun isaa immoo mallattoo faachaa ti ... (p. 38).

Bachangire removed a dagger from its holder and cut Gebru's penis from the root and both hands from the elbow. But the gun was taken by his [Gebru's] who had already fled. Bachangire held his trophy [the genitals and hands] and escaped through the dark. The hands serve as a poker when the fingers dry. The penis is the sign of trophy [or the sign of game-winning] (p. 38).

It is clear in the above extract that the voice is narrating past events even if the narrating moment is undefined. The verbs "removed", "cut", "was taken", "had already fled", "held" and "escaped" present past actions. But when the narrator wants to present facts, generalizations, habits and descriptions, it uses the present tense sentences. The last two sentences in the above extract can serve this purpose. It presents the habits of Gumuz people in the narrative. Moreover, present tense sentences are used to disclose the distance between the past and the moment of narrating. To add one more example, "Kaleessas deemaa ture. Ammas deemaa jira." (p. 123). ("He [Teto] was walking yesterday.

He is walking now.” [p. 123]). Here the narrative voice connects the past and the present by using the two tenses consecutively.

### 3.2.4 Reliability

Its implicit commentaries on the characters make the narrative voice of Gurraacha Abbayyaa unreliable. Characters are not treated neutrally. The norms of the narrator do not fit the norms of the implied author. For instance:

Mulaatuun “Dafi!” jedhee, Mashashaa ciqileen tumate. Sooxoo irraa babaasani. Callee irraa hihikkatani. Harka bakka ciqileetti irraa kukkutani. Daa’imman dhiiraa irraa immoo dubuubbuu isaanii mummuratani – Mallattoo faachaa! Achii booda, kan liphsuu ijaaf illee achitti isaan arge hin jiru (p. 52).

Mulatu hit Meshesha with the elbow and said, “Hurry!” They undid their [the women’s] *sooto* [a cloth made from leaves and used as pants by Gumuz women]. They loosened their beads. They cut the hands from the elbow. They cut the penis of the male children – A sign of trophy! After that, no-one has seen them for a matter of seconds.

The above scene happened after Mulatu and Meshesha killed the family of Bachangire who killed Gebru Teferra. Basically they went to Mattin village to retaliate the death of Gebru by killing Bachangire. But Bachangire was not at home when they arrived. They only heard the voices of women and children. They sensed the danger of waiting for Bachangire and decided to demolish the women and children who could not defend. Here is one of the ironies, Bachangire killed a man who is known for his bravery but they killed defenseless women and children. The other irony, they took hands of the women and penis of male children as a sign of trophy with them. Imagine that they reached their home with these “winnings”. I do not think their own people would receive them as heroes. But the other ironical fate for

them is that Bachangire and his friends followed and killed them before they celebrate. Carrying trophies, they became trophies themselves. In short, the narrator is in no way neutral here in his treatment of the characters. It tends to accept Bachangire as a true hero while it satirizes on Meshesha and Mulatu. By implication, the narrator opposes the brutal killings that Attabala people practice on Gumuz people who live in Mattin.

Another instance that would exemplify the ironical quality of the narrator is when it narrates the following on the part of Teto:

Qabeenyaan guddaan inni qabu ishee dha. Ishee qabaannaan durba fedhe filatee ittiin jijjiirratee fuudha. Obbooleetti akkas miidhagdu qabaatee jijjiirraadhaaf yoo inni dagate malee dhiirri ija sukkuummatu hin jiru (p. 45).

She [Docha] is his [Teto's] only wealth. He can exchange her for any girl he likes and marry. Having such a beautiful sister, no-one hesitates to exchange unless he is ignorant.

But Teto's confidence remains in vain when Docha commits suicide by running away from marrying the brother of the girl Teto loved and decided to exchange with his sister. Here, the voice is implicitly commenting on the tradition of Gumuz people where girls are forced to marry according to their brothers' will, whether they like it or not. That is why Docha committed suicide rather than marrying a boy she does not like.

So far in this chapter, it is attempted to analyze the manifestations of the narrative voices of Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa separately. The following chapter is devoted to presenting a comparison of the two narrative voices by way of conclusions.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSIONS

So far in this study, it has been attempted to present an analysis of the narrative voices in Dhaba Woyyessa's two narratives: Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa. The criteria used in the analysis include the narrator's source, level, relationship with the text and time, degree of conspicuousness and reliability. The results found indicate that the same author can apply different narratorial techniques for different functions.

Accordingly, the narrative voice in Godaannisa is a personified, named and with full human characteristics while it is not possible to tell the humanity of the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa. The voice in Godaannisa assures its personality by using the pronoun 'I' explicitly, telling his name which indicates both humanity and sex, i.e. Abdissa; and describing his physical appearance and attitudes. He is cooperative in giving all information about himself. As a result, the narrator of Godaannisa attracts the attention of the narratee towards both to him-self and to what is narrated. The account we give to his narration and our sympathy for him would be great. Even the fact that his knowledge is limited would initiate us to treat him as a real person and invites us to interact with him.

In contrast, the fact that the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa hides its personal information would make us doubt its personality. In addition, it holds a dual voice by narrating from its own mouth and from any of the characters' mind in the story which could be impossible for an ordinary or real person but which adds to the fictional reality. This is why the narrator is termed as 'unpersonified' and referred to as 'it', for lack of better terms, in the current report.

Using such a narrator attracts the attention of the narratee towards the text, i.e. towards what is narrated than who narrates it.

The narrators of both narratives: Godaannisa and Gurraacha Abbayyaa, have control over their stories. They are not embedded by any other narrator. They decide what should be told and what should be left out. The fate of the other existents and events in the narratives are in their hands. But the degree of their control varies. The narrator of Godaannisa, Abdissa, is a participant in the story he narrates. He tells his biography which contains both his past and present life experience. But the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is not a participant in the story it tells. It is outside the story. It only recounts the happenings of the other existents and events in the narrative. Then, while Abdissa tells events in which he has participated and relies on facts which the other characters told him verbally, the voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa has a free access to tell stories from any position in terms of time and mind. This indicates that the narrative voice of Gurraacha Abbayyaa is more powerful or authoritative than the narrative voice in Godaannisa. So the fictional reality of Gurraacha Abbayyaa is greater than that of Godaannisa.

Again both narrators have distinctive voice in terms of audibility. But the extent of their audibility varies. The narrative voice in Godaannisa is highly perceptible as he is co-operative in giving his personal information and attitudes explicitly and implicitly. Like the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa, he also describes settings and characters, gives temporal summaries; and comments on the events and existents in the story to increase his overtness. But the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is less overt as it does not give any information explicitly about itself.

Moreover, both narrators tell instances after they happened. This means both are retrospective in terms of the relationship between the narrating time and the story time. But the narrating time is clearly indicated in Godaannisa so that we can identify the distance between the narrator and the story. Abdissa recounts his past life experience which could be the reason for his regression and unhappy life at the present time. He ties his past to the present to show that the difficulties he faced in the past continue to the present in another form.

However, the narrating time in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is undefined even if lots of time expressions are used in the narrative. The past forms of verbs and the time expressions merely indicate that the narrator is reporting. So the narrating time and the story time are very close to each other. Such narrators are used to indicate the urgency of the narrated events. Then it can be concluded that the events in Gurraacha Abbayyaa are more immediate or instantaneous than those in Godaannisa.

In terms of reliability, the narrative voice in Godaannisa is reliable. There is no fallacy between the narration and the story's real intention. Even if he is unable to be present in every place and every mind in the story, he neutrally narrates, describes and comments on the existents and events on the basis of what he has witnessed. But the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is not neutral. It knows everything in the story and uses this opportunity to get into the minds of the characters and to present them ironically. And irony is one form of unreliability (Chatman, 1978). Then I would like to label the narrative voice of Gurraacha Abbayyaa as unreliable compared to that of Godaannisa.

To finalize in technical terms, the narrative voice in Godaannisa is:

- Personified, named and with full human characteristics in terms of source,
- Extra-homodiegetic in terms of narrative level and relationship to the text,
- Highly overt in terms of degree of conspicuousness,
- Retrospective in terms of time relationship, and
- Reliable in terms of reliability

while the narrative voice in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is:

- Unpersonified in terms of source,
- Extra-heterodiegetic in terms of narrative level and relationship to the text,
- Moderately overt (or less overt than the narrator of Godaannisa) in terms of degree of conspicuousness,
- Retrospective (but more close to the narrator's present) in terms of time relationship, and
- Unreliable in terms of reliability.

The above results clearly show that narrators should be treated separately from their authors. The job of the author is not narrating but choosing appropriate narrative voice according to the events and existents of the story s/he wants to write. And the function of a narrative voice is not merely narrating but also describing, summarizing, reporting and commenting on the events and existents of the story it narrates.

The results also indicate that the same author can apply varied styles in choosing a narrative voice (narrator). What determines is the

situation and context that the writer wants to communicate. And analyzing a narrative text in terms of voice can help a critic to understand the whole characteristics of the text. These two concepts can through new lights on literary interpretations.

Thus this study can be useful for critics, teachers and students of literature whenever they need to analyze a narrative text in terms of its application of narrative voice (narrator). The traditional terms ('first', 'second', 'third', etc. person narrators) should be avoided as they would not help to distinguish narrators one from the other; and as they could not reveal narrators' personality and attitudes than merely naming them.

Rather, it is recommended that the terms (personified or unpersonified, intra- or extradiegetic, homo- or heterodiegetic, overt or covert, projective, retrospective, simultaneous or interpolative, and reliable or unreliable) which have been used in this study should be applied whenever criticizing, teaching or studying literary texts in terms of their narrative voice. In other words, it is recommendable to apply narrator's source, level, text and time relationship, and degrees of conspicuousness and reliability as criteria to analyze a text's narrative voice. And literary teaching materials in Ethiopia should be prepared accordingly. This is because any teaching-learning process of literary techniques should take modern theories of narrative into consideration.

To give a final recommendation, the concepts of narrative voice which have been used in this study can also be applied to narratives in other Ethiopian languages and narrative genres. For instance, narrative voices in Amharic and Tigrigna novels can be assessed using the same techniques applied in this study. Moreover, narrative voices in poetry

and drama (as these genres can also involve narrators) can also be analyzed applying the same criteria used in this study. In short, the criteria used in the current study to analyze narrative voice can be applied to any narrative irrespective of its language, medium and genre.

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## **APPENDIX 1: A SYNOPSIS OF GODAANNISA**

Dhaba's Godaannisa is a fictional autobiography in which Abdissa, the narrative voice (narrator) of the novel, recounts his past life connecting it to the present. The ups and downs of Abdissa (the character-narrator of the story) are narrated in achronological order, i.e. the events in the story are not narrated in a straightforward chronological order. The narration begins with references to Abdissa's present. It narrates his desire to be a writer. In search of what to write, Abdissa recounts his past life in a form of flashback starting from his school age to the present when he is a civil servant. The narrating Abdissa is more developed and wiser than the experiencing one in terms of personality.

Abdissa loses his father when he is eight and half years old. As a consequence, his mother is married to Mannalew who rapes his sister on one occasion and runs away. This event adds to Abdissa's distressing life. After this, Abdissa completes his secondary school education, with the help of his mother and relatives, and joins Haromaya University.

On the campus, Abdissa falls in love with Woykishet who rejects his request at the time. During the second year, he again falls in love with another girl from his area called Talile. This time his love is accepted and they pass some time happily together. But this joy does not last long as Talile becomes pregnant and disappears from the campus. However, Abdissa continued his education in an unpleasant way and completes. After graduation, he is assigned to a governmental office in Finfine (Addis Ababa) as a civil servant.

But the loss of Talile still disturbs Abdissa after he has become an employee. He is not ready to entertain another love affair even if his colleague and best friend Tujuba tries to convince him now and then. Even he refuses Weje (who has changed her name to Meron) despite her frequent attempts to attract him towards herself. His only desire is to become a writer. That is why he lives in Mercato by renting a small room so that he can hide himself from any interference.

Towards the end of the narration, Abdissa starts living with his sister Kulani. It is on this occasion that something unexpected happens one day. He meets Talile, whom he has thought dead, at his office. She comes with her three years old daughter whose pregnancy has caused Talile quit her higher education and run away from the campus. It is after this situation that Abdissa chooses a title for the story he is going to write even if he could not continue due to a mixture of his happy and sad feelings.

To conclude, the narration of Godaannisa moves from Finfine to Wollega, then to Haromaya, and then back to Finfine in terms of space. This choice seems appropriate as it can be taken analogous with Abdissa's ups and downs in his life. The narration also moves from Abdissa's present to the past, and then to the present in terms of time. This connects his past and present and suggests that there is not much difference between the past and the present. In short, Dhaba Woyyessa's Godaannisa entertains love and hate, joy and sorrow, mercy and cruelty, gain and loss, in general the ups and downs in the life experience of Abdissa. The fact that Abdissa's ordinary life experiences are narrated by himself can invite a reader to sympathise with him and share the experiences; and this can reveal the world reality.

## **APPENDIX 2: A SYNOPSIS OF GURRAACHA ABBAYYAA**

The story of Gurraacha Abbayyaa is organized around consequences of conflicts. The main conflict which is the main cause for every consequence in the story is the one between two clans: a group from Gumuz people and another group from Amhara people who are populated in Mattin and Attabala villages respectively near the Nile River in Wollega. Compared to Godaannisa, the events in Gurraacha Abbayyaa are narrated in a more chronological order. The narrator presents most of the events as if reporting them as soon as they happen. But events are sometimes presented as if they happened some time in the past, through a flashback technique. Even if the position of the narrator is undetermined in terms of time, the time references made when presenting some of the events in the story can clearly show the distance between the narrating time and the story time.

The narration begins with exposing a setting (a scene of the Nile River) and introducing Teto (the main character of the story). Then the conflicts between the two clans and the consequences are narrated. The cause for the conflicts is Gebru Teferra's sexual intercourse with Badija's wife. And this event causes Bachangire (Badija's brother and Teto's father) and Gebru to threaten each other. As a result, Gebru kills Badija. Then Bachangire kills Gebru in retaliation of his brother's murder. Again, two of Gebru's relatives (Meshesha and Mulatu) brutally kill Bachangire's family (women and babies) in his absence; and they are also killed by him before they return home. And then a group from Attabala village (this time many in number) march to Mattin in order to burn the whole village. Bachangire, who is one of the tragic heroes of the story, is killed in the war. Only Teto (the main character and another tragic hero) and his sister Docha have survived the war, from Gumuz people in the village.

Having lost their family and relatives, Teto and his sister Docha decide to migrate to another place because they realize that those who killed their family are looking for them after they heard they are alive. Unknowing their destination, Teto and Docha pass through Chagni and reach Bure only to find people who resemble those who killed their family and whom they are running away from. Sensing the

danger, they again start another journey to a village called Luquma where another group of Gumuz people are populated. They go there with a man called Banzi Danyo who gives them a hut near his home where they start a new life.

After some time, Teto falls in love with Yeenche (Banzi's daughter) who also loves him. But the problem is Teto should provide either a girl or materials as worth as a girl in order to exchange and marry Yeenche, according to Gumuz's tradition. Teto knows that he can not afford the materials but he hopes that his sister Docha would not refuse to marry Yeenche's brother, Daambe, as an exchange. But Teto's hope remains in vain when Docha commits suicide by drowning herself into the Nile River because she does not want to marry Daambe, whom she highly hates. She has gone forever only to add to Teto's distressing life.

Despite his sister's death, Teto never despairs and starts working hard in order to provide materials needed to marry Yeenche. But Yeenche's father Danyo can not wait and promises her for another boy called Saaso. This urges Teto to kill Daambe whom he thinks is the obstacle between him and Yeenche so that the wedding of Yeenche and Saaso would be stopped. He also deflowers Yeenche on the same night he kills Daambe out of the norm of Gumuz people. A girl is not allowed to make sexual intercourse before her marriage in Gumuz's tradition. If she does, it is a shame for her family.

Despite Daambe's death, Banzi decides the wedding ceremony to take place soon so that he can search for the killer of his son and retaliate. As a result, Yeenche is married to Saaso. But Saaso mistreats her as she has lost her chastity to Teto and even as she is pregnant.

Teto is forced to leave Luquma for two reasons. One, Banzi feels betrayed as Teto deflowers and impregnates Yeenche because these deeds have caused anger on the part of Saaso. Second, a lad called Bagundo threatens Teto that he knows who killed Daambe and he says that he is going to disclose the secret. Bagundo does this because he thinks that Teto is going to snatch away a girl called Embo whom he assumes his friend. But it is Embo who falls in love with Teto and tries to persuade him to love her which is mysterious to Teto. As a result of these factors, Teto, encountering a merchant called Gonfaa

whom he can go with, migrates again to a small town called Obborra. There, he is forced to sleep with Gonfaa's mistress.

But after some time, Gonfaa and his mistress make sexual intercourse before Teto's eyes. Feeling inferior and disappointed with the woman's inhuman treatment, Teto is forced to make another migration to an unknown destination. On his way, he decides to take his gun from where he hid at before he had left Luquma. He goes there and encounters with Yeenche who has escaped from her husband Saaso. They decide to run away together to a place where no-one could find them. But Saaso arrives and kills Teto before they leave. Then Yeenche, like Teto's sister Docha, commits suicide by drowning herself into the Nile River. This final event gives Gurraacha Abbayyaa its closure.

In general, Gurraacha Abbayyaa encompasses events which are organised around love, hate, respect, disrespect, killings, revenges, betrayal, etc. The fact that the events are narrated by unpersonified narrator seems appropriate as a reader is attracted towards what are narrated and interacts with the events and existents in the story. In other words, unlike Godaannisa, the knowledge of the narrator in Gurraacha Abbayyaa is not restricted. This increases the fictional reality of the story as the events could have been presented from any place, time and by any mind.

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Melkamu Teshome

Signature: -----

Place: ILS, Addis Ababa University

Date of Submission: 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2010