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SCHOOL OF GRADGUATE STUDIES

**A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF AMHARIC PROVERBS OF
ADVICE**

Yidnekachew Geremew

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Yidnekachew Geremew

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Contents

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study -----	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem-----	3
1.3 Objective of the study -----	3
1.3.1 General objective -----	3
1.3.2 Specific objectives -----	4
1.4 Significance of the Study-----	4
1.5 Research methods and procedure of the study-----	4
1.5.1 Data collection -----	5
1.5.2 Procedure of analysis -----	5

CHAPTER TWO: Review of related literature

2.1 Definition and kinds of speech acts-----	7
2.2 The speech act of advice -----	11
2.3 Definitions and natures of proverbs -----	12
2.4 Sources of proverbs -----	15
2.5 Forms of proverbs -----	18
2.6 The uses of proverbs -----	21
2.7 Review of Related works -----	24

CHAPTER THREE: Analysis

3.1. Syntactic Patterns of Amharic Proverbs of advice-----	26
3.1.1 Structural Classification of Amharic Proverbs-----	26
3.1.2 Classification of Amharic Proverbs based on Sentence Function-----	29
3.2 phonetic and stylistic features of Amharic Proverbs of advice-----	39
3.2.1 Alliteration-----	39
3.2.2 Parallelism-----	40
3.2.3 Rhyme-----	42
3.2.4 Ellipsis-----	45
3.2.5 Assonance-----	47
3.2.6 Reduplication-----	49
3.2.7 Wellerism (Quotative) -----	49
3.3 Pragmatics of Amharic proverbs of advice -----	50
CHAPTER FOUR: Conclusion -----	71
References -----	73
Appendix -----	77

Abstract

The research had the objective of describing Amharic proverbs of advice from the linguistic point of view. The description included syntactic patterns, stylistic features, and pragmatics of the proverbs. A descriptive method was used for the study of the structure of the proverbs. The proverbs were selected and garnered from written sources, namely Mekuriya (1982) 'Proverbs', and Birhanu (1995) 'Amharic proverb collections'.

Based on the research objectives, the findings of the analysis of the proverbs are summarized as follows. In terms of syntactic patterns, the study shows that most Amharic proverbs of advice are complex-declarative clauses. Most of the phonetic and stylistic features have been observed. Of these alliteration, rhyme, assonance, ellipsis, parallelism and reduplication are the widely used features that made Amharic proverbs of advice poetic, memorable, and powerful conveyer of message. Furthermore, the study showed that the proverbs are used for advice in relevant contexts, situations, audience and topic that inform and/or advise. Finally, as a concluding remarks, the researcher recommends that other studies be done on the linguistic aspects of other speech acts.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Language as a means of communication has been serving human kind for ages. It has been used for different functions. Communication is not limited to statements but further encompasses other speech acts like advice, apology, commanding, remarking, promising, greeting, declaration, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or refusal (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1965). A speech act is an utterance of a linguistic unit that has performative function in communication (Ibid). Austin (1962) classifies illocutionary speech acts into five types, i.e., verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. Searl (1965) on the other hand developed his classification of speech acts. These are assertive which includes stating, suggesting, complaining, claiming and reporting; directives which comprises advising, ordering, commanding, requesting, and recommending; comissives which consists of promising, vowing, and offering; expressive which relates to congratulation, blaming, praising and condoling; and declarations which is about resigning, dismissing, christening, naming, excommunicating, appointing and sentencing.

Human communication takes place not only for diverse functions but also in various forms of which, proverbs constitute an interesting and significant aspect (Abdul Jabar 2008; Crystal 1997). Proverbs have been and are influencing human life in many ways. They have been defined from different perspectives; such as linguistics, culture, ethics, anthropology, religion, and communication. Among these, the prominent paremiologist, Mieder (1993) in Ahmed (2005: 13) defines proverb as “a phrase, saying, sentence, statement, or expression of folk which

contains wisdom, truth, morals, experience, lessons, and advice concerning life and which has been handed down from generation to generation”. Mieder (1997) and Nashashibi (1960) similarly defined proverb as a sentence expressing accumulated wisdom of experience. In line with this, Crystal (1997: 53) states that proverbs are “nuggets of popular wisdom expressed in the form of succinct sayings”. The definition given in Merriam-webster dictionary (2014) also reads “a brief popular saying that gives advice about how people should live or that expresses a belief that is generally thought to be true”. In an article on Forbes E magazine Mieder(2009) quoted Lord John Russell’s definition of proverb: “A proverb is the wit of one, and the wisdom of many.” And added his working definition: “A proverb is a concise statement of an apparent truth that has had, has, or will have currency among the people.”

Though there are many definitions of the term proverb, it is undeniable that the definitions have more similarities than differences. Thus, based on the common features of the definitions given, it is possible to sum up proverbs as sayings which are the result of rich experience and detailed observations about human life and the surrounding phenomena.

Just like many languages of the world, Amharic incorporates proverbs as genre of oral communication. As Mieder (2009:1) points out, proverbs “amount to very effective modes of communication in interpersonal relationships, in political discourse, in the mass media, in literary works, in advertisements and in cartoons”. Likewise the Amharic language speaking people use proverbs widely in various contexts for several functions. Consolidating this, there is a popular Amharic proverb about the importance of proverbs in communication which says ነገር በምሳሌ' ጠጅ በብርሌ' ዜማ በሃሌ /nəgər bəmissale, t’əj bəbirile, zema bəhalle/; which literally means speech without proverb, Psalm without hallelujah and *t’ej* without *birile* is in effective. One of

the major roles the Amharic proverbs play in the daily life of the people is that of carrying practical advice. Amharic proverbs of advice are, therefore, the focus of this study.

1.2. Statement of the problem

As stated earlier, offering advice is among the major functions of proverbs. The Amharic language speakers use proverbs to teach children and give advice to others. Due to this function of proverbs, there are some researches and academic works done on Amharic proverbs that mainly focused on listing and describing forms and providing literal meanings. Some attempts have also been made to compare Amharic proverbs with proverbs of other languages (Mengistu Tefera 1986; Solomon Deneke 1986; Mekuria Worku 1982). However, related to the topic of this work, no similar or closer research has been done as far as my knowledge goes.

The reviewed works mainly focused on meaning and functions of Amharic proverbs. However, there has hardly been any research on the linguistic features of Amharic proverbs of advice specifically. Hence, to fill in this gap, a research on the linguistic aspects of proverbs of advice in Amharic is essential, which is the objective of this research.

1.3. Objective of the study

This study has the following general and specific research objectives.

1.3.1 General objective

The major objective of this study is to give a linguistic description of Amharic proverbs of advice. It has the following specific objectives.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- (a) Describing the syntactic nature of Amharic proverbs of advice
- (b) Describing the stylistic features of Amharic proverbs of advice
- (c) Describing the pragmatics of Amharic proverbs of advice

1.4. Significance of the study

This study will have the following significance.

- It will contribute to the development of the existing knowledge on Amharic proverbs of advice.
- It will help to preserve the proverbs of the language.
- It can contribute to the betterment of the teaching and learning of the Amharic language
- It will serve as a resource material for further studies on Amharic proverbs and related issues.

1.5. Research methods and procedures

A research can be exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, experimental or inferential. **Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collected (Glass & Hopkins, 1984).** The aim of descriptive studies is finding out "what it is," that is the "description of natural or man-made phenomena such as their form, structure, activity, changes over time, relation to other phenomena, and so on. The description often illuminates knowledge that we might not otherwise notice or even encounter" (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 2001). In qualitative descriptive research,

data are gathered in the form of words from documents, observations, and transcripts, though quantification is still used. A descriptive method, therefore, is used for the study due to its appropriate nature to describe the linguistic aspects of proverbs.

1.5.1 Data collection

From a research methodological point of view there are two options regarding the size of data to be used for a particular study. The first option is examining the total population, which, in our case, would consist of the entire proverbs of advice in Amharic. The second option is sampling, in which a representative sample of proverbs will be selected from the total corpus. Therefore, for this study, first all proverbs of advice are collected from the total Amharic proverbs. Then, from the collected proverbs of advice, only sample proverbs are used in the discussion part.

In this study, the focus is on selected proverbs dealing with the speech act of advice. The proverbs were selected and garnered from authoritative sources, namely Mekuriya (1982) *Proverbs*, and Birhanu (1995) *Amharic proverb collections*. These collections of proverbial materials are believed to be authoritative, comprehensive, and representative of the corpus of Amharic proverbs, and as a result, have been chosen as the sources from which the proverbs of advice could be extracted.

1.5.2. Procedure of analysis

The study is conducted on the basis of John Searle's (1965) theory of indirect speech act and Austin's (1962) illocutionary speech act theory. Based on the speech act theory, the advice verbs of the proverbs are categorized into advice, counsel, consult, suggest, recommend, propose and

advocate types (Abdul Jabbar 2008). Each proverb is transcribed, and translated first for the purpose of the description. Sample proverbs were also presented to show the structural patterns, phonetic and stylistic feature, and the pragmatics of the proverbs.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

This chapter deals with the theoretical literatures that are related to the study. The review focuses on issues like speech acts, advice and proverbs that are discussed by various authors.

2.1 Definition and kinds of Speech Acts

Speech Act theory, according to Austin (1962), refers to a theory which analyzes the role of utterances in relation to the behavior of a speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication. The theory treats an utterance as an act performed by a speaker in a context with respect to an addressee.

The speech acts can be presented in two forms, explicit and implicit (Austin 1962, Searle 1969, Ali 2011). The explicit form is the one in which the speaker uses linguistic units directly to address the listener. The intended performative action is explicitly presented with the words uttered. “The speaker utters a sentence and means exactly and literally what he says” (Searle 1975: 59). For instance, the forms *I promise I will be there*; *Have some more coffee*; *Have a nice day*. And *Look out*. have direct and explicit functions of promise, offer, wish, and warning consecutively.

The other form of speech act is indirect speech act, which refers to “an utterance that conveys a message that is different from its literal meaning, often for reasons of politeness or subtlety.”(Beun et al 2006:1). To avoid, for instance, the flat imperative form of “shut the door”,

which might be considered impolite, one may use the following utterances of indirect speech acts.

- (1)- *I would be grateful if you'd shut the door.*
- (2)- *Could you shut the door?*
- (3)- *Would you mind shutting the door?*
- (4)- *It would help to have the door shut.*
- (5)- *It is getting cold in here.*
- (6)- *Shall we keep out the draught?*
- (7)- *Now, Jane, what have you forgotten to do? Burr! (Ali 2011: 48)*

Searle (1975:61-62) elaborates this notion of direct and indirect illocution with a sample conversation. Student X utters: *Let's go to the movies tonight.* And Student Y responded: *I have to study for an exam.* From this conversation we can understand that the utterance of X is a proposal, because of the meaning of *Let's*. The utterance of student Y in the same context would normally be a rejection of the proposal, but not in its literal meaning. Literally it is simply a statement about Y. In his words,

The PRIMARY illocutionary act performed in Y's utterance is the rejection of the proposal made by X, and that Y does that by way of performing a SECONDARY illocutionary act of making a statement to the effect that he has to prepare for an exam. He performs the secondary illocutionary act by way of uttering a sentence the LITERAL meaning of which is such that its literal utterance constitutes a performance of that illocutionary act. We may, therefore, further say that the secondary illocutionary act is literal; the primary illocutionary act is not literal. (Ibid p. 62)

Hare (1970: 3) believes that the study of speech act is much similar to the study of the meaning of sentence; what makes them different is the perspective they hold.

A study of speech acts is not in principle distinct from a study of the meaning of sentences. Since every meaningful sentence in virtue of its meaning can be used to perform a particular speech act (or a range of speech acts), and since every possible speech act can in principle be given an exact formulation in a sentence or sentences (assuming an appropriate context of utterance), the study of the meanings of sentences and the study speech acts are not two independent studies but one study from different points of view.

Performing a speech act involves three aspects. (1) Performing a locutionary act, the act of producing a recognizable grammatical utterance in the language. (2) The illocutionary act attempts to accomplish some communicative purpose including promising, warning, greeting, reminding, informing and commanding are all distinct illocutionary acts. (3) Phonology, syntax, and semantics focus on the perlocutionary act (Austin 1962). Upon these acts developed by Austin, Searle (1969) added propositional act (referring and predicating function) to the already proposed speech acts and made the speech act categories four.

Among the above mentioned categories of speech act, the illocutionary act constitutes five basic classes of speech acts that are formed based on the taxonomic model proposed by Searle (Ali and Makhlef 2011: 52-53; Hardin, 2010: 157-158).

1. **Assertives:** Assertives are acts that may express any proposition and that do not call on any obligation from the speaker or hearer. The illocutionary force of assertive speech acts can be defined in terms of the speaker's intention of getting the hearer to accept the propositional content of the utterance as the expression of a true state of affairs.
2. **Directives:** Directives place the hearer under obligation to perform an act. It contains speech acts such as requests, advices, commands and suggestions, the main goal of which is to get the hearer to do something, although the force of the attempt can differ from one speech act to another. Haverkate (1984) in Martínez-Flor (2005) classified the directives into impositive and nonimpositive directives.

2.1 **Impositive speech acts** are defined as speech acts which are performed by the speaker to influence the intentional behaviour of the hearer in order to get the latter to perform, primarily for the benefit of the speaker, the action directly specified or indirectly suggested by the proposition. It includes more threatening acts, such as requesting, pleading and ordering.

2.2 **Non-impositive speech acts** are performed in order to get the hearer to carry out the action primarily for his own benefit. This group includes speech acts such as advice, warnings, instructions and suggestions.

“The main difference between these two groups lies in the fact that the benefits obtained by carrying out an impositive speech act are exclusively for the speaker, whereas the objective of the non-impositive speech acts is to the benefit of the hearer.” (Martínez-Flor 2005:168)

3. **Commissives:** Commissives are typically “speaker-centered” and their illocutionary point is to place the speaker under the commitment of performing an act that will benefit the hearer. The illocutionary force of commissive speech acts is the speaker’s undertaking of the obligation to perform the action described by the propositional content of the utterance. Commissives are diametrically opposed to impositives, since they are centred upon an action to be performed by the speaker, not by the hearer; moreover, it is the hearer, not the speaker, who is supposed to primarily benefit from the result of the action. Promises and offers are examples of commissive acts.

4. **Expressives:** Expressives are acts that establish a particular interpersonal relation between the speaker and the hearer. The illocutionary force of expressive speech acts is the expression of a psychological state of the speaker which is brought about by the state of affairs indicated by the propositional content. The speech acts under expressive include 'to thank', 'to congratulate', and 'to condole'.

5. **Declaratives:** Performatives involve a proposition in which the verb names the action taking place. The illocutionary goal (force) of declarative speech acts can be defined as the immediate change in the institutional state of affairs; it relies on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions. The speech acts like excommunicating, declaring war, christening, and firing from employment are some examples of declaratives.

2.2 The speech act of advice

Advice as a speech act is used in order to make the hearer to commit him/herself to some future course of action. It belongs to the directive speech act category. As stated in the previous section, the speech act of advice is performed for the purpose of making the hearer carry out the action primarily for his own benefit. Due to its hearer-beneficiary nature the speech act of advice is classified under nonimpositive illocutionary act. Tsui (1994) in Martínez-Flor (2005:168) “has described *advisives* as a type of directive speech act that advocates a course of action for the benefit of the hearer, arguing that although the acts of advising, suggesting and recommending may have been treated as three separate acts in the speech act literature, they are in fact, different labels for the same type of *advisive* speech act.” (p. 168)

In line with this, Donaghy (2012) elaborates on how advice as a speech act works with examples quoted below.

Speech acts such as advice, warning, instruction, and moral exhortation are conceptually linked to practical arguments in the following way. In classifying an utterance as advice, warning, etc., we specify the type of practical argument in which that utterance is either implicitly or explicitly embedded. To advise X to do A is, among other things, to imply that X's interests will be served by doing A. When advice comes packaged in the form of an imperative, that implication functions as the premise of a general practical argument whose conclusion is "X, do A." (Donaghy, 2012: 336)

Hence, the speaker of advice not only says something to make a statement about the situation, but he also performs an action which affects or produces a change in the hearer's mind so as to get him do something in accordance with the speech act.

2.3 Definitions and natures of proverbs

Several attempts have been made to define proverb from different points of view and dimension. Due to this fact, enormous definitions of proverbs are found in many literatures. Some definitions of proverb are given in terms of its source; others in terms of its nature; and some others in terms of its function. Though “scholars seem to be unable to agree on a reasonable definition of proverb at all” (Mieder, 1999), it is useful to review some of the definitions.

A summary-like definition based on the nature of proverbs by Mario Pie (1964) cited in Mieder (1999) reads:

Proverbs are among the most ancient of human institutions. Criticism of life, in brief and pithy form, is characteristic of proverbs... there is no doubt that much of a nation's folk-philosophy gets into proverbs, along with the spice of national customs and, above all, the peculiar flavor of the nation's language and phraseology... Proverbs are generalizations of human experience, condensations

of oft-repeated occurrences of the trial-and-error variety. Above all, they are the fruit of observation and inductive reasoning,... A generalization... caught on, became popular, was passed from mouth to mouth, from generation to generation. Ultimately it became an integral part of the group's folklore, and was repeated whenever the situation it described recurred. ... Every proverb tells a story and teaches a lesson.

The above definition by Mario Pie presents proverb in terms of its origin, nature, function and other characteristics. Similarly, NCTE/IRA (2003) described proverbs as familiar sayings containing advice and truth and reflecting the culture of their origin which transmits from generation to generation orally.

[proverbs] are generally worded in such a way as to be remembered easily and tend to change little from generation to generation. Proverbs function as “folk wisdom,” general advice about how to act and live... they often strongly reflect the cultural values and physical environment from which they arise. Proverbs are used to support arguments, to provide lessons and instruction, and to stress shared values.

The two definitions mentioned above address most aspects of proverb. Alongside the definitions, some scholars and publications tend to describe proverb based on its prevailing features. Ashipu (2012), for example, described proverbs as “essentially context-bound, communally conceived, ageless, economically structured, terse, epigrammatic and frozen.” Finnegan (2012) stated some detailed characteristics of proverbs as:

[proverb] is a saying in more or less fixed form marked by ‘shortness, sense, and salt’ and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it...First, they are picked out first and most obviously as being short; and secondly by the fact that even where the wording itself is not absolutely fixed, at least the main structural pattern is accepted in the society concerned as an appropriate one for this purpose. In addition to terseness and relative fixity, most sayings classed as proverbs are also marked by some kind of poetic quality in style or sense, and are in this way set apart in form from more straightforward maxims... The same proverb may be used as advice, instruction, or warning, and may be cited in situations that may seem far removed from the original application, or even in contradictory senses. That is the flexibility nature of

proverbs. Unlike stories and songs, the performance does not generally seem to be of importance. Rather, proverbs rely for their effect on the aptness with which they are used in a particular situation and—the point considered here—on the style and form of words in which they appear. (Finnegan, 2012: 383)

Moreno on her part emphasized on the communicative power and the cognitive dimension of proverb to give a general picture of what a proverb is. As to Moreno (n.d.: 42) “Proverbs are a conceptual universal phenomenon, with high communicative and instructive power... Proverbs are mentally economical, since from one particular situation presented in them we can understand many others. For instance, the proverb *Blind blames the ditch* ...can be applied to any situation in which someone blames others for their own restrictions.” This discussion raises the allusive and metaphorical aspect of proverb in which allusive and metaphorical refers to its reference to some truth outside itself. However, “it is pertinent to note that the profundity, manifestations and values of the linguistic metaphorism of proverbs are culturally relative” as noted by Fayemi (2009).

“A proverb is a traditional saying, which offers advice or presents a moral in a short and pithy manner” (Fayemi, 2009: 3). The points notable in this definition are (1) proverb is a concise expression that contains more content meaning than can be expected from its pithily structure. (2) Proverb is a relic of ageless tradition. Traditional saying here means accepted truth of life having root in antiquity as opposed to modern or contemporary, and which is passed down from one generation to another. (3), proverbs function as a means to convey advice and instruction.

As can be noted from the above discussion “the exact definition of ‘proverb’ is no easy matter. There is, however, some general agreement as to what constitutes a proverb.” (Finnegan 2012: 383) its terseness, tacit nature, philosophical and high moral expositions and its oral nature as

part of the inherited tradition of a people at all time will continue to reflect and define proverb. Bearing in mind the aforementioned definitions of proverb, the following are the major features of proverbs as summarized by Fayemi (2009).

- i. Proverbs have their origin in oral tradition. They existed before written culture. Because of this, they are generally worded or couched in such a way as to be remembered easily. They floated down from age on the lips successive generations. The name of the first sage, who couched the saying would in time be forgotten, while the opinion, the metaphor, or the expression, remained, consecrated into a proverb.
- ii. Proverbs are passed down from generation to generation. Sometimes, their specific meanings change in form as a matter of historical exigencies.
- iii. Proverbs are metaphorical, and it is through proper understanding that their metaphorical nature is unraveled.
- iv. Proverbs are neither clichés, nor sententious maxims. Clichés are widely used, even overused, phrases that are often metaphorical in nature. Clichés often have their origins in literature, television or movies rather than in folk and oral tradition. Where sentences maxims are products of individual, proverbs are relics of cultural experiences.
- v. Proverbs are not apriori determined. Rather, they are based on human observations and experiences with the things of nature: human beings, animals, nature itself and the spirit world. Proverbs, relate mostly to abstract issues (death, laziness, envy, love, power, wealth, poverty, strength, weakness, mood, intelligence, etc) that constitute the foundations of people's mindset.
- vi. Proverbs are universal and particular in nature. Similar situations and similar objects have unquestionably made men think, act and express themselves alike. Also, unique historical cultural experiences that have generated some proverbs have shaped the contours of these proverbs to particularism.
- vii. Proverbs establish truths of life, which could be universal or relative.
- viii. There is no occurrence in human affairs to which some proverbs may not be applied. In other words, proverbs are existentially applicable and it is in their correct application to life that their intrinsic values lie. Proverbs cover the wide sphere of human existence.
- ix. Proverb is hetero-situational by nature. By this, we mean a proverb is capable of being interpreted to convey a different meaning which is applicable to different situations. One proverb can be used in various and sometimes different situations with different functions.

2.4 Sources of proverbs

Identifying the genesis of proverb has proved to be a difficult task and its origins remain unclear (Fayemi, 2009; Finnegan, 2012; Mieder, 1999; Salwa, 2005). Though there is much agreement to

the existence of proverbs early with human language existence, scholars forward what seems a reasonable argument to the origin of proverbs.

Salwa (2005) believes that proverbs have originated from sources like individuals' experiences, observations, or general facts from different surroundings. People then, according to Salwa (2005: 32),

refer to them on similar occasions and transmit them from generation to generation until they become part of their heritage. Many individuals have contributed a great deal to all nations' literatures by creating new proverbs. That is to say, a proverb is first uttered by an individual and in time it becomes part of the traditions.

In line with this Mieder (1999) argues that though proverbs "start with an individual who formulates a memorable statement that catches on among people, the coiner of most proverbs is lost in anonymity. [For this reason] proverbs are frequently surrounded by such general introductory remarks as "as the proverb says," "as my grandmother used to say," or "as the old truth says" to add credence to the traditional bit of wisdom contained in the proverb."

The notion that proverbs initially originate from individuals and then become the property of the people is termed as "popular origin" in Harris (2014); and he illustrated this process as follows borrowing Whiting's words.

If a given person makes a generalization, that generalization will appear to any of his fellows as one which he himself had made but had failed to express. To illustrate: a group of men are watching a burning building, the flames of which are fanned by a high wind; one of them remarks, "the wind makes the fire burn more fiercely." This statement, the expression of a percept, is felt to be common property. If another man adds, "a high wind always makes a fire burn more fiercely," his generalization, or concept, is common property as well. It is a statement which any might have made, and those who did not make it feel that it expresses their own experience and judgment. From this literal application,

figurative applications might grow, until such a saying as “high winds make fires burn” might be used much as we actually do use the familiar statement about “fire and tow,” which must, in its turn, have developed from a percept to a concept with literal application, and then have been used, as it now is, figuratively, as a proverb.

Finnegan (2012) on her part raises a question of individual authorship and originality of proverbs. Harris (2014) also states that there is an assumption that proverbs originate anonymously from the community as a whole, which he called “communal origins”; and he explains “in which a proverb might well come into being, and indeed in which many probably did so.”

Similarly, Encyclopaedia Britannica (2013) describes the sources of proverbs are many; and continue to discuss that most of the sources are anonymous and almost all are difficult to trace. “Their first appearance in literary form is often an adaptation of an oral saying. Popular usage sometimes creates new proverbs from old ones; e.g., the biblical proverb, “The love of money is the root of all evil” has become “Money is the root of all evil.”

Since one of the characteristics of a proverb is that it should be accepted by the community as a whole, the scope for individual initiative is clearly limited. However, [because] of variation in form and the great range of varied situations to which proverbs can be applied with greater or lesser aptness and insight give some opening for individual contributions. There is a certain amount of evidence about the way new proverbs are coined by individuals and later taken up by the community. It is common for proverbs to be attributed to well-known historical personages; this is often conventional but in some cases may be justified. Similarly new proverbs are mentioned as being taken by individuals from various outside sources, or arising from individual inventiveness and poetic imagination within the framework of the conventional forms and functions in any given society. (Finnegan, 2012: 404)

The various sources of proverbs, as discussed in this section, could be: (1) individuals who reflect their experience and observation in interesting words and the people continue to use it for

different situations; or (2) diverse sources such as poetry, songs, commercials, advertisements, movies, literature, etc; or (3) based on stories, often sentences that come at the end of a story.

In general, “the historical circumstances surrounding the origin of proverbs differ as a matter of different cultural experiences that have generated the proverb in question”(Fayemi, 2009). Although it is very difficult to trace proverbs to their origins back in time, their existence from times immemorial is beyond doubt. Many scholars trace their origins as far back as the beginnings of human society and consider them as one of the first fields of science of humanity, containing its wisdom (Bradeanu, 2007:22)

2.5 Forms of proverbs

So far we have discussed definitions, features and origins of proverb. In this section the focus will gear towards the form (structural appearance) of proverbs. “In discussing the style and structure of proverbs one of the first things one notices is the poetic form in which many are expressed. This, allied to their figurative mode of expression, serves to some degree to set them apart from everyday speech” (Finnegan, 2012:388).

The prominent phonetic and structural devices that help proverbs to sharpen their verbal expressiveness are “(1) rhyme, alliteration, assonance; (2) patterned rhythm in the service of; (3) balanced structure, usually binary sometimes oppositional; (4) repetition of the same word or same grammatical structure; (5) vowel harmony” as stated in Russo (1983: 122). In line with this, Mieder (2009) elaborates certain linguistic, structural and poetic devices often added for expressiveness and memorability of proverbs. These are:

- Alliteration : two or more words begin with the same consonant, such as /f/ as in “‘Forgive and forget’”.
- Parallelism: A ‘parallel’ proverb has two halves that share the same syntactic structure. Typically, there is some repetition of words and/or affixes, as in “Nothing ventured, nothing gained”.
- Rhyme: it is a word-end phenomenon that always includes assonance and – usually – consonance too. Examples are “When the cat is away, the mice will play”; “Man proposes God disposes”.
- Ellipsis: omission of words that will be understood as being there even if they aren’t (eg. Once bitten, twice shy; First come, first served)
- Assonance: the repetition of a vowel within two or more words in the same proverb, is also exploited in forming artistic proverbs, as in Oromo language, “kan mana baala, a’laa gaala “A leaf at home, but a camel elsewhere”, also in Amharic, yälämmänä mänämmänä “The one who begs becomes thin”.

Beyond the stylistic poetic features, proverbs of different languages exhibit a wide variety of grammatical structures. Among other additional forms, the commonly found proverbial structures include: Imperative-negative (eg. Don't beat a dead horse); Imperative-positive (eg. Look before you leap); Parallel phrases: Garbage in, garbage out; Rhetorical question (Is the Pope Catholic?) and Declarative sentence (Birds of the same feather flock together) (Finnegan, 2012; Mieder, 2009). And sometimes the desire for verbal artistry often bends the normal rules of grammar (Unseth, 2008:5).

Uttering only a portion of a proverb so as to cite an entire proverb is common in daily conversation of people. For instance, “All is fair” is commonly quoted instead of the whole proverb “All is fair in love and war”. Consolidating this Finnegan (2012) writes that proverbs sometimes may have the full and the abbreviated forms; of which the abbreviated one being the one normally cited. “Sometimes the saying is cut down even further and merely referred to in one word... A similar tendency is to leave a proverb to be completed by the hearer: names are sometimes the first word of a proverb as just ‘Atanayita’ (from the proverb *Atanayita atenda nyina okufumba*— ‘The untraveled man praises his mother’s cooking’)” (Ibid, 390).

In addition to the aforementioned forms proverbs have the tendency to appear in various forms. The subsequent quote presents some additional forms of proverbs that need to be considered.

Proverbs are generally marked by terseness of expression, by a form different from that of ordinary speech, and by a figurative mode of expression abounding in metaphor. Another common form is reduplication, with repeated words or syllables. This usually comes at the beginning, as in the Swahili ‘Hurry, hurry, has no blessing’ (*haraka, haraka, haina bar oka*). The use of quoted words attributed to some actual or fictional person is another device for giving point and sometimes authority to a proverbial saying, the form sometimes known as ‘wellerism’. as with the Ganda “‘I’ll die for a big thing”, says the biting ant on the big toe’. There are also miscellaneous patterns of fairly frequent occurrence such as the widespread ‘If . . . then . . .’ formula, the proverbs opening with ‘It is better’, the form ‘As for you . . .’ the negative axioms opening ‘There is no . . .’ or ‘There is not . . .’ (Finnegan, 2012: 388-389)

In general, the message and the philosophy in proverbs are conveyed by different forms that “may appear in the singular or plural, with various tenses, or in the first, second, or third persons. The forms also sometimes vary from place to place, [from culture to culture, from language to language].” (Finnegan, 2012: 390). Usually, the grammar of proverbs is not always expected to be the same with the typical grammar of the spoken language, often elements are moved around, to achieve rhyme or focus or other effects.

2.6 The use of proverbs

Proverbs, among other language elements, play several significant and important roles in the daily life of every community. Proverb has come to mean a lot and occupy a valuable position in the people's culture as a means of interpreting and understanding several events around them. For this reason, therefore, irrespective of the level of sophistication, modernity and technological boom witnessed all round us today, proverbs have continued to play important roles in debates, lessons and instruction, arguments, speech, sacred and secular events of people both among the literate and non-literate alike. "Proverbs are more than an index of [people's] lives; they are also the record of their vocabulary, so that it is unsafe to leave them out of consideration in studying the language of any community" (Marvin, 1916).

Elaborating on the functions of proverbs Brădeanu, (2007:24) writes "initially, proverbs were conceived as authoritative words, having the role of guiding people's behavior, tracing the guidelines for their moral, religious, philosophical, legal behavior, being the first unwritten set of laws of humanity. They were used to pass judgment, give advice, criticize or praise others etc., rather than to express universal truths." There is also an increasing interest in using proverbs to achieve goals, usually to support and promote changes in society. Proverbs have been used for constructive purposes. For example, proverbs have been used for teaching languages at various levels. In addition, proverbs have been used for public health promotion and for community development.

Scholars further argue that proverbs are used with a certain communicative aim that goes beyond their linguistic form and meaning. In complicated situations, people turn to proverbs seeking

answers. They are creatively employed to speed up communication, convey weighty messages and to sharpen arguments. They are equally used for direct criticism, and clarification of difficult ideas. The potential capacities of all these relevancies of proverbs are unquestionable, since proverbs, are rich with wit, wisdom, imagination, amusement, instruction and insight (Archer, 2003; Finnegan, 2012; Mieder, 2009; Moreno, 2014). Unlike many other forms of folklore, proverbs are more involved in everyday situations of many cultures in which a feeling for the expression of abstract ideas through condensed and allusive phraseology comes out clearly in proverbs.

Proverbs are also especially suitable even for everyday situations of advice or instruction. Finnegan, in her book *Oral literature in Africa*, discusses this function of proverbs with examples from African cultures.

Proverbs occur in less formal situations for giving ordinary advice. Here too their oblique and tactful nature makes them particularly effective. Many examples of this could be given. In Lamba culture, for instance, the young are warned in such terms as ‘Your mouth will turn into a knife and cut off your lips’ or ‘You will let the mouse rot in the trap’ (i.e. let the opportunity pass) (Doke 1934: 361), and among the Tetela the proverb ‘The palm-tree grows in the tall grass’ may be used as a gentle hint to parents that it is best to leave a child alone and to let him play and get dirty—he will grow up (Finnegan. 2012: 396).

In line with this Fair (2003) in Abdul Jabbar (2008: 117) illustrates the wisdom of advice found in proverbs by categorizing advice into moral, practical and general advices. “Moral advice based on personal experience can be seen in the following examples “*Charity begins at home*”; Practical advice gained from social observations of everyday life is in the following examples: “*don't put all your eggs in one basket*” It seems that the role of proverbs of wisdom in our daily life cannot be ignored; otherwise, people would get lost.”

The use of proverbs in education as a tool is another important role that cannot be neglected. “In a non-literate society, instruction through proverbs provides a means for relatively formal education and transmission of cultural traditions... Proverbs often imply some general comment on the way people do, or should, or should not behave... Without any specific formal occasion for their use, proverbs are used with the intention of instructing or of giving advice.” (Finnegan, 2012: 401). A collection of vernacular proverbs, Unseth (2008:2) believes, can also be utilized in literacy programs.

In addition, proverbs are used not only to make effective points but also to decorate speeches in a way to get acceptance and appreciation from listeners. “This aspect seems to be very widespread indeed and in some cases at least to be an art cultivated to a very high degree ...proverbs are essential to life and language. Without them, the language would be but a skeleton without flesh, a body without soul” (Ibid: 402).

Thus, it is possible to summarize that proverbs are used for communication either as an art or as a tool. In some societies, there may be trends about the circumstances in which they are most common or appropriate, or the classes of people who should use them. Moreover, Finnegan (2012) stresses that they are above all used as a form of conflict resolution, as an indirect way of communication, as a form of expression with a certain educational relevance, as an artistic activity in its own right, or as all these at once.

In general, this chapter has raised issues like speech acts, advice and proverbs. Language as a means of communication is used for various purposes. Speech act is a term used in discourse

analysis, ethnography of speaking and pragmatics for minimal unit of analysis of conversational interaction. Speech acts include assertive, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Advice is part of the directive speech act.

2.7 Review of Related works

There are some related academic works that are done on Amharic proverbs, though they are not completely related to this study. This section presents a review of these related works.

A research by Mengistu Tefera(1986) entitled “A similarity comparative study of Amharic and Kistane language proverbs” is one of the related works. The objective of this study was to investigate the similarity between Amharic and Kistane proverbs. According to this study, the proverbs of both languages have similarity in form as well as in content. As a result, the researcher concluded that the similarity has resulted from the closeness in culture, custom and life style of Amharic and kistane language speakers.

The other senior essay is by Wondatir Deneke (1986) titled “A similarity comparative study of Amharic and Tigrigna language proverbs”. The study had the objective of investigating the similarity between the proverbs of the two languages. The finding of this study showed that there is a strong similarity in style and form of occurrence as well as in the content and concepts raised in the proverbs of both languages. Shared belief system, culture, life style, environment, and close neighborhood were mentioned as the reasons for the similarity of the proverbs.

A Research Paper presented by Yeshe H. Mariam (1995), “A Critical Analysis of Amharic Proverbs on Women in Ethiopia”, attempted to show the role of Amharic proverbs on or related to women in constructing their identity. The paper is organized in five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory part of the paper. Chapter two deals with theoretical framework. Background information about the study population is presented in chapter three. The analysis and conclusions are given in chapter four and five respectively. The conclusions reached by this study include:

(A) A large number of the proverbs have clearly been constructed through patriarchal discourse, because they assign lower positions to women in society by portraying them as weak, mischievous, ill-behaved, ignorant, subordinate, fitted only movements, their work and their nature in general. (B) It is clear that women's voices are muted and their resistance if it exists in the form of proverbs to the dominant discourse is not so popularized because of their place in the power structure. (C) Most of the messages conveyed by the proverbs are internalized by women themselves. This is apparent in the fact that these women use the proverbs that negatively portray them as much as men of their age. Certainly, this would have influence on the way women behave and ‘define’ their self esteem not to mention its influence in indoctrinating their children in whose presence these proverbs are quoted. This internalization of the discourse is not only a matter of verbal use, rather a ceaseless struggle to comply accordingly in their life experiences.

As it can be seen clearly, the current study shares only the subject of the study (i.e Amharic proverbs) with these studies. The current research focuses on the linguistic analysis of Amharic proverbs of advice, which is entirely different from the previous works. The previous works are mainly content wise; however this study focuses on the form, meaning and functions of the proverbs.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis

This chapter deals with the analysis of the selected proverbs of advice. The analysis is made in three main sections namely: syntactic patterns, stylistic features, and pragmatic description of the proverbs of advice. In each section there are sub-sections that make the analysis more structured. A table is used to shed light on the discussions made in the first section.

3.1. Syntactic Patterns of Proverbs of advice

Amharic speakers use a variety of proverbs to give advice and transmit messages. There are some proverbs that are used to convey some moral values by way of criticizing, or simply prescribing those values (Yeshi, 1995). These proverbs have their own distinctive linguistic features. In this section, the syntactic patterns of the proverbs will be discussed.

3.1.1 Structural Classification of Amharic Proverbs

Baye (2000:312) classifies Amharic sentences into two different types by way of form, viz. simple and complex. Simple sentences, according to him, are sentences with one verb phrase and complex ones are those with two or more verb phrases. The analysis here adopts this classification.

I. Simple proverbs

Simple proverbs in Amharic are similar to ordinary simple sentences of the language, in the sense that they are made up of subject noun phrase and verb phrase. They, however, differ from

ordinary simple sentences in that the subject noun phrase usually makes generic rather than specific references to the object being referred to. Examples of simple Amharic proverbs include:

(1) ለነገረኛ ሰው ጀርባህን ሰጠው *

lə nəgəərəŋna səw jərbahin sit'əw

For a-nagging person back give-him

‘To a nagging person give him your back.’

(2) ኩራት አይሆንም እራት

kurat ajihonim irat

Pride not-be dinner

‘Pride cannot be dinner.’

(3) በሰው ቁስል እንጨት ስደድበት

bəsəw k'usil inc'ət sidədibbət

in-person wound stick insert

‘Insert a stick in a person's wound.’

The above three proverbs are in the form of simple sentences, for the reason that each consists of a single verbal phrase. Proverb (1) and (3) have the implicit subject: you; and all the words make up the predicates. Each of the above proverbs consists of a single verb: ‘give’, ‘be’ and ‘insert’ in proverb (1), (2), and (3) respectively.

* The data presentation has four rows. The first row presents the original proverb in Amharic orthography. The second row is the phonetic transcription. And, the third and fourth rows give word-to word and free translations respectively.

II. Complex proverbs

Complex proverbs are, as mentioned earlier, sentences which consist of more than one verb phrase. More than one clause (independent and dependent) is common in complex proverbs.

Most of the proverbs of the speech act of advice are complex. Consider the following examples:

- (4) ቸር ተመኝ ቸር ታገኝ

čər təməɲ čər tagəɲ

Better wish better to-get

‘Wish for the better to get better.’

- (5) ሲሮጡ የታጠቁት ሲሮጡ ይፈታል

sirot’u jətət’ək’ut sirot’u jiffəttal

Running fastened running wil- untie

‘A belt fastened while running will get unfastened while running.’

- (6) የሚያድግ ልጅ አይጥላህ የሚሞት ሽማግሌ አይርገምህ

jəmmijadg lij ajit’lah jəmmimot fīmagille ajirgəmiḥ

a-growing child not-hate-you a-dying-old-man not-curse-you

‘Don’t be hated by a growing child; don’t be cursed by a dying old man.’

As it can be seen in the above examples there are at least two verb phrases in each proverb.

Proverb (4) is composed of the two verb phrases: ቸር ተመኝ ‘Wish better’ and ቸር ታገኝ ‘to get better’. All the explicit words in proverb (5) viz ሲሮጡ ‘while running’, የታጠቁት ‘fastened’, ሲሮጡ ‘while running’, ይፈታል ‘will get unfastened’ are verbs. As verb phrases make sentences, these proverbs are complex sentence in form. Likewise, several proverbs of advice have a structure of complex sentence.

3.1.2 Classification of Amharic Proverbs on the Basis of Sentence

Function

In this section of the analysis, the presentation focuses on the sentence type of the proverbs based on sentential function. Based on syntactic structure, Amharic proverbs can be any of the following:

- Imperative (either affirmative or negative),
- Declarative (either affirmative or negative),
- Interrogative,
- A combination

Each will be treated as follows:

I. Imperative

Imperative constructions are the most direct speech acts used to address a listener (Crystal, 1997). An imperative sentence is either a command or a request that commonly occurs either in affirmative or negative forms. As the speech act of advice usually involve the advice giver and the advice receiver, most Amharic proverbs of advice have imperative forms. The following are some examples in both forms.

A. Negative imperative:

Imperative sentences are widely used in Amharic proverbs of advice. Among the imperatives, the negative forms are used in order to advise people so as not to do certain things. They are prohibitive; some such proverbs are like the following.

- (7) ሰውን አትናቀው አህልን አትራቀው
səwīn atnak'əw ihilin atrak'əw

Man don't-underestimate food don't-apart

‘Do not underestimate man; do not apart from food.’

(8) ለጠብ ጀግሪም አትሁን ጨራሽም አትሁን

lət'əb jəmmarim attihun c'ərraʃim attihun

For-quarrel starter don't-be finisher don't-be

‘Don't be first to quarrel and don't be last to finish it.’

(9) ለዳባ ለባሽ ነገርህን አታበላሽ

lədabba ləbaʃ nəgərihin attabbəlaʃ

For-poorly dressed your-advice don't-waste

‘For poorly dressed never waste your advice.’

(10) ልታስቸግር አታበድር ላትከፍል አትበደር

littasčəggir attabəddir lattikəfil attibbədər

To-disturb don't-lend not-to-pay don't-borrow

‘Do not lend to nag; do not borrow to never pay back.’

(11) ለረዥም መንገድ አትሩጥበት ለረዥም ነገር አትቸኩልበት

lərəʒim mənəgəd atrut'ibbət lərəʒim nəgər aččəkkulibət

For-long road don't-run for-long matter don't-hurry

‘Don't run for a long journey; and, do not hurry for a lengthy case.’

All the above proverbs are expressions of advice in the sense that they order to do or not to do things. The use of negative forms is also common in such proverbs. For instance, አትናቀው /atnak'əw/ and አትራቀው /atrak'əw/ in proverb (7), አትሁን /attihun/ in proverb (8), አታበላሽ /attabbəlaʃ/ in proverb (9), አታበድር /attabəddir/ and አትበደር /attibbədər/ in proverb (10), አትሩጥበት /atrut'ibbət/ in proverb (11) are negative forms of the verbs that constitute the imperative verb

phrase. The positive counterparts of these verbs are ናቀው/nak'əw/, ራቀው/rak'əw/, ሁን/hun/, አበላሽ/abbəlaʃ/, አበድር/abəddir/ and ሩጥበት/rut'ibbət/ consecutively.

B. Affirmative imperative

Similar to the negative imperative proverbs, the affirmative imperatives order the listener to do things. The difference is in the form of the verbs - they use the affirmative forms of the verbs. In the following sample proverbs, for example, the verbs አስብ /assib/, ገብር /gəbbir/ and መስክር /məskir/, ተንጋጋ /təngaga/ and ግባ /giba/, and ስደድበት /sidədibbət/ in proverb (12), (13), (14) and (15) respectively have imperative construction in affirmative forms.

(12) አስብ ሁለቴ ከመናገር አንዴ

assib hulətte kəmənnagər ande

think twice before-speak once

‘Think twice before you speak once.’

(13) በበላህ ገብር በሰማህ መስክር

bəbəllah gəbbir bəsəmmah məskir

if-you-eat pay if-you-hear witness

‘Pay for what you get; witness for what you hear.’

(14) በበጋ እሞኝ ቤት ተንጋጋ በከረምት እንደጭልፊት እቤትህ ግባ

Bəbəga imoṇ bet təngaga bəkirəmt indəc' ilfit ibetih giba

In-winter fool's house flock in-summer like-hawk your-house enter

‘Flock to the home of a fool in summer; stay in your house in winter like a hawk.’

(15) በሰው ቁስል እንጨት ስደድበት

bəsəw k'usil inc'ət sidədibbət

in-man wound stick insert

‘Insert a stick in to someone’s wound.’

In the above examples, the explicit form of imperative proverbs seems to have a speech act of order. However, implicitly, these proverbs are used in conversation in order to give advice to the listener.

II. Declarative

A declarative proverb is a statement. It can be either affirmative or negative. Such proverbs state facts in simple structures; or with sentences incorporating conditional clauses; or with sentences that incorporate relative or nominal dependent clauses.

A. Declarative Proverbs of facts

These types of declarative proverbs provide advice through stating the facts. Indirect speech act is used in such sentences to convey the message of the advice.

(16) ቅናት ያደርሳል ከሞት

K’inat yadərsal kəmot

Jealousy leads to death

‘Jealousy leads to death.’

(17) ኩራት አይሆንም እራት

Kurat ayihonim irat

Pride not be dinner

‘Pride cannot be dinner.’

(18) መቆመጥ መቆመጥ

mək’k’əmət’ mək’k’omət’

sitting being crippled

‘Sitting is being crippled.’

(19) መመጽወት ያድናል ከጸጸት

məməs’wət jadinal kəs’əs’t

Giving alms protects from regret

‘Giving alms protects from regret.’

As the above examples show the proverbs are simple sentences. The indirect advices of the bad consequence of jealousy, the uselessness of pride, the end result of being idle and the benefit of giving alms in proverb (16), (17), (18) and (19) respectively are presented in simple independent clauses. Proverb (18), for example, conveys the advice in two words. The two words are the subject መቀመጥ /mək’k’əmət’/ and the verbal complement መቆመጥ /mək’k’omət’/. The verb to be ነው /nəw/ is omitted for poetic reason.

B. Declarative Proverbs with conditional clauses

The other declarative Amharic proverbs incorporate conditional clauses. Conditional clauses describe a situation that must exist before something else can happen. Conditional clause proverbs often contain conjunctions like ከ /kə/, ካ/ka/, ቢ/bi/ and ባ/ba/ before the verbs of the conditional clauses. Such proverbs do not simply state facts but they show the conditions in the sentences of advice. Each of the following proverbs either begins with or incorporates a conditional clause.

(20) ባልዘፈንሽ ከዘፈንሽም ባላፈርሽ

balzəffənʃ kəzəffənʃim balaffərʃ

better-you-didn’t-sing if-you-sang don’t-be-ashamed

‘Better if you didn’t sing; and if you sang you would not be ashamed.’

(21) ተሰብሮ ቢጠገን እንደነበር አይሆን
 təsəβro bit't'əggən indənəbbər ajhon
 having-been-broken if-repaired as-it-is it-will-not-be
 ‘If repaired after having been broken never would it be the same.’

(22) አይን ካላየበት ግንባር ነው
 ajin kalajjubət ginbar nəw
 eye not-used-to-see forehead it-is
 ‘An eye is just a forehead, if it is not used.’

(23) ፍቅርና ጉርሻ ካለሰጩክ አያምርም
 fīk'ir inna gurja kalasc'ənnək'ə ajamrim
 love and mouthful-food if-doesn't-cause-stress not-good
 ‘Love and a mouthful food cannot be interesting unless it causes stress.’

The conditional clauses in the above proverbs which are ከዘፈንሽም /kəzəffənʃim/ in (20), ተሰብሮ ቢጠገን /təsəβro bit't'əggən/ in (21), አይን ካላየበት /ayin kalayyubət/ in (22) and ፍቅርና ጉርሻ ካለሰጩክ /fīk'ir inna gurja kalasc'ənnək'ə/ in (23) have verbs that carry the conditional morphemes *bə-* and *kə-*.

C. Declarative proverbs which begin with or incorporate a relative or nominal dependent clause

Relative clauses are clauses that modify a noun, sentence or part of a sentence. “It exists only in relation to the noun, which it modifies” (Parkinson, 2003). Relative clauses in Amharic proverbs of advice often give reference to nouns that follow the clause. Among the examples (from 24_27), the relative clause በሽታውን የደበቀ in proverb (25) refers to the noun ሰው /səw/

‘man/person’. The same omitted noun (i.e ሰው /səw/) is modified by the relative clause ‘ብቻውን የበለ’ ‘who eats alone’. The two parallel clauses in (26) which are ቆርሰው ያላገረሱትን /K’orsəw jalagorəsutin/ and ቀደው ያላለበሱትን /k’əddəw jalaləbəsutin/ refer the noun ‘ብላቴና’ ‘child’.

- (24) አንድ ዓይን ያለው በአፈር አይጫወትም
and ajin jalləw bafər ajic’c’awəttim
one eye who-has by-dust don’t-play

‘A person who has a single eye will never play with dust.’

- (25) በሽታውን የደበቀ መድሃኒት አይገኝለትም
bəṣṣitawin jədəbbək’ə mədhanit ajiggəṣṣiləttim
his-sickness who-conceal medicine do-not-get

‘A man who conceals his disease cannot be cured.’

- (26) ቆርሰው ያላገረሱትን ቀደው ያላለበሱትን ብላቴና ማዘዝ አይገባም
K’orsəw jalagorəsutin k’əddəw jalaləbəsutin bilattena mazəz ajiggəbbam
breaking whom-not-given-mouthful-food cutting whom-not-given-cloths kid to-order
not-appropriate

‘It is not appropriate to order a boy whom one didn’t feed nor did he clothe.’

- (27) ብቻውን የበለ ብቻውን ይሞታል
biččawin jəbəlla biççawin jimotal
alone who-ate alone will-die

‘A person who eats alone will die alone.’

III. Interrogative

No interrogative sentences are found in the collected proverbs of advice. However, there are some rhetoric interrogative proverbs in general; these include: አንበሳ ምን ይበላል? ቢሉ ተበድሮ::

ምን ይከፍላል? ቢሉ ማን ጠይቆ? (‘How does a lion get food? by borrowing. What will it pay? Who would ask him!’); ሸበት ምን ታረግ መጣህ? ቢሉት እኖር ብዩ አለ። (‘It said “Gray hair, why did you come?” It said, “I came to live.”’) However this type of sentence is not common in the proverbs of advice, except in a few. For example, the rhetoric proverb -አንገት ለምን ተሰራ? ዞሮ ለማየት። (‘What for is a neck made? It is made to look back.’), is often used to advise people to look things wisely. It is also used to advise people to consider their past experiences in their present and future actions. The other rhetoric interrogative proverb is:

(28) ሚስጥርህን ለባዕድ ለምን አዋየኸው? ወንፊት ውሃ ይዞ የት ሲደርስ አየኸው?!

mist'irihin ləsəw ləmin awwajjəhəw wənfit wiha jizə jət sidərs ajjəhəw

your-secret for-man why you-discussed sieve water holding where arrive you-saw-it

‘Why did you share your secret to a stranger? Have you seen a

sieve holding water?’

Proverb (28) carries the advice through posing question. The advice is in the first sentence; in line with the message the second sentence gives illustrative simile. This proverb gives the advisee a chance to answer the question by comparing a stranger with a sieve so as to understand the advice in it.

IV. Serial proverbs which can be a combination of two or more declarative and interrogative clauses

Some Amharic proverbs use two or more sentences to express advice. The sentences could be from the same type or a combination of different types. The following proverbs are some examples.

(29) ለረዥም መንገድ አትሩጥበት። ለረዥም ነገር አትገኙልበት።

lärəzzim mængəd attirut’ibət lärəzzim nəgər aččəkkulibət

for-long road do-not-run for-long matter do-not-rush

‘For a long journey don’t run; for a long matter do not rush.’

- (30) መታመሙን ታመም ነገ ትድናለህ መታሰሩን ታሰር ነገ ትፈታለህ ወዳጅ ጠላትህን ትለይበታለህ።

məttaməmun taməm nəge tidinalləh məttasərun tasər nəgə tiffəttaləh wədaɣ t’əlatihin
tələjibetalləh

to-be-sick get-sick tomorrow you’ll-be-cured to-be-imprisoned get-imprisoned
tomorrow you’ll-be-released friend foe you’ll-differentiate

‘If you get sick you will be cured; if you are imprisoned you will be released; the
main thing is that these will help you know who is a friend and who is a foe.’

- (31) በስራህ ድሃ አትበድል። ነጋሪት ባይኖረው እንባ አለው። ውሃ ሆኖ ቢኮል ያለ ሞረድ የተሳለ ነው።

bəsirah diha atbəddil nəgarit bajinorəw inba alləw wiha hono bikol jalə morəd jətəsələ
nəw

in-your-activity poor don’t-mistreat fanfare if-he-doesn’t-have tear he-has water be
flow without sharpener sharpened it-is

‘Don’t hurt a destitute person in your act; he has tears which is sharp without
sharpener.’

There are two imperative sentences in proverb (29), both carry parallel messages that emphasize on patience. Proverb (31) has three sentences. The first sentence (i.e በስራህ ድሃ አትበድል።) is an imperative type that encode the core advice. The other two sentences are ነጋሪት ባይኖረው እንባ አለው and ውሃ ሆኖ ቢኮል ያለ ሞረድ የተሳለ ነው። are declarative type of sentences.

Table 1: Frequency of Syntactic Patterns of Amharic**Proverbs of advice**

Sentence type		Occurrence	percentage
Simple Sentences	Declarative	71	31.1
	Imperative	29	12.7
Complex Sentences	Declarative	76	33.4
	Imperative	49	21.5
	Interrogative	2	0.9
	Combination	1	0.4
Total		228	100%

The data in table 1 shows the distribution of the syntactic patterns of Amharic proverbs of advice. As the data indicates more than half (56.2%) of the proverbs are structurally complex. Simple sentences constitute only about thirty eight percent of the total data. In terms of sentence function, most of the proverbs (i.e. 64.5%) are declarative sentences. The imperative sentences comprise around thirty one percent of the total proverbs of advice. Only two proverbs are found to be interrogative (All have complex structure). The data shows that most proverbs of advice are declaratives rather than imperative; which imply that the Amharic speakers prefer the indirect speech act to give advices. Note that there are also some proverbs that have no verb phrases that made them difficult to determine their function. For example the verb phrase is omitted in the proverb መፍታት ሳለ መምታት “*while there is divorcing, beating*”. The omitted element is left to the listener to complete it. However, the proverb can be completed as (1) መፍታት ሳለ መምታትን ምን አመጣው? “*Why beating while there is divorcing?*” or (2) መፍታት ሳለ መምታት አያስፈልግም/አይታሰብም:: “*There is no need of beating while there is divorcing.*” Or (3) መፍታት ሳለ መምታት እንዳታስብ/እንዳትመርጥ:: “*Do not think/choose beating while there is divorcing.*” If this is so,

the proverb can be defined as interrogative as in option 1, or declarative as in option 2, or imperative as in option 3.

In general, the above table shows that the syntactic patterns of Amharic proverbs of advice incline to have complex-declarative form. And also very rare interrogative sentences are observed in Amharic proverbs of advice.

3.2 Stylistic features of Amharic Proverbs of advice

3.2.1 Alliteration

Alliteration -two or more words begin with the same consonant- is a very common linguistic device in Amharic proverbs. The repetition of the same consonant at the beginning of two or more words adds memorability to the proverbs. This is highly observable in the following proverbs of advice.

(32) ሀሜተኛ ያፍራል ሀስተኛ ይረታል

hametəṗṗa jafral hassətəṗṗa jirrəttal

gossiper will-be-ashamed liar will-be-defeated

‘A gossiper will be humiliated; a liar will be defeated.’

(33) ሂድ ካገር ኑር ከሀገር

hid kagər nur kagər

go with-country live with-country

‘Travel with your people; live with your people.’

(34) ላያጥብ አይልበስ ላያርም አይረስ

lajat’ib ajilbəs lajarrim ajirəs

not-to-wash one-should-not-wear not-to-weed one-should-not-plough

‘If he doesn’t wash he better not wear; if he doesn’t weed he better not plant.’

(35) መቀመጥ መቆመጥ

mək'k'əmət' mək'k'omət'

sitting being crippled

'Sitting is being crippled.'

(36) ሳይርቅ በቅርቡ ሳይደርቅ በርጥቡ

sajrik' bək'irbu sajdərk' bərt'ibu

before-it-is-far by-near before-it-is-dry by-wet

'Before it is far and while it is near; before it is dry and while it is wet/soft.'

Words like, ሀሜተኛ /hametəḥḥa/ and ሀሰተኛ /hassətəḥḥa/ in proverb (32), ካገር /kagər/ and ከሀገር /kəhagər/ in proverb (33), ላጽጥብ /lajat'ib/ and ላጽገም /lajarrim/ in proverb (34), መቀመጥ /mək'k'əmət'/ and መቆመጥ /mək'k'omət'/ in proverb (35), and ሳይርቅ /sajrik'/ and ሳይደርቅ /sajdərk'/ in proverb (36) begin with the same consonants in each case. The repetition of same sound at the beginning of these words added poetic and memorable value to the proverbs.

3.2.2 Parallelism

Parallelism is having two halves that share the same syntactic structure in a proverb to give poetic power and memorable expressiveness. All the following proverbs have two halves that share similar syntactic structure. Parallelism is often prevailed through repetition of word(s) or affixes in the two halves of a proverb. This is shown in the following Amharic proverbs of advice.

(37) ፈጥኖ የገመዱት ፈጥኖ ይበጠሳል

fət'no jəgəmmədut fət'no jibbət't'əsal

fast tied fast will-break

'A rope tied fast will break fast.'

(38) ቸር ተመኝ ቸር ታገኝ

čər təməɲ čər tagəɲ

better wish better to-get

‘Wish for the better to get better.’

(39) ላለፈው አይጠጠቱም ለሚመጣው አይበለጡም

lalləfəw ajit’t’ət’t’ətum ləmmimət’aw ajibbəllət’um

for-the-past will-not-regret for-the-coming will-not-upper-handed

‘No regret for the past but always ready for the future.’

(40) ለሰው ብትል ትጠፋለህ ለግዜር ብትል ትለማለህ

ləsəw bittil tit’əfalləh ləgzər bittil tilməlləh

for-man if-you-do you-will-be-vanished for-God if-you-do you-will prosper

‘If you do it for man’s sake you will be lost; if you do it for God’s sake you will prosper.’

(41) ሰው አይወድም በደል በሬ አይወድም ገደል

səw ajwəddim bədəl bərə ajwəddim gədəl

man doesn’t-like mistreatment ox doesn’t-like cliff

‘Man doesn’t like mistreatment; ox doesn’t like cliff.’

(42) ሀዘን ሲበዛ ሀዘን ያስከትላል

hazən sibəza hazən jaskəttilal

grief when it is much grief will follow

‘A deeper grief attracts another grief.’

The repeated words which give stylistic poetic features to the proverbs are ፈጥኖ /fət’no/, ቸር /čər/, ብትል /bittil/, አይወድም /ajwəddim/ and ሀዘን /hazən/ in proverb 37, 38, 40, 41 and 42 respectively. Parallelism through affix repetition is also observable in proverb (38) where the same affix -ኝ/-

əp/ is attached to the end of both halves. The negative marker አል- ʾəp is used twice in proverb (39). Multiple affixes are used in proverb (40) to create parallel structure. The affixes that added to the expressiveness and to the poetic feature of the proverb are the preposition ‘ለ’(to) and the tense marker ‘ት--አለህ’ (t-alləh).

3.2.3 Rhyme

Rhyme is considered as a quality shared by words or syllables that end with the same sound as each other. Especially in proverbs, rhyme occurs when the word at the end of the first half sounds the same as the word at the end of the second half of a proverb. Rhyme is a very common linguistic feature in Amharic proverbs; and usually both assonance and consonance are used in Amharic proverbs to create rhyme. The following are few among the several Amharic proverbs of advice with this feature.

(43) ሀሰት ነገር ከፏ ገሃነመ እሳት ትርፏ

hassət nəgər kifu gəhannəmə isat tɪrfu ---- CV

False thing bad hell’s fire the-profit

‘A lie is bad; hell is the end.’

(44) ሁለት ባላ ትከፈ አንዱ ሲነቀፈ ባንዱ ተንጠልጠል

hulətt balla tikəl andu sinnək’k’əl bandu tənt’əlt’əl ---- VC

two pole plant the-one when-uprooted with-one hang

‘Have two poles; when you lose hold of one you have the other.’

(45) ሆድ ለባሰው ማጭድ አታውሰው

hod ləbasəw mac’id attawisəw ----- CVC

for grieved sickle do-not-lend-him

‘Don’t give a sickle to the grieved one.’

(46) ለሰይጣን አትስጠው ስልጣን

ləsəjt'an attist'əw silt'an ----- CVC

for-devil do-not-give power

'Don't give power to the devil.'

(47) ለጥቅም ሲታጠቁ ከጎን ይጠንቀቁ

lət'ik'im sittat'ək'u kəgon jīt't'ənk'ək'u ----- CV

for opportunity when prepared from side be careful

'When you go for opportunities you better watch out every side.'

(48) በበላህ ገብር በሰማህ መስክር

bəbəllah gəbbir bəsəmmah məskir ----- VC

if you ate pay if you heard witness

'Pay if you get; witness if you hear.'

(49) እህልን አላምጥ ነገርን አዳምጥ

ihilin allamt'o nəgərin addamt'o ---- CV

food after-chewing things after-listening

'Chew well what you eat; listen well what people say.'

(50) ከልጅ አትጫወት ይወጋሃል በእንጨት

kəliɣ attic'awəɬ jiwəgahal bəɬinc'əɬ ---- VC

with-child don't-play he- will-stab-you with-a-stick

'Don't play with a kid he will stab you with a stick.'

(51) የማይመስል ነገር ለሚስትህ አትነገር

jəmmajməsil nəgər ləmistih attingər ----- CVC

unlikely-thing to-your-wife don't-tell

'Don't tell to your wife things that are unlikely.'

(52) ምጡን እርሺው ልጁን አንሺው

mit'un irʃiw lijun anʃiw ----- CVC

the-labor forget-it the-baby take-up

‘Forget the labor hold the baby.’

As it can be seen in the above proverbs, the rhyme gave the proverbs artistic and memorable value. The underlined sounds in the transcription are the sounds shared by the two halves of the proverbs. The sounds repeated at the end of the two halves of the proverbs are mostly syllables and in some cases they are part of a syllable. In proverbs (43), (45), (46), (47), (49), (51) and (52) complete syllables are used to create rhyme. For instance, in proverb (43) the shared sounds in the two halves of the proverb are /f/ and /u/; which is a syllable with onset and nucleus. In another example, the sounds /ʃ/, /i/ and /w/ are repeated at the end of the two halves of proverb (52) to form rhyme. The sounds make a syllable with onset /ʃ/, nucleus /i/ and coda /w/.

In some proverbs the shared sounds do not constitute the complete syllable; they are just part of the syllable. For example, the rhyme in proverbs (44), (48) and (50) is formed by the nucleus and coda only. The onsets in these proverbs are not similar sounds; thus they do not play role in the formation of the rhyme. If we consider proverb (48), the syllables used to create the rhyme are /bir/ and /kir/- both with CVC structure. However, the shared sounds are /i/ and /r/, which are only the nucleus and the coda. Thus as it does not include the onset, the rhyme is formed using part of the syllable (i.e. /_ir/ - VC) but not using the complete syllable (i.e. /kir/ or /bir/ - CVC).

All the above proverbs used consonance as well as assonance to create rhyme. In proverb 44, for example, the consonant /l/ and the vowel /ə/ are repeated three times at the end of the three words (halves) of the proverb. These three halves are (A) ሁለት ባለ ትከል /hulətt balla tikəl / (B)

አንዱ ሲነቀል /andu sinnək'k'əḷ/ and (C) ባንዱ ተንጠልጠል /bandu tənt'əlt'əḷ/ in which the sounds are repeated in their respective structures so as to make the proverbs poetic. Similarly, the rhyme in proverb (43) ሀሰት ነገር ከኗ ገሃነመ እሳት ትርፏ occurred due to the repetition of the consonant /f/ and the vowel /u/. Here, it is important to note that almost always assonance occurs along with consonance because of the syllabic nature of the writing system. For this reason the symbol ‘ፋ’ represents the consonant /f/ and the vowel u/ (see the underlined letters in the proverbs).

3.2.4 Ellipsis

Almost all imperative proverbs have 2nd person singular subjects. However, these subjects are omitted and can easily be identified by the affixes in the verbs. For example, in the proverbs መውጫህን ሳታይ አትግባ (məwc'ahin sattaj attigba); ሲሮጥ የመጣን አህያ አጥብቀህ ጫነው (sirot' jəmet't'an ahijja at'bik'eh c'anəw); and ለጠጭ ሰው የመጠጥ ወሬ አውራው (lət'əc' səw jəmət't'ət' wəre awraw) the subject is the omitted ‘You’ (2nd SG. MASC). The underlined affixes are the marker of 2nd person singular subject.

There are other kinds of ellipsis in Amharic proverbs where the verb or verbal phrase is omitted. The following are some examples.

(53) ልጅን መቅጣት በጡት እህልን መቆጠብ በጥቅምት

lijin mək't'at bət'ut ihil mək'ot't'əb bət'ik'imt

child correcting by-breast food saving in-October

‘Correct a child in early ages; store food during harvest.’

(54) መስሎ ከመታየት ሆኖ መገኘት

məslo kəməttajət hono məggəjjət

pretending to-be-seen being found

‘It is better to be than to pretend.’

(55) መናገር ሳያስቡ ምላጭ መሳብ ሳያልሙ

mənnagər saǰassibu mīlaç məsab saǰallimu

speaking before-thinking blade pulling before-aiming

‘Speaking before thinking is like shooting before aiming.’

(56) ሰርቆ ከማሰብ እጅን መሰብሰብ

Sərk’o kəmassəb iǰǰin məsəbsəb

After-stealing thinking hand draw-in

‘Better not to steal than stealing and worrying.’

(57) ሰውን ስትወድ ልብህን ሳትሰጥ

səwīn sittiwəd libbihin satsət’

man when-you-love your-heart don’t-give

‘When you love a man, don’t give your heart.’

(58) ሳይቃጠል በቅጠል

Sajik’k’at’əl bək’it’əl

Before-it-burns by-leaf

‘Stop it with leaves before it burns.’

(59) በሰው አገር አለመናገር

bəsəw agər alemennagər

in-others country better-not-to-speak

‘Never speak in the country of others.’

(60) ትምህርት በልጅነት አበባ በጥቅምት

tīmihirt bəlijinnət abəba bət’ik’imt

learning in-childhood flower in-October

‘Learning at early age; having flower in October.’

(61) ጸሎት በፍቅር ሃይማኖት በምግባር

s'əlot bəfik'ir hajmanot bəmigbar

prayer with-love religion with-ethics

‘Prayer with love; religion with ethics’

All the proverbs from (53) to (61) are not complete sentences. The proverbs lack the main or the auxiliary verbs. However, the listener understands the message by filling in the verbs. The major observable omission is on auxiliaries. And the phrase ‘it is better’ is often omitted to lead to a terse and poetic structure. For example, if proverbs 54, 56, 59 and 60 are translated literally, they miss the phrase ‘it is better’. Proverb 60 and 61 have no verbs at all, but the message is clear from the context.

3.2.5 Assonance

As it is stated earlier in section 3.2.3, assonance is the repetition of a vowel in a proverb. However, unlike rhyme assonance is not just a word final phenomenon. The repetition of a vowel can occur anywhere within two or more words in a proverb. A typical example of assonance in Amharic proverbs is ‘የለመነ መነመነ፡፡’ /jələmmənə mənəmmənə/ in which only one vowel /ə/ occurs and repeated fully in the proverb. Though it might not be complete assonance, like this one, there are some other Amharic proverbs of advice that depict assonance. The following are examples.

(62) መቀመጥ መቆመጥ /ə/

mək'k'əmət' mək'k'omət'

sitting beingcrippled

‘Sitting is being crippled.’

(63) ቸር ተመኝ ቸር ታገኝ /ə/

çər təmən çər tagən

better wish better to-get

‘Wish for the better to get better.’

(64) ተናግሮ ከማሰብ ተከንፈር መሰብሰብ /ə/

tənagro kəmassəb təkənfər mässəbsəb

after-speaking thinking from-lip retract

‘Silence is better than speaking if one is not thinking.’

(65) እህልን አላምጦ ነገርን አዳምጦ /i/

ihilin allamt’o nəgərin addamt’o

food after-chewing things after-listening

‘Chew well what you eat; listen well what people say.’

(66) ዳኛ ቢያደላ በዳኛ አህያ ቢጋድል በመጫኛ /a/

daṇṇa bijadəla bədaṇṇa ahijja bijagaddil bəməc’ana

judge if-biased by-judge donkey if-slide by-rope

‘A biased judge by a judge; a donkey losing balance of its load by a rope.’

In the first three proverbs the dominantly used sound is the central mid vowel /ə/. Note the transcription of proverb (62), /mæk’k’əmət’ mæk’k’omət’/. It clearly shows the high frequency of /ə/. The other repeated vowel in the creation of assonance in the above examples is the low vowel /a/. This vowel occurred in every word of the proverb (66) - daṇṇa bijadəla bədaṇṇa ahijja bijagaddil bəməc’aṇa - at least one time.

3.2.6 Reduplication

As discussed in the literature review reduplication is the repetition of words or syllables usually at the beginning of proverbs or segment of proverbs. This type of technique is not widely used in Amharic proverbs of advice. Consider the reduplication in the following examples.

(67) ልሂድ ልሂድ ባይ ስንቅ አጉዳይ

lihīd lihīd baj sink' agudaj

let-me-go let-me-go who-says food who-empties

‘One who declares going again and again is one who reduces his provision.’

(68) ምከረው ምከረው እንቢ ካለ መከራ ይምከረው

mīkərəw mīkərəw inbi kalə məkəra jīmkerəw

advise-him advise-him no if-he-say misery let-it-advise-him

‘Advise him again and again; if he does not listen, let adversity teach him.’

Word reduplication is what we observe in the above proverbs. The word ልሂድ is repeated twice at the beginning of proverb (67). In the same manner proverb (68) begins with a word -ምከረው - that repeats itself twice. In both cases the repeated word is a verb and it is reduplicated at the beginning of the proverbs. The verbs are repeated not only to show repeated actions but also to add emphasis to the message and to give aesthetic value to the proverbs.

3.2.7 Wellerism

Wellerism, as a linguistic device, is the use of quoted words attributed to some actual or fictional person. This form is mainly used for giving context and sometimes authenticity to a proverb. Among the collected Amharic proverbs of advice the following are found to show a form of wellerism.

(69) ሰውን ማመን ቀብሮ አለች ቀበሮ

səwɪn mamən k'əbro aləč k'əbəro

man to trust buried said fox

'Trust a man after you bury him' said a fox.

(70) መጀመሪያ የመቀመጫዬን አለች ዝንጂሮ

məjəmmərja jəmək'k'əməc'c'ajen aləč zinjəro

first my seat said monkey

'First my seat' said a monkey.

The saying in proverb (69) is attributed to a fox. This attribution might be made to create rhyme; because the two halves of this proverb – ሰውን ማመን ቀብሮ/ səwɪn mamən k'əbro/ and አለች ቀበሮ/ aləč k'əbəro/ - share the same ending/-ro/ሮ. On the other hand, the attribution in proverb (70) is to a monkey, not for reasons of rhyme. The attribution is made based on a preceding story in which the monkey utters the quoted words at the end of the story.

3.3 Pragmatics of Amharic proverbs of advice

The study of speech acts is closely related to pragmatics. This means that the illocutionary force of an utterance which is its pragmatic meaning, is the particular speaker's use of that utterance in a given context. The pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood as the investigation of that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words, but from the way in which utterances are used, and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered. Proverbs as utterances are used in various contexts for different purposes. Giving advice is one of the communicative functions of proverbs. And proverbs give advice on almost all aspects of human life. The themes of the collected Amharic proverbs of advice are: Life,

moral principles (ethics), relationship, trust, cooperation, endurance and patience, caution, communicative skills and consequences. The pragmatic discussion of each theme will be presented with some examples of illustration.

I. Life

The proverbs in this category give advice on general issues.

(71) በሽታውን የደበቀ መድሀኒት አይገኝለትም፡፡

bəḵitawin jədəbbək'ə mədhanit ajiggənilətim

his-sickness who-hide medicine never-to-be-found

‘The one who concealed his sickness will never get cured.’

The pragmatic context: It is well known that bringing a matter to discussion is a better way of arriving to a better result, rather than concealing it and worry alone. The Amharic speaking people use this proverb to encourage people to speak out the difficulties they are in. The speaker of the proverb utters the sentence to advise the listener to discuss his/her problems overtly if he/she wants to get a solution. Therefore, the speaker of this proverb uses it instead of saying, “If you do not let others to know your situation it is unlikely that you find a solution. Thus, I hereby advise you to reveal your sickness (problems) to others so as to get them solved.”

(72) ትምህርት በልጅነት አበባ በጥቅምት

tīmihirt bəlijinnət abəba bət'ik'imt

education in-childhood flower in-October

‘Education is best at early age; as flowers are best in October.’

The pragmatic context: Life, in every aspect, depends on time. Nothing can happen without the interference of the time cycles. Throughout their life time, from conception to death, people pass through different phases of activities that are bound to time. This proverb asserts this notion of

time. The proverb is used to advise people to use their precious time appropriately. Education and flower are used to clarify the concept. As flowers flourish only at their respective time (season) of the year, education also becomes appropriate and fruitful only early in human development. In the broad sense, the proverb can be used to advise people that everything has its own appropriate time to be done. In the narrow sense, the utterance can be considered as an advice that teaches people to learn things at young age.

(73) እኖራለሁ ብለህ እጅግ አትበርታ፡ እሞታለሁ ብለህ ስራ አትፍታ፡፡

inoralləhu biləh ijig attibərtā imotallehu biləh sira attifta

I-will-live you-say very don't-be-strong I-will-die you-say work don't-stop

‘Don’t strive as if you are eternal; don’t be lazy thinking you are mortal.’

The pragmatic context: The existence of two extremes seems inevitable in most aspects of life. Individuals, depending on different factors, have various perceptions of life, which lie between extremes. Some people neglect their mortality; they work extremely hard as if their life is endless. They try hard to make money so as to live a better life in the future. But the problem is they always do the same. On the other extreme, there are people who focus on their mortality and brief span of life; thus these types of people prefer not to work at all and make themselves idle. This proverb, therefore, is used to avoid the two extremes. The proverb encourages people to have a rational perception of life and to live accordingly. The following proverbs also have communicative functions to teach lessons about life.

(74) ሰው ይኖራል እንጂ እንደቤቱ አይኖርም እንደጎረቤቱ

səw jīnoral inji indəbetu ajnorim indəgorəbetu

man lives but as-to-his-house doesn't-live like-his-neighbour

‘Man lives as himself not like his neighbors.’

(75) ሰው ይጨነቃል የሚሆነውን እግዚር ያውቃል

səw jic'c'ənək'al jəmmihonəwin igzer jawk'al

man worries the-thing-to-happen God knows

‘Man worries, God knows.’

(76) ይታደሉታል እንጂ አይታገሉትም

jittadəlutał inji ajittagəłuttim

one-will-be-endowed but one-will-not-struggle

‘Life is endowment not a struggle.’

II. Moral principles (ethics)

Proverbs under this category are used to teach people moral lessons. The proverbs encourage good behavior and discourage unethical behavior. Such proverbs are used to instill acceptable ethics in society. Some are presented as follows.

(77) ሀሜተኛ ያፍራል ሐሰተኛ ይረታል

hametəṇṇa jafral hassətəṇṇa jirrəttal

gossiper will-be-ashamed liar will-be-defeated

‘A gossiper will be ashamed; a liar will be defeated.’

The pragmatic context: lying and gossiping, like in many other societies, are not acceptable behaviors in the community. Though lying seems to exist across time and place, it is a highly condemned act. One of the sharpest ways to discourage the prevalence of such acts is using proverbs like the above one. The proverb tries to teach people to avoid telling lies and do gossips by showing them the awful consequences of such acts. This proverb is mainly used to advise children and persons who have some moral value and who fear to be ashamed and be defeated as

a result of gossip and lie they tell. There are similar proverbs that give warning to people who lie. The proverbs are (78) ሀሰት ቢናገሩ ውቃቤ ይርቃል ('if someone tells a lie, god will detach him.') and (79) ሀሰት ነገር ክፉ ገሃነመ እሳት ትርፉ ('a lie is bad; hell is the end.') These proverbs, like the previous one, have a structure of putting the bad habit of lying with the unwanted consequences that follow. Such proverbs, however, are used more appropriately to warn people who have religion and who believe in the existence of hell. Similar advice with different approach is available in the proverb: (80) እውነቱን ተናግሮ ከመሸበት ማደር ('tell the truth and accept the consequences'). Like the above proverbs it discourages the act of lying; and it is used to persuade someone who is in dilemma to choose telling the truth.

(81) መታዘዝ ከመስዋዕት ይበልጣል

məttazəz kəməswaʔit jibəlt'al

to-obey from-sacrifice it-is-better

'To obey is better than sacrifice/offerings.'

The pragmatic context: the discussion in chapter two showed that literature is one source of proverbs; and the Bible as a widely used literature served as a source of several proverbs in many languages. Amharic also has borrowed this proverb from bible: 1Samuel 15:22. The proverb compares obedience with sacrifices; and preaches that it is futile to give many offerings without humbleness and readiness to obey. In the community, this proverb is used in a context where someone wants the other person to do what he/she requests. In other contexts, the proverb can be used, along with stories, to teach children/youths the moral value of obeying.

(82) ሰርቆ ከማሰብ እጅን መሰብሰብ

sərk'o kəmassəb ijjin məsəbsəb

after-stealing from-thinking hand draw-in

‘Better not to steal than stealing and worrying.’

The pragmatic context: Stealing is one of the acts that are discouraged by the community. Stealing, usually, is followed by some kind of anxious thoughts and regrets. And some people worry much about the consequences of their stealing action. Thus, the community uses this proverb to discourage stealing. This proverb is used in a context where someone is worrying after stealing or taking something that doesn’t belong to him; and the purpose of using the proverb is to tell the listener that his worry is meaningless and it cannot change anything and to convince him to accept the consequences. In other contexts, it is used to warn people to abstain from stealing others’ property unless they want to regret and worry about it later. Rhyme and terseness made the proverb a powerful message carrier and is preferable to elaborated sentences and phrases.

(83) ሲበሉ በሰዓት ሲናገሩ በስርዓት

sibəlu bəsəʔat sinnagəru bəsiriʔat

when-eating on-time when-speaking in-manner

‘Eat at the right time; speak with the right manner.’

The pragmatic context: Things can be done properly or improperly. Things that are carried out in proper way give good results and have social acceptance. As social activities, speaking and eating have their own accepted way of doing. Such ethics of eating and speaking are the central point of this proverb. The proverb teaches the ethics of eating and speaking in terms of time and manner. Its contextual usage is to confirm that one should eat when it is necessary and should speak with knowhow. Someone can be healthy if he knows when to eat; and be effective

communicator if he knows how to speak. However, the proverb can be used in extended contexts to advise people to do every activity in a proper time and way so as to get the best out of it.

III. Relationship

Under this category proverbs that give advice on relationship are presented.

(84) ልጅህን እና አትክልትህን ተጠባበቅ ጎረቤትህን

lijihin inna atikiltihin tət'əbabek' gorəbetihin

your-child and your-plant keep your-neighbour

‘Protect your child and garden from your neighbor.’

The pragmatic context: Man is a social creature. Starting from his birth to his death man is always accompanied by others. This reality is strongly visible in societies like Amharic speaking people. Neighbors in Ethiopia share not only fences but also every aspect of life. Consolidating this, there is an Amharic saying: (85) ከሩቅ ዘመድ የቅርብ ጎረቤት ይሻላል። ‘A neighbor is much better than a distant relative/kin.’ However, there are times when things go not as usual. This time, one should expect the unexpected. Therefore, the then supportive and friendly neighbor might turn into a foe. Hence, thinking the possibility of the occurrence of such kind of situations the community used this proverb to warn the listener to watch out his/her surrounding. It is used to advise people that if they want their child and garden to be safe they need to be watchful of their neighbors, who are supposed to be friends, but might do harm.

(86) መታመሙን ታመም ነገ ትድናለህ መታሰሩን ታሰር ነገ ትፈታለህ ወዳጅ ጠላትህን ትለይበታለህ።

məttaməmun taməm nəge tidinalləh məttasərun tasər nəgə tiffəttaləh wədaɣ t'əlatihin
tələjibetalləh

to-be-sick get-sick tomorrow you-will-be-cured to-be-imprisoned get-imprisoned
tomorrow you-will-be-released friend foe you-will-differentiate

‘If you get sick you will be cured; if you are imprisoned you will be released; the main thing is that these will help you know who is a friend and who is a foe.’

The pragmatic context: Throughout the course of life a person may face different hardships. Imprisonment and sickness are among the possible ones that can happen to anyone. When these happened to someone it is a custom that families, friends and others visit him to wish him freedom/health and to encourage him to stay strong. This social norm strengthens the relationship between individuals and families. However, things might not be the same all the time; and some people may not be able to visit the sick/imprisoned one. Then this proverb, despite the fact that there could be different reasons not to visit, generalizes that those who visit are friends and those who do not are foes. Hence, the proverb is used to advise people who are in prison or in bed to take their situation as an opportunity to identify who is a friend and who is a foe. This proverb can be used in extended contexts where someone is in some kind of difficult situation. Thus, during such dark times of life, one can distinguish between the people who are there for him and who are not. The following proverbs also teach lessons on relationship.

(87) መፍታት ሳለ መምታት

məftat sallə məmtat

divorcing there-is kicking

‘Why fighting while there is divorcing.’

(88) ከልጅ አትጫወት ይወጋሃል በእንጨት

kəliḡ attic’awət jiwəgahal bəʔinc’ət

with-child don’t-play he-will-stab-you with-stick

‘Don’t play with a kid he will stab you with a stick.’

IV. Trust

To live meaningfully together there must be trust among parties. The value of trust in society is presented in this theme category.

(89) ሲያምኑት የከዳ አለበት ዕዳ

sijamnūt jəkədda alləbbət ida

when-trusted who-betrayed he-owe obligation

‘A person who is untrustworthy will pay for it.’

The pragmatic context: Human beings individually or collectively create relationships with others for various reasons. And such kinds of relationships need trust to grow better. If the trust is broken or misused by one party then the relationship is endangered. The one who broke the trust would also face untrustworthiness thereafter. Therefore, this proverb is used to warn people to stay trustworthy in order to keep their relationship and to be trusted in their future actions. Confirming this, there is another proverb that says: (90) ሲነግሩት የሚዘነጋ ሲያምኑት የሚሰጋ የለውም ዋጋ ‘A person, who forgets when he is told and who doubts when he is trusted, is worthless.’ Similarly, this proverb discourages untrustworthiness. It judges people who broke others trust as valueless.

(91) ሰውን ስትወድ ልብህን ሳትሰጥ

səwīn sittiwəd libbihin satsət’

man when-you-love your-heart without-giving

‘When you love a man, don’t give your heart.’

The pragmatic context: Unlike the above proverb, this one puts the advice in a direct and skeptic manner. The proverb shows a skeptic attitude of the society about the trustworthiness of

man. According to the proverb, man cannot be fully trusted and anyone should not give his/her whole heart to others. Someone may love other persons but trusting whole heartedly may result in heart breaking situation. Thus, this proverb is used to alert those who claim to love others to be cautious in trusting others before bad things happen. Carrying a similar message the proverb, (92) “ሰውን ማመን ቀብሮ” አለች ቀበሮ “‘Trust a man after you bury him’, said a fox.’ reflects the same skeptic attitude of the society. This proverb puts the message in a harsh way that goes to the extreme of death. As to the proverb, a man can be trusted only after he is dead and buried. To conceal its harshness, the proverb has a quotative feature to say that this cruel idea is from a fox not from a man.

V. Hope and regret

Under this sub-category proverbs that focus on advising people to avoid regrets are presented. The theme which all the proverbs share is that there is no need of regretting for past mistakes and actions; rather it is better to hope and work for the future.

(93) ላለፈ ከረምት ቤት አይሰራም

lalləfə kirəmt bet ajissərram

for-last-winter house will-not-be-built

‘A house can’t be built for the past rainy season.’

The pragmatic context: This proverb seems to talk about building a house; but the intended message is stated implicitly. Overtly, the proverb declares that it is unnecessary to build a house for the past. However, if someone wastes his/her time thinking and regretting about the things that he had done, this proverb will be used to remind him/her that regrets cannot change the things that had happened already. This proverb shares similar content and communicative

function of the proverbs, (94) ላለፈው አይጠጥቱም ለሚመጣው አይበለጡም ‘It is unnecessary to regret about the past; and it is important to be wise in the future.’ and (95) የፈሰሰ ውሀ አይታፈስም ‘Spilled water cannot be brought back.’ Generally, all the three proverbs have the same message that discourages wasting time on things that cannot be changed. The advice in these proverbs almost coincides with the English proverb, ‘Let bygones be bygones.’

VI. Courage and fear

Feelings play important role in giving human life a sense of variety and taste. A variety of feelings are expected to be experienced by human through different courses of actions. Courage and fear are among the contrasting feelings that commonly occur in different contexts. Proverbs with a theme of such feelings are the focus of this sub category.

(96) ለፈሪ ስጠው ፍርፋሪ

ləfəri sit’əw firiffari

to-a-coward give-him leftover

‘To a coward, give him leftover.’

The pragmatic context: This proverb reflects the perception of the society towards cowardly persons. The attitude is that a fearful person is submissive and he/she doesn’t question or react to the things done on him/her. Leftover food, in the culture, is not meant to be given to humans at all. In the proverb, the term ‘leftover’ is used to symbolize things that disgrace human dignity. Thus, the proverb is used to encourage people to do whatever they like to do on fearful persons, because such persons are incapable to say ‘no!’ and defy others’ action for the reason that they are tied up in fear.

(97) ምጡን እርሺው ልጁን አንሺው

mit'un iršiw lijun anšiw

the-labour forget the-baby you-bring-it

‘Forget the labor, hold the baby.’

The pragmatic context: It is undeniable that a woman giving birth in labor passes through a very painful process. However, this hard time will end up by rewarding the woman with a wonderful gift, a baby. And holding the baby gives the woman the courage to forget the agony she has been through. The proverb is used in this context to symbolize very complex and difficult situations that yield valuable things at the end. Therefore, this proverb is used to advise people to be courageous, to forget the difficult times they have been through and to appreciate and value the end result. The following proverbs also give advice to people to be courageous.

(98) ጅብ ከሚበላህ በልተኸው ተቀደስ

jib kəmmibəlah bəltəhəw tek'ədde's

hyena before-eat-you after-you-eat-him get-purified

‘When a hyena tries to eat you, eat it and purify yourself.’

(99) ደፋር እና ጭስ መውጫ አያጣም

dəffar inna c'is məwc'a ajat'am

valiant and smoke exit will-not-lose

‘A valiant and smoke will never lose a way to go out through.’

VII. Cooperation

Amharic proverbs play a role in the socio-economic aspects of the society by conveying powerful short messages. Proverbs that encourage team work are presented under this sub-category.

(100) ህምሳ ሎሚ ለአንድ ሰው ሽክሙ ለህምሳ ሰው ጌጡ

hamsa lomi land səw fəkmu ləhamsa səw get'u

fifty lemon to-one man burden-his to-fifty man ornament-his

‘Fifty lemons are burden to a person; but a beauty/ornament to fifty.’

The pragmatic context: There are things that can be difficult to a single person to carry out but easy to many. This proverb promotes teamwork. According to the proverb, a work that is done alone is tedious and time consuming. The same kind of work can be done easily and shortly if it is performed with joint effort. Lemon is needed for its aroma and taste; and for this purpose a single lemon is just enough for its good smell. The phrase ‘fifty lemons’ in the proverb is used to represent the work load. And if all the lemons (the work load) are given to a single person it will be problematic rather than aesthetic. Hence, by contrasting teamwork with individual effort, the proverb is used to give advice about the importance of teamwork. A proverb with a similar theme is (101) ድር ቢያብር አንበሳ ያስር ‘If there is collaboration spider webs can tie a lion.’ Like the above proverb this one teaches that collaboration plays an integral role to achieve a goal and succeed in huge tasks. In teamwork every contribution is important. Each and every effort of the team members contributes to the collective success. This theme is symbolically conveyed by the proverb, (102) ጋን በጠጠር ይደገፋል ‘A vessel stands with a support of a pebble.’

VIII. Hard work

The proverbs in this category emphasize on the importance of hard work.

(103) ስትሰራ ሰራ ስትጫወት ተጫወት

sitsəra sira sittic'awət təc'awət

when-you-work work when-you-play play

'Work when you work; play when you play.'

The pragmatic context: The proverb gives a direct advice on work ethics. Everything, according to this proverb, has its own time to be done. When it is work time, one should focus on work and work hard; and when it is time for pleasure one should not let his/her work interfere in his/her leisure time. Therefore, the function of this proverb is to advise those who mix play with work and who lack focus and effectiveness in their work. The proverb, (104) ሲሰሩ ሎሌን መስሎ ሲበሉ ጌታን አህሉ **'Work like a servant; eat like a lord.'** conveys a similar advice. It encourages people to be hard workers. As a worker one is expected to toil; and if he/she works hard he/she will live a fine life. Both proverbs are used in contexts like when people seem to be lazy and lack enthusiasm for their work.

(105) ላያጥብ አይልበስ ላያርም አይረስ

lajat'ib ajilbəs lajarrim ajirəs

not-to-wash he-shouldn't-wear not-to-weed he-shouldn't-plough

'If he doesn't wash he better not wear; if he doesn't weed he better not plant.'

The pragmatic context: Someone may start to do something; but starting by itself is not enough. It should be finished as well. Simply, a started business should be followed up and completed thoroughly. It is the theme of this proverb. The proverb overtly states the importance

of taking care of one's clothes and farms; however, it can be used extendedly to remind people that every work needs to be done carefully. The same advice is suggested by another Amharic proverb, (106) አለባበሰው ቢያርሱ በአረም ይመለሱ 'if you plough carelessly, then the weeding will be painful.' The blatant message is that a farm cultivated poorly needs another round in weeding it. The society uses such proverbs to teach people to avoid carelessness in their works and to do things not just for the sake of doing.

IX. Patience and endurance

Proverbs that give advice on patience and endurance are the focuses of this sub-category. Amharic has coinciding proverbs that hold endurance and patience as their theme.

(107) ቀን አሰኪያልፍ ያለፋል

k'ən iskijalf jaləfal

day till-it-passed it-makes-suffer

'A bright day doesn't come easily.'

The pragmatic context: The communicative use of this proverb is to show the role of endurance in achieving a bright future. Sometimes situations require us to pay price and to have great endurance to the hardships we are in so as to succeed in life. In other words, achieving comfortable life is not always easy, rather it requires years of hard toil. This is the theme in the above proverb. Thus, the proverb is used to strengthen people's endurance during the time of misery. The other proverb that gives advice on endurance is (108) መከራና ጉም እያደር ይቀላል 'Misery and fog decrease through time.' Here, misery is stated as a temporary situation by contrasting with the temporariness of fog. Hence, the proverb encourages people to stay strong

and be patient to see the misery over. There is also another proverb with a similar theme, which is (109) መከራን የቻለ አሸናፊ ነው ‘**A person who endures misery is a victor.**’ This proverb ensures that victory is the ultimate fruit of endurance. Therefore, the society uses this proverb to give hope to those who are in misery.

(110) ጥጋበኛንና ውሃ ሙላትን ቁመህ አሳልፈው

t’igabepnan inna wiha mulatin k’uməh asallifəw

arrogant and water flood you-stand you-let-it-pass

‘Give way to a trouble maker and a flush flood to pass you.’

The pragmatic context: The proverb uses a simile of flood and trouble maker person to convey the message. The powerful and destructive nature of flood is temporary. Likewise, a trouble maker may cause some problem but it will pass easily if handled patiently. This is the context where this proverb is used by the society. The proverb, (111) እካሰ ያለ ታግሶ እጸድቅ ያለ መንኲሶ ‘**A person who wants to be compensated has to be patient; and one who wants to be righteous needs to be monk.**’ has a similar linguistic function with the above one. Similar to the above one, this proverb is used to teach people that patience has everything to do in achieving an everlasting and best result.

The same message from a different perspective is presented by the following proverbs. The above proverbs focus on the fruitfulness of patience while the following proverbs emphasize on the negative effects of impatience.

(112) የቸኮለች አፍስሳ ለቀመች

jəčəkkoləč afsisa lək’k’əməč

the-hurried-one she-spilled she-fetched

‘The hurried lady spilled and then fetched what she has spilt.’

(113) የጅብ ችኩል ቀንድ ይከሳል

jəjib čikkul k'ənd jinəksal

hyena impatient horn he-bites

‘An impatient hyena bites the horn.’

(114) ፈጥኖ የገመዱት ፈጥኖ ይበጠሳል

fət'no jəgəmmədut fət'no jibbat't'əsal

fast tied fast cut-up

‘A rope tied fast will break fast.’

All the three proverbs show that if things are done without patience the end result will be unpleasant. Such proverbs are used to advise people to avoid rush in their works. Generally, the society uses the proverbs under this sub category to encourage endurance and patience in different contexts.

X. Caution

This category includes proverbs that give advice in a manner of warning.

(115) ለጥቅም ሲታጠቁ ከጎን ይጠንቀቁ

lət'ik'im sittat'ək'u kəgon jīt't'ənk'ək'u

for-benefit when-getting-ready from-side be careful

‘When you go for opportunities you better watch out every side.’

The pragmatic context: Literally the proverb reminds one to be careful while looking for opportunities. However, it has the intension of warning people that there could be unexpected negative impacts when some benefits are expected. Likewise, the proverb, (116) መከፈልት ሲሹ መቅሰፍት ‘While seeking for blessing beware of affliction.’ gives a warning advice. The

proverbs are used to warn in contexts where someone seems unaware of his/her surrounding and the possible disaster while he/she is going for the benefits he/she is looking for.

(117) ታሞ ከመማቀቅ አስቀድሞ መጠንቀቅ

tammo kəməmak'ək' ask'eddimo mət't'ənk'ək'

getting-sick from-suffering ahead to-be-careful

'Be careful, before getting sick.'

The pragmatic context: prevention is always better than looking for solutions for problems that have already occurred. However, if problems occurred, it is easy and better to find solutions at early stage before things get worse and are out of control. This proverb overtly discloses the undeniable significance of disease prevention to avoid sickness. It is also applicable to various situations in which suffering may be followed if the danger is not prevented. Other Amharic proverbs with related themes and functions are (118) ሳይቃጠል በቅጠል **'Stump out fire with leaves before it glows.'** and (119) ሳይርቅ በቅርቡ ሳይደርቅ በርጥቡ **'Before it is far and while it is near; before it is dry and while it is wet/soft.'** The only point these proverbs differ from the above one is that they suggest immediate solutions for problems that have already occurred.

XI. Communicative skills

The proverbs under this category focus on the two basic language skills, listening and speaking. The proverbs are two types: the first group compares the two skills and gives weight to listening, and the second group gives advice on the art and techniques of speaking skill.

(120) መናገር መልካም ማዳመጥ ይበልጣል

mənnagər məlkam maddamət' jibəlt'al

speaking good listening it-is-better

‘Speaking is good but listening is better.’

The pragmatic context: The fundamental language communication process requires both listening and speaking skills. It is obvious that listening cannot take place without speaking; and speaking will be futile if there is no listening. Acknowledging this fact, the proverb declares the goodness of speaking but gives more value to listening. Similar contrast is made on listening and speaking by associating the skills with minerals by the proverb, (121) መናገር ብር ነው ማዳመጥ ወርቅ ነው ‘**Speaking is silver and listening is gold.**’ Like the above proverb, it states the importance of listening more than of speaking. Speaking is associated with silver while listening is with gold (i.e a more precious mineral than silver). The society gives weight to listening for the reason that listening creates ample opportunity to learn from others. Thus, the proverbs are used to encourage people to give much time for listening than speaking.

(122) አስብ ሁለቱ ከመናገር አንዱ

assib hulätte kəmənnagər ande

think twice before-speaking once

‘Think twice before speaking once.’

The pragmatic context: Though speaking is a natural skill that everyone can acquire it under normal circumstances, it needs some wisdom and technique to deliver effective speech. We don’t speak whatever we like to speak unless we want to jeopardize our speech and relationships. We need to be selective and thoughtful when we speak to others. This fact is the reason for this proverb to be used in the society. Its linguistic function is to advise people to know what they are speaking. This proverb has a corresponding Amharic proverb, (123) መናገር ሳያስቡ ምላጭ መሳብ

ሳያልሙ ‘Speaking before thinking is like shooting before aiming’, which compares speaking with shooting. As shooting without aiming doesn’t give good result, speaking without thorough thinking will be the same.

XII. Consequences

As there is night for everyday so there is a consequence for everything we do in life. Proverbs focusing on these consequences are presented under this subcategory.

(124) ሚስጥርህን ለባዕድ ለምን አዋየኸው ወንፊት ውሃ ይዞ የት ሲደርስ አየኸው

mist'irihin ləsəw ləmin awwajjəhəw wənfīt wiha jizo jət sidərs ajjəhəw
your-secret to-man why you-discussed-it sieve water holding where it-
goes you-saw-it

**‘Why did you share your secret to a stranger? Have you seen a
sieve holding water?’**

The pragmatic context: secret is some information to be kept strictly between very limited individuals. These individuals must be very trustworthy and strong to keep the secret in the dark. However, there are some individuals who are symbolized by sieve in the proverb because they cannot keep secrets; they easily disseminate them. So it is one’s responsibility to know and choose the right person to whom he/she can share his/her secrets. If someone tells his/her secret to a stranger, then the secret will not be secret anymore. Therefore, this proverb criticizes those who carelessly share their secrets to any one, so as to advise them to be careful when sharing their secrets.

(125) ቀን ካልለቀሙ ሌሊት አይቅሙ

K’ən kallək’k’əmu lelit aik’imu
day if-they-don’t-collect night they-don’t-eat

‘If it is not collected in the day time there will be nothing to eat in the night.’

The pragmatic context: What has been done in the past affects the present and what is being done now will affect the future. The proverb confirms this fact by stating that someone should make ready in the day in order to be able to eat at night. It means that if someone wants to have something in the future he/she needs to work on it now. Our future depends on our current action. The same message is found in the proverbs, (126) ቀን ያልዘሩትን ማታ አያፍሱም ‘If it is not sown now, it is impossible to harvest in the future.’ and (127) በሰኔ ካልዘሩ በጥቅምት ካልለቀሙ እህል የት ይገኛል በድንበር ቢቆሙ ‘If someone does not sow and harvest at the right time, he/she will not get food by watching others.’ These proverbs share content and function with the above proverb. All are used to alert people that what they do today will have consequences in the future. Thus, it advises that things should be done at the right time so as to fulfill the future need.

(128) ባልዘፈንሽ ከዘፈንሽም ባላፈርሽ

balzəffənʃ kəzəffənʃim baləffərʃ

you-had-better-not-sing if-you-sing you-had-better-not-ashamed

‘Better if you didn’t sing; and if you sang you would better not be ashamed.’

The pragmatic context: The decisions we make and the actions we take may create unpleasant situations. The proverb exemplifies this by using singing context. If someone starts singing he/she should not be ashamed by the responses and reactions that followed. A similar message with different context is provided by the proverb, (129) አውቀሽ ከተደፋሽ ቢረግጡሽ አይከፋሽ ‘If you put yourself in to a volatile situation, then accept what others will do to you.’ Such proverbs are used by the society to remind people that consequences are the results of their actions and to advise them to accept the situation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

The research had the objective of describing Amharic proverbs of advice from the linguistic point of view. The description included syntactic patterns, stylistic features and pragmatics of the proverbs. Based on the research objectives the findings of the analysis of the proverbs are summarized as follows.

Structurally, both simple and complex proverbs are observed. Most of the proverbs are complex sentences. In terms of sentence function most of the proverbs are found to be imperative and declaratives. Around sixty percent of the proverbs are declaratives while the imperative types constitute nearly thirty percent. Affirmative and negative forms are used in both sentence types. Very few proverbs have interrogative form of sentence. Among the simple sentences, none is interrogative whereas, among the complex sentences only two are interrogatives. Generally, in terms of syntactic patterns, the study shows that most Amharic proverbs of advice are complex-declaratives.

Phonetic and stylistic features of proverbs play important role in making the form, message and function of the proverbs sharp, short, powerful, and communicative. The study shows that alliteration, rhyme, and assonance are common in Amharic proverbs. The proverbs, ቸር ተመኝ ቸር ታገኝ /čər təməñ čər tagəñ/ ‘*Wish for the better to get better.*’ and መቀመጥ መቆመጥ /mək’k’əmət’ mək’k’əmət’/ ‘*sitting is being crippled.*’ are good examples that consist of all the three features. The first proverb has words that begin with similar sound /č/, which is alliteration, and has also two halves with similar word-final sound /əñ/, which is rhyme. This proverb also shows

assonance by repeating the vowel/ə/ in all words. Parallelism is used in Amharic proverbs through the repetition of same syntactic structures in the two halves of proverbs.

Some Amharic proverbs omit words to create terseness and poetic feature. On the other hand the repetition of words is common in the proverbs for the purpose of aesthetic value or strengthening message. Though limited in number, there are proverbs presented with quotative style.

We have observed that the proverbs analyzed are used in different contexts to give advice on varied issues; they teach morals and ethics hence they advise, admonish, warn, inform, condemn, claim, reject, suggest, direct and declare.

Furthermore, we have noted that Amharic proverbs are not only used to give advices, but are also used to convey varied messages that were relevant to context; situations, audience and topic that inform their use. This has explained why different themes are conveyed across the proverbs; moral and ethical value, relationship, truth, caution, hard work, patience, unity, wisdom, reward and punishment. Amharic proverbs are terse, sharp, creative, communicative and mostly figurative (metaphorical expressions).

Further research is indispensable to develop and test the findings but it is my belief that this study will provide fertile avenue to other researches. Local studies on proverbs do not focus on linguistic analysis; thus, it is highly recommended to carry on studies on proverbs of Amharic with other speech acts.

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Appendix

Amharic proverbs of advice with their phonetic transcription and free translation are presented in the following table in Amharic alphabet order.

S.No	የምክር ምሳሌያዊ አነጋገሮች Proverbs of advice
1	ሀሜተኛ ያፍራል ሐሰተኛ ይረታል hametəጋጋጃ jafraḥ hassətəጋጋጃ jirrəttal 'A gossip will be ashamed; a liar will be defeated.'
2	ሀምሌና ሙሽራ ሳይገላለጡ ነው hamlenna muḥḥira sajiḡḡəlalət'u nəw winter and bride need cover up.
3	ሀምሳ ሉሚ ለአንድ ሰው ሽክሙ ለሀምሳ ሰው ጌጡ hamsa lomi land səw fəkmu ləhamsa səw get'u 'Fifty lemons are burden to a person; but a beauty/ornament to fifty.'
4	ሀሰተኛን ሲረቱ በወንድም በእህቱ hassətəጋጋጃጋጃ sirətu bəwəndim bəጎihitu Beat a liar using his/her brother or sister.
5	ሀሰት ቢናገሩ ውቃቤ ይርቃል hassət binnagəru wuk'abe jirik'al 'If someone tells a lie, god will detach him.'
6	ሀሰት ነገር ክፉ ገሃነመ እሳት ትርፉ hassət nəḡər kifū ḡəhanəmə isat tirfu 'Telling a lie is bad; hell is the end.'
7	ሀኪም የያዘው ነፍስ ባያድር ይውላል hakim jājazəw nəfs bajadir jiwīlal A patient visited by physician may stay longer.

8	ሀዘን ሲበዛ ሀዘን ያስከትላል hazən sibəza hazən jaskəttilal ‘A deeper grief attracts another grief.’
9	ሁለት ባላ ትከል አንዱ ሲነቀል ባንዱ ተንጠልጠል hulətt balla tikəl andu sinnək’k’əl bandu tənt’əlt’əl ‘Have two poles; when you lose hold of one you have the other.’
10	ሁለት እግር አለኝ ተብሎ ሁለት ዛፍ አይወጣም hulət igir alləṅ təbilo hulət zaf ajjiwət’t’am One cannot climb two trees at a time.
11	ሁለት ጊዜ ይፈርዱ ጉድ ይወልዱ hulət gize jifərdu gud jiwəldu Passing inconsistent judgments has bad consequences on oneself.
12	ሁሉ አማረሽን ገበያ አታውጧት hullu amarəṣṣin gəbəja attawt’uʔat Don’t take a shopaholic to the market.
13	ሂድ አትበለው እንዲሄድ አድርገው hid atbələw indihed adirgəw Don’t tell him to go; make him to go.
14	ሂድ ካገር ኑር ከሀገር hid kagər nur kagər Travel with your people; live with your people.’
15	ህልም ተፈርቶ ሳይተኛ አይታደርም፡፡ hilm təfərtə sajittəna ajittadərim ‘Sleeping wouldn’t be avoided by the fear of nightmare.’

16	ሆድ ለባሰው ማጭድ አታውሰው hod ləbasəw mac'id attawisəw ‘Don’t give a sickle to the grieved one.’
17	ሆድን በጎመን ቢደልሉት ጉልበት በዳገት ይለግማል hodin bəgomən bidəlilut gulbət bədagət jiləggimal ‘If a Stomach is in a state of malnutrition there will be no energy to go up a hill.’
18	ለሰው ብትል ትጠፋለህ ለግዜር ብትል ትለማለህ ləsəw bittil tit’əfalləh ləgzər bittil tiləmalləh ‘If you do it for man’s sake you will be lost; if you do it for God’s sake you will prosper.’
19	ለሰይጣን አትሰጠው ስልጣን ləsəjt’an attist’əw silt’an ‘Don’t give power to the devil.’
20	ለረዥም መንገድ አትሩጥበት ለረዥም ነገር አትቸኩልበት lərəzim mængəd atrut’ibbət lərəzim nəgər aççəkkulibət ‘Don’t run for a long journey; and, do not hurry for a lengthy case.’
21	ለነገረኛ ሰው ጀርባህን ሰጠው lə nəgərəጥጥጥ səw jərbəhin sit’əw ‘To a nagging person give him your back.’
22	ለዳባ ለባሽ ነገርህን አታበላሽ lədabba ləbaʃ nəgərihin attabəlaʃ ‘For poorly dressed never waste your advice.’
23	ለጠብ ጀማሪም አትሁን ጨራሽም አትሁን lət’əb jəmmarim attihun c’ərraʃim attihun ‘Don’t be first to quarrel and don’t be last to finish it.’
24	ለጥቅም ሲታጠቁ ከጎን ይጠንቀቁ lət’ik’im sittat’ək’u kəgon jīt’t’ənk’ək’u

	‘When you go for opportunities you better watch out every side.’
25	ለፈሪ ስጠው ፍርፋሪ ləfəri sit’əw firiffari ‘To a coward, give him leftover.’
26	ላለፈ ክረምት ቤት አይሰራም lalləfə kirəmt bet ajissərram ‘A house can’t be built for the past rainy season.’
27	ላለፈው አይጠጥቱም ለሚመጣው አይበለጡም lalləfəw ajit’t’ət’t’ətum ləmmimət’aw ajibbəllət’um ‘No regret for the past but always ready for the future.’
28	ላያጥብ አይልበስ ላያርም አይረስ lajat’ib ajilbəs lajarrim ajirəs ‘If he doesn’t wash he better not wear; if he doesn’t weed he better not plant.’
29	ልሂድ ልሂድ ባይ ስንቅ አጉዳይ lihīd lihīd baj sink’ agudaj ‘One who declares going again and again is one who reduces his provision.’
30	ልታስቸግር አታበድር ላትከፍል አትበደር littasçəggir attabəddir lattikəfīl attibbədər ‘Do not lend to nag; do not borrow to never pay back.’
31	ልጅህንና አትክልትህን ተጠባብቅ ጎረቤትህን lijihininna atikiltihin tət’əbabek’ gorəbetihin ‘Protect your child and garden from your neighbor.’
32	ልጅን መቅጣት በጡት አህል መቆጠብ በጥቅምት lijin mək’t’at bət’ut ihil mək’ot’t’əb bət’ik’imt ‘Correct a child in early ages; store food during harvest.’

33	መመጽወት ያድናል ከጸጸት māmās’wət yadinal kəs’əs’t ‘Giving alms protects from regret.’
34	መስሎ ከመታየት ሆኖ መገኘት mit’un irṣiw lijun anṣiw ‘Forget the labor hold the baby.’
35	መቀመጥ መቆመጥ mæk’k’əmət’ mæk’k’omət’ ‘Sitting is being crippled.’
36	መታመሙን ታመም ነገ ትድናለህ መታሰሩን ታሰር ነገ ትፈታለህ ወዳጅ ጠላትህን ትለይበታለህ məttaməmun taməm nəge tīdinalləh məttasərun tasər nəgə tiffəttaləh wədaṣ t’əlatih tələjibetalləh ‘If you get sick you will be cured; if you are imprisoned you will be released; the main thing is that these will help you know who is a friend and who is a foe.’
37	መታዘዝ ከመስዋዕት ይበልጣል məttazəz kəməswaʔit jibəlt’al ‘To obey is better than sacrifice/offerings.’
38	መናገር መልካም ማዳመጥ ይበልጣል mənnagər məlcam maddamət’ jibəlt’al ‘Speaking is good but listening is better.’
39	መናገር ሳያስቡ ምላጭ መሳብ ሳያልሙ mənnagər saṣassibu mīlaṣ məsab saṣallimu ‘Speaking before thinking is like shooting before aiming.’
40	መናገር ብር ነው ማዳመጥ ወርቅ ነው mənnagər bīr nəw maddamət’ wərk’ nəw ‘Speaking is silver and listening is gold.’

41	መከራና ጉም እያደር ይቀላል mækəranna gum ijjadər jik’əllal ‘Misery and fog decrease through time.’
42	መከራን የቻለ አሸናፊ ነው mækəran jəçalə əjjənafi nəw ‘A person who endures misery is a victor.’
43	መከፈልት ሲሹ መቅሰፍት mækfəlt sifu mək’səft ‘While seeking for blessing beware of affliction.’
44	መጀመሪያ የመቀመጫዬን አለች ዝንጀሮ məjəmmərja jəmək’k’əməc’c’ajen aləç zinjəro ‘First my seat’ said a monkey.
45	መፍታት ሳለ መምታት məftat sallə məmtat ‘Why fighting while there is divorcing.’
46	ሚስጥርህን ለባዕድ ለምን አዋየኸው ወንፊት ውሃ ይዞ የት ሲደርስ አየኸው mist’irihin ləsəw ləmin awwajjəhəw wənfīt wiha jizō jət sidərs əjjəhəw ‘Why did you share your secret to a stranger? Have you seen a sieve holding water?’
47	ምክረው ምክረው እንቢ ካለ መከራ ይምክረው mikərəw mikərəw inbi kalə məkəra jimkərəw ‘Advise him again and again; if he does not listen, let adversity teach him.’
48	ምጡን እርሺው ልጁን አንሺው mit’un iršiw lijun anšiw ‘Forget the labor, hold the baby.’
49	ሰርቆ ከማሰብ እጅን መሰብሰብ sərk’o kəmassəb ijjin məsəbsəb

	‘Better not to steal than stealing and worrying.’
50	ሰው አይወድም በደል በሬ አይወድም ገደል səw ajwəddim bədəl bərə ajwəddim gədəl ‘Man doesn’t like mistreatment; ox doesn’t like cliff.’
51	ሰው ይኖራል እንጂ እንደቤቱ አይኖርም እንደጎረቤቱ səw jīnoral inji indəbetu ajnorim indəgorəbetu ‘Man lives as himself not like his neighbors.’
52	ሰው ይጨነቃል የሚሆነውን እግዚር ያውቃል səw jic’c’ənək’al jəmmihonəwin igzer jawk’al ‘Man worries, God knows.’
53	ሰውን ማመን ቀብሮ አለች ቀበሮ səwin mamən k’əbro aləç k’əbəro ‘Trust a man after you bury him’ said a fox.
54	ሰውን ስትወድ ልብህን ሳትሰጥ səwin sittiwəd libbihin satsət’ ‘When you love a man, don’t give your heart.’
55	ሰውን አትናቀው አህልን አትራቀው səwin atnak’əw ihilin atrak’əw ‘Do not underestimate man; do not apart from food.’
56	ሲሰሩ ሎሌን መስሎ ሲበሉ ጌታን አህሎ sisəru lolen mäslo sibəlu getan ahilo ‘Work like a servant; eat like a lord.’
57	ሲሮጡ የታጠቁት ሲሮጡ ይፈታል sirot’u yətat’ək’ut sirot’u yiffəttal ‘A belt fastened while running will get unfastened while running.’

58	ሲበሉ በሰዓት ሲናገሩ በስርዓት sibəlu bəsəʔat sinnagəru bəsiriʔat ‘Eat at the right time; speak with the right manner.’
59	ሲነግሩት ሚዘነጋ ሲያምኑት የሚሰጋ የለውም ዋጋ sinəgrut mizənəga sijamnut jəmisəga jəlləwim waga ‘A person, who forgets when he is told and who doubts when he is trusted, is worthless.’
60	ሲያምኑት የከዳ አለበት ዕዳ sijamnut jəkədda alləbbət ida ‘A person who is untrustworthy will pay for it.’
61	ሳይርቅ በቅርቡ ሳይደርቅ በርጥቡ sajrik’ bək’irbu sajdark’ bərt’ibu ‘Before it is far and while it is near; before it is dry and while it is wet/soft.’
62	ሳይቃጠል በቅጠል sajik’k’at’əl bək’it’əl ‘Stump out fire with leaves before it glows.’
63	ስትሰራ ስራ ስትጫወት ተጫወት sitsəra sira sittic’awət təc’awət ‘Work when you work; play when you play.’
64	ቀን አስኪያልፍ ያለፋል k’ən iskijalf jaləfal ‘A bright day doesn’t come easily.’
65	ቀን ካልለቀሙ ሌሊት አይቆሙ K’ən kallək’k’əmu lelit aik’imu ‘If it is not collected in the day time there will be nothing to eat in the night.’
66	ቀን ያልዘሩትን ማታ አያፍሱም k’ən jalzərrutin mata ajafsum ‘If it is not sown now, it is impossible to harvest in the future.’

67	ቅናት ያደርሳል ከሞት K'inat yadərsal kəmot 'Jealousy leads to death.'
68	ቆርሶ ያላጎረሱትን ቀደው ያላለበሱትን ብላቴና ማዘዝ አይገባም K'orsəw jalagorəsutin k'əddəw jalaləbəsutin bilattena mazəz ajiggəbbam 'It is not appropriate to order a boy whom one didn't feed nor did he clothe.'
69	በሰኔ ካልዘሩ በጥቅምት ካልለቀሙ እህል የት ይገኛል በድንበር ቢቆሙ bəsəne kalzərru bət'ik'imt kallək'əmu ihil jət jiggəjal bədinbər bik'omu 'If someone does not sow and harvest at the right time, he/she will not get food by watching others.'
70	በሰው ቁስል እንጨት ስደድበት bəsəw k'usil inc'ət sidədibbət 'Insert a stick in a person's wound.'
71	በሰው አገር አለመናገር bəsəw agər alemennagər 'Never speak in the country of others.'
72	በስራህ ድሃ አትበድል ነጋሪት ባይኖረው እንባ አለው ውሃ ሆኖ ቢኮል ያለ ሞረድ የተሳለ ነው bəsirah diha atbəddil nəgarit bajinorəw inba alləw wiha hono bikol jalə morəd jətəsələ nəw 'Don't hurt a destitute person in your act; he has tears which is sharp without sharpener.'
73	በሽታውን የደበቀ መድሀኒት አይገኝለትም bəʃitawin jədəbbək'ə mədhanit ajiggəniləttim 'A man who conceals his disease cannot be cured.'
74	በበጋ እሞኝ ቤት ተንጋጋ በከረምት እንደጭልፊት እቤትህ ግባ Bəbəga iməj bet təngaga bəkirəmt indəc'ilfit ibetih giba 'Flock to the home of a fool in summer; stay in your house in winter like a hawk.'
75	ባልዘፈንሽ ከዘፈንሽም ባላፈርሽ balzəffənʃ kəzəffənʃim balaffərʃ

	‘Better if you didn’t sing; and if you sang you would not be ashamed.’
76	ብቻውን የበላ ብቻውን ይሞታል biççawin jəbəlla biççawin jimotal ‘A person who eats alone will die alone.’
77	ተሰብሮ ቢጠገን እንደነበር አይሆን təsəbro bit’t’əggən indənəbbər ayhon ‘If repaired after having been broken never would it be the same.’
78	ተናግሮ ከማሰብ ተከንፈር መሰብሰብ tənaɡro kəmassəb təkənfər məssəbsəb ‘Silence is better than speaking if one is not thinking.’
79	ታሞ ከመማቀቅ አስቀድሞ መጠንቀቅ tammo kəməmak’ək’ ask’eddimə mət’t’ənk’ək’ ‘Be careful, before getting sick.’
80	ትምህርት በልጅነት አበባ በጥቅምት timihirt bəlijinnət abəba bət’ik’imt ‘Learning at early age; having flower in October.’
81	ቸር ተመኝ ቸር ታገኝ çər təməɲ çər tagəɲ ‘Wish for the better to get better.’
82	አለባብሰው ቢያርሱ በአረም ይመለሱ aləbabsəw bijarsu beʔarəm jimməlləsu ‘if you plough carelessly, then the weeding will be painful.’
83	አስብ ሁለቴ ከመናገር አንዴ assib hulətte kəmənnagər ande ‘Think twice before you speak once.’

84	አንድ ዓይን ያለው በአፈር አይጫወትም and ajin jalləw bafər ajic’c’awəttim ‘A person who has a single eye will never play with dust.’
85	አውቀሽ ከተደፋሽ ቢረግጡሽ አይከፋሽ awk’əf kətədəffaf birəgt’uf ajikfaf ‘If you put yourself in to a volatile situation, then accept what others will do to you.’
86	አይን ካላዩበት ግንባር ነው ayin kalayyubət ginbar nəw ‘An eye is just a forehead, if it is not used.’
87	አህልን አላምጦ ነገርን አዳምጦ ihilin allamt’o nəgərin addamt’o ‘Chew well what you eat; listen well what people say.’
88	እኖራለሁ ብለህ አጅግ አትበርታ እሞታለሁ ብለህ ስራ አትፍታ inoralləhu biləh ijjiḡ attibəta imotallehu biləh sira attifta ‘Don’t strive as if you are eternal; don’t be lazy thinking you are mortal.’
89	እካስ ያለ ታግሶ እጸድቅ ያለ መንኲሶ ikkas jalə taggiso is’ədk’ jalə mənkusə ‘A person who wants to be compensated has to be patient; and one who wants to be righteous needs to be monk’
90	እውነቱን ተናግሮ እመሸበት ማደር iwnəṭun tənagro kaməṣubbət madər ‘tell the truth and accept the consequences’
91	ከልጅ አትጫወት ይወጋሃል በእንጨት kəliḡ attic’awəṭ jiwəgahal bəʔinc’ət ‘Don’t play with a kid he will stab you with a stick.’

92	ኩራት አይሆንም እራት kurat ayihonim irat ‘Pride cannot be dinner.’
93	የሚያድግ ልጅ አይጥላህ የሚሞት ሽማግሌ አይርገምህ yəmmiyadg liy ayit’lah yəmmimot fīmagille ayirgəmiḥ ‘Don’t be hated by a growing child; don’t be cursed by a dying old man.’
94	የማይመስል ነገር ለሚስትህ አትነገር jəmmajməsil nəgər ləmistih attingər ‘Don’t tell to your wife things that are unlikely.’
95	የቸኮለች አፍስሳ ለቀመች jəçəkkoləç afsisa lək’k’əməç ‘The hurried lady spilled and then fetched what she has spilt.’
96	የጅብ ቸኩል ቀንድ ይነካል jəjīb çikkul k’ənd jinəksal ‘An impatient hyena bites the horn.’
97	የፈሰሰ ውሀ አይታፈስም jəfessəsə wiha ajittaffəsim ‘Spilled water cannot be brought back.’
98	ይታደሉታል እንጂ አይታገሉትም jittadəlutaḥ inji ajittagəluttim ‘Life is endowment not a struggle.’
99	ዳኛ ቢያደላ በዳኛ አህያ ቢያጋድል በመጫኛ daḥṇa bijadəla bədaḥṇa ahijja bijagaddil bəməc’əṇa ‘A biased judge by a judge; a donkey losing balance of its load by a rope.’
100	ድር ቢያብር አንበሳ ያስር dir bijabbir anbəssa jasir

	‘If there is collaboration spider webs can tie a lion.’
101	ጅብ ከሚበላህ በልተኸው ተቀደስ jīb kəmmibəlah bəltəhəw tek’ədde’s ‘When a hyena tries to eat you, eat it and purify yourself.’
102	ጋን በጠጠር ይደገፋል gan bət’ət’ər jiddəggəfal ‘A vessel stands with a support of a pebble.’
103	ጥጋበኛንና ውሃ ሙላትን ቁመህ አሳልፈው t’igabəṛṇaninna wiha mulatīn k’uməh asallifəw ‘Give way to a trouble maker and a flush flood to pass you.’
104	ጸሎት በፍቅር ሃይማኖት በምግባር s’əlot bəfik’ir hajmanot bəmigbar ‘Prayer with love; religion with ethics’
105	ፈጥኖ የገመዱት ፈጥኖ ይበጠሳል fət’no jəgəmmədut fət’no jibbət’t’əsəl ‘A rope tied fast will break fast.’
106	ፍቅርና ጉርሻ ካላስጨነቀ አያምርም fik’ir inna gurja kalasc’ənnək’ə ayamrim ‘Love and a mouthful food cannot be interesting unless it causes stress.’

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Yidnekachew Geremew

Dec. 2014

Confirmation

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as thesis advisor.

Baye Yimam (Prof.)

Advisor