

Text Analysis of Children's Songs in Amharic

Getie Gelaye, Hamburg/Addis Ababa/

ጭማቂ-ጽሑፍ

ይህ የጥናት ጽሑፍ በአማርኛ የልጆች ቃልግጥሞችና ዘፈኖች ላይ በማተኮር በልጆች የተገጠሙ ናየተዘሙ ናሙናዊ ግጥሞችን የይዘት ትንተና ከእንግሊዝኛ ትርጉም ጋር ያቀርባል። ግጥሞቹ የተሰበሰቡት እንደ አውሮፓውያን የዘመን አቆጣጠር በ1992/93 እና በ1997/98 ምሥራቅ ጎጃም (ሰሜን-ምዕራብ ኢትዮጵያ) ውስጥ የመስክ ጥናትና ምርምር ባደረግሁባቸው ጊዜያት ነበር። ብዙ ዎቹ ልጆች ትምህርት ቤት የመግባትና ትምህርት የመማር ዕድል ስለማያገኙ፣ ከብትና አዝመራ ሲጠብቁ ግጥም መግጠም፣ ዘፈን መዝፈንና ጨዋታ መጫወት በዕለት-ተዕለት ሕይወታቸው ውስጥ የሚያከናውኗቸው የተለመዱ ተግባራት ናቸው። ልጆች በግጥሞቻቸው ውስጥ ስለነሱ የወደ ፊት ሕይወት፣ በመንደራቸው ውስጥ ስለሚኖሩ ግለሰቦች ሁኔታ-ለምሳሌ፣ ስለ ታታሪና ሰነፍ ገበሬዎች፣ ስለባልና ሚስት ግንኙነት እንዲሁም ባካባቢያቸው ስለሚከሰቱ ወቅታዊ፣ ፖለቲካዊና አስተዳደራዊ ጉዳዮች በሳል መልእክቶችን እንደሚያስተላልፉ እንገነዘባለን። በተጨማሪም ጽሑፉ በሁለት የግጥም ቅርፆች ላይ ትኩረት በማድረግ፣ ልጆች አብዛኛውን ጊዜ በግጥሞቻቸው ወይም በዘፈኖቻቸው የግጥም ቀመርና አሰነኛነት ውስጥ የተለያዩ ቃላትን እና አባባሎችን እንዲሁም የዜማና የቤት አመታት ስልቶችን እንዴት እንደሚጠቀሙ በምሳሌ የተደገፉ ልዩ ልዩ ግጥሞችን ያቀርባል።

1. Introduction

This is a preliminary study of the forms and the contents of children's songs in Amharic that I have collected¹ from children. The paper is divided into two parts. In the first part a short review on the study of children's songs in Amharic is presented followed by thematic analysis of sample poems and songs composed, improvised and sung by the children along with transcriptions and translations in English. The second part deals with the translation, transcription and commentary of the two forms that I classified as: TYPE-A and TYPE-B songs. I have attempted to understand the way children use words and phrases in rhyming their songs and at the same time raise issues related to their community. They openly and freely sing songs of praise and insult criticizing local officials commenting on contemporary happenings in the rural society. In order to complete the poetic and aesthetic aspects of their songs, children utilize names of domestic and wild animals, local crops and cereals, food

stuffs, household items, plants, etc. The paper also seeks to provide explanations of unfamiliar words and local expressions.

2. The Study of Children's Songs in Amharic

According to the material available to me, the first person who carried out research on children's songs and games in Amharic was the German scholar Eugen Mittwoch. In 1910, Mittwoch published an interesting article on children's games and songs² in Amharic under the title: "*Abessinische Kinderspiele, Amharische Texte*". The songs and games of children were collected from or recorded by Aläqa³ Taye Gebre Mariyam, an Ethiopian author and church scholar, while he was teaching Amharic at the Department of Oriental Languages, University of Berlin in 1906 and 1907.⁴ Mittwoch translated a total of 13 children's games, 50 proverbs, 4 jokes, 10 riddles, 7 narrative songs and 4 folktales, and provided an Amharic transcription of all the texts along with an excellent translation and commentary in German.

Although there are few available publications of children's folk-tales⁵, there exists almost nothing on the study of children's songs and games in Amharic. In 1963 the late poet, playwright and critic Menghistu Lemma wrote an article about the principles and technical aspects of Amharic versification and mentioned children's songs as a distinct *genre* of Amharic poetry with its own style and different forms of versification. Menghistu presented sample poems of *buhe* or *hoyya hoyye*⁶ songs. In 1984 Seifu Metaferia, the pioneer of teaching and research on oral literature in Ethiopia, published an interesting article entitled, "Oral Literature of Ethiopia as Source Material for Children's Books: A Sample Study". Here Seifu discussed the role of children's songs and poems in Amharic for the preparation of teaching materials in the schools.

¹ This article is based on fieldwork, which was conducted in 1992/93 and 1997/98 among three peasants' communities, namely Yetnora, Dejj Mariam and Gedeb Giorgis in East Gojjam, Northwest Ethiopia.

² Although this study is admirable in dealing for the first time, with the various forms of children's songs and games in Amharic for the first time, it would have been more interesting had the writer collected the texts from the children themselves rather than recorded them from an elderly man (*Aläqa* Taye) who, as the writer himself admitted, had faced several problems in memorizing and reciting children's songs and games.

³ Literally, head of a church or monastery; it is also a title to be given to scholars in the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church. In this paper the Amharic words and expressions are transcribed according to the system developed by Thomas Kane (1990).

⁴ See Mittwoch (1910:107).

⁵ See for instance, Mahteme Selassie Wolde Mesqel's widely known book: **እንቅልፍ ለምን?** (*What do I Need Sleep for?* 1952), and Shalomo Bachrach's, *Ethiopian Folktales*, 1972, which includes a translation of 20 folktales followed by a summary of vocabularies, grammars and exercises intended for teaching school children.

⁶ *Hoyya hoyye* or *buhe* songs are sung by the children during the annual feast of the transfiguration of Saint Mary on 19 August.

3. Children's Songs Collected from East Gojjam, Northwest Ethiopia

The collected items are poems, songs and games performed by children between the age of seven and fifteen years while they are supposed to look after the cattle, protecting crops from wild animals and while taking care of babies. Singing songs and playing games is part of their daily life as the majority of them are not fortunate to go to school. During my field research in East Gojjam, I realized that children's songs can easily be collected and studied⁷ because of the following three reasons. First, children can easily be approached and in most cases do not insist on negotiations or bargaining to sing such songs and poems. Second, in their poems and songs, they can freely express their feelings and make comments on past, present and future issues of the society. Third, they are well aware of the skill of singing songs, reciting poems and playing games not only to pass the day but also to show their creative capability and to get admiration among their peer groups and in their communities.

As to the occasion and performance children sing songs while they are supposed to take part in the everyday routine at home and around the village. However, the most common occasion for the performance of children's songs is while looking after the cattle and watching the harvest. While looking after the cattle, children form groups and start singing and playing games to pass the day, once they brought the cattle to the grazing land which is sometimes far away from the village. For the actual performance, some of them bring their stick, hand made flute, whip and a small ball made from old and torn clothes to accompany their songs and games. Therefore, singing and reciting poetry is an enjoyable part of their daily games.⁸

4. A Sample Analysis of Children's Songs in Amharic

In their songs, children raise matters related to the interrelationship of individuals residing in their own community such as hard working and lazy peasants, husband and wife affairs, etc., and comment on issues related to local politics and administration. They also raise names of individuals and officials at the local, regional and sometimes at national levels. In the

⁷ See, for example, the two recent studies on children's songs in Africa contributed by John Blacking (1995) on Venda children's songs and Babatola Aloba and Eva Steinhäuser (1999) on the Yoruba of Nigeria.

following three songs, for example, the children critically comment on the National Military Service policy which was proclaimed during the time of the former military regime of Ethiopia (1974-1991) in which young boys and adults between the age of 18 and 30 were recruited for military training. My informants in East Gojjam recalled that the National Military Service was one of the most destructive policies of the Derg regime that consumed the lives of thousands of Ethiopian youths. In the rural areas of Gojjam local executive committees, members of the then ruling party, the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), and the agricultural producers' co-operatives were the highest authoritative state agents, who were also recruiting young boys and adults for the military training and sending them to the war front against their will. These state agents and officials used their power for corruption, nepotism and discrimination in implementing government policies and guidelines. In the following poem, children express the injustice of the rural authorities whose children were never recruited to the war campaign, while sons of the poor peasants were forcefully sent to the war front:

የሊቀ መንበር ልጅ አይሄድም ዘመቻ
 የኮሚቴ ልጆች አይሄዱም ዘመቻ
 የኢሠጥ ልጆች አይሄዱም ዘመቻ
 የአምራችችም ልጆች አይሄዱም ዘመቻ
 ድንበር አስከባሪ የድሃ ልጅ ብቻ።
 ኤርትራን የሞላት የድሃ ልጅ ብቻ።

yäliqä mänbär l^m ayhed^m zämä~a,
 yäkomite l^m ayhedum zämä~a,
 yäisäpa l^m ayhedum zämä~a,
 yä'amra~o~^m l^m ayhedum zämä~a,
 d^mhbär as^{aa}äbbaqi yäd^mha l^m b^m~a.
 ert^mran yämollat yäd^mha l^m b^m~a.

The Chairman's son doesn't go to war campaigns,
 Committee members' children don't go to war fronts,
 Children of the WPE don't go to war campaigns,
 Agricultural producers' co-ops'⁹ children don't go to war fronts,
 Defenders of the border are only children of the poor.
 Those who filled Eritrea are only children of the poor.

As a result, parents of the young boys and men were extremely grieved as they lost their sons in the civil war. The following poem composed by children in Gojjam, refers to a mother who lost her son during the civil war. In fact, the poem soon became one of the popular funeral

⁸ For a further discussion on the singing and reciting of poetry by children in Africa, see Ruth Finnegan (1970:299-314).

⁹ This refers to the agricultural producers co-operatives that used to exist in the rural areas during the former Socialist regime of Ethiopia 1974-91.

songs of the time:

የወንድ ልጅ እናት ታጠቁ በገመድ
ልጅሽን አሞራ እንጅ አይቀብረውም ዘመድ።

yāwänd l^ʾ hnat ta^{aa}qi bāgämäd,
l^ʾ ምሽን amora ምሽን < i ay^ʾ qäbräww^ʾ m zämäd.

Mother of a boy, tie your stomach [waist] with a rope,
It is the vulture and not a relative that buries your son.

Normally, women tie their traditional dress with a waist-band known as *mäqännät*, a hand made cotton, and not with *gämäd* (rope), as they do for several months in times of deep grief and sorrow when members of their families and close relatives have died. As is rightly expressed in the poem, it was, therefore, a sign of regional mourn¹⁰ due to the frequent recruitment of young boys and adults to the war front most of whom lost their lives and did not come back to their respective villages.

On the other hand, these children and cattle herders composed poems and songs about the civil war that took place between the liberation fronts in the northern regions of Eritrea and Tigray and the former Socialist regime of Ethiopia. Contrary to the above poem, sons of Gojjam are praised in the following poem, for their courage and determination to fight against the enemy of Ethiopia being recruited and armed with modern machine-gun, as if there were no voluntary campaigners from other regions:

የኢትዮጵያን ጠላት የሚያባርር ጠፍቶ
ገባ የጎጃም ልጅ መትረየስ አንግቶ።

yä‘it^ʾ yoḥ^ʾyan ʿilat yämmiyabbar^ʾ ʿiftō,
gäbba yägo < am l^ʾ mätträyyäs ang^ʾ to.

As there was no one to chase out the enemy of Ethiopia,
The sons of Gojjam entered¹¹ shouldering machine-guns.

In the following poem, the children criticize the former government's war campaign:

¹⁰ In Gojjam traditionally, people wear black clothes and shave their hair when they are in mourning. However, as I have observed and as I was told by my informants, the peasants of Gojjam are wearing black garments since 1989, known as *Gojjam azzännä* (Gojjam mourns), as if the region is a human being. It is made from thread and not, as in the former days, from white cotton or *šamma*. Almost every male peasant including young boys and small children wear it until now. My informants explained that it is a sign of mass protest in response to the various state policies, guidelines, and directives of the former Socialist regime as well as the present one, see Getie Gelaye (1994, 1999a, 2000, 2001a, 2001b).

አህያ መጣች ተጭና እንሳቻ
ወጣቱን ፈጅው የደርግ ዘመቻ።

ah ʾyya mä^{aa}a~täðʾna ʾngo~a,
wä^{aa}atun fä < äw yädärg zämä~a.

Here comes a donkey loaded with ʾngo~a,¹²
The Derg's campaign finished the youth.

However, after the change of government that took place in Ethiopia in May 1991, it was hoped that there will be no more civil war and military service. The following two songs refer to this devastating policy sung after the fall of the Socialist regime. The first poem points to the fact that, under the Derg regime peasants were supposed to pay several types of contributions such as grain, labor and money to the state, and one of the most horrifying of these was “child [son] contribution” to the war front:

አህያ መጣች ተጭና ወፍጮ
ተእንግዲህ ቀረ የልጅ መዋጮ።

ah ʾyya mä^{aa}a~täðʾna wäfäḍo,
tä‘ ʾng ʾdih qärrä yäl ʾ < mäwwaḍo.

Here comes a donkey loaded with stone mill,
There is no longer contribution of a son.

Similarly, in the following songs, the children express their happiness as the recruitment of young boys and men came to an end following the change of government that took place in Ethiopia in May 1991:

አህያ መጣች ተጭና ከብት
ተእንግዲህ ቀረ ወታደርነት።

ah ʾyya mä^{aa}a~täðʾna kubät,
tä‘ ʾng ʾdih qärrä wättadär ʾnnät.

Here comes a donkey loaded with cow dung,
There is no longer military recruitment.

አፋፍ ላፋፍ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ቀይ ዱባ
የደርግ ወታደር ከብት አቆማ ገባ።

afaf lafaf s ʾhed agäññähu qäyy dubba,

¹¹ Recruited or joined the army, not by force but willingly.

¹² ʾngo~a is a small hand-baked bread made mostly from the flour of *ṭef* or wheat; usually it is prepared by women and given for children and cattle herders.

yädärgu wättadär käbt aqoma gäbba.

While walking along the hilltop, I found a red pumpkin,
The soldiers of the Derg became herdsmen.

The last four songs usually have similar patterns in the first line of the verse – except for the last words or phrases that I denote as “rhyming words”. As mentioned earlier, this is a kind of word game employed by the singers only to supply rhyming words in the second and most significant line of the verse to make it rhyme; it does not imply any semantic relationship with the second line.

TYPE-A songs begin with the line

አህያ መጣች ተጭና ...

ah ʷyya mä^{aa}a ~ täðʷna ...

Here comes a donkey loaded with...

and **TYPE-B** songs begin with

አፋፍ ላፋፍ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ...

afaf lafaf sʷhed agäññähu ...

While walking along the hilltop, I found...

This is a common formula of children's songs in Gojjam.¹³ Fekade Azeze (1998:3) wrote that, “essentially, the only purpose of the first line is to supply rhyming syllables for the second lines of the couplets which actually carry the real substance of the poem; and the meaning of these initial lines of the couplets is not at all connected with the inherent message transmitted by the second line”. This is again a similar form of word game used to supply rhyming words and expressions to make the second line of the verse complete and poetic.

5. TYPE-A SONGS

1. **አህያ መጣች ተጭና ግብጦ
መሬት ተለካ ለኔ አያ ብልጦ::**

*ah ʷyya mä^{aa}a ~ täðʷna gʷbʷə,
märet täläkka lännä ayya bʷlʷə.*

¹³ In fact, this is a form of children songs not only found in Gojjam. Similar lines of children's songs have been collected by Fekade (1998:153f.) in his study on famine poetry among the peasants of Northern Shoa, Ethiopia, which he labeled “odd couplets”. However, he did not provide examples of TYPE-B songs in his study.

Here comes a donkey loaded with *g^ṃb^ṃṑ*,¹⁴
Land is measured [and given] to those smart ones.

2. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ገብስ
እንዳይላሉ ነው ያምራች ንጉሥ።

ah^ṃyya mä^{aa}a~täṣ^ṃha gäbs,
ṃhdaylallu näw yam^ṃra~n^ṃgus.

Here comes a donkey loaded with barley,
Endaylallu¹⁵ is king of the producers' co-operatives.

3. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ኑግ
እንዳይላሉ ነው የጎጃም ደርግ።

ah^ṃyya mä^{aa}a~täṣ^ṃha nug,
ṃhdaylallu näw yägo <am dārg.

Here comes a donkey loaded with oilseed,
Endaylallu is the Derg of Gojjam.

4. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ቋንጣ
አምራች ያልገባ በእስር ተቀጣ።

ah^ṃyya mä^{aa}a~täṣ^ṃha quwan^{aa}a,
am^ṃra~yalgäbba bā^ṃs^ṃṣ^ṃ tāqä^{aa}a.

Here comes a donkey loaded with jerked meat,
Those who didn't join the co-operatives were punished with imprisonment.

5. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ተልባ
ያምራች ማኅበር ምንም አረባ።

ah^ṃyya mä^{aa}a~täṣ^ṃha tälba,
yam^ṃra~o~~mah^ṃbär m^ṃhn^ṃm alräba.

Here comes a donkey loaded with linseed,
The agricultural producers' co-operatives became ineffective.

6. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ንያ
የትንኖራ ሁኗል ያምራች መብቀያ።

ah^ṃya mä^{aa}a~täṣ^ṃha guwayya,
yätnora hunuwall yam^ṃra~mäbqäya.

¹⁴ According to Thomas Kane (1990:1989), *g^ṃb^ṃṑ* is "lupine or wolf's bean the bitter of which is leached out by steeping in water for a few days". This is a special bean produced only in Gojjam.

¹⁵ Endaylallu Mekonnen used to be Chairman of the former agricultural producers' cooperatives of Yetnora in East Gojjam, one of the pioneering cooperatives in the country. He was also close friend of the former President Mengistu Haile Mariam and top officials of the Socialist government. Since the change of government in Ethiopia in May 1991, he is a political prisoner in Addis Ababa. See also similar poems in TYPE-B songs.

Here comes a donkey loaded with vetch,
Yetnora became the origin of the producers' co-operative.

7. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ሞሰብ
አምራች ይፈርሳል አይዞህ ግለሰብ።

ah ^ግyya mä ^{aa}a~tä^ፀna mosäb,
am ^ግra~y ^ግfärsall ay ^ግzoh g ^ግläsäb.

Here comes a donkey loaded with *mosäb*,¹⁶
The producers' co-operatives will collapse, take comfort individual [farmers].

8. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ማር
ማን ይደራጃል ባምራች ማኅበር?

ah ^ግyya mä ^{aa}a~tä^ፀna mar,
mann y ^ፀddära < <all bam ^ግra~mah ^ፀbär?

Here comes a donkey loaded with honey,
Who will be organised in the producers' co-operatives?

9. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ካራ
የዘንድሮ ሰው ክሱ መከራ።

ah ^ግyya mä ^{aa}a~tä^ፀna karra,
yäzänd ^ግro säw k ^ግssu mäkära.

Here comes a donkey loaded with knife,
The people of our times complain too much.

10. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ጤፍ
ኧረ! እንዴት ሁኖ ይህ ቀን ይለፍ?

ah ^ግyya mä ^{aa}a~tä^ፀna ef,
ärä! ^ፀhddet huno y ^ፀh qän y ^ፀläf?

Here comes a donkey loaded with *ef*,¹⁷
How would this time be passed by?

11. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ጠላ
ያገራችን ሰው ወንድሙን ጠላ።

ah ^ግyya mä ^{aa}a~tä^ፀna älla,
yagära ~ ^ፀh säw wänd ^ፀmmun älla.

Here comes a donkey loaded with *älla*,¹⁸

¹⁶ In Gojjam and elsewhere in Ethiopia, *mosäb* or *mäsob* is a round-footed basket of woven straw on which ^ፀh <ära is placed when meal is eaten. See Amsalu Aklilu (1979:252).

¹⁷ «ef is a small-seed crop indigenous to the highland of Ethiopia, which is used to prepare the staple pan-cake bread known as ^ፀh <ära.

¹⁸ Locally or home brewed beer.

Our compatriots hated their brothers.

12. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ስንዴ
ወዴት ደረሰ መንግሥቱ ባንዴ?

*ah ʾyya mä^{aa}a~täðʾha s ʾhde,
wädet dārrässä mäng ʾstu bande?*

Here comes a donkey loaded with wheat,
Where did Mengistu go in a fleeting moment?¹⁹

13. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ንሳ
ተእንግዲህ ትግሬ ንዝ ህን አንሳ::

*ah ʾyya mä^{aa}a~täðʾha gwassa
tä ʾhgdiḥ t ʾgre gwaz ʾh ʾh ansa*

Here comes a donkey loaded with pile of gras
From now on [the] Tigre pick up your luggage.

6. TYPE-B SONGS

14. አፋፍ ላፋፍ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ድመት
መሬት ሰፍሮ ሰጠን የደርጉ መንግሥት::

*aḥaf laḥaf s ʾhed agäññähu d ʾmmät,
märet säfro sä^{aa}n yädärgu mäng ʾst.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found a cat,
The government of the Derg measured and gave us land.

15. አፋፍ ላፋፍ ስሄድ አገኘሁ አሞራ
እንዳይላሉ አበረ ከደርጎቹ ጋራ::

*aḥaf laḥaf s ʾhed agäññähu amora,
ʾhdaylallu abbärä kädärgo~u gara.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found an eagle,
Endaylallu conspired with those of the Dergs.

¹⁹ This word has a double meaning. Literally, the word: *bande*, or *band gize*, means ‘at one time, at once’. Thus, its first meaning refers to the immediate disappearance (all of a sudden, at once) of the former dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam betraying his people and his country to Zimbabwe, on 21 May 1991. The second and its hidden meaning refers to an important phenomenon that has happened in the history of Ethiopia. The word *banda*, refers to the irregular native soldiers of Ethiopia during the Italian occupation of 1936-1941 who betrayed their people and their country and collaborated with the Italians. Here, the poet criticizes Mengistu both for his immediate disappearance at a very crucial moment and for betraying his people and his country, see Getie Gelaye (1994: 195), Bahru Zewde (1991: 210).

16. **አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ቀረፎ
እንዳይላሉ ሮጠ ጥይቱን ታቅፎ።**
- afaf lafaf s^ጣhed agäññähu qäräfo,
ጣጥdaylallu ro^፳ä aጣyy ጣጥun taqq ጣfo.*
- While walking along the hilltop, I found a cinnamon,
Endaylallu run away, carrying his bullets.
17. **አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ቀይ ሥር
እንዳይላሉ ሞተ እባሕር ዛፍ ሥር።**
- afaf lafaf s^ጣhed agäññähu qäyy s^ጣr,
ጣጥdaylallu motä ጣbah ጣr zaf s^ጣr.*
- While walking along the hilltop, I found radish,
Endaylallu has died under the eucalyptus tree.
18. **አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ አንበሳ
ኢሕአዲግ ቢተኩስ እንዳይላሉ ፈሳ።**
- afaf lafaf s^ጣhed agäññähu anbässa,
ihadig bitäkkus ጣጥdaylallu fässa.*
- While walking along the hilltop, I found a lion,
Endaylallu farted when the EPRDF²⁰ fired.
19. **አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ አንበሳ
እንዳይላሉ ሮጠ በሽምብራው ማሳ።**
- afaf lafaf s^ጣhed agäññähu anbässa,
ጣጥdaylallu ro^፳ä bäsጣmb ጣraw masa.*
- While walking along the hilltop, I found a lion,
Endaylallu run away in the lentils field.
20. **አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ብረት
እሸቴ ገባበት በእንዳይላሉ ቤት።**
- afaf lafaf s^ጣhed agäññähu b ጣrät,
ጣšäte gäbbabbät bäs ጣጥdaylallu bet.*
- While walking along the hilltop, I found iron,
Eshete entered in the house of Endaylallu.
21. **አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ነብር
ፍርስርሱ ወጣ ያምራቹ ማኅበር።**

²⁰ EPRDF stands for Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, the current ruling party of Ethiopia.

*afaf lafaf s^ṁhed agäññähu näb^ṁr,
f^ṁr^ṁsr^ṁsu wä^{aa} yam^ṁra~u mah^ṁbär.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found a tiger,
The producers' co-operatives have disintegrated.

22. አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ቀበሮ
እንዳይላሉ ቀረ አዲስ አበባ ታስሮ።

*afaf lafaf s^ṁhed agäññähu qäbäro,
ṁndaylallu qärrä addis abäba tas^ṁro.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found a fox,
Endaylallu remained in Addis Ababa being imprisoned.

23. አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ሚዳቆ
እንዳይላሉ ቀረ አዲስ አበባ ታንቆ።

*afaf lafaf s^ṁhed agäññähu midaqqo,
ṁndaylallu qärrä addis abäba tanqqo.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found an antelope,
Endaylallu remained in Addis Ababa being hanged.

24. አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ትርንጎ
ኮሚቴ ቀረበት በቀን በቀን እርጎ።

*afaf lafaf s^ṁhed agäññähu t^ṁr^ṁngo,
komite qärräbbät bäqän bäqän^ṁrgo.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found a citrus fruit,
The committee were denied the daily yoghurt.

25. አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ቁንጫ
የኮሚቴ አባላት እንደ ወፍ ተንጫጫ።

*afaf lafaf s^ṁhed agäññähu qun^ṁፅፅa,
yäkomite abalat^ṁhddä wäf tändፅፅaፅፅa.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found a flea,
Members of the committee cried like birds.

26. አፋፋ ላፋፋ ስሄድ አገኘሁ ዝንጆሮ
ይግረማቸው ገባ በእንዳይላሉ ቢሮ።

*afaf lafaf s^ṁhed agäññähu z^ṁh^ṁäro,
y^ṁgräma~äw gäbba bä^ṁṁndaylallu biro.*

While walking along the hilltop, I found a baboon,
Yigremachew replaced Endaylallu in the office.

27. አፋፍ ላፋፍ ስሄድ አገኘሁ አሳማ
ኢሕአዲግ ደረሰች በነጠላ ጫማ።

afaf lafaf s^{hed} agäññähu asama,
ihadig därräsä~~bänä äla ämma.

While walking along the hilltop, I found a pig,
The EPRDF arrived putting on [shoddy] sandal shoes.

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