Linguistic Capacity Building - Tools for the inclusive development of Ethiopia

Janne Bondi Johannessen

Seminar on Capacity exchange – University of Oslo and Ethiopia

• Linguistic Capacity Building
  — Tools for the inclusive development of Ethiopia

• http://www.hf.uio.no/iln/om/organisasjon/tekstlab/prosjekter/Ethiopia/index.html
The Ethiopian challenge (and treasure)
  Many languages

The Norwegian challenge
  Fewer languages but grim history
The Sami nation – spans across Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia

The Sami languages:
A different language family (Uralic, not Indo-European)
Ole Henrik Magga

Born 12. Aug. 1947

The first president of the
[Link to Sami Parliament of Norway](https://www.samiparliament.no) 1989-1997

Professor of Finno-Ugric languages
at the University of Oslo

1898-1967: Sami language forbidden
in schools
Ethiopia


- The Ethiopian Education and training policy has as a specific objective to “To recognize the rights of nations/nationalities to learn in their language, while at the same time providing one language for national and another one for international communication.”
A multilingual country

- Ca. 90 languages (including sign language)
- 27 of these are used as a medium of instruction at schools
- 28 are regarded as endangered, but many are spoken by a sizeable number of speakers and still left as mainly oral languages.
Language important for sustainable democracy

It is impossible to see how education can be improved without improving the situation for all those who speak a minority language that is not, or only marginally used, for teaching in schools. If health personnel and patients cannot communicate with each other, health is not improved. This is particularly important with respect to the HIV/AIDS issue, as well as trachoma, and even personal hygiene. New plans in agriculture and the rules and situations in governance and justice do not reach people if language is an obstacle. Using the internet and communicating by e-mail is also impossible without a written language.
The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED) is a programme launched by Norad in 2012.

Linguistic Capacity Building was the only project led by the University of Oslo (in cooperation and then transfer of leadership) with AAU (main partner) and HU.

Main collaborators in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University:
Project Coordinator Dr. Binyam Sisay
Dr. Derib Ado
Dr. Zelalem Leyew
Dr. Ronny Meyer
Dr. Feda Negesse
Dr. Hirut Wolde-Mariam
Dr. Moges Yigezu
Prof. Baye Yimam

Hawassa University:
Dr. Fekede Menuta
Dr. Nigussie Meshesha
Main collaborators in Norway

**University of Oslo**
- Project Coordinator, Prof. Janne Bondi Johannessen (linguistics and language tech)
- Prof. Lutz Edzard (Semitic linguistics)
- Prof. Ruth Vatvedt Fjeld (lexicography)
- Prof. Elizabeth Lanza (multilingualism) (Director of Centre for Multiingualism, UiO)
- Prof. Unn Røyeneland (language planning)
- Prof. Jan Svennevig (political communication)
- Prof. Kjell Magne Yri (African linguistics)
- Dr. Lilja Øvrelid (language technology)
- Cand.philol: Kristin Hagen (lanugage technology staff)
- Dr. Anders Nøklestad (lanugage technology staff)
- Cand.philol. Joel Priestley (lanugage technology staff)

**Sør-Trøndelag University College**
- Dr. Rolf Piene Halvorsen (sign language)
- Lindsay Ferrara (sign language)

**Norwegian University of Science and Technology:**
- Prof. Björn Gambäck (language technology)
PhD candidates in Ethiopia

**Addis Ababa University:**
Andargachew Deneke
Pawlos Kassu
John Koang
Amanuel Raga
Melkeneh Seid
Binyam Ephrem Seyoum
Kassa Tilahun
Almaz Wasse

**Hawassa University:**
Solomon Getahun Assefa
Wolayte Bogale
Tsehay Abza Debo
Addisalem Tebikew

+ a number of MA grants for students from marginalised groups
Some of the PhD projects

• The Grammar Gayl: A dialect of Aari
• Nuer Grammar
• Verbal Morphology of Ethiopian Sign Language
• Phonology of Ethiopian Sign Language
• Linguistic Diversity, Ethnic Identity and The problems of Language Development Among the Southern Ethio-Semitic Languages of Gurage
• Language Use in Wolkite Town: A Study on Language Contact, Change and Social Function
• A Critical Linguistics Discourse Analysis of Development News in Ethiopian State Media'
Some outcomes

- New MA programme in Cultural and Multilingual Studies studies (HU)
- New MA programme in sign language (AAU).
- Increased number of PhD candidates in corpus linguistics, multilingual studies, descriptive linguistics (AAU)
- Orthographies for several languages (AAU/HU)
- Material (grammars, dictionaries, primers, and manuals) for educational purposes for disadvantaged spoken languages (AAU/HU)
In order to make the outcomes sustainable:

• Collaboration and network meetings with local educators and authorities
• Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (a region with many languages)
Activities (examples)

• March 2016, Hawassa, Thursday 10th and Friday 11th:
  • Networking workshop at Hawassa Central Hotel. The workshop is organized in collaboration with the Nationalities Council of SNNPR and with the presence of the Honorable Ato Lemma Gezume, Speaker of the Nationalities Council.
  • Such networking workshops with local officials and administrators are very important. They are believed to ensure that results developed in the project will be supported locally. So new orthographies, for example, will have a chance to be used in the schools.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-8:00</td>
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<td>8:00-8:10</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>9:00-9:10 am</td>
<td>Welcome and program outlines</td>
<td>Binyam Sisay</td>
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<td>10:15-10:45</td>
<td>Tea Break</td>
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<td>Girum, Taffese, Dejene and Abdulfetah</td>
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<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Progress and issues in the transcription of Hamar</td>
<td>Zinabu, Tesfaye and Samuel</td>
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<td>12:00-1:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>1:30-8:00</td>
<td>Discussion and trouble shooting on issues on transcription</td>
<td>Researchers</td>
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<td>3:30-4:00</td>
<td>Tea Break</td>
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<td>4:00-5:20</td>
<td>The way forward</td>
<td>Derib and Feda</td>
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<td>5:20-5:30</td>
<td>Closing remarks</td>
<td>Girma Mengistu</td>
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What does the capacity building project support?

- Field work for staff and PhDs
  - record language dialogues
  - Make in depth investigations of grammar and sound system with informants
- Transcription by assistants
- Travels to Norway for supervision, and international conferences (for staff and PhDs), laptops
- Support some publications
- Support MA grants for female students and students from specific languages.
- Not: PhD grants
- Not topping up of salaries for PhDs or staff.
Book: to be published in a UiO Open access series

- [https://www.journals.uio.no/index.php/osla/index](https://www.journals.uio.no/index.php/osla/index)
• Kjell Magne Yri: *School grammars with everyday vocabulary*
• Girma Mengistu Desta: *Tone in Sezo*
• Zelealem Leyew: *What is there in a Name? Personal names in Hadiyyisa*
• Moges Yigezu: *Aspects of the morphophonology of Hamar*
• Lutz Edzard: *On the role of South Arabia and Ethio-Semitic within a comparative Semitic lexicographical project*
• Nigussie Meskesh Mitike and Kjell Magne Yri: *Socio-Political Discourse and Communication in Sidaama Folk Media*
• Almaz Wasse Gelagay: *Norm Selection and Standardization in Gamo*
• Fekede Menuta and Ruth Vatvedt Fjeld: *The pragmatics of cursing an insult in Gurage culture with some comparison to Nordic cursing*
• Tsehay Abza: *Consonants and vowels in the Western Gurage variety Inor*
• Baye Yimam: *Phonological Features of the Amharic Variety of South Wällo*
• Ronny Meyer: *The Ethiopic Script: Linguistic Features and Socio-Cultural Connotations*
• Hirut Woldemariam: *Contesting identities in multilingual settings as the challenge of mother-tongue education in Ethiopia: The case of Gamo*
• Derib Abo and Feda Negesse: *Visual Recognition of Graphic Variants of Amharic Letters: Psycholinguistic Experiments*
• Binyam Sisay Mendisu: *Negation in Hamar*
• Shimelis Mazengia: *Some Observations on Hadiyyisa Orthography*
AAU

- Can be proud of the academic level of the Linguistics Department
- A trustworthy collaborator
- An important factor in the development of Ethiopia
- A good partner for Norwegian universities