# Sociolinguistic Survey Report of the Argobba Language of Ethiopia 

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## Contents

1. Argobba, the People and the language by Zelealem Leyew
1.1. The People
1.2. The Language: Phonology, Lexicon, Morphology, and Syntax
1.3. Conclusions
2. Argobba, Sociolinguistic Information and a Word List by Ralph Siebert
2.1. Sociolinguistic Information
2.2. Word List of 320-Items

Sketch Map

## 1. Argobba, the People and the Language

Zelealem Leyew

### 1.1. The People

The Argobba people are Moslems, and they inhabit the fragmented areas along Rift Valley in settlements such as Yimlawo, Gusa, Shonke, Berket, Keramba, Mellajillo, Metehara. According to Leslau (1959:251), there also were Argobba people around Harar, but their language had already shifted to Oromo at the time his article was written. As far as the recent census is concerned the Argobba people numbered around 40,000. By occupation, most of the Argobba people are traders; some of them are farmers.

### 1.2. The Language

According to Bender (1976:29), Argobba is a dialect of Amharic. Other linguists, however, such as Leslau, have considered it the closest relative of Amharic, not a dialect. So, one area of concern for linguists would obviously be to determine the status of Argobba in relation to Amharic. Argobba has been considered "dead"-and as a result, linguistic research on Argobba as a separate "language" has been very scarce, compared with the amount of research on other Semitic languages of Ethiopia.

In early November 1994, a survey team, including Dr. M. Brenzinger, R. Siebert, and myself, visited a town called Shewa-Robit where Argobba people were said to live in large numbers. And in fact we found that hundreds of Argobba people live in Shewa-Robit and the surrounding small rural villages. Some of them say they speak Argobba very well; others say they only speak a little; others say that they do not speak any Argobba at all. In general, we found that the majority of the Argobba citizens of this area do not actually speak Argobba.

They speak Amharic instead, and this is their native language. So in Shewa-Robit and the surrounding area, Amharic is predominant over Argobba, while we were told that in the area of Shonke, Oromo predominates over Argobba.

[^0]When I listened to Argobba people of Shewa-Robit and the surrounding villages as they spoke their own "language", it seemed to me that they spoke Amharic-but in a different fashion.

In other words, a person who knows Amharic will understand what Argobba people are speaking about-i.e., the two languages are "mutually intelligible".

Argobba people of Shewa-Robit and the surrounding areas speak Amharic as their L1, and some of the younger people acquire a "broken" Argobba from the elderly people. The elderly people themselves are not very confident about their proficiency in Argobba. Some of them remarked that they very often "mix" Argobba and Amharic. They also said that Amharic predominates over Argobba and that, as a result, they were not able to fully use and maintain Argobba.

Argobba people of Shewa-Robit and the surrounding villages use their language, even though it may not be "pure", whenever they are together in groups, and when they intend to identify themselves as distinct from the rest. In all other situations, they use Amharic, even among family members. It is also worth mentioning here that people of the Shewa-Robit area are not usually aware of a language called "Argobba" which is supposed to be different from Amharic. They are aware of the fact that there are Moslems called "Argobba"-but they hardly regard Argobba as a distinct language. On the other hand, every person of this area is aware of Amharic, Oromo, and Afar as languages spoken in and around Shewa-Robit.

As far as the knowledge of other languages is concerned, during our short survey to this area, we only found very few Argobba individuals who spoke Afar, and there seems to be no tendency for Argobba people to shift to Afar (even though such a shift might be expected, given the similar religious background). The reason is, perhaps, that the number of Afar people in the Shewa-Robit area is not very high, and contacts between these two groups are infrequent, given the fact that they differ not only linguistically, but also culturally. As a language for an Argobba to "shift to", Afar is not as important as Amharic or Oromo.

As I mentioned, earlier, all Argobba people of Shewa-Robit and the surrounding rural villages always recommend Shonke, a settlement nearly 150 kms NW from Shewa-Robit ( 60 or 70 kms by car, the rest on foot). Shonke in southern Wollo is said to be inhabited by "original" Argobbas who speak a
"pure" Argobba. On the other hand, we have also heard that in Shonke there is close language contact between Argobba and Oromo. As a result, there is a situation where "language shift" occurs from Argobba to Oromo.

We did not visit Shonke on this survey trip, but we were successful in finding three people from Shonke who now have moved to Shewa-Robit and a small village about 5 kms outside Shewa-Robit.

The oldest of these three people (a man of about seventy years of age) is a speaker of Amharic and Argobba, and he is equally perfect in Oromo. His nephew (about forty-five years) and his daughter (about thirty) only speak Amharic and Argobba. These two have moved to this area about ten years ago, but they have maintained contacts with their relatives in Shonke, and there are frequent visits both ways.

### 1.2.1. Questions to be addressed

In this paper, I shall raise three linguistically important issues, and I shall attempt to add some recent insights to the information which has been provided in previous publications. The questions are:

- Is Argobba a "dead" language?
- How similar is Argobba to Amharic?
- Is Argobba a dialect of Amharic or an independent language?

In order to answer the third question, I think one first has to raise another theoretical issue:

- How do we determine the status of a "dialect" vs. a "language"?
or, in other words:
- How can we make a clear cut distinction between the dialect of a certain language and a separate language?

According to Hudson (1980:35), if speakers of two languages can understand each other, then the varieties concerned are instances of the same language; otherwise they are not.

However, this will raise another question, i.e.:

- How do we determine "mutual intelligibility"? Does "mutual intelligibility" mean that the general concepts of the other speaker are understood? Or does it mean everything the other speaker says is understood?

Another problem with the criterion of "mutual intelligibility" is, according to Crystal (1987:25), that dialects of the same language are not always "mutually intelligible" in their spoken form. Hudson (quoting Matthews, 1980:37) even says that no real distinction can be drawn between a "language" and a "dialect". We shall return to this issue after the data have been presented.

### 1.2.2. Phonology

The Argobba consonant phonemes are more or less the same as those of Amharic except for the velar fricative $x$ which is common in the former, but not in the latter.

### 1.2.2.1. Consonants

|  | t |  | k | $?$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| b | d |  | g |  |
|  | t' |  | k' |  |
| f | s | J | $\underline{x}$ | h |
|  | z | 3 |  |  |
|  |  | t |  |  |
|  |  | d3 |  |  |
|  |  | t5' |  |  |
| m | n | n |  |  |
|  | 1 |  |  |  |
|  | r |  |  |  |
| w |  | j |  |  |

### 1.2.2.2. Vowels

Argobba, like Amharic, has the following seven vowel phonemes:

| i | $\neq$ | $u$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $e$ | ä | 0 |
|  | $a$ |  |

### 1.2.3. Lexical Comparisons: A Word List

The following word list, in addition to the usual survey word list, was taken from informants at Shewa-Robit. Note: In the transcription of geminated consonants, the entire symbol is written twice (e.g., $\int / \iint$ or $\mathrm{t} \int / \mathrm{t} \int \mathrm{t} \int$ or $\mathrm{t} \int^{\prime} / \mathrm{t} \int^{\prime} \mathrm{t} \mathrm{J}^{\prime}$ ).

| Gloss | Amharic | Argobba |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| acacia | grrar | ant'erfa |
| accused | kässäsä | käsäsäj |
| animal | mnstsa | duda |
| antelope | dykula | dıkula |
| ape | t'ot'a | t'ot'tefa |
| ate | bälla | ıl2a |
| aunt | akıst | awozaze |
| back | dzerßa | grdzo |
| bad | mät'fo | xosa |
| bald | mälat'a | lämat'a |
| bamboo | k'rrk'ıha | k'rrk'ıa |
| banana | muz | muz |
| bark | lit' | lyxtt' |
| barley (sorghum) | mafilla | mafila |
| beans | bak'ela | bäk'ela |
| beard | t'im | t'im |
| beautiful | t'rru | t'rus |
| bed | alga | alga |
| been | n ¢ | nıW |
| belly | hod [kärs] | xärs |


| between | mähal | guft |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| big | t+llık' | laxim |
| big bird | amora | amora |
| bird | wäf | of |
| black | t'kur | t'äk'wara |
| blade | mplats' | fäl?a |
| blanket | bardlıßs | bırdlıßs |
| blind | ajnä stwır | ajnä bäsir |
| blood | däm | däm |
| bone | at'mnt | xat'm |
| bottle | t'ärmus | t'ärmus |
| bought | gäzza | Sirraj |
| box | sat'tn | sat'm |
| branch | k'rrnts'af | fint'e |
| bread | dabbo | dabo |
| breast | t'ut | t'tw |
| brother | wändım | xxıje |
| brought | amät't'a | amät'aj |
| brown | buni | bun |
| bullet | t'jjtt | t'jjıt |
| buttocks | k'it' | fägara |
| cabbage | gommän | gomän |
| carrot | karot | str |
| cat | dımmät | adure (Or.) |
| chair | wämbär | ombär |
| chameleon | tstst | garära |
| changed | läwwot’ä | leRewot' |
| cheek | gunt ${ }^{\text {' }}$ | guntS'e |
| chief | Sum | Sum |
| cliff | gädäl | gäßäla |
| cloth | $1+\beta s$ | säro |
| coffee | bunna | bunn |
| cough | t'ıd3d3a | t'angi |
| counted | k'ot't'ärä | k'ot'äraj |
| cousin | jaktst-lıd3 | jewazaze |


| (of $A$ ) |  | $1+3$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| cousin | jagot-lıd3 | jeamuzaze |
| (of $U$ ) |  | ${ }_{1+1} 3$ |
| cow | lam | lam |
| crocodile | azo | azo |
| dark | t $\dagger$ 'älläma | tJ'eläma |
| date | k'än | k'ent? |
| deaf | dänk'oro | dänk'oro |
| dish | sahtn | saxin |
| dog | wtfea | wef?a |
| donkey | ahtija | xansi3a |
| door | mäzgıja | mäsara |
| dove | ${ }_{\text {rrg }}{ }^{2} \beta$ <br> [wänäse] | wänäse |
| drank | t'ät't'a | Sets |
| dress | k'ämis | k'emis |
| ear | d3oro | tzin |
| earth | mıdır | mıdır |
| eucalyptus tree | bahır zaf | baxir zaf |
| eye | ajn | 2jin |
| face | fit | fttje |
| far | ruk' | gärr |
| farm | mra | xars |
| fat | wäfram | amud |
| father | abbat | aba |
| fell | wäddäk'ä | ıddäk' |
| female | set | $\mathrm{m} \ddagger \mathrm{ft} \mathrm{a}$ |
| fence | at'rr | xat'tr |
| finger | t'at | t'awt |
| fire | tsat | tsat |
| fish | asa | asa |
| flood | gorf | gorf |
| flower | aßäßa | aß̈̈ßa |
| foolish | толл | monn |
| foot | tgır | äßgır |


| forehead | grmbar | grmbar |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| forest | dänn | xätöf |
| found | agänлä | raxäw |
| fox | k’äßäro | mndzedelo |
| fruit | frre | frre |
| generous | t $\int[g]$ är | gär |
| ginger | zfnd3iby | d3ind3ibıl |
| goat | ffijäl | t'aj |
| gold | wärk' | wärk' |
| grand m(f) | ajat | mıxat |
| grand $s(d)$ | jäld ${ }^{\text {a }}$ ld3 | asuma |
| grass | sar | stipr |
| greedy | stssitam | säsätu |
| green | arängwa-de | arängwa-de |
| guinea fowl | d3igra | d3igra |
| gun | t'ämänd3a | t'ämänd3a |
| hair | s'ägur | dänana |
| harvest | ats'tr'edä | adädäj |
| heart | lıb | lıb |
| hen | doro | doro |
| honey | mar | dus |
| horn | k'änd | k'rrara |
| horse | färäs | färäs |
| house | bet | bet |
| husband | bal | btitl |
| hut | god3d30 | god3d3o |
| hyena | d3iß | d3iw |
| ice | bärädo | bärädo |
| injera | mndzera | gand 3 rr |
| insulted | säddäßä | sädäwäj |
| iron | błrät | bırät |
| jumped | zällälä | zäläl |
| knee | gulßät | gulot |
| leaf | kt''äl | xit'al |
| learned | tämarä | tämar |


| left | $\mathrm{g}[\mathrm{f}] \mathrm{ra}$ | gura?a |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| lemon | lomi | lemone |
| light (vs. dark) | brrhan | zan |
| lion | ambäsa | xambäsa |
| lip | känfär | mints'r |
| long | gind | gind |
| lung | samba | xäfa |
| $m(f)$-in-law | amats, | xamats |
| male | wond | wär $\beta$ a |
| man | säw | säw |
| married | agäbba | apat |
| mattress | frraf | frraf |
| meat | stga | d3aw |
| monkey | d3and3ero <br> [zınd3ero] | d3andzero |
| mother | mnnat | tatte |
| mountain | tärara [gora] | gora |
| mouth | af | af |
| mule | bäk'lo | bäk'lo |
| nail | t'ffrr | t9'fur |
| narrow | t'äbaß | t'abaw |
| near | k'ir $\beta$ | k'urßa |
| neck | angät | xaygät |
| nephew (of $B$ ) | jäwondım-lıd3 | jexıje lidz |
| nephew (of S) | jüht-lıd3 | 2xttije lıd3 |
| new | addis | hagıs |
| night | let | jet |
| nose | afnnts'a | tıntt |
| oak | warka | k'iltu |
| old (ps.) | fimagılle | mffura |
| onion | Smkurt | Smkurt |
| orange | brrtukan | brrtukan |
| ox | bäre | bä?ra |
| paper | bärbäre | bärbäre |
| peas | atär | atär |


| physician | hakim | xakim |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| pig | asama | bodzeme |
| pigeon | k'ok' | k'ok'ha |
| pillow | trras | mäntıre-Refa |
| plant | täkıl | täkal |
| ploughed | arräsä | haräs |
| poor | dıha | dixa |
| pot | tofa | tofa |
| potato | dinnıts | dinıt $\int$ |
| pulled | gottätä | gotätaj |
| punish | k'ät't'a | k'ät'aj |
| pushed | gäffa | gäfa?j |
| rabbit | t'int $\int$ el | hilu |
| radish | k'äjj sır | k'äjix ssr |
| rain | zinaß | zinawtt |
| read (he) | anäbbäßä | anäbaßäj |
| red | k'äjj | k'äj |
| rich | habtam | dämam |
| right | k'äņ | k'en |
| river | wänz | zär |
| road | mängäd | xıjıma |
| roof | t'ara | t'ara |
| root | Sır | Str |
| ran | rot'ä | trawät' |
| sack | ke ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | ke ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |
| sand | a ${ }^{\text {ewa }}$ | a ${ }^{\text {ewa }}$ |
| sat | täk'ämmät'ä | ık'emät |
| saw | ajjä | xaje |
| school | tmmırbet | atmmırtbet |
| sea | bahır | bixir |
| seed | zär | zär |
| seedling | ftl | ftl |
| servant | afkär | afkär |
| sew | zärra | zär?aj |
| sheep | bäg | xara |


| shoe | t5'amma | tf'amma |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| short | atj'ty'r | haty'r |
| sickle | mat ${ }^{\text {'id }}$ | mäk'äd |
| sickness | hłmäm | mtt't' |
| silver | bırr | burtt 5 i |
| sister | thit | httrje |
| skin | k'oda | oda |
| slave | barja | ¥zäbo |
| small | tinnt | aygulu |
| smell | $\int_{\text {ftta }}$ | ¢tta |
| snake | ${ }_{\text {1 }} \mathrm{\beta} \times \mathrm{\beta}$ | wärro |
| soil | afär | afär |
| sold | Set'ä | as?amaj |
| soldier | wätaddär | wätadär |
| son <br> (daughter) | ldd3 | ${ }_{\text {l }}{ }^{\text {d }} 3$ |
| sorghum | gäßs | gäws |
| spear | t'or | xär $\beta$ |
| step- <br> father | mnd3eraabbat | mndzera abaw |
| stepmother | mndzeramnnat | and3era tatew |
| step-S(D) | mndzera- <br> lid3 | mindzera lid3 |
| stick | bttrr | bart |
| stone | dıngaj | gindzela |
| student | tämari | tämari |
| sugar | Sägkor | fıkwar |
| cane | agäda | ageda |
| tall | räd3d3im | gıdär |
| taught | astämarä | astämaraj |
| teacher | astämari | astämari |
| teff | t'ef | t'ef |
| thief | leßa | leßa |
| thin | k'äts'ty'n | k'ets'in |
| tin | k'ork'oro | k'ork'oro |


| tomato tongue | timatim mılas | $\underset{\text { arat }}{\text { tmatm }}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| tooth | t'rrs | Stn |
| towel | fot'a | mıxtdare |
| trader | näggade | nägade |
| tree | zaf | zaf |
| trousers | surri | suri |
| ugly | ask'äjjami | ask'äjami |
| uncle | aggot | ammo |
| wall | gıdgıdda | grdgıda |
| washed | at't'äß̈ä | xät'äw |
| water | wiha | txwa |
| wedding | särg | dexir |
| went | hedä | xäjıd |
| white | nats'ts' | zaxi |
| wide | säffi | raxi |
| wife | mist | mfft |
| wing | kımf | kımf |
| wise | awak'i | xawaki |
| wood | mntf'et | xints'tt |
| wore | läbbäsä | läwäs |
| worked | särra | gaparaj |
| worm | ttl | buk'eta |
| wrote | s'afä | t'a?af |
| yellow | bitf'a | btt ${ }^{\text {'a }}$ |
| young | wät't'at | wät't'at |

### 1.2.3.1. Conclusions from the Word List

There are 250 words in the above word list. Among these words, 188 are cognates. If this word list is considered representative, Argobba and Amharic have about 75 percent of their vocabulary in common.

### 1.2.4. Morphology and Syntax

### 1.2.4.1. Nominal Morphology

### 1.2.4.1.1. Pronouns

The Argobba independent personal pronouns can be presented as follows.

|  | singular | plural |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | an | inna |
| 2 m | ank | ankum |
| f | ant $\int$ | - |
| 3 m | iwwat | ìllä $ß$ |
| f | ijjat |  |

The $1 \mathrm{~s} ., 1 \mathrm{pl}$., 2 ms ., and 2 fs . seem to be very similar with Amharic, even though there are minor differences such as the following:

|  | Argobba | Amharic |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | an | ine |
| 2 m | ank | antä |
| 2 f | ant $\int$ | ant $\int^{\prime} \mathrm{i}$ |
| 1 p | inna | inna |

On the other hand, the 2 pl ., 3 ms ., 3 fs ., and 3 pl . are different from Amharic. A historical and comparative investigation of other Semitic languages would be needed to explain the divergence.

### 1.2.4.1.2. Possessive pronouns

The possessive pronouns of Argobba are shown as follows:

|  | singular | plural |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | ijo | inna |
| 2 m | iwwat | axum |
| 2 f | af | - |
| 3 m | iwat | illä $\beta$ |
| 3 f | ijjat |  |

Compare the above Argobba pronouns with the following Amharic data.

|  | singular | plural <br> jenna |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | jene | jennantä |
| 2 m | jeantä | jen |
| 2 f | jeant $\int \mathrm{i}$ | - |
| 3 m | jersu | jennärsu |
| 3 f | jerswa |  |

Except for the 1 pl . form, all other possessive pronouns are strikingly different. This would deserve a study.

### 1.2.4.1.3. Person markers

The person marker inflections of Argobba follow. (The verb fätfts 'drink', perfect, serves as example.)

|  | singular | plural |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Set 5 t -exu | Set $\int$ tf-ena |
| 2 m | SetStS-ex | ¢et $\int$ tf-exum |
| 2 f | iet $\int t 5-\mathrm{e} \int$ | - |
| 3 m | Set $5 t 5-$ | Set $5 t \int-\mathrm{ej}$ |
| 3 f | Set $5 \mathrm{t} \int-\mathrm{et} \int \mathrm{t} \int$ | - |

Compare this with the Amharic person and aspect inflections which are presented as follows:

|  | singular | plural |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | - ahu | -an |
| 2 m | -ah | $-\mathrm{at} \int \mathrm{t} \int$ ihu |
| 2 f | $-\mathrm{a} \int$ | - |
| 3 m | -a | -u |
| 3 f | $-\mathrm{at} \int \mathrm{t} \int$ | - |

Except for the plural forms of the second and third person, others are quite similar.

### 1.2.4.1.4. Object

Like the Subject, the Direct Object (DO) is also marked in the verb, in a pattern similar to that of Amharic.
an íwwaton irädexw - aj
I him helped - obj (3ms)
I helped him.
an ijjaton irädexw - aja
I her helped - obj (3fs)
I helped her.
an asin irädexu - $\int$
I you(f) helped - obj (2fs)
I helped you.
an axon irädexu - x
I you(m) helped - obj (2ms)
I helped you.
an illämin irädexw - ajim
I them helped - obj (3pl)
I helped them.
an axumin irädeku - xum
I you(pl) helped - obj (2pl)
I helped you.

### 1.2.4.1.5. Number

Plural is marked by the morpheme -at $\int t \int$ and $-\mathrm{t} \int \mathrm{t} \int$, which is very similar to the Amharic -ot $\int \mathrm{t} \int$-wot $\int \mathrm{t} \int$.

| Gloss | singular | plural |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| gun | sira | sirä-tfts |
| goat | taji | taji-t5t5 |
| ox | bara | bara-tfts |
| house | bet | bet-at5ts |
| man | säw | säw-attts |
| woman | niftJa | niftja-tsts |

### 1.2.4.1.6. Gender

Gender is either marked by the independent words wärbär 'male' and näftfa 'female' or by the post-positional inflections of verbs. Compare the Argobba -it $\mathrm{f} \int \mathrm{f}$ and -iti with the Amharic -u and -itu or -wa that stand for definiteness of masculine and feminine genders.
wärbär adur-itttfi zälläl-[zero]
male cat-def. (m) jump-3ms
The male cat jumped.
niftfa adur - iti zälläl - ätfts
female cat-def.(f.) jump - $3 f s$
The female cat jumped.
lid3 - itftfi itf'awat - [zero]
child-def.( $m$ ) play - $3 m s$
The boy played.
lid3 - iti itf'awot - ätfts
child-def.(f) play - 3fs
The girl played.
säw - itftfi mät't' - [zero]
man-def.( $m$ ) come-3ms
The man came.
nijts - iti mät't' - ätfts
woman-def.(f) come-3fs
The woman came.

The masculine and feminine gender is not only marked in the N (in line with definite marker morphemes) but also in verbs. In verbs (perfect aspect), the Argobba empty morpheme [zero] and -ät $5 \mathrm{t} \int$ stand for the masculine and feminine gender, whereas in Amharic this is -ä and -ät ft .

### 1.2.4.2. Verbal Morphology

### 1.2.4.2.1. Passive

In Argobba, passivization is marked by the morpheme /i-/ preceding the verb stem and then by geminating the first root consonant of the verb.

| iwwat hent | he caught |
| :--- | :--- |
| iwwat ihhents | he was caught |
| iwwat amäsagen | he praised |
| iwwat | he was praised |
| ammäsagen |  |
| iwwat gäddäl | he killed |
| iwwat iggedäl | he was killed |
| iwwat märrät' | he elected |
| iwwat immerät' | he was elected |
| iwwat särräk' | he stole |
| iwwat isseräk' | he was stolen |

### 1.2.4.2.2 Causative

Like in Amharic, the Argobba causative marker is as- which is prefixed to the verb stem.

| an t'äraxexwaj | I called |
| :--- | :--- |
| an as-t'’̈raxexwaj | I caused to call |
| an as-t'äraxebïläw | I will cause to call |
| an gäddßlexu | I killed |
| an as-gäddälexu | I caused to kill |
| an as-gäddälexubiläw | I will cause to kill |

### 1.2.4.2.3. Case: Accusative

The accusative marker in Argobba is -n like in Amharic.
an iwwat-on irädexwaj
I he-acc. helped
I helped him.
an ijjat-on irädexwaja
I she-acc. helped
I helped her.
an illam-in irädexwajim
I they-acc. helped
I helped them.
an af-in irädexwuf
I you(f)-acc. helped
I helped you.
an ax-on irädexux
I you(m)-acc. helped
I helped you.
an ankum-in irädekuxum
I you(pl.)-acc. helped
I helped you.

### 1.2.4.2.4. Conditional

The conditional clause marker in Argobba is the morpheme inti-, a morpheme whose form differs from the Amharic kä-.

| inti - sämejexu | If I hear |
| :--- | :--- |
| inti - sämeje | If you(f) hear |
| inti - sämejeh | If you $(m)$ hear |
| inti - säma | If he hears |
| inti - sämatdt | If she hears |
| inti - sämena | If we hear |
| inti - säma'aj | If they hear |

### 1.2.4.2.5. Gerundive

In Argobba, gerundive is shown as follows. Compare it with the Amharic data.

| Argobba | Amharic | Gloss |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| bäj-Re | bälli-t $\int \mathrm{e}$ | I having eaten |
| bäj-Re | bäl-tä | You(f) having eaten |
| bäj-Rex | bäl-täh | You(m) having eaten |
| bäj-Ro | bäl-to | He having eaten |
| bäj-Ra | bäl-ta | She having eaten |
| bäj-Ranä | bäl-tän | We having eaten |
| bäj-Räxum | bäl-tatfţihu | You(pl) having eaten |
| bäj-Ram | bäl-täw | They having eaten |

### 1.2.4.2.6. Jussive

The Jussive has a pattern which is similar to that of Amharic, as illustrated in the following lists.

| Argobba | Amharic | Gloss |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| li-xid | li-hid | Let me go! |
| inni-xid | inni-hid | Let us go! |
| ji-xid | ji-hid | Let him go! |
| ti-xid | ti-hid | Let her go! |
| ji-xid-u | ji-hid-u | Let them go! |

### 1.2.4.2.7. Imperative

As we can see in the following data, the Argobba imperative form is similar to that of Amharic.

| Argobba | Amharic | Gloss |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| tä-k'ämätfts | tä-k'mät ${ }^{\text {'t }}$ ' | You(f) sit! |
| tä-k'ämat' | tä-k'ämmät' | You(m) sit! |
| tä-k'ämät'u | t'ä-k'ämmät'u | You(pl) sit! |

### 1.2.4.2.8. Reciprocity

Reciprocity in Argobba is marked by reduplication of the penultimate radical of the verb root (which is similar to Amharic), and by prefixation of 1 - along with gemination of the first radical of the verb root (which is exactly the same as the passive construction).
illäm $\mathfrak{i}$-mmet-et- aj
They res-hit-res- 3pl
They hit each other.
innam i-mmet-et- ajna
We res-hit-res- $1 p l$
We hit each other.
ankum i-mmit-et- ajhum
You res-hit-res- $2 p l$
You hit each other.

### 1.2.5.2.9. Infinitive

The morpheme mä- is the infinitive marker both in Argobba and in Amharic, as shown in the following data.

| Gloss | Infinitive |
| :--- | :--- |
| to eat | m-lä? |
| to drink | mä-Stfit |
| to gallop | ma-baläß |
| to come | mänäit |
| to sleep | mää̆'it |
| to cut | mä-k'umät' |

### 1.2.4.2.10. Negation

The discontinuous morpheme a-m indicates negation in Argobba. Compare this with Amharic al-m.

Aff. vs. Neg.
an illäjäw vs. an a-bilexu-m
$I$ ate vs. I didn't eat
íwwat illa vs. íwwat a-bìläia-m
He ate vs. He didn't eat
ijjat laPat $\int t \int$ vs. ijjat abiläPätftf-im
She ate vs. She didn't eat
illäm iläZajj vs. illäm abläPaj-im
They ate vs. They didn't eat

### 1.2.4.3. Word Order

Argobba, like Amharic, has an S-O-V word order.
ł̀lläm kasan käsäsaj
they Kasa accused
They accused Kasa.
iwwat ixut $\int t \int \mathrm{im}$ kopaj
he water pour
He poured water.
For more morphological and syntactic information, also cf. the following Argobba sentences.
a - kasa bäßar -itft $\dot{\text { i }}$ - gefn
of - kasa ox - pl passive-found
Kassa's ox is found.
äwwat-ina ìwwat mist mät't'-aj
he-and his wife came-3pl
He and his wife came.
iwwat bä-mäkina mät't'
he by-car came
He came by car.
iwwat bä-mäkina timaje mät't'
he by-car yesterday came
He came by car yesterday.

In the first sentence, the prefix $\mathbf{a}$ - stands for possessive genitive like the jä- in Amharic.

In the second sentence, we find -ina as a conjunction, which is identical to the Amharic morpheme. The preposition bä- in Argobba is the same as in Amharic both in form and position as shown in the third and fourth sentences. In the fourth sentence, we also see that the Argobba time adverbials occur before the verb, which is also true for Amharic.

Cf. also the following Argobba data.
an ä-t?ät' säräw intä-gäßja Seräxew
I of-cotton cloth from-market bought
I bought a cotton cloth from the market.
an dimma ä-t'it' säräw intä-gäßja serixew
I good of-cotton cloth from-market bought
I bought a good cotton cloth from the market.
anxand dimma ä-t'it' säräw intä-gäßya Serixew
I one good of-cotton cloth from-market bought
I bought one good cotton cloth from the market.
In the first sentence the "source" genitive marker is $\ddot{\mathbf{a}}$ - as in $\mathbf{\mathbf { d }}-\mathbf{t}$ ' $\mathbf{t} \mathbf{t}$ ' 'of cotton' which modifies the N , säräw 'cloth'.

In the second sentence, the adjective dmma 'good' appears before the modified NP, ä-t't't' säräw 'of cotton cloth'.

In the third sentence, the quantifier and 'one' occurs before the NP, dłmma ä-t'tt' säräw 'good cotton cloth'.

In both configurations or structures, Argobba and Amharic are very similar.
At last, the question words of Argobba shall be considered
maxt $\int$ 'itiftf-in ma käfät-äj
door-acc. who opened-obj
Who opened the door?
maxt $\int$ 'itift $\int$-in tet näj
door-acc. where is
Where is the door?
maxt ${ }^{\prime}$ 'itift $\int$ etga i-kefät
door when passive-opened
When was the door opened?
amanäj maxtf'ita ì-kefät
whose door passive-opened
Whose door was opened?
It is obvious from the above representative examples that Argobba question words are similar to those of Amharic, both in form and distribution.

### 1.3. Conclusions

The data which were presented above are of limited scope, and this short presentation does not allow for strong conclusions. However, while keeping in mind that the survey data may be representative of only a limited area (they were gathered in one of the seven villages of the southern Argobba area), I should like to forward the following answers to the three questions I raised in the introductory part.

Argobba is very closely related to Amharic. The phonological similarity is about $95 \%$. Their lexical similarity is about $75 \%$ (Leslau even gives the figure of $84 \%, 1970: 13$ ). And, above all: the two languages are about $85 \%$ similar in their morphology which is believed to be more resistant to change than their phonology or lexicon. Syntactically, too, the two languages were seen to be more or less identical.

For this reason, I suggest that Argobba and Amharic are dialects of one another, not independent languages.

If, however, Argobba is regarded as a language, then it is a language whose present status neither is "dead" nor healthily "alive"-but a "language" on the verge of extinction.

As a final point, I recommend that further data should be elicited in addition to the data collected on the present survey. Such data should be collected on trips to different "Argobba" speaking areas, especially Shonke, so that on the
basis of fresh comprehensive data the actual status of Argobba can be identified with more confidence. Is Argobba in fact a "dialect", and is it on the way to "extinction"?

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## 2. Argobba, Sociolinguistic Information and a Word List Ralph Siebert

### 2.1. Sociolinguistic Information

This S.L.L.E. report presents findings from a short survey trip (November $7-8,1994)$ to the area of Shewa-Robit in the Northern Shewa Administrative Region. The trip was undertaken by Dr. Matthias Brenzinger from Cologne University, Zelealem Leyew from the Institute of Language Studies (I.L.S.) at Addis Ababa University, and Ralph Siebert from the I.E.S. at S.A.U.

The main aim of the trip was to evaluate the language use of the Argobba people.

Our working hypothesis was this: The Argobba people slowly but surely abandon their mother tongue (or "dialect") in favor of Amharic which is the closest linguistic relative. In other words: we assumed that a shift of "dialects" had already taken place, and that only fractions of the Argobba society still spoke Argobba regularly.

Our instruments of research were: (a) sociolinguistic questionnaires, (b) oral communication, and (c) a 320-item word list.

In addition, Zelealem Leyew was also interested in collecting grammatical and morphological data, some of which are included with this report.

We were mainly looking for informants from the Shewa-Robit area, since this is said to be the main area of the Argobba people. After we had followed a track not far from Goze (a village very close to Shewa-Robit), and as we were taking a road to the north, we met a group of Argobba men who were harvesting maize. Two of them were willing to act as informants.

Zelealem Leyew started to take an Argobba word list, but after having transcribed approximately thirty words he broke off, because he had the impression that he was only given Amharic words (but with affixes such as -ni). Zelealem's interpretation was that his informant, aware of only supplying Amharic words, artificially attempted to maintain something like a "specific Argobba feature" by shaping the words in this particular way.

The respondent then informed us that a different variety of Argobba was spoken in Shonke. He said the Shonke variety of Argobba was so "pure" that Argobba people in Shewa-Robit were not able to comprehend it.

Shonke is located in the Kemise Woreda District, near the river Bork'anna. Kemise is a different administrative region. Since we had no supporting letters for this area, and there was no opportunity to supply these, we were not able to visit there.

We then found another informant in Meriye (a village approximately 5 kms east of Shewa-Robit), a man who was born in Shonke but had moved to Shewa-Robit fifteen years ago. While I took the Shonke word list, other Argobba people sat close by, and as they listened to us they commented that they did not understand the Argobba speaker who was supplying the word list (cf. the S.L.L.E. 320-item word list, attached at the end of this report).

In the same environment, I also administered a sociolinguistic questionnaire, and the following paragraphs summarize the answers which were given.

The respondent's first language is Shonke Argobba, but he says he also speaks Amharic and Oromo. His wife speaks a little Afar besides Shewa-Robit Argobba. His children and children living close by also speak fluent Ahewa-Robit Argobba although they develop this only after they have learned Amharic. So Amharic is the language they learn first, even before they start to go to school. The informant says he knows how to read Amharic ("especially when written with a typewriter'), and he says he also writes Arabic.

In his family (parents, wife, siblings, and children) the respondent says he uses Shewa-Robit Argobba. But with his friends, with the administrators of the village or the district, at work, or in the clinic-in all of these situations he uses Amharic. On the local or big market he uses Oromo in addition to Amharic. The respondent says he uses Shewa-Robit Argobba when dreaming, counting, or being angry. But his prayers at home he says in Shonke Argobba, while those who know Arabic use Arabic for their private prayers. In the mosque of Shonke, only Shonke Argobba is used, while in the mosque of Shewa-Robit Amharic is spoken.

The informant says he would not object if young Argobba people from Shewa-Robit would marry non-Argobba people, which happens often anyway. In Shonke, however, this kind of marriage would be impossible. An

Argobba man who would take a non-Argobba wife to Shonke might face rejection there.

To teach Arabic as a subject at school would be preferred in Shonke and in Shewa-Robit.

Villages in the Shonke area where Shewa-Robit Argobba is spoken are the following: Abdelager, Akiager, Goze, Hudad, Kilegirma, K'imbibit, Lench'u-ager, Meriye, T'eyo, T'ak'war, Ts'akolu, and Zehonka.

There is only one more village in the Shonke area where Shonke Argobba is spoken: T'olaha. About sixty to seventy families live in T'olaha, while about 120 families live in Shonke itself. A person who wants to learn Shonke Argobba should live in Shonke, and a person who wants to learn Shewa-Robit Argobba should live in Goze.

The informant was convinced that Shonke Argobba would continue to be spoken in the future despite the fact that children now learn other languages. The Argobba variety spoken in and around Shewa-Robit, so our informant claimed, would be extinct in the future, and one reason for this was that there was no Shewa-Robit Argobba program on the radio.

The best language for producing books and newspapers for the Shonke area would be Arabic, or else Amharic. These two languages were thought to be the best languages for this purpose. Nevertheless, the informant said he would be interested in attending literacy classes, if there were such classes, and that he would also send his children there. He said he would appreciate seeing something published in Shewa-Robit Argobba, and would be willing to pay more than 3 Ethiopian Birr (approx. 0.50 US\$) to buy books written in Shewa-Robit Argobba.

The informant (whose personal interests include farming, agriculture, and development of water supplies) told us that in the past he had made some attempts to write his own language (Shewa-Robit Argobba), using the Arabic script.

Concerning the Shonke Argobba variety, he told us that the same variety of Argobba was also spoken in Hararghe. He said that the people of Shonke were pastoralists, and that they had their own style of building houses. One particularly interesting piece of information was that the Shonke people do not like to send their children to school. The reason is that they want to prevent them
from being influenced by the non-Moslem world. We were told that for the same reason they do not go to court.

The Shonke Argobba people generally feel that their group is a prestigious group. It is said that this is the reason why they tend to look down on non-Shonke Argobba people.

### 2.2. S.L.L.E. 320-Item Word List

Date: November 8, 1994 Place: Shewa-Robit

| English <br> Gloss | Amharic | Argobba |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| all | hul:um | 'mulum |
| and | -n:a | 'na:3a |
| animal | tnstsa | du'da: |
| ant | gundan | gun'dan |
| arrow | k'c̈st | k'rst |
| ashes | amäd | 'hamed |
| ask | t'äj:äk'ä | t' $\mathrm{t}^{\prime} \mathrm{j} \varepsilon \mathrm{k}^{\prime} \varepsilon$ |
| at | bä-, wädä | be'tem:a |
| axe | mät'räbija |  |
| back $N$ | d3ärba | ?u'jo: |
| bad | mät'fo | 'met'fo |
| banana | muz | mu:z |
| bark V | t ${ }^{\text {'ohä }}$ | 'kel:ah |
| bark N | k'rffit | k'rr'fit |
| basket | k'rrts'at | 'k'rrts'a:t |
| bat | jälelit wäf | aja'to?uf |
| bathe | tat':äbä | tr'hətau |
| bear V | wäl:ädät |  |
| beard | t'im | t'i:m |
| beehive | k'äfo | k'e'fo |
| belly | hod | xars |
| big | tıl:ık' | la'fam |
| bird | wäf | 2o:If |
| bite V | näk:äsä | 'nekes |


| black | t'sk'ur | t'a'k ${ }^{\text {wa }}$ ara |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| blood | däm | $\mathrm{d} \varepsilon \mathrm{m}$ |
| blow V | näfa | 'nef: |
| bone | at'ınt | Pa't'nnt |
| bow $N$ | k'äst | k'sst |
| breast | t'ut | $\mathrm{t}^{\prime}{ }^{\text {u }}$ |
| bridge | dıld ${ }^{\text {j }}$ | 'dildi ${ }^{\text {j }}$ |
| brother | wəndım | 3):h |
| brown | bun:am:a | 'bun:a |
| buffalo | gos | go: 5 |
| burn | tək'at':ələ | tr'k'at' 1 |
| bush | k'ut': ${ }^{\text {'w }}$ at'o | k'ut'k ${ }^{\text {wa }}$ : ${ }^{\text {'o }}$ |
| buttocks | k'it' | k'i:t' |
| buy | gəz:a | 'Scr:a |
| canoe | d3alba |  |
| cat | dım:ət | Pa'dur: |
| chicken | doro | 'do:ro |
| chief | Sum, alək'a | Sum |
| child | ldd3 | lid3 |
| chin | agat ${ }^{\text {' }}$ | 'Ragets |
| claw | t'ffr | t ${ }^{\text {'u'far }}$ |
| clay | Sək'la | 'Sexla |
| clothing | lıbs | libs |
| cloud | dəm:əna | 'dona |
| cold A | k'əzk'az:a | k'ız'k'aza |
| cold $N$ | bırd | 'ratych |
| come | mət': ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | m t' |
| cook | abəs:ələ | 3a'ßesclctS |
| cough V | salə | 2ə'hələbal |
| count | $\mathrm{k}^{\mathrm{w}}$ 'ot':ərə | 'kwot'er |
| cow | lam | lam |
| crocodile | azo | 'Ra:zo |
| crooked | t'əmama | t'E'ma:ma |
| cup | kub:aj:a | ku'b:aja |
| cut | k'or:ət’ə | 'gom: 'te $^{\text {c }}$ |


| dance V | t ${ }^{\text {f }}$ ¢f:ərə | 't'efefer |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| dew | t'eza | 't'ereb |
| die | mota | 'mote |
| dig | $\mathrm{k}^{\text {w }}$ 'of: $\mathrm{rl}^{\text {r }}$ | $\mathrm{k}^{\mathrm{w}}$ of: Er ¢ |
| dirty | k'ofafa | k'o'fa: $\int a$ |
| dog | $\mathrm{w}_{\mathrm{f}}$ : a | 'wəfa |
| donkey | ahti:a | ha'sija |
| door | bər: | 'tar:a |
| down | wədə tat ${ }^{\text {S }}$ | 'wereda |
| drink V | t'ət': ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | ¢e:Ts |
| drum $N$ | k'əbəro | 'kebero |
| $d r y A$ | dırk' | 'derck' |
| dull | dənəz | dem'dam: |
| dust | aw:ara | 2a'w:ara |
| ear | dzoro | '?ize |
| earth | moret | 'mədir |
| eat | bal:a | 'Rel:a |
| egg | mnk'ulal | kə'laləfu |
| eight | sim:nnt | sə'mint |
| elbow | krrn |  |
| empty | bado | Pim'birtu |
| enter | gəb:a | we: |
| exit $V$ | wət': ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | วə:t |
| eye | $\mathrm{a}^{\mathrm{j}} \mathrm{n}$ | 2ع:n |
| eyebrow | SifaSift | Si'fa:n |
| fall V | wəd:ək’ə | 32'dek |
| farm $N$ | Irfa | 'ha:rs |
| fat $N$ | mora | 'həb:au |
| father | ab:at | Pau |
| fear $N$ | frrhat | 'firhat |
| feather | laba | 'laba |
| fence | at'rr | 'hat'ir |
| few | t'k'it | 'כŋgril:a |
| fight V | towag:a | to'ha:g |
| fingernail | t'ffr | t'r'fir |


| fire | tsat | RI'sat |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| fish | asa | '?a:sa |
| fishnet | jəasa mərəb | Pasa'gu:mo |
| five | am:Ist | ha'mist |
| flower | aßəßa | ${ }^{\prime} 2 \mathrm{a} \varepsilon<\beta$ a |
| fly $N$ | zımb |  |
| fly $N$ | bər:a | 'ber:عr |
| fool | mon: | mon |
| foot | rgır | 'Regir |
| forearm | knnd | tJoga'le: |
| forehead | gımbar | 'gimbar |
| four | arat: | har'2ct |
| frog | mnk'urarit | ?ınkwa- <br> ku'rit |
| fruit | fre | fa're: |
| full | mulu | 'muli |
| fur | jəawre s'əgur | ?abnesade' na:na |
| garbage | k'ofasa | k'o'Jafa met'ha:ja |
| gate | bər: | 'ker:a |
| give | sət': | 'hawai |
| go | hedə | 'xexl |
| goat | fij: l | t'a'2i: |
| God | igzi ${ }^{\text {jabher }}$ | 3a'wa: |
| gold | wərk' | werk' |
| good | t'rru | 'dım: ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |
| gourd | k'ıl | kə'lə |
| grass | sar | sə'Rər |
| grave | mnok'abır | 'k'\&bir |
| green | arəy-gwade | 2aray-'gwa:de |
| guts | jəhod ${ }^{\text {k'a }}$ | xersi'sira |
| hair | s'agur - | di'na |
| hand | ıd3: | '?indze |
| hard | t'ənkar:a | t'en'kar:a |


| harvest $N$ | məhər | $\mathrm{m} \varepsilon^{\prime} \mathrm{x}$ ¢ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| he | ırsu | 3u'wa:t |
| head | ras | dr'na |
| hear | səm:a | 'sım:ə |
| heart | lıb: | lıb |
| heavy | kəb:ad | 'x̌bid |
| here | ız:ih, ız:ix | ta're:n |
| hide V | dəb:ək’ə | 'Se: $\int \varepsilon g$ |
| hit | mət:a | 'met:a |
| hoe | doma | 'doma |
| hold | jazə | 'hẽz |
| honey | mar | 'duis |
| honeybee | nib |  |
| horn | k'ənd | k'E'rara |
| hot | muk' | hen'tsaja |
| house | bet | bet |
| how? | mndet, mnde | '2a:met |
| hundred | moto | bs'k'ıl |
| hungry | rabəw | ra'hawai |
| hunt $V$ | ad:ənว | 'heden |
| hunter | adan | 'Paday |
| hyena | d3ıb | d3əu |
| I | mne | 1a:n |
| jump | zal:ələ | 'zel:عl |
| kill | gəd:ələ | 'ged: $¢ 1$ |
| knee | gulbət |  |
| knife | bil:awa | bila:wa |
| know | aw:ək’ə | huk |
| lake | ha' ${ }^{\text {j }}$ ', kure | ha'ru:je |
| laugh | sak’ə | sa'hak |
| leaf | k't'əl | he't'a:l |
| left $A$ | gra | Pa'gura |
| leopard | nəbır | 'neßur |
| lie V | tagad:əmə | 'gad:sm |
| light $A$ | k’ol:al | 'k'el:al |


| lightning | məbrək' | 'raPa:d |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| lip | konfər | 'mentJIr |
| listen | səm:a | 'sem:a |
| liver | gub:ət | xa'fa: |
| long | rəd3:im | 'gu:der |
| louse | k'mal | k'u'mal |
| machete | mat ${ }^{\text {'zd }}$ | meke'Re:t |
| maize | bak':ol:o | bar'majila |
| make | sər:a | go'Ra:r |
| man | sə ${ }^{\text {w }}$ | $s \varepsilon^{w}$ |
| many | błzu | 'Endig |
| market | gəbaja | 'gebsja |
| marry | agob:a | 2a'Ra:t |
| meat | stga | $\bar{d} \int \varepsilon^{\text {u }}$ |
| money | gənzəb | ga'zi |
| monkey | zındzəro | '3anzəro |
| moon | t ${ }^{\text {'ə }}$ 'rək'a | 'tf'erck'a |
| mother | m:at | d' ${ }^{\prime}$ 'pe: |
| mountain | torara | 'gora |
| mouth | af | a:f |
| mud | t ${ }^{\text {' }}$ 'k'a |  |
| name | stm | sim |
| narrow | t'ob:ab | 't'sbau |
| navel | mbirt | 'hembirt |
| neck | angat | 'hanget |
| nest | jəwəf god3:0 | ? aəf 'go:n3o |
| new | ad:is | 'hagis |
| night | mata | ha'da:ra |
| nine | zət'əл: | jəhə't'غл |
| no | $\mathrm{a}^{\text {j }}$ dəl:əm, jəl:əm | ha'ku:nam |
| none | and $\ddagger \mathrm{m}$, jal:əm | 'handəm jat |
| nose | afnnts'a | 'tinit |
| old | aroge | mə'fu:ra |


| one | and | hand |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| other | lela | 'le:la |
| path | jəıgır | 2igir |
|  | mongəd | 'he:ma |
| pig | asama |  |
| plant V | tək:ələ | 'te:kel |
| pot | mnsıra | zə'xa:ma |
| pour | k'ə:da | 'k'ed:a |
| pull | sabə | 'schau |
| push | gəf:a | 'gefa |
| rain $N$ | zınab | 'zəna ${ }^{\text {u }}$ |
| rainbow | k’əstə dəm:əna | Taju$\int \varepsilon$ 'bəta |
| rat | $\mathrm{a}^{\mathrm{j}} \mathrm{t}^{\prime}$ | het |
| red | k'əj: | 'k' ki :jeh |
| rest V | ar:əfə | '?aref |
| right | k'əл: | Pa'ken:a |
| ripe | jəbəs:ələ | jə'ßəs¢l |
| river | wənz | zer |
| road | məngəd | 'he:ma |
| root | Str | Səri:t |
| rope | gəməd | $\mathrm{g} \varepsilon^{\prime} \mathrm{m} \varepsilon \mathrm{d}$ |
| rotten | jəbəsəb:əsə | jəßi's\&b: $¢$ |
| run | rot'ə | ro:t' |
| saliva | mırak' | mu'rat $\widehat{e} \mathrm{e}$ |
| salt | t ${ }^{\text {' }}$ 'วw | t ${ }^{\prime}$ ' $\varepsilon^{\text {w }}$ |
| sand | afəwa | 'hafewa |
| sandals | jənət’əla <br> tf'am:a | 'tf'am:a |
| say | alə | 3a:1 |
| scorpion | gint' | gint' |
| scratch | ak:əkə | 'hakek |
| see | aj:ə | re: |
| seed | zər | zer |
| sell | ¢ət':ə | Pas'Ram |
| seven | səbat: | sc'Pant |


| sew | səf:a | sef |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| sharp | sılət | 'wei:jeh |
| shield | məkələkəja, gafa | 'ga: $\int \mathrm{fa}$ |
| short | at ${ }^{\text {' }}$ ir | 'ha: $\widehat{t}$ ¢r |
| shoulder | tıkə ${ }^{\text {a }}$ a | ta'xa: $\int \mathrm{a}$ |
| sick | tam:əmə | si'an |
| silver | bır: | bur: |
| sing | zəm:ərə | 'zem:cre |
| sister | thit | '?rhit |
| sit | tək’əm:ət’ə | tok'e:met' |
| six | sid:Ist | si'dist |
| skin | k'oda | k'o'da |
| sky | səma ${ }^{\text {j }}$ | su'maj |
| sleep V | tכn: ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | ${ }^{\text {'2ine }}$ |
| small | tın:15 | 2in'gil:a |
| smell V | afวt:ətə | 'PaSunts |
| smoke $N$ | t $\int$ 'is | tan |
| smooth | loslas:a | les'la:sa |
| snake | ıbab | 'wər:o |
| sneeze | anət':əsə | tijo'al |
| soft | loslas:a | 1es'la:sa |
| spear | t'or | harb |
| spider | ¢orsrit |  |
| spit | təf:a | 'tef:a |
| stand V | k'omə | ${ }^{1} \mathrm{O} \mathrm{o}$ m |
| star | kokəb | t ${ }^{\text {fuxo }}$ |
| steal | sər:ək’ə | 'screk' $¢$ |
| stick $N$ | bot:rr | bart |
| stone | dinga ${ }^{\text {j }}$ | gin'zela |
| stool | bartf'um:a | bor't ${ }^{\text {'um }}$ a |
| straight | bok'วt':ita | 'k'et'sta |
| sun | s'əһа ${ }^{\text {j }}$, ' $^{\text {² }}{ }^{\text {j }}$ | t¢a'he:s |
| sweat $N$ | lab | 'wezja |
| sweep | t’ər:əgə | 't'er: $\varepsilon \mathrm{g}$ |
| swim | waл:ə | 'wa:ne |


| tail | d3rrat |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| take | wəs:ədə | ?a'xe:d |
| teach | astəmarə |  |
| tear $N$ | ınba, ımba | 'hembə |
| ten | as:ır | Pa'sır |
| termite | $\mathrm{m}+\mathrm{st}{ }^{\prime}$ |  |
| termite hill | jəmıst' bet |  |
| that | ja | Ro'mis:i |
| they | mn:ərsu | Pə'lem |
| thick | wəfram | ${ }^{\prime}$ Pa:mud |
| thigh | t ¢'m, tafa | t $\}$ 'In |
| thin | k'ət ${ }^{\text {a }}$ : m | 'k' $\bar{t} \int$ In |
| think | as:əbə | 'has:u |
| this | jıh, jix | ${ }^{1}$ ?r:ni |
| thorn | Sok, Soh |  |
| thread | kır: | fa'til |
| three | sost | 'sə2o:st |
| throw | wərəw:ərə | we'rew: ${ }^{\text {cr }}$ |
| thunder | nəg ${ }^{\text {w }}$ odg ${ }^{\text {w }}$ ad | gur'mumta |
| tie | tas:ərə | 'te:sər |
| tobacco | tmmbaho | tım'baho |
| tongue | mılas | 'Parat |
| tooth | t'rrs | si:n |
| tree | zaf |  |
| twenty | haja | haj'?a: |
| two | hulət: | 'xəRe:t |
| up | wədə la ${ }^{\text {j }}$ | 'laPala |
| vomit | astaw:əkə | Pa'ste:fa |
| walk | bəıgır hedə | bsigir 'hed |
| want | fəl:əgə | 'felege |
| war | t'orın:ət | harb |
| warm | muk' | '2amo |
| water | wıha, wuha | ?o'fa |
| we | ıл:a | 2r'na: |
| wedding | sərg | bə'her |


| weed | aram | ha'ram |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| weep | alək':əsə | '2alek's |
| well $N$ | mants' | fr'la:k |
| wet | mr:t't ${ }^{\text {b }}$ | 'irt'u |
| what? | mın | ?imba'la:nə |
| when? | mətSe |  |
| where? | jet | 'te:tenei |
| whistle | af ${ }^{\text {watf }}$ 'ə | 3a'fots |
| white | nət5': | 'za:hi |
| who? | man | 'man: ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |
| whose? | jəman | 2a'man:ə |
| why? | ləmın | 'bimba |
| wide | səfi | 'rehi: |
| wife | mist | mist |
| wind $N$ | nıfas | $n{ }^{\prime}$ 'fas |
| wing | kınf | 'kinf |
| woman | set | nif'tya: |
| worm | ttl |  |
| yawn | az:ag:a | Pa'xa:fyt |
| yellow | brtt'a | 'biţ'a |
| yes | awo, awon | ?o: |
| yesterday | ttnant, tmantm:a | tima'je:nə |
| you, pl | mi:anta | '2ankum |
| you, sg, m | antə | 2ank |

Distribution of major languages in the Argobba areas
(based on Ethnologue, draft map for the 1996 edition)



[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ An earlier version of this report was published as Survey of Little-known Languages of Ethiopia (S.L.L.E.) Report 22, November/December 1994. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies and Summer Institute of Linguistics.

