



ziishshichchu

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A linguistic documentation of beekeeping in Kambaata

29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CHLSJC, ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, 10 MAY 2022

1. Introduction

COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTATION PROJECT, EARLIER WORKS



Participatory language documentation

- Report about an ongoing documentation project on the lexicon of beekeeping
 - Initiated during the corona pandemic (personal initiative)
 - Aim: Text and audiovisual documentation of beekeeping in its social and cultural context
 - Diverse target audience: speaker community, linguists, anthropologists, Cushitists
- Demand formulated in the linguistic documentation literature:
 - More collaborative, mutually beneficial, reciprocal projects
 - Collaborative data collection *and* analysis
- Persons implicated:
 - Yvonne Treis (based in Paris): linguist
 - Yoseph Yonas Zecharias (based in Duuraame): practicing beekeeper, environmentalist, author and photographer
 - Abel Yonas Zekarias (based in Bielefeld): practising beekeeper, sociologist, author
 - and family consulted “on the ground”



Earlier works on the language of beekeeping

- Only works found (so far)
 - Documentation of **Saho** beekeeping vocabulary in its cultural and linguistic context: Vergari & Vergari (2009) and Banti & Axmadsacad (2009)
 - A small glossed text on **Ongota** beekeeping: Savà (2017)
 - Comparative study from Europe (Lithuanian vs. English): Kraujutienė (2016) [MA thesis]
 - [Numerous publications by Ethiopian agronomists examining economic and technical questions]

Are you aware of other works on beekeeping in Ethiopian languages?

Earlier works on Kambaata lexicon

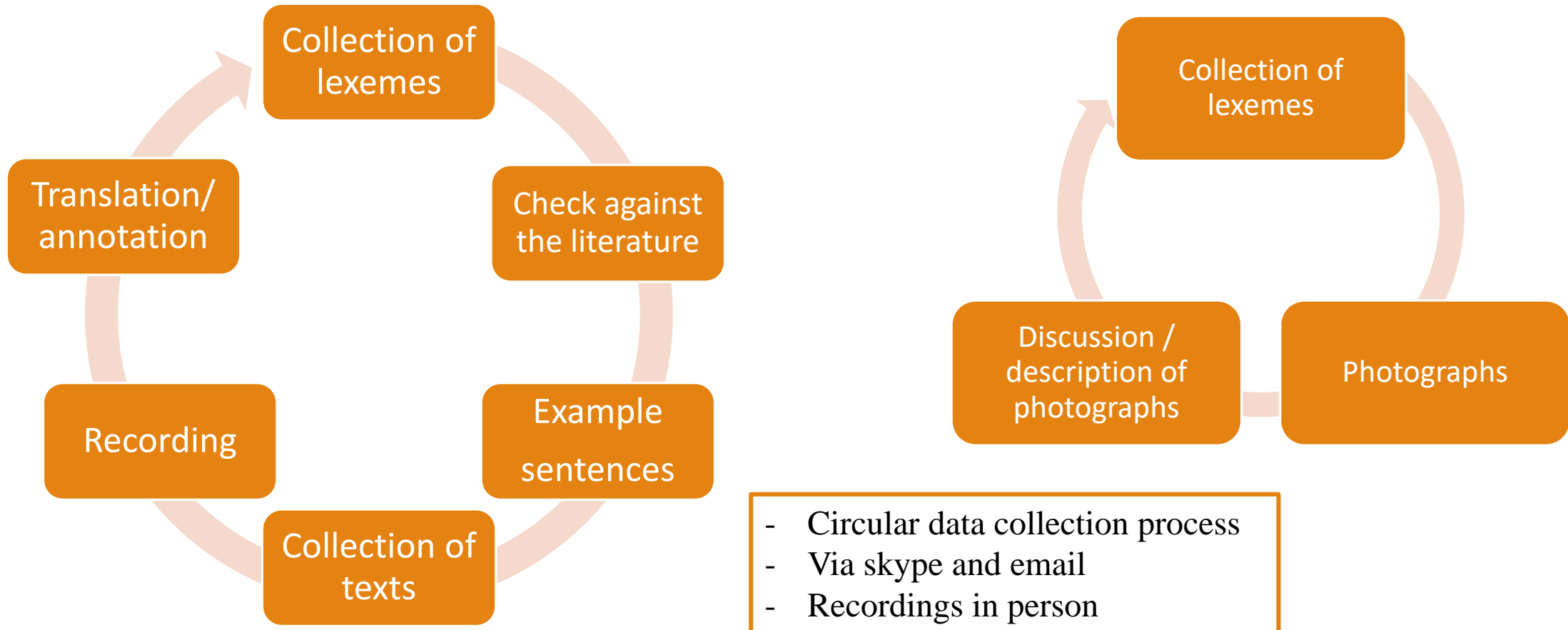
- First dictionary Kambaata-Amharic: Kambaata-Xambaaro Zone Information and Culture Main Department (1997 [E.C.]), 327 p.
- Voluminous Kambaata-Amharic-English dictionary with Kambaata monolingual definitions: Alemu (2016), 1165 p.
 - contains some bee-related vocabulary
- Documentation of the temperature lexicon: Treis & Deginet (2019)
- Documentation of idiomatic expressions: Alamu (2022)

2. Data

COLLECTION METHODOLOGY, TYPES OF DATA



Data collection methodology



Data types

- Lexemes [various sources]
- Examples sentences [Abel]
- Text: The work of the beekeeper [authors: Abel and Yoseph]
- Text: The social significance of honey [authors: Abel and Yoseph]
- Narrative (*heessa*) about honey [source: speaker community, writer: Yoseph]
- 2 poems about bees and honey [author: Yoseph]
- Proverbs and riddles [source: written Kambaata literature and fieldwork data]
- All data is recorded [recorded speaker: Abel]
- The lexeme list is illustrated with photos of traditional and modern beekeeping techniques/material from Kambaata [photographer: Yoseph*]

*Cf. his photos in this presentation

4. The lexeme list

SEMANTIC FIELDS, STRUCTURE OF THE ENTRY, SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL



4.1. Semantic fields covered in the wordlist

- Types of bees (species) and related or similar insects
- Life cycle of bees (from egg to queen)
- Parts of a bee's body
- Behavior of bees (movement, sound etc.)
- Activities of bees (pollination, collection, production, procreation)
- Parts of the hive
- Beekeeping equipment
- Beekeeping activities (production of hives, care for bees, harvest)
- Enemies of the bees/dangers for bees
- Types of honey
- Honey consumption and containers for honey
- Honey-related traditions and cultural concepts

~ 150 entries

- Lexemes unique to the semantic field
- Lexemes also used elsewhere

4.2. Structure of the entry

headword

word class +
gramm. gender





picture +
recording available

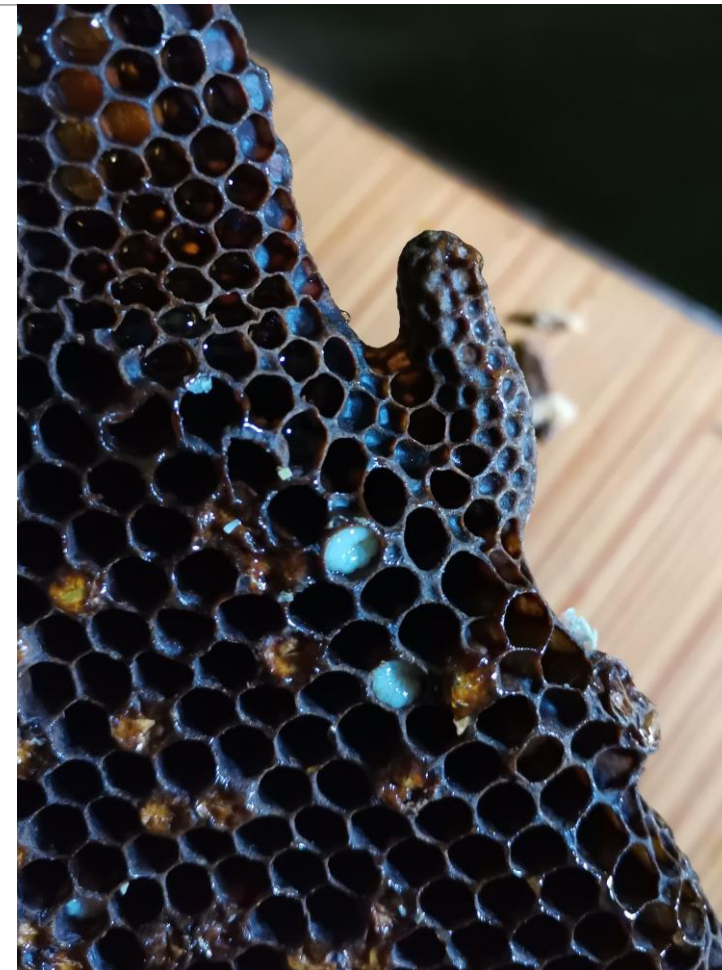
translation + explanation

cross-reference

example + recording

semantic field

qurbaabba (nm.)   'queen cell', specially constructed cell in which a new queen (\rightarrow *woma*) is raised, bigger than regular cell for worker bees, often in the corner of the honeycomb and the hive wall, cut off by the beekeeper to avoid that new virgin bees are raised.  *Ziishshu bahirsumboga qurbaabas murt kam.*  'Cut away the queen cells so that the bees do not swarm!' [AYZ]; **BEEHIVE;** in the old days: 'vial for perfume' [Alemu 2016: 859; not confirmed by AYZ]



headword

word class +
gramm. gender




picture +
recording available

translation + explanation

cross-references

sources in [...]

example + recording

shaala (nm.)   'partition in the beehive', two crossed sticks creating a partition in the beehive (→ *qachchuta*), about ¼ of the beehive between the front end (→ *nafa*) and the *shaala* is left to the bee for reproduction, about ¾ of the beehive between the *shaala* and the back end (→ *tuphuta*) is accessible to and exploitable by the beekeeper; the *shaala* is within hand's reach; lexeme unique to semantic field BEE [AYZ]; ex. *Malabu soroobaammi saata shaaliichch higg ulaamba'a*  'When I harvest honey, I do not touch (the honeycombs) beyond the partition' [AYZ]; BEEHIVE PART - Lexeme not to be confused with the homonymous adjective *shaala(ta)* 'moist' [AYZ; Alemu 2016: 907].



5. Text and audio documentation

DOCUMENTARY TEXTS, POEMS, NARRATIVE

5.1. Excerpts from texts (I)



Text excerpt from *Kambaati ziishshi xaqqi hayyuta*
'Kambaata beekeeping techniques'

Produce/buy and prepare (plaster, smoke) the beehive >
Hang the beehive in a tree* > Attract a "free" bee colony >
Bring the beehive to one's garden > Protect the beehive from enemies > Block bees from swarming
or overpower swarming bees > Harvest > Serve honeycombs with honey or with honey and larvae >
Store the honey

*Ziishshu halleechchu bata'anobaa kottit yooba'ibbaa iittanotanneeha woqqee tochchiichchii
hoolamu mannu xaaccano hegeegiichchii qeersi lagi tochchiga yoo sallakk yiyyee beechchoon yoo
haqqeen saqalaamm.

[Where to hang a beehive?] 'As the bees like a place with plenty of shade and where there are no
steps (of people passing by), I hang (the beehive) far from the road and far from where many people
meet into a tree in a quiet place beside a stream.'

Aim: Document beekeeping in the Kambaata language itself

5.2. Excerpts from texts (II)

Text excerpt from *Malabi xee'nnitannee kulaman yoo heessa*

‘Story which reports about the sweetness (and the temptation) of honey’

A new bride spends the months after her wedding in a little hut in her in-laws house and weaves baskets. Her brother-in-law gives her a pot of honey to store, as he considers her more trustworthy than anybody else. The bride is terribly tempted by the honey and sometimes shyly pierces her weaving needle through the cover of the honey pot and licks it off. When her brother-in-law comes to collect the honey, the pot is suspiciously light. Has somebody come into her hut and served himself? The bride bursts out in distress and curses the honey.

Malabu qorabu ba’u

‘May the honey-watching be damned’

Mateeminnit ba’u

‘May the busyness be damned’

Mutiin gobu ba’u

‘May the weaving with a needle be damned’

Malabu qorabu ba’u

‘May the honey-watching be damned’



Aim: Document the cultural significance of honey

5.2. Excerpts from texts (III)

Excerpt from a poem: 1st stanza of *Ziishshichchiichch roseenun!* ‘Let us learn from the bee!’

(Note: alliteration and rhyme)

Qoxareen abbeen he’eenun zoobbeech**chiga**,
Qooreen qaareen hujateenun ziishshich**chiga**.
Qallimata laamfita barree gisanata takka’een uuj**jeen**,
Qaarseen qo’rreen hujateenun zahu zaazu agure**en**.

Let us be brave, be feared and live like a lion,
Let us be intelligent, be strong and work like a bee,
Let us quickly drop foolishness, slackness and midday sleep,
Let us buckle up, stop procrastinating and hovering around, and work!

Aim: Document bees and honey in artistic language

6. Some final thoughts

Challenges of the documentation

Small and bigger challenges

- Finding succinct translations for words that have no English equivalents
- Finding botanical names for all the flowering grasses, shrubs and trees on which bees feed
- Serving the interests of a diverse audience (solution: diverse data)
- Finding *one* place to publish the lexicographic, textual, audio and visual data and analyses

maaheeta 'thorn apple' (*Solanum incanum* L.)



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- ከምባታ-ጠምባሮ ዞን ማስታወቂያና ባህል ዋና መምሪያ [Kambaata-Xambaaro Zone Information and Culture Main Department]. 2005. *ከምባታ-አማርኛ መዝገብ-ቃላት [Kambaata-Amharic dictionary]*. Duuraamee.

Ziishshu karaniyanin malabu soroobeenno.

No sweet without sweat.

(~ You don't harvest honey without being stung by bees.)