WORD-GAME AND LINGUISTIC BORROWING IN A ZARGULA SONG

AZEB AMHA

AFRICA STUDIES CENTRE, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

A.AMHA@ASC.LEIDENUNIV.NL

WORK SONGS

- Several studies on work songs in Africa, a.o.: Kwami, Robert (1992) on Akwa Ibom in Nigeria; Abokon, Ahmed Cali (1993) on Somali; Getie Gelaye (1999) on Amharic; Wedekind, Klaus (2013) on Gedeo

- Are rhythmic accompaniment to a group task; They help coordinate the work; relieve the boredom of a tedious job

- The content may be about the work or on issues not directly related to it

- Work songs cease to exist when the particular activities in which they are not more practiced

ZARGULA

- Self name of people **Gamo**; language name **Gamotso**

- The term **Zargula (**East Ometo branch of Omotic, AfroA) is widely used in the literature and in the present work to not confuse this group with its related name-sake North-Ometo Gamo (people) and Gamotso (language)
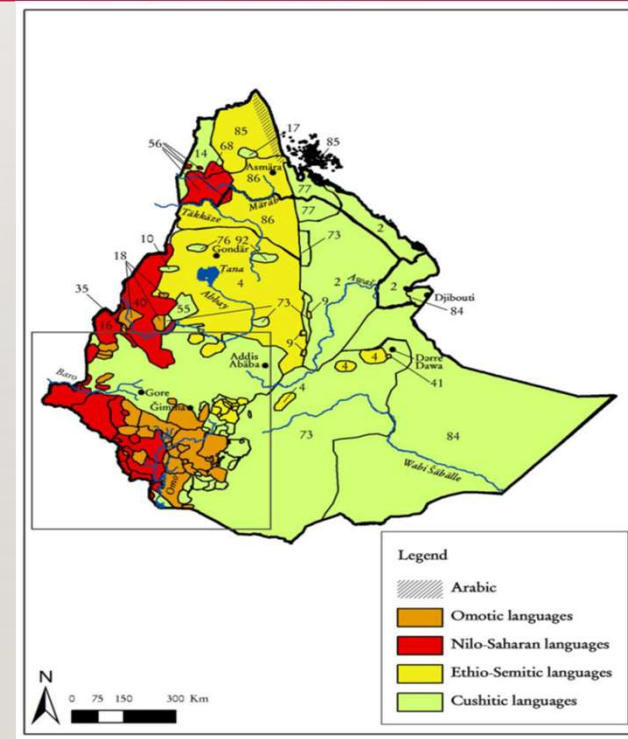
WODELLA_SONG

- Singers: Dibbe and Sinkale Degefu; joined by Alemitu Apa, who was not grinding

- All three were born and brought up in Zarg. ; D&S travel often for trading

- When asked afterwards: they said they do not ‚know' Amharic and Gamo („did not attend formal school")

- Recording, not planned, was done in the house of Mr. Arche Apa at Kettele

- Transcription and translation: T. Tariku

BILINGUALISM AND CONTANCT

- Most people speak Zargula and Gamo (these are related but mutually unintelligible to monolinguals)

- A large number of people speak Zargula Gamo and Amharic (since late 1990's primary school in Gamo which the Zargula call ɗaatʃ'e; Amharic and English as subject from grade 3)

- The closely related Zayse is spoken by many

EXAMPLES:

- Note representation of words in the following exmples:

- Words or morphemes in bold are those that are shared between Zargula and Gamo

- All non-Zargula words are put within <....>

- The morpheme –yeeye / -eeye is a vocable (VOCBL) helping shape the melodies

WODDALA: STRUCTURE / UNIT

- **wozáneeye**   **nénáa**   **woɗáyeeyé**   **woddélla**

heart.VOCBL____you_____kill.VOCBL_____woddella

           ____táná__
           ____yéla____
           ____yébe___

- **woddéllaaye**   **tá náye**   **malíleeye**   **woddélla**

young.male_____my.daughter____IDEO.beautiful___woddella

- (ref@SP2   Woddella_excerpt_28)

CONTENT IN WODDELLA SONG

- Teasing one another on character (the forgetful one; the bad cook)

- Making associations between people (mentioning P.names of husband and wife; friends)

- Suggestive reference about relationships

- These are expressed using words from Zargula, Gamo and Amharic; T.Tariku recognises words from Zayse but translation was difficult to him

- Examples are grouped on the basis of languages from which the words are taken; not by content:

WODDELLA - ZARGULLA-MAINLY COUPLETS

- **woyáyeeye tánáa woyáyeeye woddélla**

- woyá-eye   **tàná**   woyá-eye   woddélla

- up.there VOCBL 1SG.OBJ   up.there VOCBL   young.man

- 'Up.there__me__up.there__young.man'

  - ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_04

- (Gamo: *fúde* (Adv); *fúden* (LOC) 'up there'; *wodálla* 'young man')

WODELLA: ZARGULA – GAMO SHARED LEXICON

- **gíʔó gaánnáa yebé giígítteeye woddélla**

- **gíʔ**ó gaánná yebé **giíg**-î-tte-eye woddélla

- climbing side girl.VOC comfortable young.man

- 'Talking/saying of climbing, girl! it is comfortable___young.man

  - ref@SP2 Woddella_excerpt_12)

- Cf. Zargula gíʔ**ó** infinitive/verbal nominal vs Gamo: gíʔ**ettá** 'to climb; climbing'

WODELLA: ZARGULA – GAMO SHARED LEXICON

- Ɂeerésaaye tánáa Ɂereéseeye woddélla

- Ɂeerés -aaye   **tàná**   **Ɂer** -eés-eeye   woddélla

- small-VOCBL   1SG.OBJ   know–IPF.REL-VOCBL   young.man

- "The little one who knows me___young.man

                                                        - (ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_20)

- (in Gamo 'small' is : *guútta*)

WODELLA: ZARGULA – GAMO SHARED LEXICON

- **ʔarsámaaye woddélla ʔaʃʃámeeye woddélla**

- **ʔarsá**-ma-aaye   woddélla   ʔaʃʃám-eeye   woddélla

- light.coloured-DER.IDEO-VOCBL young.man IDIOM VOCBL young.man

- 'Light coloured and attractive person__young.man___*ʔaʃʃáma*_young.man

- ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_26

-

(ʔaʃʃáma 'utterance addressed to people who are carrying something heavy or are busy doing some physical work; at times actual help is offered')

WODELLA: ZARGULA – GAMO SHARED LEXICON

- Ɂámmánoyyee tanáa k'ázítteeye woddélla

- **Ɂammáno**-yeeye **táná** k'áz-î-tte-eeye woddélla

- Evangelical.Christian-VOCBL 1SG.OBJ pray\beg-SS.CNV-FOC-VOCBL young.man

- 'One who belongs to evangelical religion that prays\ begs me'

  - ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_18

- (Gamo form for 'pray\beg' is *wooss-* ; the term **Ɂammáno** is a borrowing both in Zargula and Gamo from Amharic: ammänä 'he believed'; amaɲ 'a believer')

GAMO LEXEMES INTENTIONALLY USED

- **Ɂaʃʃámeeye <wotsída> wós'ayeeye woddélla**

- Ɂaʃʃám-eeye   wots-ída   **wós'a**-yeeye   woddélla

- IDIOM-VOCBL   <keep-REL.PST>   **grinding.stone**-VOCBL   young.man

- '*Ɂaʃʃáma* to the grinding stone that provides a living__young.man'

  - ref@SP2   Woddella_excerpt_18

- (-*ída* a TAM morpheme in Gamo, its equivalent in Zargula is –*éssi.* The Gamo verb wots-'keep; make live' has an equivalen in Zargula: *kap*-)

GAMO LEXEMES INTENTIONALLY USED, CTD

- **<ʔít'ť'ireeye> tánáa ʔitʃ'tʃ'ídeeye woddélla**

- <ʔít'ť'-ire>-eeye   **táná**   ʔitʃ'tʃ'-íde-eye

- refuse\reject-M.PAST.Q.2-VOCBL   1SG.OBJ   hit.with.fist <M.PAST.Q.1>--VOCBL

- Woddélla

- young.man

- 'Did he dislike, did he reject?__me___did he hit with his fist?__young.man

- ref@SP2   Woddella_excerpt_03

                                      - ref@SP2   Woddella_excerpt_03

- (Zargula equivalent for form for Gamo **ʔít'ť'ire** is **ʔík'árínne** 'die one refuse, reject/dislike')

GAMO LEXEMES INTENTIONALLY USED, CTD

- <matʃ'tʃ'aasaaye> tánáa matʃ'areeye woddélla

- matʃ'tʃ'aas-aaye   **táná**   matʃ'ar-eeye   woddélla

- <woman> -VOCBL2   1SG.OBJ   women's.girdle   young.man

  - ref@SP2   Woddella_excerpt_26)

- (Zargula term for 'woman, girl' is *bíʃáʔa*)

LEXEMES FROM AMHARIC

- <wónjalaaye> tánáa <k'ábbítteeye> woddélla

- wónjal-aaye   táná   k'ábbî-tte-eye   woddélla

- <crime>-VOCBL 1SG.OBJ <catch.suddenly.by.hand> -FOC   young.man

- 'Criminal, ….arrest me____young man'

  - ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_03

- (Amh. *k'äbb ʔaräg-* IDEO 'to catch, arrest')

LEXEMES FROM AMHARIC, CTD

- **<ʔilaasaaye> néná <mabaareeye> woddélla**

- ʔilaasa -aaye   néná   mabaar-eeye   woddélla

- P.Name-VOCBL 1sg.OBJ   <party.in.the.name.of.a.saint-VOCBL> young.man

-
(ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_07)

- (Zargula Personal name: <**ʔilaasa / Silaasa**> comes from **sīllase** 'trinity' in Amh as the Zargula word **mabaar-** from Amharic **mahïbär**)

LEXEMES FROM AMHARIC, CTD

- <fik'ireeye> tánáa <wórk'itteeye> woddélla
- fik'ire-eeye   táná   wórk'e—tte-eeye

  - (ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_10

- né <wórk'eeye> né <wórk'e> <ɸik'íreeye> woddélla
- né   wórk'-yeeye   né   wórk'e   fik'ire -yeeye   woddélla
- 2SG.POSS   <gold>-VOCBL   2SG.POSS   <gold>   <love>-VOCBL   young.man
- Your Worke (your.gold)__Your Work'e (your.gold)___Your Fik're (your love)___young.man

  - (ref@SP1   Woddella_excerpt_36)

- (The Zargula P.names in the examples are from Amharic Fik're 'my love'; Work'e 'my.gold' and the singers make use of these same two words slightly differently in different couplets #10 and #36)

ZARGULA___& WHICH LANGUAGE?

- Some words can be clearly heard and transcribed but T.Tariku could not translate them. Here gender-age may play a role: the translator, a young man, may not recognize everything in his culture that is in the domain of women's work. For example, in # 25 below, it is likely that the term *k'igíro* in slot-3 is something *in the category of food (because of* **k'antʃ'ele/ k'antʃ'ale** *in slot-1*) but he did not know what it was. Alternatively, **k'igíro** *could be a food-related term from Zayse or another language he does not speak.*

- **k'antʃ'eleeye wóy ʔaátsa *k'igírooye* woddélla**
- kind.of.dish___or__exceeding___***k'igíro*** ?????_young.man
- k'antʃ'eleeye wóy ʔaátsa k'igírooye woddélla

  - (ref@SP2   Woddella_excerpt_25)

- mítʃtʃíraáye   taná   kátakeeye   woddélla
- ?????   Me   ???????   Young.man

  - (ref@SP1 Woddella_excerpt_24

WODDELLA—CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Wodella involves at least three languages but it is not „linguistic borrowing" to fill a gap; it is a form of word-play.

- Word-meaning recognition in different languages is aimed at in the songs of Wodella.

- Future research needs to determine in which language the women actually (think they) sing. Is it a Zargulla song to which words from other languages (esp. Gamo) are brought in or have Zargula women learnt a Gamo song to which they add words from their own language?

- Wodella song is a way of 'knowing' and showing of (prtial) knowledge of languages. It is a kind of cognitive excercise stimulating quick association of words and meanings in various languages.

Thank you!