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HEWAN SEMON MARYE, Universität Hamburg

Dissertation Abstract

The Rhetorics and Polemics of Humor in Addis Abäba, 2005–2019

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by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ludwig Gerhardt, Susanne Hummel,
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The main tools with which the epistemic expressions are studied are eight dimensions, five semantic, and three formal. The list of dimensions is as follows: (1) explicit vs implicit epistemizer; (2) manner of integration of epistemized and epistemificator into the sentence; (3) concrete vs abstract epistemificators; (4) personal vs non-personal epistemificators; (5) degree of epistemic strength; (6) source of epistemic assessment; (7) axiological judgement; (8) time orientation. In addition to the dimensional analysis, for selected epistemificators (both grammatical and lexical) prose semantic sketches are provided, which hopefully may be useful in the future for a more comprehensive semantic description. Subsequently, three types of complement clauses are examined in greater detail, with an attempt to shed light on their comparative semantics. These are *əndä-*, ‘that’, *bəyye*, ‘I saying’, and nominalized clauses. The final chapter discusses the interaction between epistemic modality and two other categories, namely time and negation. In dealing with the category of time it is noted that any utterance containing an epistemic modal expression involves two points in time: the moment of the sender’s epistemic assessment and the location in time of the state of affairs. The moment of epistemic assessment is typically ‘here and now’. Within any modal epistemic sentence there are basically two possible loci for indicating the location in time of the state of affairs: the epistemized head and the epistemificator head. In view of that epistemificators are grouped into various types and further examined. In the section on negation, it is pointed out that in an epistemic sentence there are in principle two things that might be negated: the epistemificator head and the epistemized head. Thus different patterns of behaviour of epistemificators in regard to negation are distinguished and discussed.

HEWAN SEMON MARYE, *The Rhetorics and Polemics of Humor in Addis Abāba, 2005–2019*, PhD Dissertation in Ethiopian Studies, Faculty of Humanities at the Universityät Hamburg, defended on 5 July 2021.

This dissertation primarily introduced the Amharic word *čäwata* as the equivalent for the English word humour, implementing the word to describe the phenomenon of joke telling and humorous conversation. Addis Abāba is the focus of this study as it is the political, economic, and cultural centre of the country during the period investigated.

Chapter 1 discusses *čäwata* in Ethiopian historiography and reveals how humour plays a part in Ethiopian oral culture, a part that has not been previously seriously collected and studied. Chapter 2, 3, and 4 discuss humour in three venues in Addis Abāba: parliament, theatre, and public spaces (namely the minibuses, and public demonstrations). In each chapter, a particular case study is

discussed for its brand of *čäwata* and the purposes it serves relevant to its venue. Each of these chapters begins with a historical investigation contextualizing the discussed venue, following which the jokes are presented, translated, and discussed. At a micro level, all jokes in the three chapters have been discussed individually to categorize to what kind of humour theory they are appropriate. Relief theory and disparaging theory are the two categories of humour implemented in discussing the purpose and effects of the jokes collected.

The question at the base of the research was, what role does humour have in contemporary Addis Abäba? The thesis posits the purpose of humour to be a self-reflective activity, a means of speaking truth to power, educational or didactic; a negotiation with power across political elite and with the general public; and finally a source of entertainment.

The value of the research undertaken is in demonstrating that aside from the serious written and documented political culture in Ethiopia, the relationship between the Ethiopian government and the general public can also be studied from Ethiopians' oral cultures. Disregarding the jokes discussed beyond the case studies, the number of jokes in this thesis total 146. Taken from a mix of each joke's microanalysis, participant observation, and historical investigation, as well as theories and conjectures, each chapter provides an analysis of the political and social realities of contemporary Addis Abäba. The *čäwata* studied in this dissertation illuminates an informal and often elusive sphere of communication between the government and the public. Some aspects of the relationship of Addis Abäba with the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), especially post-2005, are highlighted in jokes made both by the ruling elite and by the urban dweller.

ይኸ መመሪቂያ ጽሑፍ «ጨዋታ» የሚለውን ቃል የኢትዮጵያን አማርኛ ቀልዶች እና ለዛ ያላቸውን ንግግሮች መጠሪያ አድርጎ አስተዋውቋል ። የመጀመሪያው ምዕራፍ በኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ አጻጻፍ ውስጥ ጨዋታ ያለውን ጉልህ ሚና አሳይቶ ጨዋታ ከጥቂት ሥራዎች ወጪ ለብቻው ተጠንቶ አለመቅረቡን ዳስሷል ። በምዕራፍ ሁለት ፣ ሦስት እና አራት ደግሞ ከሦስት የተለያዩ ሥፍራዎች የተሰበሰቡ ጨዋታዎች ቀርበዋል ። እነዚህም ሥፍራዎች ፓርላማ ፣ ቲያትር እና በአዲስ አበባ የሕዝብ የሚባሉ ቦታዎች (ታክሲዎች በአንደኛነት ፣ የሕዝብ ፖለቲካዊ ሠልፎች በሁለተኛነት) ናቸው ። በእያንዳንዱ ምዕራፍ በተመረጠው ሥፍራ ውስጥ ጨዋታዎቹ ምን እንደሚመስሉ እና ምን አይነት ዋጋ እንዳላቸው ተጠንቷል ። በተጨማሪም በእያንዳንዱ ምዕራፍ ቀልዶች ከመቅረባቸው በፊት የዚያ ምዕራፍ ሥፍራ ታሪካዊ ሁኔታ ተጠንቶ ቀርቧል ። ለምሳሌ የፓርላማ ጨዋታዎች የሚቀርብበት ሁለተኛው ምዕራፍ በኢትዮጵያ የፓርላማን ውልደት እና ታሪካዊ ሂደቶችንም አብሮ አለ ።

ሦስቱ ምዕራፎች እያንዳንዳቸው ቀልዶች ምን ዓይነት የቀልድ ንድፈ ሐሳብ ውስጥ ሊያርፉ እንደሚችሉም ይጠቅሳሉ ። በአጠቃላይ በጥናቱ ውስጥ ጎልተው የሚታዩት ሁለት ንድፈ ሐሳቦች የማጥላላት እና ስሜትን የማስተንፈስ የቀልድ ንድፈ ሐሳቦች ናቸው ።

የዚህ ምርምር መነሻ ጥያቄ «ጨዋታ በዛሬዬቱ አዲስ አበባ ምን ዋጋ አለው?» የሚለው ነበር ። ታዲያ በጥናቱ የተገለጸው ጨዋታ የራስን ሐሳብ እና አመለካከት መመርመሪያ፣ ሥልጣን ላይ ላሉት ስሜትን መናገሪያ፣ ማስተማሪያ፣ በባለሥልጣናት መካከል ሥልጣንን ማስከበሪያ፣ በመንግሥት እና ሕዝብ መካከል መበሻሻቂያ እና መነጋገሪያ፣ በመጨረሻም በአጠቃላይ መዝናኛ መሆኑን ነው ።

ጽሑፉ ከምርጫ 97 በኋላ ያለችው አዲስ አበባ ከኢሕአዴግ ጋር ያላትን ግንኙነት የሚያሳይ የምርምር ውጤት ነው ። የጥናቱ ጥቅምም የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ በመጻሕፍት ተጽፈው በተገኙ መረጃዎች መሠረት ብዙ የሚባልለት ሆኖ ሳለ በመንግሥት እና ሕዝብ መካከል ያለውን ግንኙነት ለማየት ግን በቃል የሚባሉትን እና የሚነገሩትንም ከልብ ማጥናቱ አስፈላጊ እንደሆነ ማሳየቱ ላይ ነው ። በሦስቱ ምዕራፎች ብቻ የቀረቡት ቀልዶች በቁጥር መቶ አርባ ስድስት ናቸው ። በዚህ ጽሑፍ የቀልዶችን ትርጉም፣ ታሪካዊ ምርምር፣ በሕዝብ መካከል በመገኘት የተገኙ መረጃዎችን በማጥናት፣ ንድፈ ሐሳቦችን እና መላ ምቶችን አንድላይ አጣምሮ የአዲስ አበባን የተለያዩ ፖለቲካዊ፣ ማኅበራዊ እና ኢኮኖሚያዊ ሁኔታዎችን በየምዕራፉ ለማቅረብ ተሞክሯል ። የተሰበሰቡት ቀልዶች ሕዝብ እና መንግሥት በቀጥታም ባይሆን በተዘዋዋሪ በጨዋታ እንደሚነጋገሩ ያመለክታሉ ።