

Developing a Comprehensive Electronic Monolingual Dictionary for Amharic

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This presentation discusses the urgent need for the preparation and publication of a comprehensive monolingual electronic dictionary for Amharic, a language with millions of native and second-language speakers, which serves as a working language for the Federal Government of Ethiopia and for some of its regional states. In addition, Amharic has been taught as a foreign language at different universities outside Ethiopia for a long time.

Despite its rich literary and lexicographic history, Amharic currently lacks an adequate dictionary that meets the diverse needs of its users, particularly in an academic context. The need to compile a modern and standardized electronic dictionary is addressed by the project "Compilation of an Amharic Monolingual Electronic Dictionary" of which I am the Principal Investigator and which is currently underway at the Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures at Addis Ababa University that runs from 2023 to 2026 and is financially supported by Addis Ababa University.

In my paper, I will explore the limitations of existing resources and present the innovative features of our new dictionary, which will include 30,000 entries and fill significant lexical gaps. This electronic dictionary consists of several contemporary and neological lexemes and expressions coined over the last three decades. This enables us to examine the development of Amharic vocabulary. This dictionary aims to support researchers, educators, students, policymakers, and mass media and contributes to the effective use and sustainable development of the Amharic language in academia and everyday use.