

Amharic verb forms at A1 level (CEFR)

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The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is a helpful tool for teaching non-European languages as well. The beginner level A1 (together with A2) should cover elementary language use. This includes the use and understanding of simple sentences about people and family, everyday situations and specific needs, if the conversation partners are cooperative (definition according to CEFR).

The challenge in teaching Amharic is that even at this level of language use, verbal constructions (e.g. relative, gerundive) are used which are very complex for beginners and therefore do not contribute to learning motivation. Conversely, the morphologically simplest form is the perfect tense, the learning of which is just as unhelpful for initial everyday conversations.

In my contribution, I would like to describe the didactic approach that I have found to be effective for learning the verb forms in class and which I have used in my forthcoming textbook *Sälam 1* (with 24 lessons). Here is an excerpt from the content (concerning verb forms):

from lesson 3: imperfect

from lesson 4: infinitive

from lesson 11: theory of verb types

from lesson 14: perfect

from lesson 16: accusative suffixes

from lesson 17: imperative

The textbook begins with the imperfect tense and also deals with the infinitive relatively early on, as European learners usually ask about these forms first. After some lessons and language practice, students are generally eager to get an overview of verb classes so that they can construct sentences (with the correct verb stems) on their own. From this point onwards, there is a high level of motivation to learn the theory. The more advanced lessons are dedicated to verbal accusative pronouns, *t*- and *h*-verb stems; relative constructions are introduced but not dealt with exhaustively. In my opinion, this approach provides a good foundation for the next level A2 (with a focus on gerundive, subordinate clauses and relative constructions, prepositional infixes *-Δ* and *-Ω*), in which a more natural, less constructed style of speaking is to be developed towards a more authentic way of expression.