

Full Length Research Paper

The sociolinguistics and pragmatics of greetings in Sidama

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The main objective of this study was to provide a descriptive account of the greeting system in Sidama, an Ethiopian Highland East Cushitic (HEC) language speaking people culture. Cross sectional and descriptive none interventional research design were followed. The research methodology used was qualitative. Sociolinguistic data were collected from six purposefully selected key informants who are native speakers of Sidama language who know the culture. Semi-structured interview guide was used to collect the sociolinguistic and cultural data. The finding showed that greeting in the Sidama culture is a tool to begin and end a conversation in a casual or planned meeting. The word keero 'peace' is at the core of the Sidama greeting. However, there are a number of greeting expressions, most of which are used metaphorically and pragmatically. A few of these include: daa?e buffu, suk'k'u daa?e, sururu daa?e and suk'k'u sururu daa?e, all of which are referring to 'welcome' with different degrees of endearment. The greeting expressions differed based on gender of the interlocutors. However, a few of the greeting phrases were commonly used by women and men. Much of the greeting expressions were accompanied by non-verbal body languages, such as kissing and bowing. Kissing on cheek, lips, and knees were used to greet people of different ages, powers, social relationships, and sexes. There are restrictions on who may or may not kiss who. It was found that a son-in-law never kisses or hugs his mother-in-law. Father-in-laws can kiss his son-in laws and vice versa. A father-in law cannot kiss his daughter-in-law. Similarly, a daughter-in-law never greets by kissing her father-in-law, but she can do so to greet her mother-in-law. It was suggested that the greeting culture has to be well documented, and taught to the children of Sidama, who are already studying Sidama language from grade one to the higher education, and to others who may be using the language instrumentally.

Key words: Culture, greeting, pragmatics, Sidama, sociolinguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Sidama people live in the Sidama Zone of the Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS). The Zonal capital, which is also the seat of

the SNNPRS, is called Hawassa. It is located at 175 km south of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. The majority of Sidama people are farmers producing root

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crops, such as Ensete, cereals like wheat, barley, peas and beans, cash crops, such as coffee. They also rear animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, etc. Fishing is also common in some districts of the Zone. Coffee is the main cash crop grown in the Zone and that engages a number of traders.

Greeting is a means to embark onto a communication. Despite the degree of acquaintance, socio-cultural and power differences, people across cultures have to use greeting. It is important to begin a communication to smoothen social relationships. It is quite difficult to begin any communication without greetings, particularly when there is less acquaintance among interlocutors. It ranges depending on the time of greeting and social variables, such as age, gender, and power. Though greeting is universal phenomenon, the manner people greet one another is a culture specific. The greeting culture of Sidama is not documented and is not taught to students, though Sidama language is taught as a subject and used as a medium from elementary school to the university. This study thus attempts to fill in this gap.

Objective

The main objective of this article is to provide a descriptive account of greeting expressions used in the Sidama language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term Sidama refers to the Highland East Cushitic (HEC) Languages (Harold et al., 1976; Harold, 1969) speakers living in Sidama Zone of the SNNPRS. The language of Sidama is called Sidamu afo “the mouth of Sidama.” There are some linguistic variations in Sidama language; the variations are said to be “minimal” (Hudson, 1976), but according to Kawachi (2007) the variations, both regional and social, are greater than Hudson has reported. (Kawachi, 2007) adds, “the speech variation between *Haadiichcho* clan, who often were considered potters (Brøgger 1986), and the *Yanase* clans, who are geographically separated from other clans” is significant.

Sidama people are surrounded by Cushitic and Omotic speakers. In fact, the Omotic languages were considered West Cushitic in the earlier literature. Sidama Zone borders in the North and North East with Arusi Oromo, in the South with Guji Oromo, in the West with Gedeo and in the North West with Wolayta. There are dictionaries in Sidamu afo including the Gasparini's (1983) bilingual dictionary of Sidamu afo and English and Hudson's (1989) dictionary of HEC in which a chapter is devoted to the Sidamu afo.

Abebe (1985) provides the Morphophonemics of Sidamu afo. A relatively thick description of Sidamu afo grammar was written by Teferra (2000) and Kawachi (2007). Teferra (1987) describes proper name avoidance or taboo of calling personal names by women when addressing their in-laws and husbands. A woman calls her husband by a nick name she bestows until she gives birth to a baby. Once the woman had a baby, she begins to call her husband as 'X's father', where 'X' represents the name of the child.

The most common phrases that are at the heart of Sidamu afo greetings are *keero* 'peace' and *daa?e* 'welcome'. *Daa?e* is neutral to gender differences; hence, can be used to welcome an individual irrespective of his or her sex. According to Markos et al. (2003), *daa?e* expresses love that somebody has for another person and that the person has been missed 'for long'. To deny “someone a *daa?e* during a formal or casual encounter is considered to be a hatred and enmity” (Markos et al., 2003). So far, the greeting system of Sidamu afo has not been studied either from descriptive or pragmatics perspectives. The present study is, thus, an attempt to fill in this gap.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The methodology used is qualitative and descriptive. Language data, the greeting expressions, were gathered from key informants; then they were phonemically transcribed and transliterated. Finally, their socio-cultural and pragmatic meanings are provided. Since, the study is qualitative, generalization of the finding to some other language is not sought, but the finding can work to all speech communities of the language since there are no significant dialect variations that hinder intelligibility. The main data gathering tool is interview guide. The participants were purposefully selected based on their knowledge of the language and culture. Only six participants were used for the actual interview, however a number of greeting expressions were also collected from different people in actual communication situations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Meeting a person

When meeting a person, be it a first or second encounter, Sidama people use the phrase *keero* 'peace'. A similar concept, peace, is used as a greeting in other Ethiopian languages, such as Amharic (Ethiosemitic) *selam* 'peace', Wolayita (Omotic language): *saro* 'peace'; Nuer (Nilo-Saharan language): *maale* 'peace be with you' (Baye, 1997). The listener also responds with *keero* 'peace'. It is not clear whether the *keero* refers to a wish of the kind: 'I wish you peace' or asks a question, 'Is it a peace?' In some cases, *keero* 'peace' is accompanied by '*selame*', which also mean 'peace' in Amharic. However, the Amharic form is '*selam*' and the vowel {-e} is added to

make it compatible to the Sidamu afo phonological structure, in which words end, unlike in Amharic, only in vowels. It seems that *keero* expresses a wish 'peace be to you' and the added phrase *selame* asks the question 'Is it a peace?' The response to the phrase is almost always the same: *keero*.

Welcoming

The introductory greeting phrase *keero* is further extended to the welcoming phrases. There are several phrases used to welcome someone depending on the familiarity of the interlocutors and the degree of welcoming. The most common welcoming phrases are discussed:

- (1a) *hawalle keeru-ni da-jito*
well peace-in come- 2SM
'you (2SM) welcome'
- b) *hawalle keeru-ni da-jita*
well peace-in come- 2SF
'you (2SF) welcome'
- c) *hawale keeru-ni da-gini*
well peace-in come-2PL/ POL
'you (PL/POL) welcome'

The welcoming is responded with a phrase given in 2:

- (2) *hawale keeru-ni keffitini*
well peace-in stayed
'Well stayed'

A welcome is also expressed with other expressions of different degrees of affection and respect. Most of the expressions are metaphorical, and interpreted non-literally as shown below:

- (3) *daa-?e buffu*
come.3SM soil
'let soil come'

Though literally it means 'let a soil come onto me' where 'me' refers to the speaker, the communicative function of the phrase is just a 'welcome'; however, metaphorically it means 'let me die.' Such self-cursing phrases are also used in other Afro-asiatic languages, such as Gurage (Tesfaye, 2012; Leslau, 1959 and 1952).

The type of soil called to come into the addressee, and used for welcoming a person also matters regarding the degree of love and respect expressed to the welcomed person. For instance, *suk'k'u* 'top-light soil', *sururu* 'heavy and deep soil' or the combination of the two *suk'k'u sururu* 'light and heavy soil' are used to express less, more, and most love / respect offered to the person welcomed, respectively. So, the welcoming phrases may

assume one of the following expressions:

- (4a) *suk'k'u daa-?e*
top: soil come-3S
'let top soil come onto me'
'welcome' (weak)
- b) *sururu daa-?e*
deep: soil come-3S
'let deep soil come onto me'
'welcome' (stronger)
- c) *suk'k'u sururu daa-?e*
top: soil deep: soil come-3S
'let top soil and deep soil come onto me'
'welcome' (strongest)

It is claimed by the informants that there is a regional difference within Sidama in the use of the expressions of the welcoming phrases. Thus, the greeting phrases with self-cursing in 4a to c are said to be common in the Hula, Arbegona and Bunsu areas. The greeting phrases which are found to be used mostly in Hawassa and Aleta area include the following:

- (5a) *daanf'u daa-?e*
good come-3S
'let good come to me'
'welcome' (weak)
- b) *suk'k'u daa-?e*
top.soil come-3S
'let the top soil come to me'
'welcome' (stronger)
- c) *buk'k'isu daa-?e*
heavy.compacted.soil come-3S
'let a heavy-compacted soil come onto me'
'welcome' (strongest)

Some of the greeting phrases, such as *suk'ku daa?e* seem to be common to all the Hula, Arbegona, Bunsu, Hawassa and Aleta areas. The greeting phrases, particularly the soil names used for self-cursing as a welcoming, vary in the other Sidama lowland areas, such as Bona, Bensa and Chire. The greeting phrases used in these areas include the examples given in (6):

- (6a) *maanfu daa-?e*
low land.light.soil come-3S
'let light soil come to me'
'welcome' (weak: similar to *daa?e buffu*)
- b) *kotifu daa-?e*
heavy.soil come-3S
'let heavy soil come to me'
'welcome (stronger: similar to *suk'k'u daa?e*)
- c) *kototu daa-?e*
deep.soil come
'let heavy deep soil come onto me'
'welcome (strongest: similar to *buk'k'isu daa?e*)

Syntactically, it is found that *daa?e buffu* [come soil] is possible structure, but it is not common to say *buffu daa?e*. To the contrary, *maantfu daa?e* and *kotifu daa?e* are possible structures, but it is not acceptable to say *daa?e maantfu* or *daa?e kotifu*. Thus, it is possible to say that there is a difference in the lexical choices of welcoming phrases in different areas of Sidama, instance of dialect variation. There are lexical and structural variations in the phrases used in the different areas of the Zone.

Culturally, the welcoming phrase *daa?e buffu* can be used both by male and female to welcome a guest of any gender. However, *suk'k'o daa?e* and *sururu daa?e* are more often used by women only. Thus, gender difference in the Sidama culture determines a language use. This was also the case in Gurage languages in which self-cursing is used as greeting only by woman (Fekede and Ruth forthcoming).

It is also important to note that such respect and endearment expressing welcoming phrases are often used when one welcomes a son or daughter, a son's wife (daughter-in-law) or a daughter's husband (son-in-law). They are also used in a situation when a loved person has come unexpectedly.

Though soil in its different types metaphorically expresses 'wish for a death to come in adversity of addresser welcoming a guest,' a more straight forward term for a death may also be used to welcome a person as in (7):

- (7) *da-nawa ?ani*
 come-death me
 'let death come onto me' / 'let me die for you'

This phrase of welcome is much affectionate than the others, since it outwardly expresses the most feared 'death' to come onto the person greeting the guest.

Greeting time

Greeting varies depending on the time of meeting (morning, after noon, evening), days and years. It also varies depending on whether it is a casual or a holiday. It still may vary depending on the events or circumstances that take place, such as a woman gave birth to a baby, somebody has been circumcised, someone has got a new job or position, etc.

Morning

Sidama people do not actually wish to a person his morning be good as it is the case in English. They rather ask how well the person has spent the last night. The response is also based on the way the night was spent,

but usually 'peacefully' is expected. The examples in (8) show greetings in the morning addressed to 2PL/POL, 2SM and 2SF forms:

- (8a) Greeting: *keere gal-tini*
 Peace spend. night-
 2PL/POL
 'Good morning to you
 (PL/POL)
- b) Response: *keere holla*
 Peace spent. night
 'We spent the night
 peacefully'
- c) Greeting: *keere gal-ita*
 Peace spent. night- 2SF
 Good morning to
 you (SF)
- d) Greeting: *keere gal-ito*
 peace spent night -2SM
 'Good morning to
 you(SM)'
- e) Response of (8c-d): *keere holla*
 peacefully spent. night
 'I / we spent the night
 peacefully'

The morphemes {-tini}, {-ita} and {-ito} show second person plural or polite, second person feminine and second person masculine, respectively. The initial consonant of the second person plural and polite is deleted if a verb root has geminated consonant to avoid impermissible three consonant clusters. The example in 9a demonstrates this. However, different variants of these agreement affixes are also observed in 10.

Evening

Similar to the 'greetings of good morning,' the wish for good evening in Sidama culture is asking about how well the day was spent by interlocutors. The examples in 9 show the greeting phrases used in the evenings:

- 9a) *keere hoss-ini*
 Peace spend. day- 2PL/POL
 'Good evening to you (PL/POL)
- b) *keere hoss-ita*
 Peace spend. day- 2SF
 Good evening to you (SF)
- c) *keere hoss-ito*
 Peace spend. day-2SM
 'Good evening to you (SM)'
- d) The response of (9a-c) is: *keere hossa*
 peacefully spent. day
 'I / we spent the day peacefully'

Leave taking and saying goodbye are done with similar

greeting phrases as shown in 8 and 9. The main difference is only structural where the 'goodbye' phrases have imperative form; whereas, the leave taking forms have interrogative forms. The examples in 10 are phrases used for leave taking. They have the meaning of wish: 'have a good night' (10a-b) and 'have a good day' (10 c-d):

- 10a) *keere gall-e*
Peace spend: night-2PL/POL
Good night to you (PL/POL)
- b) *keere gall-i*
Peace spend.night-2SF/M
'Good night to you (SF&M)'
- c) *keere hoss-i*
Peace spend.day (2SM/F)
'Have a good day/ Good day to you(SM/F)'
- d) *keer hoss-e*
Peace spend. day-PL/POL
'Goo day to you PL/POL'

In a New Year

A New Year greeting phrases are different from the greeting phrases used in the morning and at night. It is worth to note that Sidama people have their own calendar which is a lunar. The calendar has 12 months with equal 30 days and five or six extra days that are separately considered a month; hence, a total of thirteen months. Sidama New Year is usually celebrated around the end of July. The exact day is not known because it varies depending on a particular star and the moon. Elders particularly renowned for star counting have to sit and predict the day of the New Year. Then, they announce to the people of Sidama to get prepared for the holiday. Two holidays, namely *Fiche* and *Chambalalla* take place in the consecutive days. *Fiche*, which comes first (at the eve of the new year), is dedicated, as a memorial day, to a very kind Sidama woman who was called *Fiche*. The holiday was named after the woman based on the decisions of Sidama elders. *Chambalala* is the actual holiday of the New Year.

Greeting expressions used during the New Year slightly vary between the urban (educated elites) and the rural people of the community. The examples in 11a and b are often used by the educated and urban dwellers:

- 11a) *hawalle keeru-ni haro diro ?iili-tini*
Well peace-in new year arrived-2PL/POL
'Happy new year to you (PL/POL)'
- b) *hawalle fiiffete ?ajana keeru-ni ?iili-tini*
well new. year holiday peace-in
arrived-2PL/POL
'Happy Fiche Holiday to you (PL/POL)'
- c) *hawalle fit'ari barira keeru-ni ?iili-tini*

Well Fiche. holiday day peace-in arrived-
2PL/POL

'happy Fiche Holiday to you(PL/POL)'

- d) *?ajid-e tf'ambalalla*
arrive. you (PL) Chambalalla
'You all arrived well for Chambalalla holiday!'

The greeting phrase in 11a is used at any days, beginning from *Fiche* and at the day of *Chambalalla*. It may be used after *Chambalalla* as a belated New Year greeting. However, the greeting phrase in 11b is used only on the *Fiche* holiday. Rural people tend to use the phrase shown in 11c. They use *fit'ari barira* instead of *fiiffete ?ajana*.

Response to 11 (a-d) is: *?iil-e*
arrive (2PL/POL)
'You (2PL/POL) arrive well',

You and we all have arrived well to the *Chambalalla* holiday! This phrase is used only on the day of *Chambalalla*. Every person coming to a home wishes: *?ajide tf'ambalalla* and the response is just *?iile*.

Usually guests coming to a home to wish a happy *Chambalalla* carry a spear or a stick with them. As they step into the house, often after they have been welcomed, they put their spears and sticks at the entrance (outside the house) and they get in. The guest, whoever coming home, eats a food called *boorsame* 'cultural food made of 'Wasa,' a product of ensete plant which is mixed with butter and milk. Meat is not eaten on this day. If there was a meat stock in the house or a fridge, it must be taken out of the house. People believe that their cattle may die if meat was eaten or kept at home on the day of *Chambalalla*. On the eve of *Chambalalla*, that is, on the day of *Fiche*, people who had quarreled must be negotiated.

Circumcision and greeting

Circumcision plays the role of an inclusion of a man into elders' membership. It may take place during childhood or culturally when a person becomes an adult. If a person was circumcised during his childhood, there must be another ceremony of inclusion to adulthood. That ceremony entails touching upper part of his leg (near genital) with a knife as if he is circumcised at the moment by an elderly person. People sing *heebo*; an elderly person leads the song and others receive the chant saying: *hee*. Then, a ram is slaughtered by an elderly man among those gathered for the ceremony. A soft grass called *məratf'a* is immersed into the blood of the sheep, and then the boy's neck, at the back towards his shoulder, is smeared with the blood. The elderly man who touched the person with a knife (simulated circumcision) utters: *ko?lu kulohe* 'let your mind leads you

about what may going on around you.'

After the 14th days of this inclusion ceremony, the boy himself slaughters a cow and feeds the elders and the community. This ceremony is called *buula*. Here after, he is a full member of the adult community, and he wears adults' clothes called *gonfa*. If a boy is circumcised in adulthood, which is the custom, the inclusion to adulthood takes place at the same day of the circumcision.

The person who is re-circumcised as simulation when he became an adult, or the one who culturally circumcised when he is actually adult, are taken to a river side after a seclusion period, for a month or more. This period varies depending on the wealth of the circumcised parents, friends, etc. It is worth to note that the circumcised persons stay in this period in a small hut built for them and typically meant for the circumcision ceremony. Then, the leg toe of the to be re-circumcised in simulation is immersed into the river water, and then the elders sing *heebo-heey*. Then after, the circumcised persons are brought back to their actual home. A person who feeds the circumcised is called *jaala*. The *jaala* feeds the person from the day of circumcision to the completion of the seclusion, a period that ensures inclusion to the adult community. The *jaala* is assigned for the purpose by elders. Other relatives of the circumcised or a wife (a person may marry a wife before a circumcision) cannot feed the person. The time a person is circumcised depends on his wealth, which suffices for the circumcision feast. The greetings to a circumcised person go as follow:

12a) Greeting: *holgidi manna magalale keeru-ni sa?ini*

bedroom men circumcision-knife
peace-in passed
'Congratulations to you (POL) for
escaping the knife'

b) Response: *keere sa?nomolla*
Peace passed

'We passed safely' (the response
is made by the *jaala* not by the
circumcised person).

13a) Greeting: *sa?ine hobakinoni*

Passed without-dying
'You passed (escaped without dying)'

b) Response: *keere sa?nomolla*
Peace passed

'We passed safely'

14a) Greeting: *t'uru t'umiha ?ikko?ne*

wound peace let. be
'Let the circumcision be for good
luck in your future life'

Asking about health and treasure

The welcoming phrases are followed by extended

greeting expressions which may ask about the health of a person, kids, animals, villagers and the country at large as in the examples in 15:

- (15) Person Greeting phrase Gloss
2SM keere nooto [peace exist] 'How are you?'
2SF keere noota [peace exist] 'How are you?'
2PL/POL keere he?dino-ni [peace live(exist)] 'How
are you?'

The response to all the greetings in 15 is *keere holla* [peace exist] 'I am / we are fine'. The person who was asked about his health also asks how the interlocutor's health was as in 16:

(16a) *?ati keere-ho?*

You (SM/ F) peace-exist (ho is short form of holla)
'Are you fine'

b) *keere holla*

Peace exist

'I am fine'

c) *ki?ne keere-ho?*

you (PL.POL) peace-exist
'Are you (PL.POL) fine?'

The greeting in 16(c) may be rephrased as in (17):

(17a) *keere he?di-noni?*

Peace exist-2PL.POL
'How are you(PL.POL) ?'

b) *keere holla*

Peace exist

'We are fine'

c) *?ani keere holla*

I peace exist
'I am fine'

The interlocutors may further continue, as discussed earlier, asking about the health of a third party that is not actually in the conversation as in (18):

(18) Person Greeting Phrase Gloss

3SM?isi keere-ho? [he peace-exist] 'Is he fine?'

3SF?ise keere-ho? [she peace-exist] 'Is she fine?'

3PL?insa keere-ho? [they peace-exist] 'Are they fine?'

The response to all the greeting phrases on 18 is *keere holla* 'S(h)e is fine' / 'they are fine'.

Impersonal and specified greetings

An impersonal greeting phrase is used to address a third person(s) as shown in (19):

(19a) *keere-ho (lla)?*

peace-exist

'Is it a peace?'

- b) *hi?iito-ti?*
how-COP?
'How is it?'

Keere holla 'is it a peace' pragmatically implies that everything (health, family, weather, etc.) is in good order. Similarly, *hi?iitoti* 'how is it?' asks more general issues, be it a business, health, political stability and others. It can be roughly equated with '*what is up?*'. The response to the greeting phrases in 19 is *keere holla* which may mean 'It/he is fine'. More specific responses to the same question may also be used as in 20:

- 20a) *danfa holl-a*
well/fine exist-3SM
'He is fine'
- b) *danfa-te*
fine-3SF
'She is fine'
- c) *danfule-ho*
fine-3PL-exist
'They are fine'

Age and gender in greeting

A new comer first greets, irrespective of his age, and then those in place respond to the greeting for the conversation to continue. On streets, anybody who sees a person first greets, and the other responds. Believers may greet a priest first, or the greeting may be preceded with the priest's blessing believers with his cross which may be followed by his formulaic greetings asking about 'health,' including about 'the health of the interlocutor's belief'. Though youngsters greet elders first, the reverse is also possible depending on the situation. Generally, a less powerful person greets people who are in power first. The power could be religious, political, age-based, marriage-based, etc. Regarding gender, anyone who sees a person first greets. Usually women greet men first though this is not strictly adhered.

Listening responses

Different types of listening responses are used by the Sidama people during conversation. Some of the common phrases include the following:

- 21a) *ihhi*
'Ok, continue'
- b) *eeja*
'Is that so'

- 22a) *attot-ni haada*

like that-was

'Was that so'

- b) *hiike hatu ?ika-dandi*
how person like: that. happen-PST.COP
'How comes the person happened to do like that'
- c) *hiito hatu ?ika-dandi*
how a.thing like. that. happen. PST.COP
'How comes it happened like that'
- d) *hiikite hatu ?ika-dandi-tu*
how person. thing. PL like. that. happen-PST.COP-PL
'How comes they happened (to do) like that'

The same plural form is also used for third person singular feminine; thus the structure overlaps. It seems that third person singular feminine marker and plural marker are homophones. Nodding of head up and down is also used as a signal to continue a conversation. So, listening responses are not only verbal but also none verbal. In a telephone conversation, *ihii* is used as a listening response, and greeting on telephone begins with *haloo*.

Declaratives as greetings

Some casual, as opposed to the holiday, greeting expressions are short and seem informing:

- 23a) *beeto daa-gu*
girl came 'welcome girl'
- b) *seenu daa-ji*
girls-came 'welcome girls'
- c) *beetu daa-ji*
boy came 'welcome boy'
- d) *?ooso daa-gu*
boys came welcome boys
- e) *meentu daa-ji*
the women came 'welcome women'

Another frequently used greeting phrase is *?anne kira* [I yours] which roughly means '*whatever bad thing may happen to you, be it done to me.*' The actual cultural meaning with regard to welcoming with this expression is more than the words. It was also heard its contracted form as *?annera*.

Body language in greeting

Different types of non-verbal cues, mainly body languages are used for greeting purposes in Sidama culture.

Hugging and kissing

The most commonly used body languages for greeting purposes are hugging, kissing and bowing. A person

greet another person by hugging at the front part of a body towards the chest, and then by kissing at the cheeks and lips. However, there are a number of restrictions on who can or cannot kiss a person for greetings. For instance, a son-in-law can kiss his father in law and vice versa, but he cannot do so to his mother in law. Similarly, daughter in law may kiss and greet her mother in law, but not her father in law. In such instances, the greeting phrase *daa?e buffu* is used without kissing.

Lips' kissing during greeting is possible between brothers, a brother and sister, a father and children, a mother and children, a woman with a woman, and a man with a man. Adults can kiss kids at lips irrespective of their gender. Ethnicity and tribal differences do not matter as to who may greet first. Yet, there is a tendency for a person who is socially or ethnically higher is greeted first both in kissing and verbally. A woman or a man kissing an opposite sex, other than his wife or her husband, is considered adultery. In fact, a husband and a wife often do not kiss one another for greeting purposes.

Bowing

Bowing is very common when greeting the people on power, religious leaders, elderly fathers, a mother in law, and a father-in-law. The bowing involves making a head down towards the front chest. The extent of bowing a head down shows the degree of respect and politeness offered to the person greeted.

Lying down on chest

Someone who has done something wrong often asks for an excuse by bowing, and then further lying down on a ground on a chest while touching the legs of the person against whom something wrong had been done. This apology request is considered more important than penalty with money or other treasure. The relatives of the person who did something wrong stand from their seats and stand still until the person who was asked an apology grants the apology. If the person takes time hesitating to apologize, the relatives and friends of the wrong dower lie down on their chest as well to request apology for the behavior of their relative.

Exception to the culture of lying down on the chest to ask for apology is when parents have done something wrong against their children. The parents may ask for an apology to their children orally but they never lie down on the chest. So, age and relationship between interlocutors' matters as to who may lie down seeking apology. Sidama elders believe that the child may die if the child's parents had lied down on their chests to ask for an apology from their children. In reverse, the elders order the child to ask for an apology from his parents though the parents are

actually responsible for the mistake. The following saying shows this very fact:

- 24) *?anu beeto forani ?ubiro halale ?ana-ho gannani*
 father son: daughter chasing lies issue father-for
 judged
 'If a father lies down and gets hurt while chasing
 his son/daughter, the child is caught guilty.'

The expectation is that the child should not run away from the father, and he has to receive punishment. The child's wrong doing for anything else and his running away to escape the punishment is considered a double guilt.

At a wedding day, the bridegroom and his best men come to the bride's home. They enter into the house and tell the girls family that they are messengers from the bridegroom's family. If they are allowed *to sit down*, it means that they are *welcomed*. They, then, will have food and drink prepared for the wedding ceremony. When the bride leaves her parent's home, the parents kiss her as a sign of goodbye. Nobody from the bride's family kisses the bridegroom or his best men.

Farewell

'Keer'- 'peace' plays the main role in saying to someone goodbye as it does in welcoming. The following in 34 are a few examples of farewell phrases:

- (25a) *keeru-ni keefi*
 peace-in happen
 'Goodbye (2SM/F)'
 b) *keeru-ni keefe*
 peace-in happen
 goodbye (2PL. POL)
 c) *keeru-?ate ledo ?iko*
 Peace-you(2SM/F) with be
 'Let peace be with you'

These farewell phrases are often used for someone leaving for a place that is far away from the residence of the person, or for someone who may stay for a long time in the destination. For short time leaves, greeting phrases, such as *keere galli* 'good night' and *keere hossi* 'have a good day' are used.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher has discussed the socio-cultural and pragmatic uses of greetings in the Sidama culture. Greeting is found to be very important tool to begin a conversation and smoothen relationships. *Keero* 'peace' and *daa?e* 'welcome' are the most common

expressions used to greet and welcome people. Whereas *daaʔe* is specifically used for welcoming, *keero* combined with other words is used both to welcome and farewell a person. The expression *daaʔe* combined with different layers of soil is used to express levels of welcoming (weak, mid-level or strong) somebody. Socio-cultural variables, such as age, power, social status, marital relationships and circumcision determine the types of greeting expressions to be used. Greetings are also accompanied by non-verbal cues, such as hugging, kissing and bowing. Marital relationship affects who may and may not greet someone through kissing.

It was found that there is conceptual convergence in the greeting phrases among Afro-asiatic languages including Sidama. For instance, the Sidama greeting phrase *keero* 'peace' is found to be common to Ethiosemitic languages, such as Amharic '*selam*', Gurage '*keer*'; Omotic language such as wolayta '*saro*', and Nilo-Saharan language, such as Nuer '*maale*'. In all these languages, the words in Italics refer to 'peace'. A further comparative study of greeting phrases may help to uncover the typology of greeting expressions in terms of semantics in particular, and cultural categorizations in general.

It is recommended that the greeting culture of Sidama has to be studied in more details, and be integrated into the education system of Sidamu afo. Cross-cultural study of greeting system associated with self-cursing (which is very common in Afro-Asiatic) may help to uncover the semantics and pragmatics of language and the constituted socio-cultural settings.

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Conflicts of interest

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