

**MEKELLEUNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LANGUAGES**

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**



**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON TIGRINYA CURSING AND BLESSING  
EXPRESSIONS IN CENTRAL TIGRAY**

**BY**

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**MEKELLE, TIGRAY, ETHIOPIA**

**NOVEMBER, 2025**

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## *Abstract*

*This study explored discourse analysis of Tigrinya cursing and blessing expressions in the central zone of Tigray, Ethiopia, examining them as culturally significant speech acts embedded in social practice. Employing a qualitative research design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and audio recordings from twelve basic informants, six male and six female, age 35-75 were purposively selected. The analysis was formed through speech act, politeness, and sociolinguistic theories. The findings revealed that blessings are pervasive in positive social and ritual contexts such as teskar/sedeka (memorial feasts), tsebel (religious gatherings), weddings, birthday ceremonies, and coffee rituals. The function is to reinforce social cohesion, express goodwill, and invoke divine favor for prosperity, health, and long life. Cursing, conversely, occurs in contexts of perceived norm violation, such as familial disrespect, theft of church property, and criminal acts like rape. These expressions serve as powerful tools for social control, expressing intense emotions like anger and frustration, and invoking misfortune or divine punishment upon the wrongdoer. Linguistically, both forms are characterized by specific formulaic structures and are highly dependent on the speaker's authority, the context, and paralinguistic features like tone and gesture. The study concluded that cursing and blessing are not merely literal utterances but are performative acts that profoundly shape social relationships, enforce community values, and reflect the underlying power dynamics and cultural ideologies of Tigrinya speakers. The study recommends further comparative research, the documentation of these oral traditions, and community awareness of their powerful social and psychological impacts, especially religious leaders, elders, and educators, should promote responsible and ethical use of powerful speech acts, ensuring that language fosters healing and respect rather than harm or division. Awareness campaigns could highlight the psychological and emotional impact of negative speech, especially in family settings.*

*Keywords: cursing, blessing, discourse analysis, Tigrinya, Teskar, Tsebel, speech acts, social norms*

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Phonetic transcription .....	vii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2. Statement of the problem .....	2
1.4. Objective of the Study.....	3
1.4.1. General Objective.....	3
1.4.2. Specific Objectives .....	3
1.5. Significance of the Study.....	3
1.6. Delimitation of the Study.....	3
1.7. Limitation of the Study .....	4
1.8. Operational Definitions.....	4
CHAPTERTWO .....	5
REVIEWOFLITRUTURE.....	5
2.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.....	5
2.1.1. Theoretical Framework .....	5
2.2. Conceptual Framework.....	6
2.2.1. The Concept of Cursing and Blessing.....	6
2.2.2. Functions and Roles of Cursing and Blessing.....	7
2.3. Related Previous Studies on Cursing and Blessing .....	8

2.3.1. International Studies on Cursing and Blessing .....	8
2.3.2. Local Studies on Cursing and Blessing.....	9
CHAPTER THREE .....	11
METHODOLOGY.....	11
3.1. Design of the study.....	11
3.2. Population and Sample Techniques of the Study.....	11
3.3. Source of Data.....	13
3.4. Data Collection.....	13
3.4.1. Interview .....	13
3.4.2. Observation .....	13
3.4.3. Recordings.....	14
3.5. Data Analysis.....	14
CHAPTER FOUR.....	15
Discourse Analysis of Blessing and Cursing Expressions.....	15
4.1. Analysis of Blessing Expressions .....	15
4.1.1. ‘In Teskar/Memorial’ services .....	15
4.1.2. ‘In Mahber (Tsebel)’ .....	16
4.1.3. In Birthday Ceremony.....	17
4.1.4. Blessing in Church .....	18
4.1.5. In Psychological and Physical affected person .....	19
4.1.6. In Marriage.....	20
4.1.7. In Coffee Ceremony .....	21
4.1.8. ‘In Geleb’ .....	21

4.1.9. In Conflict Resolution.....	22
4.2. Analysis of Cursing Expressions .....	23
4.2.1. Cursing in the Church .....	23
4.2.2. Cursing in the Family.....	23
4.2.3. Robbing the Properties of the Church.....	24
4.2.4. Raping .....	25
CHAPTER FIVE .....	26
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	26
6.1. Conclusion .....	26
6.2. Recommendations.....	27
REFERENCES .....	28

## Phonetic transcription

Consonants	IPA & Non-IPA	Vowels	IPA
<b>ʉ</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ɤ</b>	<b>ə</b>
<b>ʌ</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>ɤ̣</b>	<b>u</b>
<b>ɬ</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ɤ̣</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ɔ</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>ɤ</b>	<b>a</b>
<b>ʒ</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>ɤ̣</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>ɔ̣</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>ɤ̣</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ɥ</b>	<b>ʃ</b>	<b>ɤ</b>	<b>o</b>
<b>ɸ</b>	<b>k'</b>		
<b>ɸ̣</b>	<b>χ'</b>		
<b>ɓ</b>	<b>b</b>		
<b>ɗ</b>	<b>t</b>		
<b>ɗ̣</b>	<b>n</b>		
<b>ɠ</b>	<b>ʔ</b>		
<b>ɠ̣</b>	<b>k</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣</b>	<b>χ</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣</b>	<b>w</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>ʃ</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>z</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>j</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>d</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>dʒ</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>g</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>t'</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>s'</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>f</b>		
<b>ɠ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣</b>	<b>k<sup>w</sup></b>		

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a basic need of human beings to interact with each other. As a tool of communication, people use it to express their needs, ideas thoughts and feelings. It cannot be separated from the culture or the society to which it belongs because it is an important part of culture (Niguse, 2011). Moreover, language is a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings (Merriam Webster).<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Tigrinya is one of the widely spoken North Ethio Semitic languages. Along with Geez and Tigre, Tigrinya belongs to the North Ethio Semitic languages, (Hetzron, 1972): Faber, 1997; Tsehaye, 1979; UIIendorff, 1985; Voigt, 2011a, 2011b.). Girma (2001) also attested that Tigrinya is the second most widely spoken Semitic language in Ethiopia and the third most widely spoken Semitic language after Arabic and Amharic." It employs the Ethiopic script and uses a subject-object-verb (SOV) Word order, (Dagneu, 2019, Tesfay, 2002). The language is used in education, literature and media domains (Kogan, 1997, Tesfay, 2002) as cited in Tesfaye (2023).

Regarding blessings and curses, Prince (1994) says, blessings and curses are usually expressed in words either spoken words or written words. But those words are not ordinary words; they are words charged with supernatural power. The power may be the power of God or it may be the power of Satan.

Language encompasses a wide arrangement of phenomena, including the use of both profane and sacred expressions. Cursing and blessing, as fundamental aspects of human communication, provide insights into socio-cultural dynamics and emotional expression (Allan & Burrige, 2006; Ameka & Terkourafi, 2019). Although curses are universal, they vary across societies in terms of linguistic form and practice. Communities often view them as powerful tools that can affect individuals positively or negatively in contexts such as illness, misfortune, or death (Malinowski, 1935; Jay, 2009). Moreover, many cultures maintain a strong belief that the curses of elders or religious leaders are particularly potent and feared (Lutz, 1988).

On the other hand, a blessing is a wish or invocation for well-being, happiness, protection, health, associated with hope, positivity, and prosperity they are commonly delivered during events such as weddings, childbirths, religious ceremonies, and everyday greetings. It is favor from a higher power. Blessings can be given in various forms, such as verbal expressions,

typically offered to confer positive outcomes and is often used to acknowledge gratitude or to seek symbolic gestures, and are meant to bring about changes in one's life. Blessings are "performative speech acts" (Austin, 1962 & Searle, 1969), and are universal phenomena even if they are distinct in linguistic expressions and manner of practice among different societies. Societies use blessings in their daily conversations and interactions and reflect their traditions, norms, philosophies, religions, etc. Accordingly, Tesfay and Baye (2023) investigated about blessing expressions in Raya Tigrinya in semantic and pragmatic aspects. They described and analyzed the context of blessings in general and in particular. Aspects such as wedding ceremony, coffee ceremony and on a festive occasion are analyzed. On the other hand, Tesfay (2023) examined two types of curses: self and other curses: He examined mothers use self-cursing to encourage their babies. Furthermore, he investigated on cursing others as parental, enemy and leaders. Those researches have been studied and focused in Raya titled with semantic and pragmatic cursing and blessing expressions. However, to the best of my knowledge, no one has studied on discourse analysis in Tigrinya cursing and blessing expressions in Central Tigray. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by examining how cursing and blessing expressions perform in actual discourse. It explored the linguistically transcription forms, contextual usage, and social implications of these expressions in Central Tigray. Understanding these aspects helped reveal how Tigrinya speakers construct meaning, express emotions, and along social relationships through language. Hence, the researcher was initiated to investigate this and fill the gap.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Language serves as a crucial medium through which cultural beliefs, social norms, and emotional expressions are conveyed. In the context of the societies, discourse expressions of cursing and blessing carry deep cultural significance, serving both communicative and performative functions. Cursing and blessing, as fundamental aspects of human communication, offer rich insights into socio-cultural dynamics, emotional expression, and linguistic creativity.

As the researcher had explored or reviewed different previous works or researches, Semantic and pragmatic aspects of blessing expressions in Raya dialect of Tigrinya (Tefay & Baye, 2023) have examined, and cursing expressions in Raya Tigrinya: semantic and pragmatic aspects have been studied, (Tefay, 2023). However, the discourse analysis of cursing and blessing expressions on Tigrinya in central Tigray has not been studied yet. Accordingly, the researcher has initiated to investigate the discourse analysis of blessing and cursing expressions on Tigrinya in central Tigray to fill the gap. To achieve this goal, the researcher had prepared the following research questions:

1. In which situations are cursing expressions typically employed?
2. In what social and cultural contexts are blessing expressions commonly used?
3. How do cursing and blessing expressions reflect the cultural values and social norms?

## **1.4. Objective of the Study**

### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the discourse analysis of cursing and blessing on Tigrinya expressions in central Tigray.

### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. to identify and describe the communicative situations in which cursing expressions are typically employed in Tigrinya discourse in Central Tigray;
2. to examine the social and cultural contexts where blessing expressions are commonly used among Tigrinya speakers, and
3. to analyze how cursing and blessing expressions reflect and reinforce the cultural values and social norms of Tigrinya society.

## **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study contribute to the field of linguistics, particularly in the areas of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and ethnographic linguistics, by examining how Tigrinya speakers use cursing and blessing expressions as part of everyday communication. It highlights how these expressions serve as vehicles for expressing identity, negotiating relationships, and reinforcing social norms within the cultural setting of Central Tigray. Furthermore, the study offers practical value for language documentation, education, intercultural communication, and cultural preservation. It may serve as a secondary source for other researchers interested in Semitic languages, pragmatics, or traditional oral expressions. The insights gained from this study could also support community based efforts to recognize and preserve oral heritage as part of broader linguistic and cultural sustainability initiatives.

## **1.6. Delimitation of the Study**

Delimitation refers to the boundaries set by a researcher, specifying the focus and scope of the study. Hence, this study focuses on discourse analysis of Tigrinya cursing and blessing expressions. However, speech acts like apologies and compliments would not be covered. It focused on discourse analysis of blessing and cursing expressions of Tigrinya in the central zone of Tigray.

## 1.7. Limitation of the Study

The researcher faced challenges in conducting his study. Some of these challenges were shortage of time, financial, and materials. While these limitations posed challenges to the depth and scope of this study, several strategies were employed to mitigate their impact such as develop a detailed and realistic timeline during the research, allocating specific periods for each phase (literature review, fieldwork, transcription, analysis, and writing); create a minimal budget for essential costs (transportation for interviews, maybe a small token of appreciation for informants); and use available materials. For example, smart phone was effectively utilized for data recording and storage.

## 1.8. Operational Definitions

To ensure clarity in research objectives, the following operational definitions are provided for key concepts in this study:

**Cursing** is a linguistic expression intends to cause harm, misfortune, and other activities upon a person or entity. Operationally, a curse will be identified through: the use of negatively perspective words, including imperatives like "May you suffer "or "damn you", cultural references to misfortune, illness, or negative supernatural forces, such as invoking the angriness of a Lord, and contextual clues like anger, frustration, or hatefulness "in the tone and delivery of the speaker.

**Blessing** is defined as a linguistic expression or phrase intended to invoke good fortune, well-being, or divine favor upon a person or entity. Blessings will be operationally defined through: The use of positively connoted words, such as "May you prosper "be well," or "blessed are you." Contextual clues like affection, care, or kindness in the tone and delivery of the speaker.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents the theoretical, and conceptual framework, and international and local related previous studies.

#### 2.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This section discusses the key linguistic theories that inform the analysis of cursing and blessing expressions in discourse.

##### 2.1.1. Theoretical Framework

Cursing and blessing are not only linguistic expressions but also social actions with cultural and pragmatic significance. They can be examined through various linguistic theories, including speech act theory, pragmatics and politeness theory, and sociolinguistic theory.

###### 2.1.1.1. Speech Act Theory

According to speech act theory, language is used to perform actions rather than simply to convey information. Cursing and blessing are performative utterances, since by uttering them; the speaker performs the act of invoking harm or goodwill. They are illocutionary acts that express intentions and are often classified as expressive (expressing feelings such as goodwill or hostility) or declarations (when spoken by socially recognized figures, such as priests or elders). They also carry perlocutionary effects, producing emotional or social consequences such as fear, joy, or respect in the hearer (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

According to this theory, utterances can have three levels of meaning. These are Locutionary (literal meaning), Illocutionary (speaker's intention), and Perlocutionary (effect on the listener).

###### 2.1.1.2. Pragmatics and Politeness Theory

Pragmatics emphasizes that the meaning of language depends on context, speaker intention, and hearer interpretation. Curses and blessings are thus context-bound: the same expression can be serious, sarcastic, humorous, or ritualistic depending on the situation.

Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle explains that blessings often function as polite acts that promote goodwill, harmony, and solidarity, while curses typically violate politeness expressing hostility or disrespect. Similarly, Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that blessings are generally positive politeness strategies, since they enhance the hearer's positive face (the desire to be respected and appreciated). In contrast, curses are usually face-threatening acts, because they attack the hearer's dignity or impose negative consequences.

### **2.1.1.3. Sociolinguistic Theory**

Sociolinguistics examines how language reflects and shapes social identity, culture, and norms. Gumperz (1982) highlights that meaning in interaction is influenced by social roles, norms, and cultural practices. Cursing and blessing are culturally situated practices that vary according to tradition, religion, and community values. Their use is influenced by factors such as age, gender, authority, and social hierarchy. For instance, in many cultures, the blessing of an elder is highly valued, while the curse of the same figure is deeply feared. Curses may serve as mechanisms of social control or resistance, whereas blessings often reinforce solidarity, respect, and communal harmony/agreement.

## **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

### **2.2.1. The Concept of Cursing and Blessing**

Blessings and curses are activities of pronouncement. As Anderson (1962) stated, proclamation acts, or "per-formative" utterances, are what blessings and curses are. They are more than just prayers, though they might be prayers as well. A blessing is an effective means to invoke, distribute, or celebrate the well-being that results from divine favor. It conveys some sort of benefit, but the emphasis is more on the life or relationship that the blessing has improved than on the benefit itself. In contrast, curses are expressions of misfortune, calamity, and evil. They, like blessings, are not mere wishes but are powerful and effective per formatives that have strength when uttered, but only in appropriate contexts by appropriate individuals. A curse is an illocution and it is intended to do something by its invocation. As with blessings, the focus is less on the utterance itself and more (in the case of a curse) on the relationship severed or at least marginalized by the curse, (Anderson, 2014).

Existing literature review on cursing and blessing reveals a broad spectrum of perspectives. Key studies have examined the psychological and social functions of profanity (e.g., Jay, 2009) and the ritualistic and protective aspects of blessings (e.g., Kroskrity, 2000).

Blessing is power-oriented like cursing. For blessings to be authentic and efficacious there must be extra-linguistic institutions like family, descent groups, religious institutions, etc. with distinctive social roles and status. In other words, it is "Only certain individuals may principally utter out the blessings" (Westermann, 1978). Besides, the blessing is speech acts related to some future action and it often functions as foundations by providing a comparative analysis that incorporates contemporary linguistic theory and socio-cultural context.

### **2.2.2. Functions and Roles of Cursing and Blessing**

Numerous scholars highlight the multifunctional role of blessing and cursing expressions: Spiritual and Religious Role, blessings are often viewed as divine gifts, while curses are considered spiritually dangerous. Both carry theological weight in traditional belief systems (Prince, 1994; Fredrickson, 2001).

Psychological and Emotional Impact: Curses may induce fear, guilt, or shame, while blessings promote encouragement, resilience, and social bonding (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

Social and Cultural Regulation: Cursing can function as a form of social control penalizing behavior deemed inappropriate while blessings act as moral reinforcement, confirm desirable conduct (Jay, 2009; Kroskrity, 2000).

Linguistic and Symbolic Significance: Both expressions employ metaphor, symbolism, and formulaic structures, making them powerful linguistic tools in oral tradition and identity formation.

#### **2.2.2.1. Spiritual and Religious Importance**

Cursing often considered a verbal expression invoking harm, cursing is viewed as a powerful negative act in many religious traditions. This suggests cursing carries moral and spiritual consequences, reflecting the state of the heart. Blessings, on the other hand, are acts of kindness, goodwill, and affirmation, often thought to attract positive outcomes.

#### **2.2.2.2. Psychological and Emotional Impact**

Cursing: Words carry psychological weight. Research suggests that negative speech, including curses, can lead to stress, lower self-esteem, and strained relationships. The act of cursing may reflect inner disturbances and continue a cycle of negativity.

Blessing: Positive affirmations, or blessings, have a profound effect on emotional well-being. Words of encouragement and blessing promote confidence, strength, and optimism. Studies in positive psychology affirm the power of uplifting speech to improve mental health.

#### **2.2.2.3. Social and Cultural Relevance**

In some cultures, curses are believed to bring tangible harm, tied to spiritual beliefs. This is common in African, Middle Eastern, and indigenous traditions where curses can function as social controls or expressions of deep anger. Blessings serve as a means of social cohesion and goodwill. They are often part of the ritual, celebrations, or transitions in life.

#### **2.2.2.4. Linguistic and Symbolic Power**

Cursing: Curse words are powerful linguistic tools used to express intense emotions. While often discouraged, they reflect deep feelings and serve as platform for frustration.

Blessing: Blessings are deliberate, thoughtful expressions meant to create a positive shift. They symbolize hope, gratitude, and connection, often better the immediate context.

### **2.3. Related Previous Studies on Cursing and Blessing**

This section reviews the extant literature pertinent to the study of cursing and blessing, categorizing it into international theoretical foundations and local empirical studies.

#### **2.3.1. International Studies on Cursing and Blessing**

International scholarship provides the theoretical and analytical frameworks for understanding cursing and blessing as linguistically and culturally significant acts. The following productive works have been instrumental:

Jay T. (2009) Posits that cursing is a complex neuron-psychological phenomenon rather than a mere linguistic deficit. Jay's cross-cultural analysis demonstrates that taboo language is processed in the brain's system, associated with emotional regulation, which accounts for its effectiveness in expressing emotional affect, facilitating purification of the emotions, and solidifying in-group identity across diverse societies.

Wierzbicka, A. (1992) examines that the inseparable link between language and cultural cognition. Her findings indicate that the semantic content of performative utterances like blessings and curses is shaped by culture-specific norms and values, meaning their illocutionary force and perceived strength are not directly translatable but are embedded within unique cultural scripts.

Austin, J. L. (1962) establishes the concept of the performative utterance, wherein saying something is equivalent to doing something. This work is critical for analyzing blessings and curses not as descriptions but as social actions whose effectiveness depends on felicity conditions (e.g., appropriate speaker, context, and procedure).

Searle, J. R. (1976) blessings are typically categorized as expressive (e.g., expressing gratitude) or commissives (committing a supernatural force to act), while curses often function as expressive of anger or directives (attempting to get a supernatural force to harm a target).

Kroskrity, P. V. (2000). analysis that the authority to curse or bless is legitimized through ideologies that link language to divine power, traditional authority, and social hierarchy, thereby reinforcing political structures and collective identity.

Duranti, A. (1997). Insights reveal that the meaning and efficacy of ritual blessings and curses are co-constructed within their specific cultural context, including the ritual performance, participant roles, and broader cosmological beliefs.

Goffman, E. (1967), analysis blessings as positive, affirming rituals that maintain social solidarity and uphold a participant's "face." Conversely, curses are analyzed as negative, face-threatening acts that challenge social bonds and disrupt the interaction order, often serving as tools for social control and conflict.

Sperber and Wilson (1986), arguing that utterance interpretation depend on inferring the speaker's intended meaning based on contextual relevance. This theory explains how a seemingly literal curse (e.g., a mother's self-curse) is understood non-literally by listeners as a highly relevant expression of empathy or emphasis, given the immediate context.

### **2.3.2. Local Studies on Cursing and Blessing**

Supportable research within the Ethiopian context has applied these international frameworks to local languages and cultures, with several studies focusing on aspects of Tigrinya.

Fekede, M. & Fjeld, V. (2016), concludes that the pragmatic functions and social rules governing cursing are culturally specific. While both cultures employ cursing for bonding and conflict, the severity, acceptable contexts, and thematic content are dictated by distinct cultural norms, underscoring that function supersedes literal meaning.

Baye, Y. (2013) identifies common thematic elements (e.g., invocations of disease, poverty, and divine retribution) across cursing practices in multiple Ethiopian languages. This suggests shared socio-cultural concerns within the region, even as the linguistic expressions remain distinct.

Dagneu, M. (2019) although focused on discourse markers, this study provides critical insights into the grammatical and syntactic structures of Tigrinya. Its findings are essential for analyzing the specific morphological and syntactic features that characterize performative utterances like blessings and curses in the language.

Almaz (2021) cursing and blessing serve as a mechanism for social control, enforcing community, ethics by creating a binary between the blessed (morally upright and successful) and the cursed (immoral and ostracized). The power to perform these acts is vested in authority figures (e.g., clan chiefs, religious leaders) presumed to have supernatural access. Furthermore,

the study identifies their profound impact on human emotions, capable of inducing anxiety, fear, joy, and solace.

According to Tesfay (2023), there are two ways of curses: self-cursing and cursing others. He explored mothers use self – cursing to encourage for their babies (Let Him make me eat soil! when her babies say I am hungry!), and to condole them. While cursing others categorized by relational context such as parental curses: function as a severe form of moral discipline, curses against enemies: serve as appeals for justice and revenge and curses against leaders: operate as a form of political commentary and a wish for accountability.

Tesfay and Baye,(2023). Categorize blessings into two types. These are general contexts which Utterances invoking universal goods such as peace, love, and health (e.g., *səlam-ij fiχ`r-ij t`iʕinna-j ji-hab-ə-nna*) and particular ritual contexts: Performances embedded in specific cultural ceremonies, including weddings (*mərʕa-χum di-ti-χ`addəsə*), festivals (*?inkwaʕ ?a-bsəh-ə-kum*), and coffee ceremonies (*ʕaddi hagos-ij t`iʕinna-j ji-gbər-ə-ll-i-nna*), each with distinct discursive functions.

While the aforementioned local studies provide invaluable insights into the semantic content and immediate pragmatic use of cursing and blessing expressions, their analytical scope remains primarily confined to the sentence level. A significant gap exists in understanding how these expressions operate at the macro discourse level how they are structured across extended conversations, how they function within the entirety of a ritual performance, and how they dynamically construct social relationships and cultural realities over time. Consequently, this research aims to address this gap by examining cursing and blessing not as isolated utterances but as integrated discourse practices within the social interactions of Central Tigray, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of their linguistic, cultural, and interpersonal functions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This section consists of the design of the study, population of the study, source of data, sample size and sampling technique, data collection and data analysis.

#### **3.1. Design of the study**

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the discourse expressions of cursing and blessing, within different activities like in the celebrant people, social activities of the people in central Tigray. The research was conducted as: gathering data from public celebrations, and ethnic curios forums, specifically focusing on the community curios celebrations that contain cursing and blessing expressions.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to identify, the religious places, wedding activities and ensuring a wide variety of sources. Once the data were collected, the second phase involved conducting a thematic analysis to categorize the expressions of cursing and blessing in central Tigray based on their discourse expressions. The themes were guided by linguistic theory, focusing on emotional, social, and cultural functions of these expressions. And then, a discourse analysis was deployed to understand how cursing and blessing expressions contribute to the structure and dynamics of the people in central Tigray. This included an examination of how these expressions are used in different contexts, such as personal communication, community building, or conflict situations.

#### **3.2. Population and Sample Techniques of the Study**

The population of this study consisted of native Tigrinya speakers from central zone of Tigray, which encompasses 22 weredas. From these, 12 weredas were selected using simple random sampling technique. To obtain a culturally rich and representative sample, participants were chosen based on several criteria:

Age: Middle-aged and older individuals (35–75 years), as they are more likely to be familiar with traditional expressions and cultural norms.

Gender: Both male and female participants were included to ensure gender balance and to identify possible differences in expression or usage.

Location: Individuals from both urban and rural areas were selected to capture regional linguistic and cultural variations.

Social Roles: Special attention was given to participants who are religious leaders (priests and sheikhs), community elders, and cultural informants, as they are considered custodians of oral traditions and social norms.

Religious Affiliation: Religion plays a significant role in shaping language, especially blessings. Participants from different religious backgrounds (e.g., indigenous belief systems) will provide insights into how faith influences expressions of blessings and, to a lesser extent, cursing. The researcher had taken six male and six female informants from each that believe any religious affiliation.

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants with in-depth knowledge and experience in using Tigrinya cursing and blessing expressions in central zone of Tigray. A total of twelve (12) participants (six male and six female) were chosen. The sampling focused on: Language proficiency: Fluent speakers of Tigrinya with strong cultural grounding. Contextual exposure: Individuals involved in social roles where such expressions are commonly used e.g., marriage ceremonies, religious services, coffee gatherings, and conflict mediation. Cultural expertise: elders, priests, sheikhs, and respected figures known for their use of traditional expressions. Initial participants were identified through local institutions (churches, mosques, community centers), and participants were selected based on their ability to provide rich, contextually relevant examples of Tigrinya cursing and blessing. Lastly, interviews and records focused on natural discourse, elicited narratives, and real-life examples. The researcher targeted individuals with specialized knowledge rather than rely on random selection. Generally, the informants' information is presented as in the following table:

**Table 1: General description of Informants**

R.NO	Name of informants	Sex	Age	Wereda
1	W/ro Lemlem Belay Amare	F	35	Aksum
2	Ato Tamrat Gidey	M	67	T/machew
3	W/ro Awetash G/Slasie	F	75	Adwa
4	W/ro yeshu w/aregay	F	45	L/machew
5	Ato Nasredin Nruhusen	M	37	Aksum

6	Ato Abdernur Mehamed	M	68	Adiet
7	Qeshi Gidey Abebe	M	45	L/machew
8	W/ro Gidey Abrha	F	40	Nadier
9	W/ro Fatuma Abdela Ahmed	F	74	Ehesa
10	Teacher Araya Yebiyo	M	39	T/ A Addi
11	W/ro Shewit Berhe	F	55	R/ addiarbaete
12	Ato Hadera Welu	M	57	Edaga Arbi

### 3.3. Source of Data

The study used both primary and secondary sources: Primary Data: were gathered from interviews, non-participatory observations, and audio recordings of real discourse events such as ceremonies, social gatherings, and everyday conversations. The secondary data included scholarly articles, theses, dictionaries, and documented studies related to Tigrinya linguistics, discourse analysis, and cultural expressions of cursing and blessing.

### 3.4. Data Collection

This study which focuses on the discourse expressions of cursing and blessing used the following data collection methods:

#### 3.4.1. Interview

This way of gathering data aims to gather in-depth insights into the meanings and contexts of discourse analysis of cursing and blessing expressions. Therefore, semi-structured interviews and recoding Tigrinya speakers 6 male and 6 female informants were used, focusing on: examples of commonly used cursing and blessing expressions, cultural and emotional meanings behind these expressions, situational contexts where these expressions were used (e.g., anger, frustration, joy, gratitude) and variations across social groups (e.g., age, gender, region). The researcher used a cell phone to record audio and video from the selected informants.

#### 3.4.2. Observation

To document the natural use of cursing and blessing expressions in everyday interactions, the researcher observed participants in various social settings (e.g., public events, family gatherings, social media) to see how these expressions used in real-life contexts and observations would focus on the tone, body language, and the social situation in which these expressions occur.

The researcher would make observation in *teskar*, *sedeka* in Muslim, marriage, *tsebel*, birthday, coffee ceremony, religious places, *geleb*, conflict resolution, etc. to collect the data of cursing and blessing expressions as non-participatory observer.

### **3.4.3. Recordings**

To capture the clear tone, emotion, and delivery in cursing and blessing expressions, the researcher used cell-phone recording, interviews, focus groups, or natural conversations where participants use the expressions and analyze how vocal intonation, stress, and emotion influence the interpretation of the expressions.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, with a focus on identifying patterns, meanings, and contexts in which cursing and blessing discourse expressions were used. First, the texts were analyzed to identify key expressions of cursing and blessing. Following this, a more detailed contextual analysis conducted to explore the situational factors and communicative purposes. Additionally, a discourse analysis approach was used to examine how cursing and blessing expressions shape social interactions, exploring the expressions of how they contribute to community building or conflict. This data analysis approach is designed to provide an in- depth understanding in the usage of cursing and blessing expressions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Discourse Analysis of Blessing and Cursing Expressions

#### 4.1. Analysis of Blessing Expressions

Blessing expressions in Tigrinya society are deeply rooted in cultural, religious, and social practices. They are employed in diverse contexts such as communal feasts, birthdays, marriage, church rituals, coffee ceremonies, childbirth celebrations, and even during conflict resolution. These expressions function not only as linguistic rituals but also as social acts of solidarity, gratitude, and hope, reinforcing communal values and spiritual beliefs. From a speech act perspective (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), blessing expressions are illocutionary acts that perform social and spiritual functions by invoking divine favor. They can broadly be categorized into two types:

##### 4.1.1. 'In Teskar/Memorial' services

*Teskar* is a feast that is held to clean the sins of a dead person, whether they were married or not. This feast includes children, adults, elders, and priests together. After eating and drinking, the elders and priests gave a speech of blessing nearly in the evening. As well as the owners and the family members, gather together and stands in front of the people, the priest and elders start by praying and blessing one by one. On this phenomenon, the Youngers and the family members are listeners, and their response is "Amen". As well as in Muslim the blessing has been taken, when *teskar* in Christian in the other hand *sedeka* in Muslim.

##### 1. ዓድና ሰላም፣ አዝመራ፣ ልምዓትን ዕብዮትን ይገበረልና።

ፍልና ሰላም, ገላጤጫ, ለምዓተን ኃይላትን ገገቦራለና

'May our country be having peace, harvest, development and prosperity.'

##### 2. ንመዋቲ መንግስተሰማይ የዋርሰልና።

ni-məwat-i məngstə-səmaj jəwars-ə-lna

'May God grant the deceased in peace!'

##### 3. እዚ ገይርኩሞ ዘለኹም ድግስ ሕልፍንትርፍን እዩ። ስለዚ እግዚአብሔር ንተረፍቲ ድማ ነዊሕ ዕድመን ጥዕናን ይፍጠረልኩም።

ገደገገ ገይርኩም ወይንም ድግስ ሕልፍንትርፍን እዩ። ስለዚ እግዚአብሔር ንተረፍቲ ድማ ነዊሕ ዕድመን ጥዕናን ይፍጠረልኩም።

'This feast is excessive, so God grant you long life, health and wealth for the rest of you!'

##### 4. ንዝጠፍኦ እኸለማይ እግዚአብሔር ይተካልልኩም።

niztəfəʔə ʔiɣləmaj ʔigziʔabihər jətəkʔalkum

‘May God compensate/ replace for your lost grain!’

**5. ረብዓን ገደና ይበሉም።**

rəbi nidzəna jibəlom

‘May Allah grant him to paradise!’

**6. ከርይገደፋ።**

kərjigdəfa

‘Let she leaves you something good!’

**7. ጃንጉን ፎርድስ ይወፍቆ።**

dʒənətn fords jiwəfik’o

‘May Allah admit him to paradise!’

In the above, numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7), describe lists of *teskar* blessings in Christian and *sedeka* in Muslim. The Priest and the aging persons show how to bless the deceased’s family after the *teskar*’s feast. Example (1) describes how these families prepare feasts, lose their grains, and they were tired to do this feast. After this action the priest and the aging person express their blessing and craving their country to be peace, harvest, development and prosperity for all the people who were participated and the graduates say, ‘Amen.’ In number (2), they give praying expressions for the deceased person peace through *Teskar*. In number (3), it describes how the deceased person’s family prepares different grains to invite prayer, so the priest and the aged people ask God to grant long life and health to the rest of the deceased’s family. Example (4) explains to replace the lost grain by other harvests. Namely, as they lost for this feast, elders, and priests of that place blesses for the preparations, other emphasizing actions, and to replace God their lost grains. In (5-7) in Muslim followers, these explains addressing a great gratitude to God as well as blessings to his or her family by saying, *rəbi nidzəna jibəlom*, *kəri jigdəfa*, *dʒənətn fordis jiwəfik’o*.

**4.1.2. ‘In Mahber (Tsebel)’**

*Tsebel* is the belief of the Saints, Angels, and is held monthly, once a year. The owner of the *tsebel* sends a boy or a girl to call or tell their neighbors and relatives to taste it. After a feast, the priest and the elders bless one by one, respectively and the Youngers, women others bless for the organizers privately.

**8. ጸዕዳ ቀውዒ ይግበረልና።**

s’afida k’əwifsi jigbərəlna

‘Have a nice and peace time!

**9.ንግመታ ከምዝሕዚ ብሰላም ይዕቆረና።**

niፍaməta kəməzḥzi bisəlam jiፍk’orəna

‘May God keep us safe throughout this year!’

**10.ካብ ቆልዓ ምሕንጋር ካብ ናባ ምስጋር ይምሓረና ።**

kab ruba misgar kab k’olፍa miḥngar jimḥarəna

‘Have mercy on us, Lord don’t let us be driven from our home!’

**11. ሓላዊኹምን ሓላዊ ደቅኹምን ይኹን።**

ḥəlawiፃumn ḥalawi dəፃikumn jiፃun

‘May God protect you and your children!’

Example (8) this describes the blessed people to have a nice and peace fulltime, filled with God’s blessing, free from stress or conflict, enjoyable time and joy on their harvests. In number (9) the guests expressed their desires that the inviters may God grant them peace and the rest of the community, including them, remains peaceful for the next year. In number (10) refers to the merciful Lord, have compassion on us. Protect us, we pray and don’t let us be driven from our home. Keep us our hearts steadfast in your love, and surround our dwelling with your peace and blessings. In (11), the speaker’s blessings, it is to invoke God’s protection for the owners and their children and which are used to shows the speakers feelings, emotions, or attitudes rather than to give information. This particularly expression carries a religious and emotional tone, showing a sincere wish for safety and divine protection as well as people often use this kind of expression in religious or cultural contexts. *Mahber* blessings highlight both communal well-being and personal prosperity, showing the duality of individual and collective solidarity.

**4.1.3. In Birthday Ceremony**

Birthday ceremony means remembering the date, month, and year of a child born. In this ceremony the people bless as follows:

**12.ዝተወለደ ቆልዓ የዕብየልና።**

Zitəwələdə k’olፍa jəፍibjəlna

‘May God bless the child!’

**13. ኣብ ካልኣይ ዓመቱ ይድገመና።**

?ab kali?aj ፍamətu jidgəməna

‘Let it be celebrated on his second birthday!’

**14. እግዚአብሔር ነዊሕ ዕድመን ጥዕናን ይሃቦ።**

ʔigziʔabihər nəwih̄ ſidmən t'ifnan jihabo

‘May God bless him with long life and good health!’

**15. እንኳል ተወለድካ!**

ʔink<sup>w</sup>aſ təwələdika

‘Happy birthday!’

The texts which are written above express a child`s birthday ceremony. . In (12), guests (middle aged, elders and others) express their blessings for the child`s growth and hope to see him again on his second birth. They convey a sincere desire for divine favor and protection for the child. This expression is used in religious or emotional contexts, such as during celebrations, and it helps to create solidarity between the speakers and the listeners. Therefore, it functions not only as a spiritual blessing but also as a social and emotional gesture that conveys love, concern, and moral support. In number (13), this expression informs of their intentions to see him again at next year`s birthday feast or the child will live, grow, and be healthy so that his first birthday celebration can happen again when he reaches his second birthday. In (14) it indicates the guests bless the child, praying for a long and health life. This expresses a religious and emotional wish, reflecting the speaker`s hope that God will grant the child a long, healthy, and happy life. The phrase conveys kindness, good will, affection, and respect. The above number (15) expresses their happiness and good will at the child`s arrival into the world. Birthday blessings are exclusively directed toward the celebrant, invoking long life, joy, and divine support.

**4.1.4. Blessing in Church**

Blessing in church is a funeral prayer like priests and other elders that pray for those who have dead person, blessing situations takes place in the church and is given on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the deceased.

The priest or the aging people begin by saying (praying):

**16. እግዚአብሔር ንተረፍቲ ነዊሕ ዕድመን ጥዕናን ይሃበና።**

ʔigziʔabihər nitərəfit nəwih̄ ſidmən t'ifnan jihəbəna

‘May God grant the rest of the family, long life and good health!’

**17. ዓድና ሰላም፣ አዝመራ፣ ልምዓትን ዕብዮትን ይገበረልና።**

ſadna səlam, azməra, limſatn ſibjətn jigbərəlina

‘May our country be blessed with peace, progress and prosperity!’

**18. ንመዋቲ መንግስተሰማይ የዋርሶ።**

Niməwati mənigsitə səmaj jəwariso

‘May God deceased rest in peace!’

**19. መዋቲ ንቁጽ አግሪ ይኹን።**

məwati nik’us` ʔigiri yiχun

‘May the deceased’s death serve him alone!’

**20. ዝጠፍአ እኸለማይኩም ብአዘመራ ይተካእልኩም።**

zit’əfʔə ʔiχləmajkum biʔazməra jitəkʔəlkum

‘Let the God compensate you for your lost grain!’

According from the above examples (16) expresses that blessing the families of the deceased to get peace, long life and health with the help of God. In number (17) this expresses craving the country to get peace, harvest, development and prosperity. In the above lists (18) describes that elders and an aged people start by praying and addressing gratitude speech to God in order to get peace the deceased. (19), craving not to follow the deceased from their families and May God prevent them from dying. (20), this explains to replace the lost grain by other harvests. Namely, as they lost their grains for this feast, elders, and priests of that place blesses for the preparations, other emphasizing actions, and to replace God their lost grains. Church blessings intertwine intercession with communal aspiration for peace, revealing religion as both personal and collective.

**4.1.5. In Psychological and Physical affected person**

Psychological and physical affected person there are physical and psychological problems that a person experiences in their daily life activities.

**21. ናይ ዘይተጽበኹሉ ሓጎስ አምላኽ ይሃብካ።**

nayzəjtəs’bək’ajoħagos amlak’jihəbka

‘May God grant you unexpected joy!’

**22. ከትወልዱን ከትዝምዱን አምላኽ ይሓግዝኩም።**

kitwəlidun kitzmidun amilaχ jihagzkum

‘May God bless you with a safe and healthy parenthood!’

**23. እግዚአብሔር አብ ዓምዲወርቁ ይጽሓፈልካን ብውላድካ ተሓጎሰን።**

ʔigziʔabihər ʔab ʕamdi wərk’u jis’ħafəlkan biwladka təħagosn

‘May Gog make you joyful and rejoice in your child!’

**24. እግዚአብሔር ጉልበትኪ የጽናዓሉ።**

ʔigziʔabihər gulbətka/ki jəs’nʕajo

‘May God strengthen your strength!’

The above examples (21-24), express how people with psychological and physical disabilities bless their helpers: (21), this encompasses the message of happiness and the expectation of blessings from God because she unexpectedly helped someone. This act leads to unexpected blessings. In (22), explains the desire to be born and lives a happy life with God’s help. (23), the text above expresses helpers’ honesty and to be happy by his activities as well as God make him full of happiness with his children. Example (24), expresses God to hard the person as she helps the psychologically and physically affected person blessed to keep her in God’s hand. These blessings reward helpers by invoking divine reciprocity. They are consistently other-blessings

#### 4.1.6. In Marriage

Marriage is a union relationship between two persons of the opposite sex based on their own wishes to live together. In this day the priest, sheiks and other an aging people gives bless as follows:

25. መርዓ ኣብርሃምን ሳራን ይግበረልኩም።

mərfa abrhamn saran jigbərəkum

‘Happy wedding as Abrham and Sara!’

26. መርዓውቲ ከም ማይን ጸባን ይሕወስኩም ወይ የስምረልኩም።

mərfaawti kəfa kəm majn s’əban jīhwəskum

jīs’əmrəkum

‘May God bless you with smooth relationship!’

27. መብሩክ ዘወጅቲ።

Məbruk zəwəḍtu

‘Happy Wedding!’

28. እግዚአብሔር ሂወትኩም ብሓባር ከም እትውድእዎ ይግበርኩም።

ʾigziʾabihər hiwətkum biḥabar kəm ʾitwdiʾwojigbərəkum

‘May God grant you a long life!’

According to the above lists (25), express wishing of the bridesmaids to have continuity together through their life. Example (26) expresses to be happy bridesmaids in the cause of their marriage. In (27), in Muslim, this is the best wish for bridesmaids, God make them as one body through their life together. (28), this expression explains blessing, God make them to pass their time together. Let the wedding be for joyful and live peacefully until the grave. Marriage blessings emphasize fertility, harmony, and permanence with occasional communal hopes.

#### 4.1.7. In Coffee Ceremony

Coffee ceremony is a common form of motivation and entertainment in most of our society, especially brewed for respect guests and neighbors in groups gathered together in order to exchange their ideas and pass their time happily.

#### 29. እግዚአብሔር ሰናይ ግዜ ክንሐልፍ ይግባረልና።

ʔigziʔabihər sənay gizə kinəħlf jǐgbərəlna

‘May God make us to have a nice time!’

#### 30. ፍቅርን ምሕዝነትን ይሃበና።

fǐχ’irn miħznətn jǐhabəna

‘May God grant us love and companionship!’

#### 31. ገዛኹም ጥዕናን ሹሻይን ይምለኣልኩም።

gəzaxum t’ṣinan fuʃajn jǐmləalkum

‘May your life be full of health and wealth!’

#### 32. ከምታ ዘኸበርኩምና እግዚአብሔር የኸበርኩም።

kəmta zəχbərəkumna ʔigziʔabihər yəχbrikum

‘May God respect and bless you, just as you have shown respect to us!’

Example (29), desire to be a good time to hear good news, not in war and sets independently and respect them. Example (30) expresses for the coffee maker and themselves to fill their lives with harmony, trust and that their relationships are strengthen by kindness, respect each other, and continue to walk together in peace and understanding. Through his blessing they share love, unity, joy and comfort with one another and be accompanied by their families and neighbors. According to the above examples (31), the expression is made wishing for the coffee maker to have a blessed home and full of wealth for the situations what they have done. (32) Expresses their wishing to bless them as they respect them because of their kindness and actions be rewarded with God’s protection, peace, joy, and favor through their life. Coffee ceremony blessings balance gratitude to hosts with collective wishes for harmony.

#### 4.1.8. ‘In Geleb’

*Geleb* is a mother and baby washing clothes, which were worn it and feast on the seventh day after the birth of the baby. In Muslim takes a vast feast with both male and female participates, in the other hand in Christine only females are participants.

#### 33. ኣብ ክትምኡ የብለዐና።

ʔab kitmʔu jəblṣəna

‘Let’s celebrate his graduation with a feast!’

34. ብኢድ ወለዲ ይዕበ።

bi?idwələdi jifbə

‘May he grow up with his parents!’

35. ማርያም ምሉእ ገይራ ተውጽኦኝ።

marijam milu? gəjra təws’?ixi

‘May Mary restore you to your former life!’

The blessing in example (33) in Muslim, expresses craving the baby’s growth, good times with his family, and wishes for his safe and healthy growth, bright future, protection and continued successes as he moves forward and expecting to serve his society. From the above examples (34) explains the wish that God may grant his parents long life to ensure his safe upbringing. The baby desires to grow up with love and safety and to be helped by his or her parents freely. This means craving for a baby to grow up with his parents without any struggling of living. Example (35), shows the wish for the nursing mother to be health and strong. This means praying for well-being and happiness and to restore her fully to her former life, bringing back the joy, peace, and balance that she once knew, each day ahead to be filled with hope and renewed strength as her return to the life. These blessings are predominantly blessings, directed at the newborn and mother.

#### 4.1.9. In Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution describes the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of a conflict or dispute. It encompasses various approaches aimed at addressing the underlying issues and achieving an agreement that satisfies all the parties involved.

36. ከምቲ ዝሰማዕኹምና ኣምላኽ ይሰማዕኹም።

kəmti zisəmaʕixumna ?amlax jismaʕxum

‘As you accept our view, let God do your wishes!’

Based on the example in number (36), this blessing is occurs when people are in conflict and are needed to be peaceful. During this communication or way of agreement between the two quarreled people and when these hear and understand the reconcilers, they quarreled people are blessed as kəmti zisəmaʕixumna ?amlax jismaʕxum.

Conflict resolution blessings validate peace-making by invoking divine reciprocity (agreement).

## 4.2. Analysis of Cursing Expressions

### 4.2.1. Cursing in the Church

Like blessing, cursing is also performed in churches as in the following way: A person who is injured on his harvests or on his materials by the unknown person tries to tell his injury and says to the community “come and curse the injury.” When his plant cuts and uprooted, his animals injured through cutting the animals tongue, his animals let out from his home at night and taken away as well as when his house is burned down ,so the injured person asks for the prayer to curse for the person who did the worst thing.

#### 37. ብአደ እገሩ ይሓዘልና።

bīʾidə ʔigru jǝhazəlna

‘May God keep him from committing crimes!’

#### 38. እግዚአብሔር ዕድሜኡ የሕፅር።

ʔigziʔabihər ʕidmiʔu jəhs’ro

‘May God make your days be few!’

#### 39. እግዚአብሔር ካብ ገፅ መሬት የጥፍእኝ።

ʔigziʔabihər kab gəs’mərijət jət’fīʔxa

‘May God disappear you from the world!’

In example (37) asking God to protect the person and prevent him from engaging in any criminal or unlawful actions. The data in (38), discusses the concept of cursing someone who is seen as unwelcome person due to his unacceptable actions with in the community. In example (39) expresses that there is a belief that God should justify punishing this person by eliminating him from the earth.

### 4.2.2. Cursing in the Family

Cursing in the family faces when the parents the aged mother or father| has left alone their son, daughter and other relatives. These aged persons do not emphasize their daily activities to continue their life; this cause leads to curse their children and relatives as follows:

#### 40. አድኩም አይትስኣኑ።

ʔidkum ʔajtisʔanu

‘May your efforts be nothing!’

#### 41. ከምቲ እነ ዝሳቀዩ ዘለኹ ኣምላኽ ንዓኛትኩም ይሳቁኹም።

kəmtiʔanə zisaɣəyo zələxu ʔamlax niʕayatkum jisak’ixum

‘As I am suffering, may God suffer you, too!’

#### 42. ዓይነብርክኝ ረኹብካ ሰኣነን።



bīwəladəka ʔajtītəhagos

‘May not you get joy with your child!’

In number (42) describes wishing that God will give punishment or justice to someone because they have done something bad or morally wrong. In the above lists (43), describes a person who has done unacceptable things in the society, like robing, which has led to his rejection from the community and a curse that he will go to hell for his evil actions. (44), the statement in this verse suggests that since he has stolen, the temple that people serve may give him his judgment. (45) This explains, he is cursed for not being able to have children and for living alone without any child. (46) It expresses a hope that the parent will experience unhappiness or disappointment regarding his action, or be sorrowful because of his unacceptable activity as well as not to be happy with his child.

#### 4.2.4. Raping

Raping is most common when a man has sexual intercourse or unlawful of sexual activity with a woman against her permission or forcibly against her.

#### 47. ብሽፉንካ ይውሰድካ!

bīʃifunka jīwsədka

‘May God not allow you to repent for what you have done to the society!’

#### 48. እግዚአብሔር ናይ ኢድካ ይሃብካ።

ʔigziʔabihər najʔidka jīhabka

‘May God make your efforts fruitless!’

#### 49. እግዚአብሔር ዕድሜኻ የሕፃኖቹ ።

ʔigziʔabihər ʃidməጎa jəḥs’ro

‘May God allow you not to live long!’

Example (47) describes that God will not give the person a chance to repent for his harmful and wrongdoing actions against the society. In the above lists (48), in this speech may God judge him based on his actions that the people and the government disapprove of his cruelty and in the example in (49) expresses that the God follow and not invite to live for a long time because he made awful and an acceptable things which is hated by the community.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter includes the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

#### 6.1. Conclusion

This study explored the discourse analysis of cursing and blessing expressions in Tigrinya, specifically, focusing on the central zone of Tigray. Through qualitative analysis of real and simple communicative exchanges and interviews, the research was addressed the contexts and situations in which blessing and cursing expressions are used. The findings reveal that blessing expressions in Tigrinya are predominantly reflected in positive social interactions such as gratitude and significant life events, including births, weddings, and religious ceremonies like *teskar* and *sedeka*. These expressions reinforce social cohesions, show respect, and convey goodwill. Blessings are cultural and religious traditional beliefs, relationships of the society, and expressions of social norms. Additionally, blessings are typically delivered with a respectful tone and non-verbal hint, such as gestures, and are often accompanied by references to divine intervention or ancestral favor. They are portrayed as acts of kindness and are integral to everyday interactions. However, cursing expressions were found to occur primarily in contexts when social norms are perceived to be violated. Such situations include arguments, expressions of anger, and instances where individuals feel wronged. Curse words express strong emotions, misfortune, and enforcing social order. Similarly, the research explored when curse words are reflected. They are usually uttered suddenly, during moments of high emotional intensity, or as a response to perceived injustice. Their usage is context-dependent and varies based on the relationship between speakers. It is also occurred in church when there is a theft of materials. To sum up, this thesis has validated and documented the verbal forms of blessing and cursing

expressions in central Tigray and identified the specific settings and situations in which they occur. The analysis illustrates the complex role of language in expressing social values, emotions, and relationships within the Tigrinya speakers' community of central Tigray. Moreover, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of linguistic practice and social dynamics in the region and offers a foundation for further research into sociolinguistics of Tigrinya and in other Semitic languages.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and analysis, the following recommendations are made:

### **1. for Future Researchers**

More comparative studies should be conducted across different Tigrinya dialects (e.g., Rayya, Central Tigray) to understand regional variations in cursing and blessing discourse. Further discourse analysis is needed on other traditional speech acts such as apologies, greetings, threats, and compliments within the Tigrinya language. Cross-cultural studies could compare Tigrinya expressions with other Ethiopian or Semitic languages to highlight shared patterns and unique distinctions.

### **2. for Linguistic and Cultural Preservation**

Documentation of traditional expressions should be supported through audio-visual archives, especially from elders and religious leaders, to preserve oral culture. Blessing and cursing expressions could be integrated into language education and literature curricula to foster cultural awareness and linguistic competence among younger generations.

### **3. for Community Awareness and Practice**

Community institutions, especially religious leaders, elders, and educators, should promote responsible and ethical use of powerful speech acts, ensuring that language fosters healing and respect rather than harm or division. Awareness campaigns could highlight the psychological and emotional impact of negative speech, especially in family settings.

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## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A: Interview Guide

Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. In what social situations do people use blessings?

**ኣብ ምንታይ ማህበራዊ ኩነታት ሰባት ምረቃ ይጥቀሙ ?**

2. Can you mention some generally used blessing expressions in your community?

**ብሓፈሻ ኣብ ማሕበረሰብኩም ካብ ዝጥቀሙሎም ምርቃታት ንገለጹለይ ዶ?**

3. Can you recall situations where curses are used in your community?

**መርገም ኣብ ምንታይ ማሕበረሰባዊ ኩነታት ከም ዝጥቀሙሉ ንገለጹለይ ዶ ?**

4. What religious beliefs are associated with these blessings?

**ምስ ምርቃ እንታይ ዓይነት ሃይማኖታዊ እምነት ይተሃሃዝ?**

5. What are the intentions behind these curses?

**ድሕሪ እዞም መርገማት እንታይ ሓሳባት ኣለው?**

6. Who is generally allowed to give blessings or curses in your culture?

**ብሓፈሻ ኣብ ባህልኹም መረገመ ወይ ምረቃ ንመሃብ መን እዩ ዝፍቀደሉ?**

7. How do bless or curse on your family and in church?

**ኣብ ቤተሰብን ቤተክርስቲያንን ብኸመይ ይምረቅ?**

8. How do people respond when they admit a blessing or a curse?

ሰባት ምረቃ ወይ መርገም ክበጽሑም ከሎ ከመይ ምላሽ ይህቡ?

9. Can you share a particular experience related to blessing or cursing?

ምስ መርገም ን ምርቃዝተኣሳሰር ፍሉይ ተሞክሮ ከካፉሉኒ ይኸእሉዶ?

10. How do you suppose these expressions affect social connections?

እዞም መግለጽታት እዚኣቶም ንማህበራዊ ምትእስሳር ብከመይ ይጸልው ይብሉ/ይብላ?

### Appendix B: Observation Checklist

Event Types Observed:

- Teskar (Christian) / Sedeka (Muslim) burial feasts
- Tsebel (Religious gatherings)
- Birthday observances
- Coffee observances
- Marriage observances
- Geleb (Baby's seventh-day form)
- Conflict resolution meetings
- Church services
- Informal family and community relations

Observation Focus:

- Environment of the blessing/cursing
- Speaker's part and authority
- Exact words or expressions used

- Tone, facial expressions, and gestures
- Followership (verbal and non-verbal)
- Cultural or religious symbols present

Appendix C: Sample Recap of Collected Data

Example – Blessing in Marriage form

Tigrinya: መርዓኣብርሃም ወሳራይግበረልኩም

Transliteration: mərʕa abrhamwəsara yigbərəlkum

Restatement: “May your wedding the same as that of Abraham and Sarah!”

Environment: Spoken by a clerk to the bridegroom and bachelor during the wedding form, invoking biblical numbers as models of concinnity and life in marriage.

Illustration - Cursing in Family Context

Tigrinya: ከምቲ ኣነገሳቀዮ ዘለኹ ኣምላኽንግኻትኩም ይሳቅኩም

Transliteration: kəmtiʔanə zisakəyo ʔamlax niʕakʔatkum yisaxʔixum

Translation: “As I suffer, may God make you suffer too!”

Environment: Uttered by an elder parent toward children perceived as disregetful, reflecting deep emotional pain and a desire for moral justice.

## Appendix D: List of Crucial Blessing and Cursing Expressions Collected

### Blessings:

- እግዚአብሔርንወቅቶዕድመንጥዕናንይሃቦ – “May God grant you long life and health.”
- ገዛኹምጥዕናንሹሻይንይምለአልኩም – “May your home be filled with health and happiness.”

### Curses:

- እግዚአብሔርዕድሜኸ የሕፃኖች – “May God shorten your life.”
- ነብስኸ አብሲአልትንበር – “May your soul live in hell forever.”

## **Appendix E: Ethical Considerations**

- Informed concurrence attained verbally before interviews and recordings.
- Participants' names and personal identifiers neglected in reiterations.
- Sensitive artistic expressions handled with respect to community morals.
- Data stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.