



Omar M. Kekia

Dehai Tigre/Tigrigna Standard

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Dehai g'z Standard

he	hu	hi	ha	hie	h	ho	(habtom, name)
le	lu	li	la	lie	l	lo	(lemlem, name)
He	Hu	Hi	Ha	Hie	H	Ho	(Hagos, name)
me	mu	mi	ma	mie	m	mo	(meHamed, name)
re	ru	ri	ra	rie	r	ro	(rahya, name)
se	su	si	sa	sie	s	so	(sulieman, name)
she	shu	shi	sha	shie	sh	sho	(shumedin, name)
qe	qu	qi	qa	qie	q	qo	(qelati, name)
be	bu	bi	ba	bie	b	bo	(berhe, name)
te	tu	ti	ta	tie	t	to	(tewelde, name)

che chu chi cha chie ch cho (getachew, amHarNa name)
 ne nu na nie nie n no (nuredin, name)
 Ne Nu Ni Na Nie N No (tgrNa)

'e 'u 'i 'a 'ie ' ' 'o ('aHmed, name ' may be dropped if
 it is in the beginning of a word, eg
 'aHmed = aHmed and the sads ' will be
 be replaced by "e" e.g 'sayas == esayas)

ke ku ki ka kie k ko (kemal, name)
 Ke Ku Ki Ka Kie K Ko (zKone neger, any thing)
 we wu wi wa wie w wo (welde'ab weldemaryam, name)
 Ae U I A Aie E O (AbdelQadr kebire, name)
 ze zu zi za zie z zo (adey zieneb, name)
 Ze Zu Zi Za Zie Z Zo (shmeZana ab akeleguzay)
 ye yu yi ya yie y yo (ysaQ tewoldemedhn, name)
 de du di da die d do (meAsker denden, camp in Asmera)
 je ju ji ja jie j jo (jabr, name)
 ge gu gi ga gie g go (gerehlase, name)
 Te Tu Ti Ta Tie T To (ibrahim sulTan, name)
 Che Chu Chi Cha Chie Ch Cho (Chekan, cruel)
 pe pu pi pa pie p po (polis, policeman)
 Pe Pu Pi Pa Pie P Po (PieTros, name)
 Se Su Si Sa Sie S So (dokter fSum, name)
 fe fu fi fa fie f fo (ftHi, justice)
 ve vu vi va vie v vo (nay akal vitamin (sebHi Som), Alamin's song)

=====
 kWe - kW i kW a - kW (kWinat, spear)
 gWe - gW i gW a - gW (gWal, girl)
 qWe - qW i qW a - qW (qWanqWa, language)
 QWe - QW i QW a - QW (bHiQW, dough)
 KWe - KW i KW a - KW (KWaKWito, the plant)

=====
 The back stroke " ` " will be used to represent the sads ' when
 it is applied in the following way.

kem'u ewn, or kemu 'wn becomes kemu`wn

Punctuations

, or : for :
 :: or . for ::
 ? for ? (selste neTbi)
 ; for drb serez

Other relevant rules

:

If a word or sentence is to be read as is in Latin characters, it must be preceded by ^ and end ^.

Example

hager ktmEbl ente KWoyna: bQedamnet tHte-QrSa ^infrastructure^ qedamnet qolaHta kwehabo alewo::

A Note On Tigre and Tigrigna Pronunciation

[This was taken from the book "**mezgebe qalat smat iertrawyan : tgrNan tgren**" by Musa Aron, 1994, page 3-5. In addition to what is mentioned here, the book has an explanation about Tigrigna pronunciation of the g'z and rabE. More importantly however, this book has a good collection of Tigre and Tigrigna names and their meanings. Check it out; you will love it.]

g'z

There is no Tigre pronunciation equivalent to the Tigrigna g'z sound. The pronunciation of the g'z vowel in Tigre is almost equivalent to a short rabE vowel of Tigrigna.

Example

meHemed should be read as in the way *maHamad* is pronounced in Tigrigna. (Except the rabE here should be short)

befta should be read as one would read *bafta*; and *seAedya* as *saAadya*

ka'b The *kab'* vowels are identical in both Tigre and Tigrigna.

sals The *sals* vowel is read the same in both languages

rabE

The *rabE* vowel in Tigre is read like a long Tigrigna rabE. Note that Tigrigna doesn't seem to have a long rabE.

Example

Hel (read as Hal with a short rabE "Ha") means maternal aunt.
Hal (read with a long rabE as Ha__l) means maternal uncle.

gedm (read as gadm with a short rabE sound) means now
gadm (read as ga__dm with long rabE sound) means plain

men (read as man with short rabE sound) means who?
man (read as ma__n with a long rabE sound) means right (hand).

Hams:

In Tigrigna, this vowel has the "ye" sound in it. i.e.
biet == byet. In Tigre it is read as short as the Tigrigna g'z.

Example:

kiekya written in Tigre should be read as the Tigrigna reading for *kekya* (with the "ke" being short.)

sads This vowel is read the same in both languages

sabE This vowel too is read the same in both languages.

Lesson 1

The Pronoun

1. The personal pronouns in Tigre have feminine (f) and masculine (m) forms for the second person (you), and both singular (s) and plural (p), and the third person singular/plural (she/he/they).

Person		Singular	Plural
1st common	I/we	ana	Hna
2nd feminine	you	enti	entn
2nd masculine	you	enta	entum
3rd feminine	she/they	hta	hten
3rd masculine	he/they	htu	htom

Note: for we *nHna* is also used and is equally correct.

2. The second person plural personal pronoun, *entum*, may be used as a polite form of address for the second person singular, and the third person plural personal pronoun, *htom*, may be used as a polite form of reference.

Example 1.1:

entum abuyie afo iteArfo ?
you my father why not rest?

and you my father, why don't you rest?

ab dkan male gesew
father of Dikan yesterday (they) went

wa htom ako gesew enta meS'aka
and they after went you came

ab Dika, went yesterday, and you came after he(they: polite for he) went.

3. Expression of Quality or Identity:

This is to refer to auxiliary verbs like am, is, are, were, etc. Identity is expressed for

3.1. 1st. person singular and plural by the addition of the pronoun at the end of the sentence.

Example 1.2:

ana ana I am
Hna Hna We are

Example 1.3: ana mders ana I am a teacher

3.2 Similarly for the 2nd. person singular.

Example 1.4:

enta..... enta You (m) are
entienti You (f) are

Example 1.5: enta mders enta you are a teacher

3.3 For the 3rd. person both singular and plural, identity is expressed by adding a suffix *te* conjugated to agree with the gender. See below

htu tu he is
hta ta she is
htom..... tom they(m) are.....
hten..... ten they (f) are.....

We have learned the following new words

afo why
abuyie my father
Arf take rest, you(m)
Arfi take rest, you(m)
Arfo take rest, you(plural)
male yesterday
gesew they went
gesa/geset he/she went
meS'aka you came
we and
ako after
mders/mderset teacher/m/f (arabic)

Lesson 2

Pronouns (contd.)

This is a continuation of Lesson 1, so to refresh your memory you might need to go back and read [Lesson 1](#).

Now let us use the personal pronouns and the auxiliary verb to be learned in lesson 1 in a few sentences:

Example 2.1:

ana Abi ana
I big am

I am old/big

Note: *Abi* could mean older in age or big in size or higher in rank.

enta Abi enta You (m) are old (big)
enti Abay enti You (f) are old (big)

Note: The adjective here takes the feminine gender for the second example. So adjectives are gender specific:

Example 2.2: Abi vs Abay

ana Abi ana I am old (big)
htu Abi tu He is old (big)
hta Abay ta She is old (big)
htom Abayie tom They (m) are old

hten Abayie ten they (f) are old

Abayie : plural to Abi.

Note that the subject is inherent in the verb to be , so the pronoun could be dropped with out causing any confusion , e.g.

htu Abi tu -----> Abi tu
hta Abay ta -----> Abay ta
hten Abayie ten-----> Abayie ten
htom Abayie tom -----> Abayie tom

Other examples :

Example 2.3:

hta reyam ta -----> reyam ta she is tall
htu Hachir tu -----> Hachir tu he is short

Note also the adjective is gender specific.

reyam (f) tall (for she)
reym (m) tall (for he)

reym also indicates distance. mdr reym -----> far land.

Now we have learned the following new words

Arf	rest (verb)
Erf	rest (noun)
ab	father
gesew	went, they
male	yesterday
ako	after
Abi	big
reyam	tall(f)
reym	tall (m)
Hachir	short (m)
Hachar	short (f)

Lesson 3

Verbs of existence/verb to be (1)

In the previous lessons we have seen how the auxiliary verbs or verb-to-be are conjugated. In this lesson we will learn their past forms i.e. was and were. Let us take *Ala* for the 3rd person as the base form, just for convenience, and do the conjugation for the other pronouns. Today's new word will be *n'ush* = small (for he) and *n'ish* (for she)

The present form will be *ana n'ush ana* = I am small (young). Go back to lesson 1 and you can do for the others too. But back to the past form.

Example 3.1:

ana n'ush Alko = I was young (small) i.e. at some point in the past
enti n'ish Alki = You (f) were young
enta n'ush Alka = You (m) were young...Note the change in adjective
for he: *n'ish* vs *n'ush*

nHna ne'aysh Alna = We were young..... Note ne'aysh is plural to n'ush
entum ne'aysh Alkum = You (m,p) were young
entn ne'aysh Alkn = you (f,p) were young
hten ne'aysh Aleya = they (f,p) were young
htom ne'aysh Alewe = they (m,p) were young

Let us now use the same past form with the verb geys = go or to go

Example 3.2:

ana egeys Alko I was going (this is rather a past continuous)
enti geysi Alki You (f) were going
enta (t)geys Alka You (m) were going, the (t) is almost silent
hta (t)geys Alet She was going. " " " " "
htu geys Ala He was going.
nHna engeys Alna We were going.
entn geysa Alkn You (f,p) were going.
entum geysa Alkum You (m,p) were going.
hten geysa Aleya They(f,p) were going
htom geysa Alewe They (m,p) were going.

Note: the word n'ush could mean both small and young

e.g welet n'ish a young girl
biet n'ish a small house
ktab n'ush a small book

Today we have learned the following new words

n'ush = small / young. for masculine subject but single
n'esh = small / young for feminine subject but single
n'aysh = small / young for both (f) and (m) but plural
geys = go or to go
welet = girl
biet = house
ktab = book

Lesson 4

Verbs of existence/verb to be (2)

Now let us see the present form of the auxiliary verb "Ala = was ".
the present form of Ala is "hala".

ana	haleko	I am (present)
enti	haleki	You are
enta	haleka	You are(m)
hta	halet	She is
htu	hala	He is
nHna	halena	We are
entn	halekn	You (p,f) are
entum	halekum	You (p,m)
hten	haleya	they (p,f)
htom	halew	they(p,m)

Example 4.1: let us look at an example from one of [Al-Amin's songs](#)

ana sabr haleko	I am patient
ask sebr abieni	until patience hates me
we ana sabr haleko	and I am patient
ask leKaleq red'ani	until the Creator rescues me

ana sabr haleko I am patient (I am waiting in patience)
enti sabret haleki you (s,f) are patient
enta sabr haleka you (s,m) are patient
hta sabret halet she is patient
htu sabr hala he is patient
nHna sabram halena we are patient
entn sabrat halekn you(p,f) are patient
entum sabram halekum you(p,m) are patient
hten sabrat haleya they (p,f) are patient
htom sabram halew they (p,m) are patient

Let us summarize this, the verb conjugation for "sebr = patience" would be

sabr	for (m,s)	I , you , he
sabret	for (f,s)	I , you , she
sabram	for (m,p)	we, they
sabrat	for (f,p)	we, they

In the previous lesson we learned "geys =to go". megyas is the act of travelling. One who is to travel is also called " beAl megyas" i.e. she/he will start her/his journey soon but not yet. Then one may ask

Example 4.2:

beli amna , beAl megyas enti ma sabret ?
say Amna , are you going to travel or not? (sabret = not travelling).

beAl megyas enta ma sabr ?
Are you (m) going to travel (soon) or not?

Also " beAl gebey " is for one already on the road (gebey) travelling.

beAl gebey tu = he is a traveller.
beAl gebey sefa Haze we mestey = a traveller needs (Haze) food
(sefa) and drink (mestey)

Let us take one more example and do the same thing for Hmam = sickness

Example 4.3:

Hmum
Hmt
Hmumam
Hmumat

e.g. Musa Hmum hala
Musa Hmum Ala

To refresh your memory:

amna esit Abay ta.	Amna is an old woman.
dib melebso (t)nebr Alet.	She was living at melebso(the t is almost silent).
aze dib afAbet (t)nebr halet.	now she lives at Afabet.

In this lesson we have learned the following new words

sebr	patience
megyas	going/travelling
beAl megyas	a would be traveller
gebey	road
beAl gebey	traveller
sefa	food taken particularly to last a journey
mestey	drink
nebr	living

aze	now
dib	at

Lesson 5

Summary

Now we will try to put together what we have learned in the previous lessons. We will take *htu* (he) as an example;

htu	..... tu	he is (for identity)
htu	..... Ala	he was (describing action in the past)
htu	..... hala	he is (describing action in the present)

Hamd	HSan n'ush tu	Hamid is a young boy.
htu	HSan n'ush tu	he is a young boy.
	HSan n'ush tu	is a young boy.

(the subject "he" is inherent in the copula *tu*)

Hamd	ltselhe Ala/hala	Hamid was playing/is playing
htu	ltselhe Ala	he was playing.
	ltselhe Ala	was playing.

Hamd	sekb Ala/hala	Hamid was sleeping/is sleeping
htu	sekb Ala	he was sleeping.
	sekb Ala	was sleeping.

We will do the same thing with **Hmum** (= sick)

Hamd Hmum tu	Hamid is sick (has some kind of sickness that is always with him)
Hamd Hmum Ala	Hamid was sick.
Hamd Hmum hala	Hamid is now sick.

Summary

I	ana	ana
	ana	Alko
	ana	haleko
you (f)	enti	enti
	enti	Alki
	enti	haleki
you (m)	enta	enta
	enta	Alka
	enta	haleka
she	hta	ta
	hta	Alet
	hta	halet
he	htu	tu
	htu	Ala
	htu	hala
you (p,m)	entum	entum

	entum	.....	Alkum
	entum	.....	halekum
you (p,f)	entn	.....	entn
	entn	.....	Alkn
	entn	.....	halekn
we	nHna (Hna )	.....	nHna (Hna)
	nHna (Hna )	.....	Alna
	nHna (Hna )	.....	halena
they (f)	hten	.....	ten
	hten	.....	Aleya
	hten	.....	haleya
they (m)	htom	.....	tom
	htom	.....	Alew
	htom	.....	halew

One last example for she. Note how the adjective is gender dependent, i.e. changes with gender, but we will come to this later on, on coming lessons.

arhiet welet reyam ta	Arhiet is a tall girl.
arhiet geys Alet	Arhiet was going.
arhiet tsE halet	Arhiet is running.

Now we can do the same for the other pronouns with the verb geys = going and *lsE* (for he)

I	esAe	haleko/ Alko	I am running/ was running
you(f)	tsI	haleki/Alki	you are running/was running
you(m)	tsAe	haleka/ Alka	you are running/was running
he	lsAe	hala/ Ala	he is running/was running
she	tsAe	halet/Alet	she is running/was running
we	nsAe	halena/Alna	we are/were running
you(f)	tsEya	halekn/Alkn	you are/were running
you(m)	tsU	halekum/Alkum	you are/were running
they(f)	lsEya	haleya/Aleya	they are/were running
they (m)	lsU	halew/Alew	they are/were running

Today we have learned the following new words;

skab	sleep(n)
sekba	slept (v)
lsE	running

Lesson 6

Word Order

The main clause can consist of a subject , verb with or without direct object and propositional or adverbial phrases.

The subject may , or may not be explicitly expressed by a noun or a pronoun.

Example 6.1:

arhiet geset	Arhiet went
hta geset	she went.

geset went (she)

arhiet belAt	Arhiet ate
hta belAt	she ate
belAt	ate (she)

The order of the words is usually the subject comes first followed by the verb:

Example 6.2:

leHSan wedqa	the child fell.
arhiet sekbet	Arhiet slept.
musa Aqbela	Musa returned back.

If there is a direct object, the object comes between the subject and the verb, the order being

Subject -----> Object -----> Verb.

Example 6.3:

musa lebab kefta	musa opened the door
musa shahi seta	musa drank tea
musa Halib seta	musa drank milk
Humed we drar lbas Hadis zabewu.	Humed and Drar bought new cloths.
aHlam saAt zabet	Ahlam bought a watch.
Huha es'n zaba	Her brother bought shoes.

The position of adverbial or propositional phrases varies, but let us not worry about this now , as it will be clear in due time.

Then to summarize: the order is subject---> object ----> verb. The subject may be dropped, as it is inherent in the verb. The verb is usually at the end of a sentence. This is probably the major difference with English, where the verb does not appear at the end of a sentence.

Example 6.4:

zahra ketab qerat	Zahra read a book.
ketab qerat	read(she) a book.
fkak jeridet qera	Fikak read a newspaper
jeridet qera	(he) read a newspaper

In this lesson we learned the following new words

belAt	she ate
HSan	child
sekbet	she slept
Aqbela	he returned back
lbas	cloth
Hadis	new
zabewu	they bought
zaba	he bought
zabet	she bought
saAt	watch
es'n	shoes
seta	he drunk
shahi	tea
ketab	book
qerat	she read
qera	he read
jeridet (Arabic)	newspaper

Lesson 7

Simple Present Tense

The simple present expresses habitual action, or every day action. The verb is the simple present form, but of course should be in agreement with the subject i.e singular vs plural and feminine vs masculine. Let us take a few examples

n'ush Abe the young grows older or old. Abe is the present form. The past is Aba.

[Note : **Abe** is also used as a male personal name. One of the known Tigre traditional singers is Abe Abdela]

Harestay Hars The farmer farms

sheqalay rekb The worker gains. **rekb** also have the meaning of finding a lost item or object or person. The past form is **rekba**. eg.

ako senet Huhu rekba = after a year his brother he found. [He found his brother after a year.]

kelb nebeH the dog barks.

nway seAr beleE cattle eats grass.

Note that the order of the words is subject-->object--->verb.

Proverb 1: Hguz Amsat hade = A needy man marries a pregnant woman
[meaning: a needy man has no choice]
hade is the present form of hada.

Example 7.1:

arhiet abuha tfete= Arhiet loves her father.
Remember the "t" in tfete is almost silent.

mesmer abuhu fete = Mesmer loves his father.

Ali we mesmer abuhom fetu = Ali and Mesmer love their father.

arhiet we amna abuhen fetya= Arhiet and Amna love their father.

Let us see into the conjugation of the present form of the verb fete = love

ana abuyie efete	I love my father
enti abuki tfeti	you (f) love your father
enta abuka tfete	you (m) love your father
hta abuha tfete	she loves her father
htu abuhu fete	he loves his father
Hna abuna enfete (nfete)	we love our father
entn abukn fetya	you(p,f) love your father
entum abukum fetu	you(p,m) love your father
hetn abuhan fetya	they(p,f) love their father
hetom abuhom fetu	they(p,m) love their father

Today we have learned the following new words

Harestay farmer

Hars	farms
sheqalay	worker
rekb	gain, find
kelb	dog
nebeH	barks
nway	cattle
seAr	grass
beleE	eats,
Hguz	needy, one in need
<u>Amsat</u>	pregnant
hade	marries
ab	father
fete	loves (love(n) = fti)

Lesson 8

Simple Past Tense

This expresses action done in the past and already completed.

Let us see a few examples

Example 8.1:

nsur deAm meS'a	Nusur came last year.
	[Note: this year = <i>yom Amet</i>]
emyie ketab qer'at	My mother read a book
ana ser lali sekebko	I slept (at) mid night
nsur asmera giesa	Nsur went to Asmara
nsur asmera fegra	Nsur went up to Asmara

Note: *fegra* has the meaning of went up or went out. Because Asmara is situated at a higher altitude, going to Asmara is like going up (to the high land). So one can say

asmera giesa	went to Asmara	or
asmera fegra	went up to Asmara.	

An opposite word is also used when one goes to a place of a lower altitude, eg.

baSeE dena = went down to Massawa.

If one starts his journey let us say from Keren to Asmara then to Massawa, we can say:

mn keren asmera fegra we Har baSeE dena =
From Keren he went up to Asmara and then went down to Massawa.

another meaning of *fegra* is went out or released:

lali mn bietu fegra:: (he) went out from his house at night
mn sjn fegra (he) was released from prison.

Let us go back to the simple past tense:

Like the simple present , the verb in the simple past has also to agree with the subject. The word order is also

subject---object--verb

Let us take the verb giesa =went and sekba =slept and do the

conjugation

ana	giesko	ana	sekebko
enti	gieski	enti	sekebki
enta	gieska	enta	sekebka
hta	gieset	hta	sekbet
htu	giesa	htu	sekba
Hna	giesna	Hna	sekebna
entn	gieskn	entn	sekebkn
entum	gieskum	entum	sekebkum
htn	giesaya	htn	sekbeya
htom	giesew	htom	sekbew

Today we have learned the following new words

deAm	last year
yom Amet	this year
emyie	my mother (em = mother)
em	mother
ser	middle , half
lali	night
fegra	went out , went up
mn	from
sjn	prison
dena	went down
we	and
Har	then , later

Lesson 9

The negative no 'i

When 'i appears as a prefix to a verb, it means **do not** or **does not** or **did not** as the verb might be.

Example 9.1

itblaE	do not eat	you (m)
itblI	do not eat	you (f)
inblaE	do not eat	we

Let us use some of the verbs we used in previous lessons:

itigies	do not go	you (m)
itskeb	do not sleep	"
itfger	do not go out	"

itigisi	do not go	you (f)
itskebi	do not sleep	"
itfgeri	do not go out	"

Proverb 2 : ite'akebet itrekebet
what was not saved was not found.

Proverb 3: rebi bu iSebr
iwe'la ra'i ils'e
he who has God (who believes in God) does not despair,
(but) who ever see (experience) this does not hope for much.

Let us take a few examples : for you (m) and you (f):

Example 9.2:

itthage do not speak (you, m)
itthagey do not speak (you, f)

itHreq do not be angry
itHreqi " " " "

itfraH do not be happy
itfriHi

itbke do not cry
itbkey

itKjel do not be shy
itKjeli

The verbs of existence **hala** and **Ala** are also negated in the same way a finite verb is negated i.e. by adding the prefixed article 'i .

Example 9.3

et biet ihala biolet:: in the house he is not present she said.
[She said he is not the house]

ana ewan meSa'ko et biet iAla:: I when I came in the house he was
not present
[He was not in the house when I came.]

Note: the negative of hala, the impersonal verb of existence, is also effected by means of the superlative form "elebu"

et biet hala elebu in the house present there is no.
[There is no one present in the house.]

eb fana meyt elebu by telling his last will dies there is no.
[No one dies by telling his last will.]

Today we learned the following new words

itHreq do not get angry
Harqa got angry
Haruget anger
itKjel do not get shy
Kejla got shy
Kjl shyness
ferHa got happy
feraH happiness

Lesson 10

Connectivity Words (1)

and = we

The word "and" used in English for connectivity e.g he and she is translated as " we " in tigre.

Example 10.1:

ana we Huyie msl giesna I and my brother went together
hta we htu Aqbelew she and he returned (back)
ibalaEna we isetena we did not eat and drink.

Note that the 'i ([Lesson 9](#)) which means "not" and expresses the negative appears in English only once in the sentence, but in Tigre it should proceed each verb e.g. ibalaEna we isetena

Example 10.2:

jemal we abuhu we emu we Htu msl
Jemal and his father and his mother and his sister together

et Hate biet nebro
in one(the same) house they live

[Jemal, his father, his mother and his sister live together in the same house]

The connectivity word "**we**" does not appear only once as in English but with every one of the nouns.

Example 10.3:

ertrya we etyobiya we sudan we jebuti agwar ten.
Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and Djibouti are neighbors.

Abi we n'ush msl ferHa Old and young rejoiced together.

kelb we dmu kl'ot gelgelay ma fetech Alew
dog andcat two friends or pals they were
[The dog and the cat were two friends.]

Heshil we Hermaz msl talew
fox and elephant together they travelled.

We have learned the following new words

msl	together
setena	we drank
belaEna	we ate
Hate	one, the same
agwar	neighbors
ferHa	rejoiced
gelgelay	friend
fetech	pals, close friends
Heshil	fox
Hermaz	elephant

Lesson 11

Connectivity Words (2)

The word "or"

1. "Or" is translated in three different ways:

ma
ewk
aw

ma is more often used in the question form, but not always .

Example 11.1:

fejr ma fejr laha ?	Tomorrow or after tomorrow ?
male ma male laha ?	Yesterday or before yesterday?

Note: *laha* has the meaning of "the other", so **fejr laha** which means

after tomorrow would strictly be translated as "the other tomorrow"

2. *ewk* and *aw* are more often used in the statement form.

Example 11.2:

fejr *ewk* fejr laha Aqbl return tomorrow or after tomorrow.
fejr *aw* fejr laha Aqbl " " " " "

For the feminine gender the above statement would read

fejr *ewk* fejr laha Aqbli you (f, s)
fejr *aw* fejr laha Aqbla you (f, p)

ana igis ma Hche tigus? should I go or my sister go ?

Note: The "*tigus*" after **Hche** can be dropped because it is understood from the context, so the sentence can read as:

ana igis ma Hche ?

esmera teAbe ma baSeE ? Asmara is bigger or Massawa?
[Which is bigger, Asmara or Massawa?]

keren reym ma aqurdet? Keren is far or Agordat?
[which is far, Keren or Agordat?]

enti aw Htki aw Huki You (f) or your sister or your brother.

may habeka ma Halib? Water I give you or milk?
[Should I give you water or milk?]

eb Teyaret aw eb babur With airplane or with train I will travel
egl esafr tu. [I will take the airplane or the train.]

3. If there are more than one subject in a sentence the connectivity "or" precedes each one of them.

Example 11.3

samya aw Hawa aw zieneb Samia or Hawa or Zieneb

We have learned the following new words

fejr	tomorrow
fejr laha	after tomorrow
Aqbl	return (m)
Aqbli	return (f)
Hche	my sister
Teyaret	airplane
babur	train
sefer	travelling

Lesson 12

Determination

1. A noun can either be indeterminate or determined. The indeterminate form has no special marker. In English the indefinite articles "a" and "an" are used, but in Tigre there is no such marker:

Example 12.1:

feres	a horse
adg	a donkey
Telit	a goat
dmu	a cat
kelb	a dog
Hayet	a lion
biet	a house
qelem	a pen

Examples 12.2:

male feres zabeko	Yesterday I bought a horse
male Hayet re'eko	Yesterday I saw a lion

2. The determined form of the noun denoted in English by the definite article "the" is expressed in Tigre by a prefix element "**le**" attached to the noun

Example 12.3:

leferes	the horse
le'nas	the man
lebiet	the house

Examples 12.4:

leferes beda	The horse is lost
lebiet zebet	The house is sold
lekelb nebHa	The dog barked
le'nas giesa	The man went (left)

le feres lemale zabekuwu beda	The horse that I bought yesterday is lost
le melehayka men ta smu?	What is the name of your friend?
le qeyaH mekinet nay men ta?	Whose is the red car.

3. The marker of determination is gender independent and is the same for female and male. eg.

Example 12.5 :

lewelet	the girl
le'nas	the man
leHSan	the child

4. The marker "**le**" is also used for singular and plural.

Example 12.6:

lewelet	the girl
le'awald	the girls
leAd	the village
leAdotat	the villages

In this lesson we have learned the following new words:

feres	horse
adg	donkey
Telit	goat
dmu	cat
Hayet	lion
zabeko	I bought
zabet	she bought
HSan	child

beda	lost
qelem	pen
qeyeH	red (m)
qeyaH	red (f)
mekinet	car
Ad	village

Lesson 13

Adjectives

1. An adjective is added to qualify a noun, and is placed after the noun.

Example 13.1:

esit senet	a good woman
enas seni	a good man

2. As we saw from the above example, the adjectives are gender specific, and will have a masculine and a feminine form, as in the above example.

senet	(f)
seni	(m)

Let us see a few other examples.

Example 13.2:

may Srui	clear (clean) water
may brud	cold water
may Hfun	hot water
nebra TEm	tasty food
lbas bluy	old cloth
Ad reym	a distant (far away) village
Hakm Adl	a just judge (governor)
Hakm zalm	an unjust judge (governor)
enas dbur	a poor man
enas Hawan	a feeble man
enas fedab	a wise man (of strong character)
esit fedabit	a wise women(" " ")
welet reyam	a tall girl
enas Hachir	a short man

3. The definite article " le " is attached to the noun and not the adjective.

Example 13.3:

le may brud = lemay brud = the cold water
 le esit fedabit = le'sit fedabit = the wise woman

In this lesson we have learned the following new words:

may	water
Srui	clean
brud	cold
Hfun	hot
TUm	tasty (m)
TEm	tasty (f)
Ad	village

Hakm	judge, governor
Adl	just
zalm	unjust
dbur	poor
Hawan	feeble
fedab	wise

Lesson 14

This, These, That, Those

Are used in agreement with the subject and are translated as follows :

1. This ela (f)
 eli (m)

Examples 14.1:

ela esit men lbula ?	Who is this woman (What do they call this woman ?)
ela banderetna ta.	This is our flag.
ela gebey reyam ta	This road is far.
ela Arat dhr ta	This bed is low.
eli enas men lbulu?	Who is this man? (What do they call this man?)
eli debr Abi tu	This mountain is big.
eli ktab nay men tu?	Whose book is this ?

Note : *eli* is also used in many instances for plural subjects as we see in this examples :

Example 14.2:

eli eben m nefeeE ?	What use has these stones?
eli adbr asmayu te'amr ?	Do you know the names of these mountains ?
eli nway bzuH tu	This is a lot of cattle.

2. These : plural form of this:

elen	(f)
elom	(m)

Examples 14.3:

elen ans m beleya ?	What did these women say ?
elom seb m belewu ?	What did these men say ?

3. That leha (s, f)
 lehi (s, m)

Examples 14.4:

leha welet Hche ta	That girl is my sister.
leha esit emyie ta	That woman is my mother.
leha medresetna ta	That is our school.
lehi enas Huyie tu	That man is my brother.
lehi enas abuyie tu	That man is my father.
lehi debir lalmba ltbehal	That mountain is called Lalmba.

Note in the examples above the use of *ta* and *tu* (tgrNa : *eya, eyu*)
for (f) and (m) .

4. Those lehn
lehom

Examples 14.5:

lehn awald Hawache ten Those girls are my sisters.
lehom wulad Hawuyie tom Those boys are my brothers.

Summary :

ela	eli	this	(f,s) & (m,s)
elen	elom	these	(f,p) & (m,p)
leha	lehi	that	(f,s) & (m,s)
lehn	lehom	those	(f,p) & (m,p).

In this lesson we have learned the following new words:

mn	who
banderet	flag
Arat	bed
dhr	low
debr	mountain
eben	stones
nefeI	useful
mnefeI	what use does it have ?
bzuH	a lot

Lesson 15

Who?

1. Who is translated as "men".
Some Tigre speaking people pronounce "men" as "mn".
But both "men" and "mn" are equally correct, and equally used.
But, for the sake of consistency we will use "men".

Examples 15.1:

men tu abuka ?/abuka men tu?	Who is your father?
ela men beleya?	Who said this ?
leseladi men habeka ta?	Who gave you the money?
leseladi mn habeki ta?	Who gave you (f) the money?

[Remember le is the definite article "the"]

2. *men* is not gender specific.

Examples 15.2:

men tu abuka?	Who is your father ?
men ta emka?	Who is your mother ?
ela men wedeya?	Who did this(f) ?
eli men wedeyu?	Who did this(m) ?
ri'is nay iritriya men tu?	Who is the president of Eritrea?
men asa'leka?	Who told you ?
ela ende twede men re'eka?	Who saw you while (you) this?

In this lesson we have learned the following new words:

seladi	money
habeka	gave you (m)
habeki	gave you (f)
ri'is	president
wude	do (m)
wudey	do (f)
weda	did (m)
wedet	did (f)

Lesson 16

Which ? = aya/ayi

1. **Which** is gender specific and is translated as :

aya	for (f)
ayi	for (m)

2. **aya** also means "where" .

Where did you go? = **aya gieska?** But, you never say **ayi gieska** or **ayi gieski**

The meaning and use of which.

Let us take some examples for **aya** and **ayi**," which " in this case:

Example 16.1

(enti) ayi ktab qera'ki ? Which book did you (f) read ?
(enta) ayi ktab qera'ka ? Which book did you (m) read ?

In these two examples, the gender of the subjects **enti** and **enta** are evident from the verbs (read - **qera'ki** and **qera'ka** -) and can be dropped from the sentence.

ayi ktab qera'ki ?	Which book did (you) read?	(f)
ayi ktab qera'ka ?	Which book did (you) read?	(m)

The **ktab** (book) is perceived as masculine, so we use **ayi** and not **aya**.

Example 16.2

If we use **Katm** (ring), then we use "**aya**" as Katm is perceived as feminine.

aya Katm zabeki? Which ring did you (f) buy ?
aya Katm zabeka? Which ring did you (m) buy ?

aya mnen ta weletka? Which one of them (f) is your daughter ?
ayi mnom tu welka? Which one of them (m) is your son?

[If you don't remember when to use "ta" and "tu" go to [Lesson 1](#)]

aya medinet eta tneber? In which city/town do you (m) live ?
aya medinet eta tnebri? In which city/town do you (f) live ?

["**medinet**" for city or town is an adaptation from Arabic. In the old days when Massawa was the only urban center in Eritrea Tigre people used to call it "**medayn**" which is the plural

of medinet. This usage can still be heard among some people in rural Eritrea.]

It might be confusing as far as identifying the gender of objects, but if you know Tigrigna, the gender specificity of objects in Tigre is similar to that of Tigrigna.

ayi mnom Heys mesleka ? Which one of them(m) do you think is better ?
aya mnen tHeys mesleka? Which one of them(f) do you think is better?

In this lesson we have learned the following new words

Katm	ring
medinet	city/town
mesleka	(what do you) think
Heys	better
zabe	to buy

Lesson 17

Where?

1. In the last lesson ([Lesson 16](#)) we have discussed the meaning and use of "**which**". "**Which**", depending on the gender of the object it is referring to, was translated as "**ayi**" or "**aya**". "**Where**" is also translated in Tigre as "**aya**".

Example 17.1

aya hala ?	Where is it ? or Where is he ?
aya hala lbaska ?	Where is your cloth ?
aya hala meleheyka?	Where is your friend?
aya hala abuka ?	Where is your father ?
aya hala Halka ?	Where is your uncle ? (maternal uncle)
aya hala Hu abuka ?	Where is your uncle ? (paternal uncle)
aya gieska male ?	Where did you go yesterday ?

aya haliet ?	Where is it ? or Where is she ?
aya haliet Katmka ?	Where is your ring ?
aya haliet melhyetka?	Where is your friend?
aya haliet Htka ?	Where is your sister ?
aya haliet HSetka ?	Where is your fiance ?
aya heliet Helka ?	Where is your aunt ? (maternal aunt)
aya haliet Ametka ?	Where is your aunt ? (paternal aunt)

aya halew ?	Where are they ?
aya halew melhyamka?	Where are you friends?

2. "**Where**" as translated "**aya**" is gender independent unlike "**which**" **aya** and **ayi**. So we say

Example 17.2

aya hala meleheyka ?	Where is your friend(m) ?
aya haliet melhyetka ?	Where is your friend (f) ?

[The use of **hala** and **haliet** will be addressed in coming lessons.]

In this lesson we have learned the following new words:

hala	(he)is present
haliet	(she)is present
lbas	cloth
melehay	friend (m)
melhyiet	friend (f)
melhyamka	friends
Hal	uncle (maternal uncle)
Hel	aunt (maternal aunt)
Amet	aunt (paternal aunt) there is stress on the m.
Hu ab	uncle (paternal uncle)
HSet	fiancee

Lesson 18

Verb of Presence or Existence

1. The verb of presence or existence, (he) is present/ there is, is expressed by "**hala**".

The person, gender and number is generated from **hala**, the base element, by adding a suffix to it:

hala	he is present/there is
halet	she is present
haleka	you(m,s)

haleki	you(f,s)
haleko	I
halekum	you(m,p)
halekn	you(f,p)
halena	we
halewu	they(m,p)
haleya	they(f,p)

This verb of existence is placed at the end of the sentence.

Example 18.1

et suq adam bzuH hala	There is a lot of people in the market.
abuyie et Ad hala	My father is (present)at home.
et beHar Asa bzuH hala	There is a lot of fish(present) in sea
et lebeHar Asa bzuH hala	There is a lot of fish(present)in the sea.
dib bietna gasha bzHam	There are a lot of guests (present)
halewu	in our house.
mn asmera lemeS'aya ans	Where are the women who came from Asmara?
aya haleya ?	

2. The verb hala is also used to express action in progress:

Example 18.2

legashay sekb hala	The guest is sleeping.
(le gashay)	
mtwede haleka ?	What are you doing ?
egeys haleko	I am going.
leHSan beke hala	The child is crying

3. This verb of existence also has a past form Ala.

Ala	he
Alet	she
Alka	you (m, s)
Alki	you (f, s)
Alko	I
Alna	we
Alkum	you (m, p)
Alkn	you (f, p)
Alewu	they (m)
Aleya	they (f)

Example 18.3

amayr et biet Alet Amayer was at home.

- 4. This past form is also used to express an action that was in progress at some point in the past:

Example 18.4

arhiet jewab ketb Alet Arhiet was writing a letter
nawud ltelhe Ala Nawed was playing

In this lesson we learned the following new words:

suq	market
adam	people
Asa	fish
gashay	guest
gasha	guests
bkay	crying (noun)
beke	cry (verb)
jewab (Arb.)	letter
tlhya	playing (noun)
ltelhe	playing (verb)

Lesson 19

Possessive Adjectives

- 1. The possessive adjectives mine, yours, his, her etc. are expressed by the element "nay" conjugated to agree with the gender and number of the subject:

naye mine
nayna ours

nayki yours (f, s)
nayka yours (m, s)

naya her
nayu his

naykn yours (f, p)
naykum yours (m, p)

nayen their (f, p)
nayom their (m, p)

Examples 19.1

nay men tu ?	Whose is it ?
naye tu.	It is mine
naya tu	It is her's
nayen tu	It is their's
nayom tu	It is their's

2. When the "**nay**" element is used in conjunction with the object, the "**nay**" is dropped and the suffix **ye, ki, ka** etc. is added at the end of the object:

Example 19.2

nayki biet Abay ta. Your house is big.
Drop the nay and it will read:

bietki Abay ta.
lbaski grum tu Your cloths is beautiful.

naye es'n Hadas ta. My shoes is new. Drop the nay
es'nye Hadas ta

3. If the object ends in t, then the added suffix can be ye or che for the first person singular i.e. for I

Example 19.3

naye biet Abay ta my house is big.
bietye Abay ta
bieche Abay ta

Both are correct and can be taken as a variant of the language use.

4. When referring to a person, the element **nay** is not used. So you CAN NOT say:

naye ab for " my father". The correct form is to add the suffix to "father"

abuye	my father
Huye	my brother
Htye/Hche	my sister
abotye/aboche	my grandmother
melehaye	my friend

In this lesson we have learned the following new words:

grum	beautiful
Hadas	new
es'en	shoes
abot	grandmother

Lesson 20

egl = to / for

-
1. egl has the meaning of both " to " and " for " and it precedes the

verb.

2. If "egl" is followed by "mi" then its meaning changes to "why".
egl mi = why.

Let us now look into the conjugation of the verb "to eat" with "egl"

egl eblaE to eat (for I)
egl nblaE to eat (for we)
egl lblaE to eat (for he)
egl tblaE to eat (for she)
egl tblaE to eat (for you, masculine)
egl tblI to eat (for you, feminine)
egl tbleO to eat (for you, plural and masculine)
egl tbleA to eat (for you, plural and feminine)
egl lbleO to eat (for they, masculine)
egl lblaA to eat (for they, feminine)

Examples 20.1

eli enas egl mi meS'a ? egl mi= eglmi
this man why (did he) came ? [Why did this man come?]

(htu) egl lshqe meS'a.
(he) to work (he) came. [He came to work.]

elom seb egl mi meS'awu ?
these men why (did they) came ? [Why did men come ?]

(htom) egl lshqewu meS'awu.
(they) to work (they) came. [They came to work.]

elen ans egl mi meS'aya
these women why (did they) came ? [Why did these women come?]

(hten) egl lshqeya meS'aya.
(they) to work (they) came. [They came to work.]

3. "egl" has the meaning of "for" if it is followed by a noun.
But there are exceptions to this as is evident from the following

Example 20.2

egl Adna seniet nKdem.
for our country good do/work [Let us work good for our country]

egl men habkaha ?
for/to who/whom (did you) give it ?

egl rayet habkuwa.
to Rayet (I) gave it. [I gave it to Rayet]

Note: Rayet is a name for a girl.

4. egl followed by the possessive prefix indicates for me, for you, for her etc.

1st. person egl+yie = eglyie = for me
 egl+na = eglna = for us

2nd. person egl+ki = eglki = for you (f)
 egl+ka = eglka = for you (m)
 egl+kum = eglkum = for you (p,m)
 egl+kn = eglkn = for you (p,f)

3rd .person egl+la = egla = for her
 egl+lu = eglu = for him
 egl+lom = eglom = for them (m)

egl+len = eglen = for them(f)

Example 20.3

eglyie m egl tahbeni tu ?
for me what to give me ? [For me, what will you give me?]

eglka seladi egl habaka tu.
for you money to give you. [For you, I will give you money.]

Today we have learned the following new words

shqul = work
seladi = money
meS'a = (he)came
belA = (he)ate
nKdem = (we) work (verb)
Kdmet = work (noun).

Lesson 21

mn = if/from/since (1)

- I. "**mn**" is translated as "if" when it precedes a verb, and it is independent of the subject. "**mn**" also has the meaning of "from" and "since" which will be presented in [Lesson 22](#).
Let us see some examples for its use as "if"

Example 21.1

enta we melehayka mn teHazu giso.
you and your friend if you want go.
[You and your friend can go if you want.]

Note that the subject is evident in the verb "**teHazu**" which refers to the second person plural in this case. If the subject is only "you"singular = "**enta**" then the verb would have been "**teHaze**" so we can say

mn	taHaze	gis.	mn	taHazi	gisi
if	you(m)	want go.	if	you(f)	want go

Example 21.2

nawud mn meS' lSebereni
Nawud if (he)comes (he) wait for me
[If Nawud comes, let him wait for me.]

amna mn tr'ya lakeya.
Amna if (you)see her call her.
[If you see Amna, call her.]

le'nas shuqul mn rekb denu wefeda
the man work/job if (he)find his debt would have paid
[If the man finds a job, he would have paid his debt.]

ask Ad mn geys l'uk byie eglka.
to home if you go message I have for you.
[If you go home, I will give you a message.]

telefun mn wede eb Huyie se'al
telephone if you do about my brother ask.
[If you call ask about my brother.]

Note : In tgre you either "**telefun wede**" = do telephone or
"**telefun zebeT**" = ring/ hit telephone

abraham male telefun zebTa = Abrhim called yesterday.
abraham male telefun weda = " " "
zieneb male telefun zebTet = Zieneb called yesterday.
zieneb male telefun wedet. = " " "

Today we have learned the following new words

den = debt
denu = his debt
feda = paid back
Sebereni = wait for me
Seber = wait
lakeya = call her
lika = calling (noun)
shuqul = work

Lesson 22

mn = if/from/since (2)

2. "**mn**" also has the meaning of "from" when it comes before a noun in a sentence.

Example 22.1

mn asmera ask aqurdet reym tu ma qurub ?
from Asmera to Agordat far is or near ?
[Is it far or close from Asmara to Agordat?]

Note : "**reym**" can be used in the context of far in distance or long in length or tall in height.

Example **mdr reym** = far land
enas reym = tall man (but remember **esit reyam** = tall woman)

Example 22.2

mn estEmar Hara fegerna.
from colonialism (we) free got out.
[We are freed from colonialism.]

Note: "**fegra**" is literally translated as "went out". It also has the meaning of " went up". Remember our example
mn keren asmera fegra = From Keren he went up to Asmara.

Example 22.3:

mn ayi Ad enta ?
from which village are you ?

Note: **Ad** could mean a village or town or a country.
Many villages in Eritrea have the prefix "**Ad**
in their names and are thus called "**Ad ...**"

Example 22.3.1 :

Ad sheK, Ad aberehim, Ad saydna, Ad Humeday, etc.

3. "**mn**" also has the meaning of "since" when it precedes a noun indicating time like "**deAm**" = last year, **male**=yesterday,

Examples 22.4

1. **mn deAm Hud ijereba**
since last year little he did not try.
[Since last year he tried a lot.]

Note the use of the double negative: "**Hud**" and "**ijereba**" =little he did not try, to convey the meaning that he tried a lot. This kind of usage is common in Tigre.

For the feminine gender "**ijereba**" would be "**ijerebet**"
mn deAm Hud ijerebet.

jereba is the verb, the noun would then be "**jerbe**"

Proverb 4

jerbe sekey ikel'
trying fleeing does not prevent
[Trying to do a thing does not prevent giving up.]

Ad mn geset Hud iwedet
Home since she went little she did not do
[It is long since she went home.]

Ad mn gesa Hud iweda
Home since he went little he did not do
[It is long since he went home.]

mn amEl hdaya
since the day of her marriage.....

mn amEl hdayu
since the day of his marriage.....

mn ela senet
since/from this year

In this lesson we have learned the following new words

qurub = near
estEmar = colonialism
Hara = free
deAm = last year
jerbe = trying (noun)
jereba = tried
sekey = to flee
hday = marriage

Lesson 23

Haqo = after

-
1. **Haqo** is also pronounced as "**ako**" or "**Hako**". This might be taken

as a variance of the language, but all three pronunciation are correct.

Haqo can precede a time phrase or a noun as in the following:

Examples 23.1

Haqo kl'e samn
after two weeks

Haqo Huryet Ad selam geb'a
after freedom country peaceful became
[The country is peaceful after freedom.]

Haqo ela lali igeys
after this(incident) night he will not go
[He won't go at night after this(incident).]

Haqoki asmera ittneber (from Alamin's song [Haqoki ittneber](#))
after you Asmara can not be lived(in).

[After you left can not live in Asmara.]

Haqo hdaya msl be'sa ask Karj saferet
after her marriage with her husband to abroad she travelled.
[She travelled abroad with her husband after her marriage.]

Haqo abuhu mota bzoH Hazna
after his father died a lot he grieved
[He grieved a lot after his father died.]

2. **Haqo** is conjugated with the possessive pronouns as for "after me"
" after her" etc.

Haqo-yie Haqoyie= after me
Haqo-ka Haqoka = after you
Haqo-ki Haqoki = after you
Haqo-hu Haqohu = after him
Haqo-ha Haqoha = after her

Haqo-na Haqona= after us
Haqo-kum Haqokum= after you(m)
Haqo-kn Haqokn = after you(f)
Haqo-hom Haqohom= after them(m)
Haqo-han Haqohan= after them(f).

Example 23.2:

Haqoha Huha meS'a
after her her brother came
[After her came her brother.]

Today we have learned the following new words

Haqo	= after
samn	= week
lali	= night
Huryet	= freedom
selam	= peace
msl	= with
be'sa	= her husband
be's	= husband
Karj (Arabic)	= abroad
saferet	= she travelled
sefer	= travelling(noun)
mota	= died
mot	= death

Lesson 24

bak /msl = with, together, near

1. **imsl** has the meaning of "with" . It also could mean "together"

Example 24.1:

htu msl Htu nebr
he with his sister lives
[He lives with his sister.]

musa we Ali msl shequ
Musa and Ali together work.
[Musa and Ali work together.]

weqt mn erekb msl-ka egeyies
time if I find with you I go
[I will go with you if I have time.]

rayet we melhyeta meryem Hate am'El msl weledeya
Rayet and her friend Meriam same day together they
were born.
[Rayet and her friend Meriam were born the same day.]

2. **bak** also means "with" or "near"

Example 24.2:

zieneb bak muderseta haliet
Zeineb with her teacher(f) is present.
[Zieneb is with her teacher]

bak shababa Ada tEgeb wesheEba
with her youth her country defend and her people
[She will defend her country and people with the other youth.]

[from a song by Ahmed Mohammed Osman, wedi shiek]

Today we have learned the following new words

weqt	time
muderset (Arabic)	female teacher
muders	male teacher
medreset	school
shabab	youth (p)
sheAb	people
sheEbiet	peoples
jebhat sheEbiet	peoples' front

Lesson 25

et = in /at / on / when / while

1. Perhaps *et* is one of the prepositions that have the most varied meanings in Tigre. Depending on its use in a sentence it could mean any of the following:

1.1 **in** : like in a place

Examples 25.1

et neqfa	Abay medreset	ttnefaq haliet
in Nekfa	big school	building is

[A big school is being built in Nekfa.]

et baSeE Abi babur beHar re'eko
in Massawa big ship I saw
[I saw a big ship in Massawa.]

et lebiet bezuH Afsh atewe
in the house a lot parcel they took in
[They took a lot of parcels into the house.]

Asa et may nebr
fish in water live
[Fish live in water.]

Asa et beHar nebr
fish in sea live
[Fish live in sea.]

1.2 to

egl le'adeg et leEchet asreyu.
for the donkey to the tree he tied him
[He tied the donkey to the tree.]

1.3. at

we la et ta seHaqka as'leni beleyu
and that at which you laughed tell me he said to him
[And he asked him to tell him at what he laughed.]

1.4 while

bezHat AneSit et smTu ltelhaya Aleya we
many rats in near him playing were and

et ltelhaya gle mnen et mqTen leHayet
while playing some of them on body (of)the lion

Argeya
they climbed.

[Many rats were playing near the lion, and while playing
some of them climbed on the body of the lion.]

et lsAe wedqa ke'gru seberet
while runing he fell and his leg broke
[While runing, he fell down and broke his leg.]

Today we have learned the following new words

babur beHar	ship
Echet	tree
Argeya	they(f) climbed
wedqa	fell, he
egr	leg, his
egr	leg
seberet	broke

Lesson 26

Adverbs Denoting Relation of Place

Here is a partial list of adverbs that express relation of a place.
Some of them have been mentioned in previous lessons.

teHat	under	eg.	seb teHat	= the dead
leAl	up, above		leAl re'e	= look up ward
qedem	forward, front		qedem gis	= go forward
ra'as teHat	down'wards		ra'as teHat wedqa	=fell downward
ra'as leAl	up'wards		ra'as leAl nefra	= flew upward (bird,insect)
ra'as qedem	forward		ra'as qeder seA	= ran forward
ra'as Har	backward		ra'as Har aqbela	=returned backward
geSu teHat	down ward		geSu teHat dena	=he went down ward
geSu leAl	up wards		geSu leAl Aqlola	= he went up ward
geSu qedem	forward		geSu qedem seA	= he ran forward
et qblat	in front		et qblat re'ekwu	= I saw him in front
mn qedem	in front, from front,		mn qedem meS'a	=he came from front
geS Ad	from/to inside		geS ad ata	= entered inside
geS keden	from/to outside		geS keden weleba	= turned to outside
et keden	outside		et keden meya	= out side he spent the night
etu/eta	there		eta tmeya	= he spent the night there
etli/etla	in here		etla tmeya	= in here he spent the night
enze	here		enze neA	= come here
ken	there		ken gis	= go there
enze we ken	here and there (enze weken)		ken we enze itibel	=don't go here and there
ken we enze	to and fro		mn ken the debr	= beyond the mountain
mn ken	off, beyond			

Lesson 27

asar = behind / following

aHmed	Hago	meS'a	ana	et asaru	meSa'ko	
Ahmed	after	he came	I	behind him	(I) came	
wehtu	kem	mota	asaru	weldu	meHamed	egl
and he	when	he died	after him	his son	Mohammed	to
lshaymo		Hazaw				
appoint		they wanted.				
asar ela	=	after this				
asar Hd	=	one after the other.				
asar Hd		et lsU				
one after the other		while running				
[While running		one after the other]				
asar when used with pronouns it should agree with the pronoun						
asar-yie	after	me	asar-na	after	us	
asar-ki	after	you (f)	asar-kn	after	you (p,f)	
asar-ka	after	you (m)	asar-kum	after	you (p,m)	
asar-a	after	her	asar-n	after	them (p,f)	
asar-u	after	him	asar-om	after	them (p.m)	
asaryie	htu	meS'a	he	came	after	me
asarki	"	"				
asarka	"	"				
asarna	htu	meS'a				
asarkn	"	"				
asarkum	"	"				

asara " "
asaru " "

asaran " "
asarom " "

Lesson 28

mn leAl, mn Hrs, mn Hnet

There are certain preposition that are made of two words like the following examples. These are not the only double words of this kind.

1. mn leAl = above

mn leAl legebey
above the road

leTeyaret mn leAl ledebr Halfet
the air plane above the mountain passed
[The air plane passed above the mountain.]

Proverb 28.1

Hesas mn leAl may lidena rebi
butter above water make us God
[God make us butter above water= Save us God from all evil.]

2. mn teHat = (from)under , below

legebey mn teHat Adna teHalf
the road below our village it passes.
[The road passes below our village.]

mn teHat we mn leAl
from under and from above

3. mn Hrs = because of , owing to

mn Hrs eli msl melahyu tba'sa
because of this with his friend he quarreled
[He quarreled with his friend because of this]

" mn Hrs " can also be substituted by " sebet " without change of meaning

sebet eli msl melahyu tba'sa.
because of this with his friend he quarreled.

4. mn Hnet = instead of

mn Hnet fejr yom deyu
instead of tomorrow today do it

[Do it today instead of tomorrow.]

mn Hnet ekit tthage azim Heys
instead bad you talk silence is better

[Silence is better than you talk bad.]

mn Hnet enti geysi Huki ligis
instead of you(f,s) going your brother should go

[Instead of you, your brother should go.]

5. mn Har/ mn reHar = behind, last

Both " mn Har" and "mn reHar" have the same meaning and can be taken as a variance in the language use.

mn Har klu ata / or mn reHar klu ata.
behind every one he entered
[he entered last.]

mn Har klu tehaga
behind every one he talked
[He talked last]

mn Har klu terfa
behind every one he remained
[He was the last one/ he remained behind every one.]

Today we have learned the following new words

Teyaret = air plane
ba'as = quarreling
(t)ba'sa = quarreled (he),
terfa = remained
azim = silence
ekit = bad , evil, (noun)
yom = today
fejr = tomorrow

Lesson 29

Words Used in Questions

We will now use some propositions that we have learned in previous lessons to make compound words that are often used in questions used to enquire about time, place, condition etc. This list is not complete, and the learner will of course add to it as she/he learns more words.

1. mdol = when

ma aze has the same meaning as mdol.

mdol egl tigis tu ? when will you (m,s) go ?
ma aze egl tigis tu ? " " " "

mdol egl tigisi tu ? when will you (f,s) go ?

mdol meSa'ki ? when did you (f,s) come ?

mdol re'ekahom ? when did you(m,s) see them (m)?

mdol re'ekahan ? when did you (m,s) see them (f) ?

mdol re'ekyom ? when did you (f,s) see them (m) ?

mdol re'ekyen ? when did you (f,s) see them (f) ?

2. msaAt = what hour or what time

msaAt laAqabl mesleka ? what time do you think he will be back ?

msaAt taAqabl meleka ? what time do you think she will be back ?

also means " what time will you(m,s) be back?

msaAt halena ? what time is it now.

3. et aya = in where

et aya hala male lezabekahu ktab ? where is the book that you (m.,s)
bought yesterday ?

et aya hala male lezabekyu ktab ? where is the book that you(f,s)
bought yesterday ?

et aya hala male lezabekuwu ktab ? where is the book that I
bought yesterday ?

et aya ttrekeb ? where could she be found ?

et aya ekan beda ? In what place was it lost ?/ where was
it lost ?

4. mn aya = from wher

mn aya meSa'ki ? where from did you (f,s) come ?

mn aya zabekahu ? where from did you buy it ?

5. eshwo = which one

eshwo Hays ? which one is better ?

eshwo ln'sh ? which one is smaller ?

eshwo tfeti ? which one do you (f,s) like/love ?

6. kefo = how

kefo haleka/halaki ? how are you m/f ?

kefo halekum ? how are you (p) ?

eli kefo ge'a ? how did this happen ?

7. egl mi = why

leHsan egl mi beke hala ? why is the child crying ?

egl mi ite'as'lu ? why don't you tell him ?

egl mi ite'as'la ? why don't you tell her ?

egl mi abeka ? why did you say no (refuse) ?

8. akl ayi = how much

akl ayi seladi teHaze ? how much money do you need ?

akl ayi terfeki ? how much is left for you (f,s) ?

akl ayi terfeka ? how much is left for you (m,s) ?

akl ayi terfeni ? how much is left for me ?

akl ayi terfeyom ? how much is left for them (m) ?

akl ayi terfeyen ? how much is left for them (f) ?

9. kem = how much

kem has the same meaning as akl ayi, but it referes specifically to
a quantity.

kem zabekahu ? how much did you pay for it ?

kem beleka ? how much did he say (to you) ?

kem bela ? how much did he say ?

dib Hate senet kem amEl halaya ? how many days are there in one
year?

dib Hate ryal kem sentim hala ? how many cents are there in one
dollar (ryal) ?

Lesson 30

Time Denoting words

Words that denote time could be of two types- those that express a certain duration of time like an hour, a day , a year etc. and those that indicate a certain point of time like after, before etc. The list of such words are given below as category A and B.

I. Category A

1. yom today
 fejr tomorrow
 fengoH tomorrow

Note : fejr and fengoH have the same meaning and there is no restriction on when to use which.

fejr laha after tomorrow
fengoH laha " "
male yesterday
male laha day before yesterday

2. eb fejra on the next day
 asboH morning
 adaHa noon
 amsuy afternoon
 lali night
 amEl day time

yom Amet this year
deAm last year
deAm laha before last year
letmeS' senet coming year

3. The five Moslem prayers of the day are also used to indicate time and are very frequently used to tell time of the day..

'asaboH morning. this is before sun rise.
'zhr noon
'alAsr afternoon
'almeqrb after sun set.
'alEsha night time about 8:00 P.M.

4. Time is also told by the position of the sun, how high or low in the sky it is.

SbHat mdr day break
'asboH early morning
fgret SeHay sun rise
'adawuHyet about 9:00 a.m.
qedem 'azhr before noon.

'azhr	noon
'alAsr Hfn	literally translated as hot 'alAsr or hot afternoon i.e. about 4:00 p.m. and a little before.
'alAsr	afternoon
'alAsr brdt	literally translated as cold 'alAsr or cold afternoon, i.e. about 5:00p.m. and after
mwudaq SeHay	sun set
'almeqrb	just after sun set.
lali	night
ser lali	mid night

5. sanyet	second	adaptation from Arabic, but widely used.
deqiqet	minute	" " "
saAt	hour	" " "

6. yom	day
samn	week
shehar/wereH	month note; shehar is an adaptation from Arabic.
senet/Amet	year

II. Category B

Her	later , then
Haqohu/	afterward
Haqoha	
mn ela	from this
ledol	at that time
kldol	every time
doldol	sometime
dima	always

Lesson 31

Adverbs of Doubt

There are certain adverbs that are used to express doubt by the speaker. Such adverbs in English would be words like " perhaps, may be, possibly", etc

1. kendo':

The exact meaning of this word is close to " I don't know", but more correctly it means " I am not sure".

It is given in response to a question, when one is not sure of the answer or does not know the answer.

Example 31.1:

eli nay men tu ? = whose is this ?
 kendo' . = I don't know / I am not sure.

eli Kadija amSa'atu ma saAdia ? = Who brought this, Kadija or Sadia ?

kendo' aya mnen km anSatu. = I am not sure who of them brought it.

2. men amr:

This is a complete sentence by it self. It means who knows ?

Example 31.2:

men amr msl abuha giesat geb'e.
who knows, with her father she went may be.
[Who knows, may be she went with her father.]

3. geb' : may be

Example 31.3

le enas shqul rekba geb'.
may be the man found (got) a job.

esitu male weldet geb'.
His wife yesterday gave birth may be,
[May be his wife gave birth yesterday.]

4. labd : also has the meaning of perhaps/may be/ more likely

Example 31.4

le kl'e Hawu ltArew labd.
The two brother will perhaps reconcile.

le mdr male zalm geb' labd.
perhaps it rained yesterday.

5. yemkn:

Has the meaning of "probably" or "perhaps". This word is adapted to Tigre from Arabic and it is widely and very frequent used.

Example 31.5:

saAt kem taAqabl ? = what time do you come back ?
yemkn saAt seles. = perhaps at 3 o'clock.

men hala mslu ? = who is with him ?
yemkn emu. = probably his mother.

m biolet ? = what did she say ?
"yemkn fejr Aqabl" biolet. = " Perhaps I will return
tomorrow" she said.

Lesson 32

Words of Affirmation and Negation

1. There are several words used for affirmation with very close meanings.

Words used in affirmation are the following:

afo yes.

Abe yes

aywa yes.

aho yes

These words are used to express agreement. aho is mostly used in familiar conversation, where the listener shows he is attentive.

aywa , which could very well be an adaptation from Arabic, is

nowadays used more often than the others, specially among people who use Arabic as a second language.

Examples :32.1

ela gebey neQfa ta ? aywa, re'aska Qedem gis.
Is this the road to Nekfa ? yes, go forward.

eli nayka tu ? aywa, nayie tu.
is this yours ? yes, it is mine.

2. afo is also used to mean "why" if used in a question context.

Examples 32.2

afo k'na wedeka ? why did you do like this ?

afo k'na wedekahom ? why did you do this to them ?

afo ela bela ? why did he say this ?

3. Words of negation:

la' no adaptation from Arabic.

lala' no this is used fpr emphasise.

'ifalu no

'ekon no

ya ya not at all (used when one wants to emphasize)

Examples :

mn deAm laha iritriya geska ? Did you go to Eritrea since
before last year?

la'. no
'ifalye no 'ifal is subject dependent as seen here.
'ifalu for he
'efala for she and so on....

le 'esit mn musteshfa fegret ? Was the women discharged from
the hospital ?

la', etu halet. no, she is still there.

'ifala, etu halet " " " " " .

Lesson 33

Verbal Concepts

Some verbal concepts may also be expressed by certian fixed stems followed by the conjugated form of "biela." literally translated as " said". Here some examples are given to this mode of verb formation.

1. tm biela/bielet = he/she kept quiet.

Examples 33.1

Hgya aba. tm biela. he refused to speak. He kept quiet.
le radyo sebera mesleni tm biela. the radio has broken down I think,

Example 34.1

A short story that goes with this. A man is said to have asked his son to marry and settle down. The son agreed on the condition that he will choose his bride, to which the father replied " deHan tu. En abuka mn Enka qeyeH" translated as " don't worry, your father's eye is more red than your eye" so the saying " En abuka mn Enka qeyeh " is a proverb in Tigre, meaning that one will do a better job and knows what he is talking about.

2. anfu Hachir tu = he has a short nose = he gets angry very easily.
aHmed anfu Hachir tu = Ahmed gets angy very easily.
3. ediehu Trqt ta = he has a hole in his hand= he is a spender.
4. ediehu krit ta = his hand is put down = he has the habit of stealing.
5. ediehu Tlqt ta = his hand is loose(opposite to tied up) = he is generous
6. kebdu Selam ta = his stomach is black = he is not honest
7. kebdu reqaq ta = his stomach is weak = he is a coward
8. kebdu beHar ta = his stomach is a sea = he is not easily disturbed
9. nsalu reym tu = his tounge is long = he talks too much (about things that does not concern him); he is abusive.
10. afuhu Truq tu = he has a hole in his mouth= he can not keep a secret.
11. Sgadu SnoE tu = he has a stiff neck = he is rigid; he is stubborn. he is not easily convinced.
12. amEl Selam = black day = sad day ;
13. amEl SaEda = white day = blessed day.

Lesson 35

The Numerals

I. Numerals like 1, 2, 319, that are used in simple counting and answers the question " how many " are as follows :

0	sfr (adapted from Arabic)
1	Hate
2	kl'e
3	seles
4	arbaE
5	Hams
6	ss
7	seboE
8	seman
9	seE
10	Asr

Hate (1) and kl'e (2) are the feminine form.

The masculine form is :

"woro" or "worot" for the number 1, and
"kl'ot" for the number 2.

Examples 34.1

So we say -----> "Hate welet", but never "woro welet".
one girl
Like wise we say ---> "woro enas" or "worot enas"
one man
but never "Hate enas".

Similarly for the number 2 we say:

"kl'e welet" but never "kl'ot welet"
two girls
"kl'ot enas" but we CAN say kl'e enas. Yes this is we Can say.
two men two men

II. Number above 10 are made as follows:

for the numbers 11 to 19, the unit numeral is placed immediately after the invariable element Asr (10) and "we" (i.e. and) can or can not be used. It is optional. This last statement is only true for numbers 11 - 19.

11	Asr Hate	or	Asr we Hate
12	Asr kl'e	or	Asr we kl'e
13	Asr seles	or	Asr we seles
14	Asr arbaE	or	Asr we arbaE
15	Asr Hams	or	Asr we Hams
16	Asr ss	or	Asr we ss
17	Asr seboE	or	Asr we seboE
18	Asr seman	or	Asr we seman
19	Asr seE	or	Asr we seE
20	Esra		

III. For numbers greater than 20 the "we" is no more optional, but it must be used. So

21	Esra we Hate . (Esra Hate is NOT correct).						
22	Esra we kl'e						
23	Esra we seles						
24	Esra we arbaE						
25	Esra we Hams						
26	Esra we ss						
27	Esra we seboE						
28	Esra we seman						
29	Esra we seE						
30	selasa						
40	arbaA						
50	Hmsa						
60	ssa						
70	sebA						
80	semanya						
90	seA						
100	m't						
200	kl'e m't	300	seles m't	400	arbaE m't	500	Hams m't
600	ss m't	700	seboE m't	800	seman m't	900	seE m't
1000	alf						
2000	kl'e alf and so on.						
1 000 000	melyun (adaptation from Arabic)						

100 000 m't alf

121 832 m't we Esra we Hate alf we seman m't we selasa we kl'e

1991 alf we seE m't we seA we Hate.

Lesson 36

Numerals (2)

Lesson 36

This a continuation of the previous lesson on numerals.

Fraction are given as follows

1/2 one half ser

1/3 a third meseles (third part) or sls

1/4 quarter rboE

1/5 a fifth Hmesit (fifthe part)

1/6 a sixth sdesit (sixth part)

1/7 a seventh sbeIt (seventh part)

1 1/2 one and half = Hate we ser

2 1/4 two and quarter = kl'e we rboE

Ordinal numerals have both feminine and masculine form. in English " first", "second" , "third " etc. have no specific gender as they are equally used for the femoale ad male. The case in Tigre is different. The ordinal numerals are gender specific and are given as follows:

first awal or awelay / awelayt (m/f) we can also use the words qedam or qedamay/ qedamayt (m/f)

second kal' or kale'ay/kale'ayt (m/f)

Example : et kale'ayt amEl on the second day

third sals or salsay/ salsayt (m/f)

fourth rabE or rabeAy/ rabeAyt (m/f)

fifth Hams or Hamsay/ Hamsayt (m/f)

sixth sads or sadsay/ sadsayt (m/f)

seventh sabeE or sabeAy/ sabeAyt (m/f)

eighth samn or samnay/ samnayt (m/f)

ninth taseE or taseAy/ taseAyt (m/f)

tenth Asr or Asray/ Asrayt (m/f)

Lesson 38

Family Relationships

Family relationships, both by blood and through marriage, between individuals are described in Tigre as follows:

I	singular	plural
	em	mother emat
	ab	father abawu/abach (both are correct)
	Ht	sister Hawat
	Hu	brother Hawu
	abot	grandmother abotat
	abEb	grandfather abEbotat

In English uncle and aunt are used for equally for both from the father's and mother's side, but in tigre there is a differentiation

II	singular	plural
	Hel	aunt = sister to mother Heltotat
	Amet	aunt = sister to father Amotat
	Hal	uncle= brother to mother Halotat
	Hu ab	uncle= brother to father Hawu ab

No specific words for nephew , niece , and cousin

welet Hu ab cousin (daughter of father's brother)
wed Hu ab cousin (son of fathers brother)

welet Hal cousin (daughter of mother's brother)
wed Hal cousin (son " " ")

welet Ht niece (daughter of a sister)
wed Ht nephew (son of a sister)

welet Hu niece (daughter of a brother)
wed Hu nephew (son of a brother)

Relations of in-laws are as follow :

III	Esit	wife
	b's	husband
	Hema	first wife
	wed bkr	first son
	welet bkr	first daughter
	wed Hdegat ede	last son
	welet Hdegat ede	last daughter
	Hamat	mother in law
	Ham	father in law
	Ad Ham	family of in laws
	zema	brother in law
	zemayt	sister in law
	telakm	brother in law to wife i.e. brother of the husband is a "telakm" to the wife
	neAl	sister in law to wife i.e. sister of husband is "neAl" to the wife
	Hano	two men married to two sisters are Hano to each other

IV Among the Tigre people "em" or "ab" followed by the name of the first daughter or son is a common polite form of addressing people example :

em afraH mother of Afrah
ab afraH father of Afrah
em ebrahim mother of Ibrahim
ab Usman father of Osman

Lesson 39

Text

This text has a word for word English parallel translation. The proper translation is given at the end of the text.

dgm adg wed fdiel

[The story of Adeg wed Fdiel]

agd wed fdiel Hema, we'b leHmam bzuH
adeg son of Fdiel was sick, and with the sickness a lot

tekma. wekm Hewena nyet
he became weak and when he became close to death appetite

nebra irekba. de'am Helib lieTa ltHenek Ala.
for food he could not find. But milk only he was taking.

We Hetie mEl egl lstie hebuni biela. de'am
and one day to drink give me he said. But

lemetentnetu bielwo " yom welka seteyu, Helib
his nurses said to him " today your son drank it, milk

alebu , htu ask berka giesa , webeAel gebey
there is not, he to Berka went, and of a journey

reyam tu ende enbie eglu hebnu." we adg biela " gbey
far he is we said to him we gave." and Adg said " journey

ana le'geysa itreym ? " we'la ask azie
I that will go isn't more far ?." and this until now

mesel geb'at, " gebey ana le'geysa itreym ?"
proverb it became, " journey that I will go isn't more far?"

biela adg wed fdiel lblo
said Adg son Fdiel, they say.

[Adeg the son of Fdiel got sick, and he was so weak that he could only take milk. One day he asked for his milk, but those taking care of him told him " there is no any milk left today , as we gave it to your son, who was going in a long journey to Berka." and Adg replied " wasn't my journey longer than his ? " and this saying of Adg has become a proverb until this time, and people say " wasn't my journey longer than his" said Adg wed Fdiel.]

Lesson 40

Text (2)

dgm hmem we wed Hashil
Story of tiger and son of Hashil (Fox)

hmem we wed Hashil msl Alewu. kehmem Atal re'a.
tiger and son of fox together were. and the tiger goats he saw.

de'am egl ilqtel mnu Heram ferha.
but to not kill from sin/forbiden he was afraid (of).

weHar egl wed Hashil tse'aleyu . " Heram et mi
and then to son of fox he asked him. sin in what

ferhwa, wed Hashil ? " wed Hashil hyie belo
they're afraid from , son of fox ?". son of fox then said to him

" et terf ferhwa." wehmem " terfyie
" in offsprings they are affraid of it." and tiger " my offsprings

nosu ta " biela we't leATal seA . ke't Hetie
is up to them " he said. and to the goats he ran. and to one

Telit egl lsrer et leHezie et krmiedet
goat to jump when he wanted on a shrub

wedqa kehta Aegeto. wehmem km
he fell down and it slashed his stomach. and tiger when

tAqeqa, egl wedHashil bielo " heram et
he was slashed open, to son of fox he said " forbidden act in

terf ferhwa itieleni eglmi ana
off sping they are affraid of did you not say to me why I

mtko ba ?" wehtu belsa kebielo " abuka belA
died by it ?" and he replied and said to him " your father ate

bka." Heqoha hmem mota. kemn eli dgm kl'e mesel
by you". after that tiger died. and from this story two proverb

terfeya " Heram et terf ta" biela wed Hashil lblo.
remained " forbidden act in offsprings it is" said son of fox they say.

wehyie " " ebuka belA bka" biela wed Hashil" " lblo.
and also" " your father ate by you" said son of fox"" they say.

Note: Heram is any act that it religeously forbidden to do.
eg. to kill is Heram, to steal is Heram, etc. So the act itself
is said to be Heram, so one can say

Heram itede = do not do Heram.

srqet Heram tu = stealing is Heram.

the opposite of Heram is Halal. So human acts are classified
as Heram and Halal.

we have learned this new words today

hmem tiger
Hashil fox

msl	together
Heram	forbiden
seA	he ran
terf	off sping
Telit	goat
ATal	goats