

AMHARIC

COUNTRY: Ethiopia

POST: Addis Ababa

Amharic, the official language of the Empire, is similar to many other Ethiopian languages, including Tigrinya, Tigre, Harari, Argobba, Gafat and all the southern dialects.

This language developed from a form of speech similar to Geez or classical Ethiopian that has not been spoken since the 10th century, but continues to be the liturgical language of the Ethiopian coptic church. It has been the language of the government since the New Empire was formed in the 13th century and is in growing use today. Until recently it was written only occasionally, but a literature, primarily didactic, is developing as time goes by.

Amharic contains many prepalatals resulting from the palatization of dentals, palatals and liquids. The nouns are invariable, apart from a form of plural in - oč. Most of the verbs have three radical consonants, and the disappearance of laryngeals and semi-vowels has resulted in shortened verbs having special forms. Finally, Amharic has expressive compound formations in which an invariable radical is conjugated by means of a verb that serves as an auxiliary. To express time and mood, there are compound forms with postpositioned auxiliaries as well as forms inherited from the Geez. The sentences are often long and periodic, with subordinates and interpolated clauses before the principal clause, and the main verb placed at the end.