From the edge:

A sketch of Ongota, a dying language of Southwest Ethiopia
Graziano Savà and Mauro Tosco
A SKETCH OF ONGOTA
A DYING LANGUAGE OF SOUTHWEST ETHIOPIA*

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The article provides a grammatical sketch of Ongota, a language on the brink of extinction (actively used by eight out of an ethnic group of nearly one hundred) spoken in the South Omo Zone of Southwestern Ethiopia. The language has now been largely superseded by Ts'amakko, a neighboring East Cushitic language, and code-switching in Ts'amakko occurs extensively in the data. A peculiar characteristic of Ongota is that tense distinctions on the verb are marked only tonally. Ongota's genetic affiliation is uncertain, but most probably Afroasiatic, either Cushitic or Omotic; on the other hand, it must be noted that certain features of the language (such as the almost complete absence of nominal morphology and of inflectional verbal morphology) point to an origin from a creolized pidgin.

* We are grateful to the Italian National Research Center (C.N.R.) for funding the research upon which this paper is based, and to the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University for granting us the permission to carry on our fieldwork in the area. Previous data on various points of Ongota grammar has been presented jointly by the authors at the “XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies” (Addis Ababa, November 6-11, 2000) and, by Graziano Savà at the Symposium “Ethiopian Morphosyntax in an Areal Perspective” (Leiden, February 4-5, 2001). We thank all those who, with their comments and suggestions, greatly improved our understanding of Ongota. Special thanks are due to Akilu Yilma (Addis Ababa University). Obviously, any error and omission is entirely our responsibility.
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1. Introduction

The extreme southwestern corner of Ethiopia is well-known as an ethnic and linguistic mosaic. What was formerly the western part of Gemu-Gofa and is now the Southern Omo Zone (Amharic: yá-dāḥub omo zon) of the “Southern Peoples, Nations and Nationalities Region” comprises peoples speaking Cushitic and Omotic languages of the Afroasiatic family, as well as Nilotic and Surmic languages of the Eastern Sudanic branch of Nilo-Saharan. But there is at least another enigmatic people, mostly known in the area as Birale, but whose ethnic selfname is rather Ongota ( móṇ̄ṭ̄ora [mōngōtā]). One would search in vain for either the Birale or the Ongota in the Ethiopian census (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 1998). The state of our knowledge about this people and their language (iifa móṇ̄ṭ̄ora ‘language [“mouth”] of the Ongota’) is well summarized in Ethnologue’s entry, quoted here below:

Birale (Ongota, Birelle, Ifa’Ongota, “Shanqilla”) [BXE] 20 speakers out of an ethnic group of 70 (SIL 1990). One village on the west bank of the Weyt’o River, southeast Omo Region. Afroasiatic, Unclassified. All the speakers are old. The others conduct their affairs in Tsamai. 18% lexical similarity with Tsamai, but from borrowing. Typology: SOV; postpositions; genitives follow noun heads; suffixes indicate noun case; verb affixes mark subject person, number, and gender; passive; causative. Agriculturalists, hunters. Nearly extinct. [Grimes 1996: 260]

The entry itself represents a decisive improvement over previous reports, such as, for example, Ethnologue’s 11th edition, where the language was said to be spoken ‘[O]n Lake Weyto, north of the Cushitic-speaking Tsamay’ [Grimes 1991: 218]. At least at the present time, no such thing as a (permanent) “Lake Weyto” exists, and Ongota is spoken to the east of Ts’amakko, 2 rather than to the north. The improvement is mostly the result of a single article, published in 1992/93 in

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1 The following abbreviations are used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>CAUS</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>IMPV</th>
<th>INF</th>
<th>INT</th>
<th>INTR</th>
<th>ISP</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>MID</th>
<th>NEG</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Amharic</td>
<td>Causative verbal extension</td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>Infinitive</td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>Intransitive verbal extension</td>
<td>Impersonal Subject Pronoun</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>Middle verbal extension</td>
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2 The denomination of Tsamay or Ts’amay, although common in the area (and in the literature) is unknown in the language itself. The ethnic selfname is rather Ts’amakko (corresponding to S’aamakko of Hayward [1989]).
the short-lived *Journal of Afroasiatic Languages*. The article, entitled ‘Ongota or Birale: A moribund language of Gemu-Gofa (Ethiopia)’, was co-authored by Harold C. Fleming, Aklilu Yilma, Ayyalew Mitiku, Richard Hayward, Yukio Miyawaki, Pavel Mikeš, and J. Michael Seelig [Fleming et al. 1992/93] and presented the first real data on the Ongota language. Actually, as well-argued in the article itself, there are reasons to believe that the Ongota were first mentioned by the American explorer Donaldson Smith [1896], when he spoke of a “Borali” people in connection with other yet unidentified tribes, especially a mysterious group of pygmies, the “Dume”.

Fleming et al. [1992/93] is particularly interesting for its rich vocabulary (with comparative notes), but it also presented much grammatical data, although only incompletely analysed. A year later it was followed by a precious 320-item wordlist of Ongota, Arbore, and Ts’amakko, published by the “Survey of Little-Known Languages of Ethiopia” [Dinota & Siebert 1994]. Although the words were carefully transcribed, no phonological analysis was attempted, and grammatical data was missing. In the following years, Aklilu Yilma, a linguist at Addis Ababa University (and one of the authors of Fleming et al. [1992/93]) collected additional sociolinguistic data on the people, visiting their settlement on various occasions. But no new linguistic data has been provided.

Differently from previous researchers, we more or less stumbled on Ongota while working on another language. On August 18, 2000, in the course of a fieldwork campaign aimed at various Dullay varieties, we stopped in the small town of Weyt’o, just after the bridge on the Weyt’o river, along the road leading from Arba Minch to the Omo. We had heard that a few Ongota were working at the Birale Agricultural Development Corp., a successful cotton company whose head-quarters are located just out of town, and had decided to enquire into the subject with the local manager. Although he could not be of great help (to his knowledge, no Ongota was found among the workers), he had us taken to somebody who arranged to have a few Ongota brought to us. On the following day we were introduced to three ethnic Ongota[3] and began interviewing them. It soon became apparent that the three had a limited command of the language (although they could remember much of its vocabulary). Finally, we were promised a much better speaker for the following day, and on August 20 we were introduced to Mole Saganne, of the *baritto* clan.

Mole was the informant who provided Dinota & Siebert’s [1994] word-list (where he is referred to as Moyle Saganne). A short interview convinced us that he was the man we were looking for; Mole agreed to follow us to Jinka (the provincial capital of South Omo), where we worked full-time on Ongota from August 21 to 29. The present article contains the result of that work.

Mole claimed once to be 48 years old (but later denied knowing his age); he is a well-known and much respected elder, as well as a brave hunter, a native speaker of Ongota, he speaks like all his people a perfect Ts’amakko, masters well Hamar-

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[3] Their names are: Geta K’awla, Muda K’awla, and Gename Wa’doo.
Banna, and has also a working knowledge of both Amharic and Borana Oromo. He soon proved to be a good linguistic informant, intelligent, cooperative and, above all, patient towards our endless questioning and our first clumsy attempts at speaking his language.

According to Mole, there are eight speakers of Ongota left: apart from himself, his older brother Aburre Sagane, and four brothers: Dulo Korayo, Oydalle Korayo, Guya’o Korayo and Iida Korayo (of the famaddo clan). They all live in Muts’e, a good hour’s walk upstream of the bridge upon the Weyt’o river; most Ongota live there, together, we were told, with a few Ts’amakko. Two other Ongota speakers not living in Muts’e are Mole’s older brother Tabba Sagane, and Gacco Olle (of the hizmakko clan). According to Mole, the eight speakers actively use the language among themselves (on one occasion, we witnessed a conversation between Mole and one of his brothers).

Mole also claimed that four Ongota women speak the language, but since they are married to Ts’amakko men and have been living among the Ts’amakko for many years, it is probable that their active knowledge of the language is limited. We could not have their names.

The number of the ethnic Ongota is only slightly larger: according to Mole’s mental count, they do not exceed one hundred. This accords well with Aklilu Yilma’s (p.c.) personal count of 75 Ongota in Muts’e alone, and with the figure of 89 given in Fleming et al. [1992/93: 186]. Many, according to Mole, understand Ongota, some of them also speak it a little bit (such as the three Ongota we met on August 19), but for all practical purposes Ongota is a dead language and the Ongota are Ts’amakko speakers.

Still according to Mole, the Ongota abandoned their language and ceased teaching it to their children in order to avoid being teased by the Ts’amakko and the Banna. But he had to admit that their pastoral neighbors still look upon them in scorn, since the Ongota do not possess cattle and mainly live on fishing, hunting and honey.

We do not take a position on questions of classification in this descriptive sketch; different hypotheses have been put forward about the genetic affiliation of Ongota: that it is an autonomous branch of Nilo-Saharan [Blazek 1991]; that it is a separate branch of Afroasiatic (Harold Fleming), or that it makes a separate branch within South Omotic (Christopher Ehret, p.c.). While either a Cushitic or Omotic affiliation makes sense, one must note that the almost complete absence of inflectional morphology makes Aklilu Yilma’s (p.c.) idea of a creolized pidgin attractive, if only, at the present state of our knowledge, unverifiable. This creole would involve Nilotic, Omotic, and Cushitic elements (Lionel M. Bender, p.c.), because, as Bender [1994] has shown, any statistical test on the basic lexicon does not support aligning Ongota with any single Ethiopian language family. A further element pointing in the direction of a creole is possibly provided by the oral traditions of the Ongota, who speak of themselves as originally a collection of clans from

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4 Due to Mole’s insufficient knowledge of Amharic, we were partially helped by Olle Fattale, a Ts’amakko policeman servicing in Jinka.
different ethnic and linguistic origins (ranging, for example, from the North Omotic Maale to the South Omotic Banna, to the East Cushitic Borana and Dishina).

2. Phonology

2.1. Segments. As noted by Fleming et al. [1992/93: 190], any account of the phonology of Ongota (henceforth: O) is hampered by the huge amount of free variation which is found in the data. This variation is most probably the result of the obsolescence of the language and of the pervasive influence of Ts’amakko (henceforth: Ts), which, as anticipated, is the true living language of the Ongota. Even when speaking in O, code-switching with Ts is the norm. Also, most phonological processes of O find an exact parallel in Ts (e.g., the Final Height Neutralization of Vowels, the Glottal Onset Insertion, and many others).

The O vowels are the five cardinals. Their quality is relatively stable and unaffected by neighboring consonants. As for the consonants, O operates with the 26 phonemes charted in Table 1.

Table 1. The consonant phonemes of Ongota

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voice (±)</th>
<th>bilab.</th>
<th>lab-dent</th>
<th>(post) alv.</th>
<th>palato-alv.</th>
<th>velar</th>
<th>uvular</th>
<th>pharyn.</th>
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<td>Plosives</td>
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The following spelling conventions are used: IPA /ʃ/ = $; /ʒ/ = j; /f/ = c; /y/ = y; /χ/ = x.

2.2. Allophonic variation

2.2.1. Voicing opposition. As for Ts’amakko and other Dullay varieties, as well as the Konsoi languages, the status of the voice-voiceless opposition is doubtful (cf. Hayward [1989: 7-8] for Ts’amakko and Amborn, Minker & Sasse [1980: 73] for Dullay in general). Voice alternations have been found extensively for /h/ and /l/ and, in one case only, between /d/ and /t/, as in (1). A word-initial /l/ is often voiced into [d] when it comes to be found between vowels, for example, in cliticization, as in (2).
A sketch of Ongota

(1) gaddaʃuni [gaddahhuni ~ gaddaʃuni] ‘big’
gidata   [gidáta ~ gitáta] ‘you (P)’

(2) miditte ‘clitoris’ but miditti=du (an insult; from miditte=tu)

2.2.2. Labial alternation. In a few cases [pʰ] is in free alternation with /f/.

(3) oxoni faʔo [pʰaʔo] ‘to kindle the fire’

Word-internally /bb/ is optionally devoiced to [ppʰ]: [bb] → [ppʰ] / X _ X

(4) dibba [díppʰa] ‘hundred’
abba     [appʰa] ‘good’

In Ts, too, /p/ is in free alternation with /pʰ/, /f/ or /φ/ in all positions, except when geminated or postnasal [Hayward 1989: 5]: for example, pari [pari ~ fari] ‘to die’ and poolo [podo ~ pʰodo ~ φodo] ‘cloud’.

2.2.3. Fricativization. The palato-alveolar voiced affricate optionally loses its stop component, becoming a fricative. Again, this process occurs also in Ts: [dʒ] → [ʒ] (optional).

(5) janta [dʒánta ~ zánta] ‘you’ (S)

2.2.4. Glottalization. There is no plain (non-glottalized) /ts/ in Ts; the phoneme Hayward [1989] transcribes /s/ “is usually an affricated (but occasionally a fricative) ejective” ([Hayward 1989: 6]; hence Hayward’s “S’aamakko” for the more common “Ts’aamakko” or “Ts’amakko”). In O, on the contrary, /ts/ is plain; glottalization is frequently heard in Ts loans (e.g., tsoono [ts’onáko] ‘honeybee’) and sporadic elsewhere, for example, nitsina [nits’ina] ‘many’.

Likewise, the phonemic status of glottalized /ʃ/ [ʃ’] vs. plain /ʃ/ is doubtful: both phonemes are found in Ts (although the latter is rare [cf. Hayward 1989: 5]); in O, /ʃ/ has been recorded only in a few Ts loans, such as cayde [ʃ’ajde] ‘pen, enclosure’, but also in the possibly native word conqorte [ʃ’onqorte] ‘mud’.

2.3. Phonological processes

2.3.1. Final Height Neutralization. Word-finally only three vowels are in opposition, the high vowels /i, u/ being optionally lowered to mid /e, o/:

\[ V_{[+\text{high}]} \rightarrow V_{[-\text{high}, -\text{low}]} \]  

(6) ki= [ki ~ ke] ‘3S.M’ (3rd Singular Masculine, Subject Clitic)

The same neutralization is common in Ts, not only in final position, for example, geʃe [ges’e ~ géʃ’i] ‘belch’ and koutonko [kutónko ~ kottónko] ‘mountain’.
2.3.2. Final-Vowel Dropping. A final /a/ is often dropped in connected speech and before clitics. Other final vowels are not apparently affected. This process is reminiscent of similar rules dropping a “Terminal Vowel” (generally, a lexicalized former gender marker) in neighboring Cushitic languages (cf. Tosco [2001: 65f.] for Dhaasanac).5

(7) barama [baráma ~ barám] ‘tomorrow’
cafiawa [tjafáwa ~ tjafáw] ‘water; river’

2.3.3. Glottal-Onset Insertion. The phonemic status of /h/ is doubtful: on the one hand, a handful or so of words are consistently pronounced with an initial /h/; a few examples are: handura ‘navel’, hobot- ‘to wash’, and the Ts loan hokam- ‘to exchange’. In all these cases, /h/ is considered phonemic. On the other hand, vowel-initial words are optionally provided with a glottal onset, and (possibly as a result of the uncertainties in voicing opposition [cf. 2.2.1.]) this is realized either as a glottal stop [ʔ] or as a voiceless laryngeal [h] in free variation:

Ø → [ʔ ~ h] / # _ (optional).

(8) ayma [áyma ~ ?ájma ~ hájma] ‘woman’

In Ts, too, apparently there is free alternation between Ø and /ʔ/ word-initially, for example, arre [ʔarre ~ arre] ‘donkey’, although the phonemic status of /h/ is beyond doubt.

2.3.4. Final-Glottal Deletion. The presence of /ʔ/ in word-initial position is due to the operation of Glottal Onset Insertion (cf. 2.3.3); /ʔ/ is, nevertheless, phonemic in word-internal position (although attested in very few words only, such as iʔa ‘arm’). A glottal stop is deleted word-finally, but it is recovered in affixation, for example, [ki-dgi] ‘he killed, hit’ will be interpreted and transcribed ki=iʔi, on the basis of such forms as the IMPV.S: jiʔá ‘kill!’ and the IMPV.P: jiʔa ‘kill! (P)’. Final Glottal Deletion (/ʔ/ → Ø / _#) is particularly relevant in Middle verbs, whose extension =iʔ is realized as [i], except when further followed by an affix, as shown by the examples in (9).

5 The label “Terminal Vowel” itself is taken from Hayward’s [1987] discussion of Ometo nominals, where it is used in a different technical meaning.
2.3.5. Final Devoicing. Voiced plosives are devoiced word-finally.

(10) ki=šūb [kiʃuːb]  ‘he killed’
     šubá   [ʃuːba]   ‘kill!’

The voiced affricate is devoiced, not only word-finally, but also, optionally, word-internally: /dʒ/ → /tʃ/ (optional).

(11) ka=báaj [kabाज]  ‘I carried’
     báajo   [bāːjo]   ‘to carry’

The same optional devoicing occurs in Ts, too, for example, jiʃəo [diʃiˈoː ~ ziʃiˈo] ‘a sp. of bird’.

2.3.6. Final Non-release. Final voiceless plosives are unreleased.

(12) ki=Cák   [kitʃaːk]  ‘he ate’  compare: caká  ‘eat!’

A particular application of Final Non-release is the dropping of a word-final glottal stop (Final Glottal Deletion, cf. 2.3.3).

2.3.7. Uvular Spirantization. The uvular stop is generally voiced and fricativized intervocally: q → [ʁ] / V_V, as in (13). Word-finally, it can be affricated (14).

(13) kata Kara ka=qáfi
     I fish 1S=catch.PST

(14) ki=cóq
     3S.M=shoot.PST

Intervocalic uvular spirantization occurs in Ts, too, as, for example, in sọqo [sɔbo] ‘salt’.
2.4. Assimilations

2.4.1. Assimilation to a dental. The Imperative Plural suffix -ta induces progressive voicing assimilation of an immediately preceding voiced plosive.

IMP.V.P

(15) yeqadā ‘hiccup!’ yeqadta [yeqattā]
sugā ‘sniff!’ sūgta [sūkta]

2.4.2. Nasal Assimilation. A nasal assimilates to the articulation point of a following plosive.

(16) ki=ífam ‘he married’
ayma=ko kita ifan=ta ‘the woman he married’

(17) tagamā ‘sleep!’ tagánta (IMP.V.P)

2.4.3. Sibilant harmony. /s/ of the Causative suffixes =san, =as, =is becomes a palato-alveolar /x/ when following a palatal consonant in the stem.

(18) ka=cōq ‘I shot’ ka=cōqsan ‘I made shoot’

In Ts, /s/ of the causative suffixes -is, -as and the rarely attested -os is affected by the same kind of sibilant harmony (19).

(19) jooq-i ‘I/he ground’ jooq-aš-i ‘I/he made grind’
šoh-i ‘I/he washed’ šoh-iš-i ‘I/he wade wash’
šiggar-i ‘I/he stopped’ šiggar-os-i ‘I/he made stop’

In O., the same rule has been sporadically found in other cases, as in (20).

(20) sija ‘by us, chez nous’ (*sijja)

2.5. Syllables. The syllable structure of O can be expressed as (C)V(V)(C). This allows the following syllable types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>g.xa.co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>ca.ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVV</td>
<td>zoo.ba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>ip.pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVC</td>
<td>iiš.te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVC</td>
<td>(ka=)cōq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVVC</td>
<td>(ka=)fīid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6. Clusters and epenthesis. Clusters are limited to two elements and to word-internal position. A three-element cluster arising from affixation processes is
avoided through epenthesis of /i/ after the second member. That the affricates /ts/, /s/ (=[tʃ]), and /ʃ/ (= [dʒ]) are single segments and not sequences of a plosive and a fricative is shown by the fact that a following segment does not yield epenthesis.

(21) tuuts- ‘to push’ IMPV.S: tuutsá
IMPV.P: tūutsta (tuutsita)

2.7. Length. Vowel length and intervocalic consonant gemination (both marked by doubling of the relevant symbol) are phonemic.

(22) aka ‘foot, leg’ aaka ‘women, females’
aka ‘foot, leg’ akka ‘grandfather’
am- ‘to suck’ aame- ‘to rest’

Certain affixes involve the gemination of a preceding consonant, such as the infinitive affix =Co (23). Again, the same rule affects the infinitive suffix -o in Ts, as in (24).

(23) dīm- ‘to plunge’ > dīmmo ‘to plunge’ (Infinitive)
kät- ‘to come out’ > kätto ‘to come out’ (Infinitive)

(24) koʔ-i ‘I/he burned’; koʔ-ʔo ‘to burn’ (Infinitive) (Ts)
deh-i ‘I/he gave’; deh-ʔo ‘to give’ (Infinitive) (Ts)

2.8. Suprasegmentals. Accent is defined here as an abstract property of morphemes to be able to carry high pitch. The presence of accent is marked by /'/ and is contrastive.

(25) yooba [yó:ba] ‘men, males’ yooɓ (yobá) ‘see!’ (IMPV.S)

(in the first case, accent is placed upon the first mora by default (see below); in yooɓ, the stem yoo- is followed by the morpheme of the Imperative Singular (Positive) -á, which bears inherent accent.)

The accent-bearing unit is the syllable, but, on long vowels, accent may fall either on the first or the second mora. A sequence /vv/ is phonetically realized as a long falling tone; conversely, a sequence /vV/ is phonetically realized as a long rising tone. Falling and rising tones, being predictable, are not marked in the transcription.

Opposition between a falling and a rising tone may be seen in the Past vs. Non-Past of verbal stems of shape CVVC (cf. 3.9.3).

(26) ka=xáb ‘I scratched’ vs ka=xááb ‘I’ll scratch’
[kaxáːb] [kaxáːb]
Accent may be lexically or morphologically defined, or may be assigned by default. In this case, it affects the penultimate syllable. Default-assigned accent is not marked in the phonological transcription.

(27) gitata [gi:tā:] ‘you (P)’
kara [kā:ra] ‘fish’

Penultimate position is the rule for accent placement also in plurimorphemic words resulting from the affixation/cliticization of accentless morphemes.

(28) ayma [‘a:jma] ‘woman’ ayma=ko [‘a:jmako] ‘the woman’
fonjota [fonjota] ‘Ongota’ fonjotitta [fonjotitta] ‘one Ongota’

Morphologically-assigned accent is found in verbs (cf. 3.9.3), where past is expressed by accent on the first (in the following example, the only) stem vowel, while non-past is expressed by absence of accent on the stem vowel, which induces high pitch on the subject clitic ka.


Accent may be assigned lexically, either on the antepenultimate (for example, ūdaba ‘tongue’) or on the last mora (for example, barām ‘tomorrow’ in alternation with barama [barâma]).

Accent may also be assigned lexically to specific morphemes, such as the Imperative Singular -ā or the Imperative Plural-ā-ta (which induces accent on the preceding vowel).

(30) coqā ‘shoot!’ cōqta ‘shoot!’ (P)

2.9. Treatment of Ts’amakko loans. Borrowings from Ts are often left unchanged. However, a final /o/ of Ts is often changed into /a/ in O, especially in the Singulative suffixes (cf. 3.2.1.1), as in (31). There are, nevertheless, many exceptions, as in (32), which are perhaps to be regarded as unassimilated loans. A similar change of Ts final /e/ to O /a/ is also common, shown in (33).

(31) Ts’amakko Ongota
irgaf ‘axe’
orga ‘Hamer-Banna’
baaro ‘armpit’
barlo ‘white-browed sparrow weaver’
heko ‘chest’ (note the irregular vowel change)
rummaštitt ‘an Arbore man/woman’
orgit ‘a Hamer-Banna man/woman’
konsitt ‘a Konso man/woman’
raykit ‘male guest’

(32) Ongota Ts’amakko
irgaf ‘axe’
orga ‘Hamer-Banna’
baaro ‘armpit’
barlo ‘white-browed sparrow weaver’
heko ‘chest’ (note the irregular vowel change)
rummaštitt ‘an Arbore man/woman’
orgit ‘a Hamer-Banna man/woman’
konsitt ‘a Konso man/woman’
raykit ‘male guest’
A sketch of Ongota

| Ts' amakko | Ongota | "seed"
|------------|--------|------------------|
| (32) boraho | booraho | ‘pigeon’
| (33) atole | atolla | ‘owl’
| dige | diga | ‘hornbill’
| donke | donka | ‘root, vein’
| hezze | hizza | ‘earth, land’
| biye | biya | ‘ankle’
| kirince | kirinca | ‘crow’
| kurruke | kurruba | ‘crow’

In a few cases a Ts noun extended with a lexicalized Singulative suffix has been taken into O in its bare form, possibly from an earlier stage of Ts; in most such cases the O word ends in /a/ (34); a few end in /o/ (35). There are a few cases of irregular change in the final vowel or the suffix (36).

| (34) berko | bera | ‘season’
| do’osko | do’osa | ‘waterbuck’
| dullayko | dullaya | ‘the Weyt’o river’
| gereško | gereša | ‘thief’
| gibilko | gibila | ‘knee’
| gibusko | gibisa | ‘femur’
| gaarakko | gaara | ‘monkey’
| damatto | damša | ‘giraffe’
| qalatte | qalaya | ‘hyena’

| (35) halte | halo | ‘calabash’
| balgitto | balgo | ‘ostrich’

| (36) gosile | goša | ‘white-headed buffalo weaver’
| tokonko | tokoma | ‘heel’
| kormico | korome | ‘fishing hook’

The /u/ of Ts loanwords is sometimes devoiced to /h/ (cf. 2.2.1. for Voicing Opposition in O) (37). A cluster /u/ in a Ts loan is shifted to /u/ in O (38).

| (37) faska | haaše | ‘grass’
| fangaro | hangararo | ‘worm’

| (38) oršaste | oršatte | ‘rhinoceros’
| mugotte | mugotte | ‘frog’

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6 From the local name of the Weyt’o river Amborn, Minker & Sasse [1980] originally proposed to call “Dullay” an East Cushitic dialect cluster spoken on both sides of the river (with Ts’ amakko being spoken on the west side, and all the other dialects on the highlands to the east).
Finally, the following kinship names are extended in O with -ne.

\[(39) \text{ Ts'amakko } \quad \text{Ongota} \]
\[\text{ sazo } \quad \text{ sazane } \quad \text{ 'younger brother'}\]
\[\text{ s'aalko } \quad \text{ s'alkume } \quad \text{ 'older brother'}\]

2.10. Words, affixes and clitics. A word is defined here phonologically as the domain of accent placement (cf. 2.8). A word may be mono-morphemic (as is most commonly the case of nouns), or it may be formed by a root morpheme followed by one or more affixes (for example, verbal forms, which are always at least bimorphemic), or, still, by a stem preceded and/or followed by one or more clitics:

\[\text{Word} = (\text{Clitic}_n) + \text{Stem} + (\text{Affix}_n) + (\text{Clitic}_n)\]

A few examples displaying different word-compositional possibilities are shown in (40).

\[(40) \quad \text{ayma} \quad \text{ 'woman' (monomorphemic)}\]
\[\text{ sugá } \quad \text{ 'sniff!' (stem sug- 'to sniff' + IMPV.S. Suffix -á)}\]
\[\text{ coqšaná } \quad \text{ 'make shoot!' (stem coq- 'shoot' + Causative suffix -san} \]
\[\quad \text{ + IMPV.S. Suffix -á)}\]
\[\text{ ayman=ko } \quad \text{ ayma + Determinative clitic =ko}\]
\[\text{ ka=coq } \quad \text{ 'I shot' (ka= '1st Sing. Subject Clitic' + stem coq-'shoot'}\]
\[\quad \text{ + Past //?)}\]

3. Morphology

3.1. Word-classes. Nouns and verbs may be clearly defined in O in terms of their different morpho-syntactic behavior. Other categories of less certain status are the adpositions, the pronouns, the adjectives, and the numerals.

3.2. Nouns. Native nouns are uninflected, apart from the occasional use of Ts number (both Singulative and Plural) suffixes. In one case, from the native noun cařa ‘stone’ a diminutive has been provided through a change in vowel quality: cęče ‘pebble’.

Nouns always end in a vowel (verbal stems, on the contrary, are generally consonant-ending); the preferred word shapes are (CV(V).CV or (CV(V).CV. CV. The final vowel is subject to deletion when a Ts number suffix is added.

A few nouns are apparently related to verbal stems, in a few cases through the addition of a vowel copying the (last) stem vowel of the verb. d'aye ‘firestick’ is apparently a borrowing from Ts d'aye, but compare the verb daye ‘to twist’.
A sketch of Ongota

(41) ame- ‘to suck’  ama ‘breast’
axay- ‘to rise’  áxaco ‘sun’
ʃad- ‘to lick’  ʃadaba ‘tongue’
caʃaw- ‘to drink’  caʃawa ‘water; river’
naf- ‘to give’  nafana ‘food’ (?)
ʃoxe- ‘to have sex’  ʃoxo ‘blood’
zooʔ- ‘to collect honey’  zóoba ‘beeswax’

3.2.1. Number

3.2.1.1. Singulative. Names of peoples (all of them apparently Ts loans, except fuga ‘Amhara’) have a collective meaning; from them singulative forms are built through the suffixes -ɪtta (M) and -ɪtte (F), corresponding to Ts -ɪtto (M) (cf. 2.9) and -ɪtte (F), respectively.

(42) fuga  S.M fugitta  ‘Amhara’
orça  S.M orgitta  S.F orgitte  ‘Hamar-Banna’
(c.f. Ts orgo  S.M orgitto  S.F orgitte)
rummatte  S.M rummattitta
(c.f. Ts rummaʃte  S.M rummaʃtitto)
ʃale  S.M ʃalitta  Gawwada and other Dullay- speaking groups of the highlands
(c.f. Ts ʃalle  S.M ʃallatto)
konso  S.M konstita  ‘Konso’
ʃongota  S.M ʃongotita  ‘Ongota’
(c.f. Ts ʃongota  S.M ʃongotitto)

Examples of the use of the singulative forms (43)-(44) vs. plural (45):

(43) katha  ʃongotitta  ‘I am Ongota’ (focalized; cf. 4.11)
I Ongota-SING

(44) ayma=ko  ʃongotitta  ‘the woman is Ongota’
woman-DET Ongota-SING

(45) juta  ʃongota  ‘we are Ongota’
we Ongota

The Ts singulative suffixes -(ak)ko (M), -(at)te (F), as well as the Plural suffix -ayke are used with derived adjectives, as in (46) (cf. 3.6.2). In one case, the same

The term is widespread in Ethiopia for depressed or outcaste clans. Its use for the Amhara is probably derogatory.
The suffix -te has been used with the O word ceťe 'pebble' with a diminutive meaning, yielding ceťete 'pebble'.

(46) Masculine Singular  Feminine Singular  Plural
zaarakko  zaaratte  zaarayke  'fool, crazy'
kamurko  kamurte  ?  'rich'
daafakko  daafatte  daafayke  'blind'
arrakko  arratte  arrayke  'dark grey'
tonnakko  tonnatte  tonnayte  'lame'

3.2.2.2. Plural and Collective. A common way to express plurality is through the use of the adjective badde 'all' or nitsina 'many' (47). Occasionally, the Ts plural affix =adde is used with O nouns. A frequent case is ūdība 'elder', which is often provided a plural form ūdībadde, perhaps because other nouns referring to groups of people express number distinctions through the use of different stems, as in (48).

(47) ayma=ko badde  'all the women'
woman-DET all

(48) Singular  Plural or Collective
ayma  aaka  'woman; female; wife'
inta  yooba  'man; male; husband'
jaaka  eela  'child, baby'
juuka  igire  'girl; daughter'
maara  eela  'boy; son'

In a few cases (49), the element -wa has been observed with a plural function. It might be an old Plural marker fallen out of use.

(49) Songotawa  'Ongota' (P)
kara  'fishes'
juuka  'girls'

3.2.2. Gender. Apart from the occasional use of different gender-sensitive Singulative suffixes, gender is not formally expressed on O nouns. Nominal gender has nevertheless relevance in the pronominal system and in verbal accord. In the Personal Pronouns different forms for the 3rd Sing. Masculine and Feminine are used. Gender accord with subject nouns denoting humans is natural; with subject nouns denoting things the Subject clitic is in the 3S.F. and the same applies to most animals, especially little and socially unimportant ones (for example, most wild animals).
(50) uke $ki=tib$ ‘an/the elephant died’
elephant 3S.M-die.PST

vs.

(51) karbo $ku=tib$ ‘a/the bird died’
bird 3S.F-die.PST

3.3. Pronouns. The Personal Pronouns of O follow the usual Cushitic seven-
members system, with separate Masculine and Feminine elements for the 3rd Singular.

Six series of personal pronominal elements have been identified: Emphatic, Subject Clitic, Object, Postpositional, and Possessive; a sixth series, the Indirect Clitics, has separate forms for the singular persons only. They are shown in Table 2, together with their glosses.

Table 2. Personal Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPHATIC (INDEPENDENT)</th>
<th>SUBJECT CLITIC</th>
<th>OBJ / INDIRECT / POSTPOS</th>
<th>POSSESSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kata</td>
<td>ka</td>
<td>ka na ka me</td>
<td>sinne my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jaama ~</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>jami jata jan you</td>
<td>siidu your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kita</td>
<td>ki</td>
<td>ki wana ki him</td>
<td>seea his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuta</td>
<td>ku</td>
<td>ku wata ku her</td>
<td>suu?u her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juta</td>
<td>ju</td>
<td>ju — ju us</td>
<td>siju our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gitata</td>
<td>gita</td>
<td>gita — gita you.Obj</td>
<td>sigida your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki?ita</td>
<td>ki?i-a</td>
<td>ki?i ~ — ki?i them</td>
<td>suwaya their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1. Emphatic Pronouns. Emphatic pronouns may occur in whatever syntactic role but do not replace members of the other series. They may be regarded as extrasentential. In the following sentence the Emphatic pronoun is underlined.

(52) $juta hanca ju=gfád$ ‘we cut the tree’(past)
    we tree 1P-cut.PST

3.3.2. Subject Clitics. The Subject Clitics obligatorily precede the verbal form in declarative clauses. The Impersonal Subject Pronoun a (ISP), which is used in the Passive (cf. 4.3.3), also belongs here. In the following sentence the Subject Clitic is underlined.

(53) $janta hanca i=gfád$ ‘you cut the tree’(past)
    you tree 2S-cut.PST
3.3.3. Object Pronouns. The Object Pronouns (underlined in the following examples) are used in the role of direct objects; they may appear before the Subject Clitic but may also be cliticized after a verbal form.

(54) kata ki ka=góhís  ‘I made him grow’
     I him 1S-make_grow.PST

(55) kata šu₄na=me ka=šúguc=ki  ‘I smeared him with butter’
     I butter-with 1S-smear.PST-him

3.3.4. Indirect Pronouns. A series of Indirect Pronouns is proposed on the basis of a few sentences only, in which the 3S.M and 3S.F have irregular forms wana, wata (reported also by Fleming et al. [1992/93: 198]), 1S na, and 2S jata. na and ta as markers of 3S.M and 3S.F, respectively, are found in relative clauses (see 4.7).

For the plural persons the Object Pronouns are used followed by the postposition =ku ‘for’. The Indirect Pronouns can appear either before or after the verbal form, as in (56)-(57).

(56) hálö=ke  tari uccé  wana  ‘fill the container with coffee for him!’
     container-in coffee put.IMPV.S him

(57) barama  tora  ká=na?  jata  ‘tomorrow I’ll give you my spear’
     tomorrow spear 1S-give.NPST you

3.3.5. Possessives. As expounded in 3.3.6, the Possessive pronominal series may possibly be analyzed as containing the preposition se ‘of’ followed by a special series of pronouns, also occurring with the preposition uku= ‘on’. The Possessives act as nominal modifiers but may also occur alone.

(58) ayma  sinni  seena=tu  abba  ‘my wife is more beautiful than his’
     woman my his-from good

3.3.6. Postpositional series and other pronominals used with adpositional elements. The Postpositional Pronouns are used with a following postposition (see 3.5). With the preposition uku= ‘on’, which is apparently used only with pronouns, the pronominal element follows in a special form. This same form is also found in the Possessives, which may be analyzed as formed with the preposition se (found, albeit not regularly, in nominal phrases; see 4.2).

The pronominal series used with all the postpositions, the one used with uku= ‘on’, and the Possessives are shown in Table 3. Use of the preposition uku= is shown in (59)-(65).

(59) uku=ni  ki=déhad  ‘he came near (“upon”) me’
     on-me  2S.M.come_near.PST
Table 3. Postpositional Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pronouns + =tu ‘from’</th>
<th>uku= ‘on’ + Pronouns</th>
<th>Possessives (se ‘of’ + Pronouns)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1S</td>
<td>ka=tu</td>
<td>uku=ni</td>
<td>sinni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2S</td>
<td>jan=tu</td>
<td>ugu=du</td>
<td>siidu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S,M</td>
<td>kii=tu</td>
<td>eke=na</td>
<td>seena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S,F</td>
<td>kuu=tu</td>
<td>uku=ʔu, uku=wi</td>
<td>suuʔu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1P</td>
<td>ju=tu</td>
<td>uku=ʃijja</td>
<td>sijju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2P</td>
<td>gida=tu</td>
<td>uku=gida</td>
<td>sigida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3P</td>
<td>kiʔi=tu</td>
<td>uku=waya</td>
<td>suwaya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(60) kata ka=dehād  
I 1S-come_near.NPST on-you  
ugu=du  ‘I am coming near ("upon") you’

(61) eke=na dehādá  
on-him come_near.IMPV.S  
‘go near him!’

(62) uku=ʔu dehādá  
on-her come_near.IMPV.S  
‘go near her!’

(63) janta uku=ʃijja ~ uku=ʃijji i=dehād  
you on-us 2S.come_near.PST  
you=šijja ‘you came near us’

(64) kata uku=gida  
I on-you.OBJ 1S.come_near.PST  
ka=dehād  ‘I went near you (P)’

(65) kata uku=waya  
I on-them 1S.come_near.PST  
ka=dehād  ‘I went near them’

The following sentences show the use of the Postpositional Clitics with the postposition =ki ‘in, to’.

(66) kata gida=ki  
I you.OBJ to 1S-come_near.PST  
ka=dehād  ‘I went near you (P)’

(67) janta ju=ki  
you us-to 2S-come_near.PST  
i=dehād  ‘you came close to us’

When one leaves out of consideration the irregular and defective Indirect Object series, it becomes obvious that the pronominal series share a common set of forms, and that this series actually coincides with the Postpositional Series. In particular, both the Subject and the Object Clitic series are actually identical to the Post-
3.4. Deictics and Determiners. The deictic system of O is still far from clear. The elements =ko and =nki (the former very possibly borrowed from Ts'амакко; cf. 3.2.1.1. on Singulatives) are frequently found, with no apparent difference in meaning. Both =ko and =nki will be glossed “Det” (for Determiner); an alternative analysis could account for these elements as connectors, as they are generally found with nouns which are further followed by a modifier, following the pattern common in Ts’амакко and generally in Dullay:

(68) ayma=ko, inta=nki
    woman-DET, man-DET
    ‘the woman, the man’

    More clearly deictic is inda ‘this’, which follows the noun, either in its bare form or, more commonly, with the Determiners =ko and =nki.

(69) cawo inda ka=héení
    gun this 1S-like.PROG
    ‘I like this gun’

(70) ayma=nki inda abba
    woman-DET this beautiful
    ‘this woman is beautiful’

    Other deictic words are áddate ‘there’ (implying a considerable distance from the speaker and the hearer) and inkena ‘here’ (for Masculine nouns)/inkona (for Feminine nouns — females, animals, and things), possibly to be analyzed as plurimorphemic: in=ke/ ko=na, with =ke, =ko being the 3S.M and 3S.F Object Clitics, respectively. Both áddate and in=ke=na/in=ko=na follow a noun, generally with the Determiners =ko and =nki.

(71) maara=nki áddate sae
    child-DET there whose
    ‘whose is that (faraway) child?’

(72) maara=ko inkena sae
    child-DET here.M whose
    ‘whose is this child (nearby)?’

(73) tagara inda áddate ka=héení
    shade this there 1S-like.PROG
    ‘I like that place’ (“shade”)

(74) tagara in=ko=na ka=héení
    shade this here-F 1S-like.PROG
    ‘I like this place (“shade”) here’

8 It is noteworthy that a similar element is found in Omotic languages, most notably in the 1S *ta, which Bender [2000: 197 ff] proposes to explain on the basis of an old affixed copula; in due time the original pronominal element was dropped and its function was taken over by the erstwhile copula itself.
3.5. Adpositions. Adpositions are clitics to a preceding element, either a noun, a noun modifier, or a pronoun.

=tu ‘from’

(75) haw=tu éeni ‘where do you come from?’
    where-from come.PROG

(76) ūngot=tu ka=éeni ‘I came from Ongota’
    Ongota-from 1S-come.PROG

(77) kāta cašāw=tu katto ka=hāabini ‘I want to come out of the water’
    I water-from come_out.INF 1S-want.PROG

(78) ka=tu eeji ku=kūm ‘I finished the milk’
    me-from milk 3S.F-finish.PST

The postposition =tu may also follow a Possessive pronominal with a spatial meaning (‘by’, Fr. ‘chez’).

(79) sījī=tu maara xōdi ‘a boy was born to us’
    our-from child be_born.PST

Noteworthy is also the use of =tu in insults, such as in sorra=du from sorra ‘anus’ (see also the lexicon; note also the intervocalic voicing of =tu to =du; see 2.2.1).

=ki ‘to, in’ (movement):

(80) haw=ki j=rōota ‘where are you going?’
    where-to 2S-go.PROG

(81) ūngot=ki ka=rōota ‘I am going to Ongota’
    Ongota-to 1S-go.PROG

(82) kāta cašāw=ki réehu ka=hāabini ‘I want to go in the water’
    I water-to go_down.INF 1S-want.PROG

(83) halo=ke ṣari uccē=ju=ku ‘fill the container with coffee for us!’
    container-in coffee put.IMPV.S-us-for

=me ‘with’ (instrumental and comitative)

(84) hak=me gida=éeni ‘who did you (P) come with?’
    who-with 2P-come.PROG

(85) kāta cawo=me bīnta ka=hāt ‘I shot the animal with the gun’
    I gun-with animal 1S-shoot.PST
(86) inta gůlbata=mi ki=dángadi ‘the man is strong’ [“works with man strength-with 3S.M-work.PROG strength”]

=kù ‘for’ (also used to express an indirect object with nominals and, as anticipated in 3.3.4., with plural pronouns)

(87) halo=ke əri ka=ucci gida=kù container-in coffee 1S-put.PST you.P-for ‘I filled the container with coffee for you (P)’ [“I put coffee in the container for you”]

(88) halo=ke əri uccé ju=kù container-in coffee put.IMPV.S us-for ‘fill the container with coffee for us!’

=na ‘with, and’

(89) cašíw=na eefi ella ki=sángata water-and milk together 3S.M-mix.PST ‘he mixed water with milk’

(90) halo=ke əri uccé na container-in coffee put.IMPV.S me ‘fill the container with coffee for me!’

(91) halo=ke əri uccé waya=kù container-in coffee put.IMPV.S them-for ‘fill the container with coffee for them!’

(92) halo=ke əri ka=ucci ja=ta container-in coffee 1S-put.PST you-for ‘I filled the container with coffee for you’

(93) halo=ke əri ka=ucci=wa=ta container-in coffee 1S-put.PST-her-for ‘I filled the container with coffee for her’

3.5.1. Spatial relations. A few items, possibly nouns, which follow a noun to which the postposition =tu ‘from’ is affixed, are used to express and further delimit various spatial relations.

galla ‘under’ (from Ts gallo)

(94) inta hanca=tu gálía ki=dá man tree-from under 3S.M-be_there.PST ‘the man was under the tree’

ippa=tu ‘out of’ (“door.from”)

(95) janta wúra=tu ippa=tu i=ká t you house-from out 2S-go_out.PST ‘you came out of the house’

gúsùto ‘in, within’ (gusku ? + =tu ‘from’)

(96) karbo wúra=tu gúsùto ku=gáyya bird house-from within 3S.F-fly.PROG ‘the bird is flying in the house’
3.6. Adjectives. There is not a unitary category “Adjective”: many adjectival concepts are expressed by verbs, a minority of others by true adjectives.

3.6.1. Basic adjectives. A few adjectives have different endings for Masculine and Feminine, or for Singular and Plural, but most are invariable. A few native adjectives end in =uni, which is also used in derived adjectives from verbs (see below). A list of basic adjectives is given below.

(101) 
- *gaddaunji; P: giddeʃeta* ‘big; large; wide; fat, old (of people and animals)’
- *munnuunji; P: miʃeta* ‘small, little; young (of people and animals)’
- *abba* ‘nice, beautiful; good; sweet’
- *šádala* ‘ugly; bad’
- *šádiba* ‘old’ (for Masculine nouns only)
- *geccate; P: geccayke* ‘old’ (for Feminine nouns only; from Ts)
- *kamurko; F: kamerute* ‘rich’ (from Ts)
- *carba* ‘thin’
- *hólbatuni* ‘short’
- *órma* ‘tall’ (from Ts)
- *zaarakko; F: zaaratte; P: zaarayke* ‘fool; crazy’ (from Ts)
- *mekente* ‘sterile’ (from Ts; subj: woman; for men the expression *mooło tiibto* [“the penis died”] is used
3.6.2. Derived adjectives. A few adjectives are derived from verbs; an ending

-ni has been noted in a few cases. Compare (102) with (103)-(104), (105) with
(106), (107) with (108), and (109) with (110).

(102) inta=ko šašatuni
man-DET afraid
'scared, fearful man'

(103) kata ka=šašatī
I 1S-be_afraid.NPST
'I am afraid'

(104) inta=ko juta ju=ma=šašāti=ʔi
man-DET we 1P-NEG-be_afraid-NEG
'we are not afraid of that man'

(105) cašāw tsāntuni
cold
water cold
'cold water'

(106) sibila=ko ku=tsān
iron-DET 3S.F-be_cold.PST
'the iron is (became) cold'

(107) ayma=ko erehte
woman-DET pregnant
'pregnant woman'

(108) ku=érehi
3S.F-be_pregnant.PST
'she is pregnant'

(109) inta daafakko
man blind
'blind man'

(110) kata ka=dāaf
I 1S-be_blind.PST
'I became blind'

3.6.3. Verbs with adjectival meaning. Other adjectival concepts are expressed
through verbs.

(111) kata ka=malāl
I 1S.be_tired.NPST
'I am tired, weak' (from Ts)

(112) hanca ki=šōoni
wood 3S.M-be_hot.PST
'the wood is (became) hot'

(113) cašā ku=bōi
stone 3S.F-be_hard.PST
'the stone is (became) hard'

(114) nafana=ko ku=tsāgami
food-DET 3S.F-be_salty.PST
'the food is (became) salty'
3.6.4. Colors. Like other languages of the area (cf. Tosco [2001: 582ff.] for Dhaasanac), the color system of O has five basic colors:

áttomuni  ‘white’
dákkamuni  ‘black’
róomini  ‘red’
cárkamuni  ‘green’
silbe  ‘yellow’

The following non-basic colors have been recorded; note the use of silbe ‘yellow’ in these compounds.

silbe áttomuni  ‘light blue’ (“yellow+white”)
silbe cárkamuni  ‘dark green’ (“yellow+green”)
silbe dákkamuni  ‘blue’ (“yellow+black”)
silbe róomini  ‘pink; violet’ (“yellow+red”)
moora  ‘light gray’ (from Ts)
arrakko;  ‘dark gray’ (from Ts)
F: arratte; P: arrayke

3.6.5. Adjectival phrases. The adjective follows the noun it modifies. Both the noun and the adjective may be followed by a determiner.

(115) ayma=nki gadda=uni=nki (sinni)  ‘the big woman (is my wife)’
woman-DET big-DET my

(116) juuka=ko abba=ko (ka=háabinii)  ‘(I want) a beautiful girl’
girl-DET nice-DET 1S-want.PROG

3.6.6. Comparatives and superlatives. In comparatives the adjective does not change; the subject may either precede or follow the element against which the comparison is made, which is followed by the postposition =tu ‘from’. The same construction, which is common in the area, is used in Ts.

(117) a. inta=nki ayma=ko a/dda=tu gadda=uni
man-Det woman-Det there-from big
‘the man is taller than that woman’

b. Ts:
qawko kutta gaant=issa kaysa=nu ko damma
man this woman-that there-to CONN big
‘this man is taller than that woman’
(118) a. ayma=nki=tu inta=nki gaddafuni
    woman-DET-from man-DET big
    ‘the man is taller than the woman’

b. Ts:
    gaante=nu qawko damma
    woman-to man big
    ‘the man is taller than the woman’

(119) a. inta=nki inda ayma=ko āddade=tu abba
    man-DET this woman-DET there-from beautiful
    ‘this man is more beautiful than the woman’

b. Ts:
    qawko=kutta gaante kaysa=nu ko qayya
    man-this woman that-to CONN beautiful
    ‘this man is more beautiful than the woman’

(120) a. ayma=nki=tu inda āddate abba
    woman-DET-from this there beautiful
    ‘that (woman) is more beautiful than this one’

b. Ts:
    gešant=itta=nu kissa abba
    woman-this-to that beautiful
    ‘that (woman) is more beautiful than this one’

(121) a. hanca=nki baddi=tu inda gaddafuni
    tree-DET all-from this big
    ‘this tree is the biggest of all’

b. Ts:
    gar=e xumbi=nu kutta ko damma
    tree-P all-to this CONN big
    ‘this tree is the biggest of all’

Other sentences:

(122) ayma=nki inda=tu inta āddate gaddafuni
    woman-DET this-from man there big
    ‘that man is taller than this woman’

(123) wura siidi=tu wura sinni gaddafuni
    house your-from house your big
    ‘my house is bigger than yours’
For the equative comparative, the Ts structure with the Ts word gura ‘like’ following the second element is used.

(124) a. hanca=nki hanca=nki áddate gura gaddafuni
tree-DET tree-DET there like big
‘this tree is as big as that one’

b. Ts:
garko kutta garko kaysa gura ko damma
tree this tree there like CONN.M big
‘this tree is as big as that one’

Sometimes =tu appears also after the second element in an equative comparison.

(125) inta=nki ayma=ko addate=tu gura abba
man-DET woman-DET there-from like beautiful
‘this man is as beautiful as that woman’

3.7. Numerals

3.7.1. Cardinals. The following numerals have been recorded:

\begin{tabular}{ll}
  kálbano & ‘one’ \(^9\)  \\
  lama & ‘two’ (Cushitic)  \\
  zaha & ‘three’ (Ts zéh)  \\
  tálaha & ‘four’ (Ts tálaha)  \\
  xubbi & ‘five’ (Ts xobín)  \\
  tsanafa & ‘six’  \\
  tahanke & ‘seven’ (Ts tahán)  \\
  ista & ‘eight’  \\
  gollanke & ‘nine’ (Ts gollán)  \\
  coma & ‘ten’ \(^{10}\)  \\
\end{tabular}

\(^{9}\) The form akala mentioned by Fleming et al. [1992/93: 203] has not been found. On the other hand, kálbano ~ akkálbano apparently contains a formative -bano which is also found in the special forms for ‘two’ and ‘three’ used in numeral phrases (see 3.7.2).

\(^{10}\) When counting or mentioning numbers, the oral expression of the numbers is usually accompanied by a conventional manipulation of the fingers; the numbers up to ten are expressed as follows:
1: little finger curled by the other hand, other fingers extended;
2: little finger and ring finger curled by the other hand, other fingers extended;
3: little finger, ring finger and middle finger curled by the other hand, other fingers extended;
4: all fingers except the thumb curled by the other hand, thumb extended;
5: all fingers clenched over the thumb;
6: thumb of left hand held between the thumb and the forefinger of right hand; other fingers of left hand extended;

continued on next page
Teens are formed with coma ‘ten’ followed by the unit, for example:

- coma aikkálábo ‘eleven’
- ñíbbə (~ ñíppə) ‘hundred’
  (cf. Dullay ñíppə [Amborn, Minker & Sasse 1980: 96])

3.7.2. **Numerals**. The numeral always follows the head noun. The following special forms used in phrases have been recorded (see also fn. 9).

- lámboo ‘two’
- zëhbboo ‘three’

(126) wura=ko ñaddate zëhbbo ko sinni ‘those three houses are mine’
  house-DET that three 3S.F my

The other numerals are used in phrases without changes.

(127) wura=ko ñaddate xubbí ko sinni ‘those five houses are mine’
  house-DET that five 3S.F my

3.8. **Adverbs**. A few elements have been tentatively classified as adverbs; they can precede or follow a noun or an emphatic subject pronoun, but always precede the verb and the pronominal clitics.

Adverbs of time:

- bårám ~ barama ‘tomorrow’:

(128) barama kata ka=koli ‘I will return tomorrow’
  tomorrow I 1S-return.NPST

---

7: thumb and forefinger of right hand inserted between the thumb and the forefinger of the left hand; the forefinger of the left hand is curled, while the other fingers are extended;
8: thumb, forefinger and middle finger of the right hand inserted between the thumb and the forefinger of the left hand; the fingers of the left hand are extended;
9: all fingers of the right hand except the little finger inserted between the thumb and the forefinger of the left hand; the fingers of the left hand are extended;
10: both hands as for 5.; the two fists knocked together.

This system is, in a way, the reverse of the one used among the Dhaasanac [cf. Tosco 2001: 108]; in particular, the Dhaasanac start from the forefinger and proceed toward the little finger, while the Ongota start from the little finger; among the Dhaasanac, extension of one or more fingers expresses the counted number, while the other fingers are kept curled, while for the Ongota it is the curling of one or more fingers which expresses the counted number. For example, among the Dhaasanac 1. is expressed extending the forefinger and keeping the other fingers curled; for 2. the forefinger and the middle finger are extended, and so on.
naxani 'yesterday':

(129) kata naxani ka=gājī 'yesterday I ran'
     1 yesterday 1S-run.PST

burink 'this morning':

(130) burink ka=mālal baram ka=dangfād
     this_morning 1S-be_tired.PST tomorrow 1S-work.NPST
     'this morning I was tired, I will work tomorrow'

wuuni 'today':

(131) wuuni ka=rōo 'I went today'
     today 1S-go.PST

ayke 'now':

(132) ayke ka=rōota 'I am going now'
     now 1S-go.PROG

qarra 'before':

(133) qarra ku=bōyi=ba ayke cārqamuni
     before 3S.F-be_fresh.PST-and now green
     'before it was fresh and now is yellow'

sidda 'before':

(134) juuka=kō sidda abba ayke ūādala
     girl-DET before nice now ugly
     'the girl before was nice, now she is ugly'

kolba 'again' has been found only in the sentence:

(135) ayma ka=išēeni=ba kolba ka=hāābini
     woman 1S-bring.PROG-and again 1S-want.PROG
     'I have a woman and I want another one'

Adverbs of quantity and intensity

ekkete 'much':

(136) ekkete cakā "eat a lot!"
     much eat.IMPV.S

(137) ekkete riirā "scream loudly"
     much scream.IMPV.S
iccama ‘a little bit; slowly’:

(138) **iccama caká**  
     little  eat.IMPV.S  
     ‘eat a little!’

(139) **iccama rootá**  
     little  go.IMPV.S  
     ‘go slowly!’

The adjective abba ‘good’ is used as an adverb with the meaning ‘well, properly’:

(140) **kita cata abba ki=qádi**  
     he  meat  good  3S.M-cut.PROG  
     ‘he is cutting the meat properly’

The following adverbial phrases have been noted:

qane qane ‘sometimes’ and qane **badde** ‘always’ (Lit. “all day”. A calque of Ts qane xumbi. Cfr. Amh k’an ‘day’).

(141) **qane badde kara ka=cákini**  
     day  all  fish  1S-eat.PROG  
     ‘I am always eating fish’

kanna kanna ‘quickly’ (Ts kanna kanna):

(142) **kanna kanna ki=róota**  
     quickly  3S.M-go.PROG  
     ‘he is going quickly’

3.9. **Verbs.** The following categories find expression in verbal inflection:

- tense: Past (: PST), Non-Past (: NPST);
- aspect: unmarked vs. Progressive (: PROG);
- mood: Main, Imperative (: IMPV), Jussive, Verbal Noun or Infinitive (: INF);
- polarity: Positive vs. Negative (the latter tagged NEG).

It will be noted that the person, number, and gender of the subject of the sentence is not indexed on the verb itself, although a few verbs use different stems for Singular and Plural Subjects and/or Objects. Other categories find their expression in verbal derivation; the simplest form of a stem, both morphologically and semantically, is the Basic stem. From a Basic stem one or more derived stems are derived through suffixation.

Inflection may be suffixal or suprasegmental (tonal); derivation is exclusively suffixal.¹¹

¹¹ It is difficult to decide whether the extreme reduction in inflectional categories expressed on the verb is exclusively a function of the obsolescence of the language; other Cushitic languages, all of them spoken in close contact with non-Cushitic languages, show similar, although perhaps not so radical, reduction: Dhaasanac, Elmolo, and Yaaku are the most evident examples. But two continued on next page
3.9.1. Basic stems. In the following discussion and in the Lexicon, verbs will be
given under their stem forms, which never surface as such; for most verbs the
stem is actually identical to the form found in the Past and Non-Past, but without
accent (cf. 3.9.3); this is also the form to which suffixes (both derivational and
inflectional) are added. This applies to the consonant-ending verbs, which are the
vast majority of all verbs. Among the consonant-ending verbs, most are mono-
syllabic and have the shape CV(V)C; a minority are bi- and pluri-syllabic.

A good number of verbs are vowel-ending; the final vowel is -i in the tensed
forms, but -e before the inflectional suffixes. Finally, no final vowel is generally
found before the derivational suffixes. For example, one finds the following forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ka=múxi</td>
<td>'I laughed'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Past:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ka=muxí</td>
<td>'I laugh, will laugh'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative Singular:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muxé</td>
<td>'laugh!'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative Plural:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muxéta</td>
<td>'laugh! (P)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causative, Past:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ka=múxsan</td>
<td>'I made laugh'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering that only /e/ or Ø are found before suffixes, and taking into
account Final Height Neutralization (cf. 2.3.1), it is possible to consider these verbs
as ending in /-e/ in their stem-form. As shown above, both /i/ and /e/ appear word-
finally; now, while it is tempting to hypothesize that a final accented /e/ avoids
raising, thereby accounting for, for example, the Past ka=múxí 'I laughed' vs. the
Imperative Singular muxé 'laugh!'; this would leave unexplained the Non-Past
ka=muxí 'I laugh, will laugh'. It is tentatively assumed here that /e/ is the final
stem-vowel and that raising to /i/ is morphologically determined; all the basic
vowel-ending verbs are therefore reported with a final /e/ in the following
discussion and in the Lexicon. A few examples are: aame-'to rest', ame-'to suck',
ee-'to come', išee-'to bring', šebeše-'to vomit', bašce-'to carry on the back',
beše-'to give', berre-'to touch', boye-'to cry', goxe-'to put out', mayye-'to kiss', muxe-'to laugh'

3.9.1.1. Plural stems. A few verbs have different stems for Singular and Plural
Subject and/or Object. These verbs are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of these (Elmolo and Yaaku) were recorded in their terminal stages, too. Derivation has been on
the whole more resistant to decay than inflection.
Singular stem  |  Plural stem  |  Meaning  |  Notes
---|---|---|---
gfay-  |  bafat-  |  'to run'  |  Cfr. Ts sor (S), bafad (P)
ox-  |  kuše-  |  'to hit'  |  
gfad-  |  qits-  |  'to cut'  |  Cfr. Ts qits
?  |  xot-  |  'to put down'  |  
dčhe-  |  aame-  |  'to stop (intr.)'  |  
dat-  |  ?  |  'to make fall'  |  
kat-  |  foof-  |  'to leave'  |  
reex-  |  ?  |  'to go down'  |  

(143) kita hanca ki=gfad  
he  tree  3S.M-cut.NPST  
'he'll cut the tree'

(144) ki?ita hanca ki?a=qits  
they  tree  3P-cut.P.NPST  
'they'll cut the tree'

Other verbs seem to be used only with plural subjects, without a corresponding singular stem.

---
hadí-  |  'to collect, pick up'  |
hokam-  |  'to exchange'  |

3.9.2. Derived stems. The productive derivational system consists of a Causative (CAUS) extension and of a Reflexive-Middle (MID) extension (whose productivity is unclear).

3.9.2.1. Causative. The most common extension is -san; possibly this was, at least originally, a compound Causative-Passive extension, since a scarcely productive extension -am is found with an Intransitive meaning (cf. 3.9.2.3).

The Causative in -san is completely productive. Basic vowel-ending verbs (cf. 3.9.1) delete their final -e before the extension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Stem</th>
<th>Causative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coq-</td>
<td>coqsan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cafaw-</td>
<td>cafawsan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lool-</td>
<td>loolsan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muxe-</td>
<td>muxsan-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second Causative derivation, apparently of less productivity, is =is. This is the same suffix used in Ts, and is frequent with Ts loans, but not limited to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Stem</th>
<th>Causative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bafat-</td>
<td>bafits-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gutal-</td>
<td>gutalis-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gfoh-</td>
<td>gfohis-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kox-</td>
<td>koxis-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a few cases, both -san and -is have been recorded, with apparently no difference in meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Stem</th>
<th>-is Causative</th>
<th>-san Causative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mag-</td>
<td>magis-</td>
<td>magsan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morom-</td>
<td>moromis=</td>
<td>moromsan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sal-</td>
<td>salis-</td>
<td>salsan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiid-</td>
<td>tiid-is/-as-</td>
<td>tiidsan-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To take another road’ magis- ‘to cause to take...
moromis= ‘to make speak’
salis- ‘to make wait’
tiid-is/-as- ‘to make put’

A few verbs have, possibly as a variant of -is, a Causative extension -as (or -aš, very possibly a variant of -aš):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Stem</th>
<th>Causative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ucce-</td>
<td>uccaš-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʔad-</td>
<td>ʔadas-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diig-</td>
<td>diigas-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To pour, fill’ (from Ts) ucce- ‘to pour
ʔad- ‘to lick’ ʔadas- ‘to make lick’
diig- ‘to pour’ (from Ts) diigas- ‘to make pour’

Finally, the following shows a Causative -os, apparently borrowed from a Dullay variety other than Ts together with the Basic stem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Stem</th>
<th>Causative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>daggab-</td>
<td>daggabos-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to arrive’ daggabos- ‘to make arrive’

3.9.2.2. Middle. The usual Cushitic Reflexive-Middle (or Auto-benefactive) extension is found in O with the unusual shape -iʔ, which has been recorded for a substantial number of verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Stem</th>
<th>Middle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boš-</td>
<td>bošiʔ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coq-</td>
<td>coqiʔ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaf-</td>
<td>gaditʔ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ges-</td>
<td>gesitʔ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hobat-</td>
<td>hobatiʔ-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘to pick up, collect’ bošiʔ- ‘to pick up for o.s.’
‘to spear, sting’ coqiʔ- ‘to spear for o.s.’
‘to cut’ gaditʔ- ‘to cut for o.s.’
‘to shave’ gesitʔ- ‘to shave o.s.’
‘to wash’ hobatiʔ- ‘to wash o.s.’

In filiʔ-‘to comb’, the Middle extension has been added to a loan verb (Ts fil) without a Basic correspondent. Other verbs, such as goiʔ-‘to take, get’ and fiqqišiʔ- ‘to sneeze’, are found only in their Middle forms without a Basic stem.

3.9.2.3. Intransitive. An Intransitive extension in -am has been recorded for a few verbs. It is evidently connected to the Passive East Cushitic extension of the same form, and, as anticipated, could be the origin of the common Causative extension -san.
Basic Stem  Intransitive
bul-  ‘to pull out’  bulam-  ‘to be pulled out’
lax-  ‘to mix’ (tr.)  laxam-  ‘to mix’ (intr.)
šud-  ‘to cover, dress’ (Ts)  šudam-  ‘to wear’
xot-  ‘to put down’  xotam-  ‘to go down’

At least the following has an irregular double Intransitive extension -mam.

Basic Stem  Intransitive
caq-  ‘to hide’  caqmam-  ‘to hide oneself’

A few Intransitive-extended verbs have been recorded without a corresponding Basic stem, such as ?ifam- ‘to marry’, hokam- ‘to exchange’ (P. subj.; from Ts). Maybe also morom- ‘to speak’ belongs here.

The opposition between a Basic transitive stem and its Intransitive derivate may be seen in the following sentences:

(145) kuta eefi=na cašáw ella=ki ku=láx
she milk-and water together-to 3S.F-mix.PST
‘she mixed the milk with water’

(146) eefi=na cašáw ella=ki ku=láxam
milk-and water together-to 3S.F-mix.INTR.PST
‘the milk mixed with water’

The complete series of (regular) derivational possibilities is illustrated, for example, in the following:

Basic Stem  Middle  Intransitive  Causative
bul-  ‘to pull out’  buli?-  bulam-  bulsan-
diig-  ‘to pour into’ (from Ts)  diigi?-  diigam-  diigas-

3.9.2.4. Frozen derivational extensions? A few verbs appear with a dental ending in their Basic stem; while for a few of them a Ts origin is evident, this is not always the case. They can act as the base of further, “true” derivation:

Basic Stem
fangat-  ‘to mix’ (tr.)
hobat-  ‘to wash’
nabat-  ‘to hate’ (from Ts)
noqot-  ‘to look, aim at’ (from Ts)

3.9.3. Tense. A twofold opposition Past vs. Non-Past is found. The Non-Past is used for an incomplete action, either present or future. The Past tense is marked by tone on the first (or only) mora of the verbal form. If the verb stem is a long monosyllabic one (CVVC), the sequence High-Low yields a falling tone. The Non-
Past tense is marked by absence of tone on the mora of the stem if this is monomoraic (CVC). In this case, the Subject Clitic gets High tone; a certain amount of non-phonological lengthening of the stem vowel is occasionally heard.

(147) a. (kata) ka=bud’
    1S-spit.PST
    ‘(me,) I spat’

   b. (kata) ká=bud’ [bud’]
    1S-spit.NPST
    ‘(me,) I’ll spit’

(148) a. ka=cig
    1S-sew.PST
    ‘I sewed’

   b. ká=cig
    1S-sew.NPST
    ‘I’ll sew’

(149) a. ka=cóg
    1S-hit.PST
    ‘I hit’

   b. ká=coq
    1S-hit.NPST
    ‘I’ll hit’

(150) a. tempo ka=sóg
tobacco 1S-sniff.PST
    ‘I sniffed tobacco’

   b. tempo ká=sug
tobacco 1S-sniff.NPST
    ‘I’ll sniff tobacco’

(151) a. ka=héd
    1S-tie.PST
    ‘I tied’

   b. ká=hed
    1S-tie.NPST
    ‘I’ll tie’

If the verb is at least bimoraic, the verbal form gets a Tone on the last mora and the Subject Clitic does not get High tone. If the stem is a long monosyllabic one (CVVC), the sequence Low-High yields a rising tone.

(152) a. ka=xááb [xááb]
    1S-scratch.PST
    ‘I scratched’

   b. ka=xááb [xááb]
    1S-scratch.NPST
    ‘I’ll scratch’

(153) a. ka=zií?
    1S-fart.PST
    ‘I farted’

   b. ka=zií?
    1S-fart.NPST
    ‘I’ll fart’
If the stem is bi- or pluri-syllabic the Non-Past has High tone on the last mora.

(154) a. naxani ju=ǐški
    yesterday 1P-play.PST
    ‘we played yesterday’

b. barám ju=ǐški
    tomorrow 1P-play.NPST
    ‘we’ll play tomorrow’

(155) a. kata ka=ǐkkǐši
    I 1S-sneeze.PST
    ‘I sneezed’

b. kata ka=ǐkkǐši
    I 1S-sneeze.NPST
    ‘I’ll sneeze’

Native verbs and loans do not differ in their treatment, as shown by the following verbs from Ts.

(156) a. ka=geši
    1S-belch.PST
    ‘I belched’

b. ká=geši
    1S-belch.NPST
    ‘I’ll belch’

(157) a. ka=gúfasí
    1S-cough.PST
    ‘I coughed’

b. ka=gufásí
    1S-cough.NPST
    ‘I’ll cough’

3.9.4. Aspect. An on-going action is expressed through the Progressive ending -i/-ni. The verb receives the accent on the first vowel. Verb stems ending in a consonant (cf. 3.9.1) add -i; verbs ending in a vowel add -ni. Compare the following sentences.

(158) a. barám kata ka=dángáid
    tomorrow I 1S-work.NPST
    ‘tomorrow I’ll work’

b. inta gúルu=mi kí=dángadi
    man strength-with 3S.M-work.PROG
    ‘the man is working hard’

(159) a. naxani narfe=me ka=cig
    yesterday needle-with 1S-sew.PST
    ‘yesterday I sewed with the needle’

b. barám narfe=me ká=cig
    tomorrow needle-with 1S-sew.NPST
    ‘I’ll sew with the needle tomorrow’

c. ayki narfe=me ka=cígi
    now needle-with 1S-sew.PROG
    ‘I am sewing with the needle now’
A sketch of Ongota

(160) a. naxani kata kara ka=qáfi
    yesterday I fish 1S-catch.PST
    'yesterday I fished'
b. barám kata kara ka=qáfi
    tomorrow I fish 1S-catch.NPST
    'I’ll fish tomorrow’
c. ayki kata ka=qáfini
    now fish 1S-catch.PROG
    'I am fishing now’

(161) a. naxani kata ka=höbi
    yesterday I 1S-wash.PST
    'yesterday I washed’
b. barám kata ka=höbi
    tomorrow I 1S-wash.NPST
    'I’ll wash tomorrow’
c. kata ka=höbiní
    I 1S-wash.PROG
    'I am washing’

(162) a. naxani na i[ne]= xá
    yesterday what 2S do.PST
    'what did you do yesterday?’
b. barám na i=xa [= néxa]
    tomorrow what 2S-do.NPST
    'what will you do tomorrow?’
c. ayki na i[ne]= xání
    now what 2S do.PROG
    'what are you doing now?’

The verb roo-‘to go’ has an irregular Progressive in -ta.

(163) casáw=ki ka=róota
    river-to 1S-go.PROG
    'I am going to the river’

The Progressive may be used for an on-going action in the present or in the past.

(164) casáw=to ka=éeni
    river-from 1S-come.PROG
    'I am coming from the river’

(165) naxani ka=áxay=ba ka=qáfini=ba ku=gírib
    yesterday 1S-get_up.PST-and 1S-catch.PROG-and 3S.F-be_night.PST
    'yesterday I woke up and spent the day fishing until it became night’

(166) kita ki=éeni na=tu kata ka=yóng
    he 3S.M-come.PROG what-from I 1S-see.PST
    'I saw him as he was coming from over there’

(167) kita ki=éeni na=tu juta ju=yóng
    he 3S.M-come.PROG what-from we 1P-see.PST
    'we saw him as he was coming from over there’
(168) cafyáw = ki ki = róota  na = tu  kata ka = yób
water-to  3S.M-go.PROG him-from I  1S-see.PST
'I saw him as he was going (there) to the river'

3.9.5. Negative paradigms. For both the Past and the Non-Past a single Negative form is used, marked on the verb by a suffix -ʔi and by a negative marker ma (both glossed NEG) preceding the verbal form.

(169) barama  kata ka = ma = éeni-ʔi
tomorrow I  1S-NEG-come.PROG-NEG
'I won’t come tomorrow'

(170) kata ku = mi  ka = ma = móromi-ʔi
I  3S.F-with 1S-NEG-speak-NEG
'I don’t speak with her'

3.9.6. Imperative. The Positive Imperative (: IMPV) Singular of consonant-ending verbs (cf. 3.9.1) is marked by final High-toned -á; the Plural by -ta.

(171) budá  ‘spit!’
spit.IMPV.S
bútá  ‘spit (P)’
spit.IMPV.P

(172) gufašá  ‘cough!’
cough.IMPV.S
gufáta  ‘cough! (P)’
cough.IMPV.P

Vowel-ending stems (cf. 3.9.1) end in their Imperative Singular in High-toned -é, while for the Plural the same -ta ending of all other verbs is used.

(173) muxé  ‘laugh!’
laugh.IMPV.S
muxéta  ‘laugh (P)!’
laugh.IMPV.P

3.9.6.1. Irregular imperatives. The Imperative of roo- ‘to go’ is built from the irregular Progressive (cf. 3.8.3) róota: S rootá, P róotta. The verb xaʔ- ‘to do’ extends its stem in the Imperative: S xaašá, P xáašta. As in many Ethiopian languages, the verb ee- ‘to come’ has a suppletive Imperative: S háyá, P háyta.

3.9.6.2. Negative imperative. The Negative Imperative uses the special Negative element intíma (composed with ma?).

(174) intíma qaʔi  ‘don’t fish!’
NEG fish
intíma gida qaʔi  ‘don’t (P) fish!’
NEG 2P fish

3.9.7. Jussive. A separate Jussive form has been found for the 1st Plural only and is built with the suffix -itu (after consonant) or -tu (after vowel; but a few irregular forms have been found).
(175) **axay-** axáytu  ‘let’s stand up!’
**boye-** bóytu  ‘let’s cry!’
**caʃaw-** caʃawítu  ‘let’s drink’
**jiʔ-** jiʔítu  ‘let’s kill!’
(note the idiom cáxma jiʔítu  ‘let’s eat!’ [“let’s kill meat!”])
**faʔ-** faʔítu  ‘let’s kindle!’
**gad-** gádi tu  ‘let’s cut!’
**muxe-** muxítu  ‘let’s laugh!’
**roo-** rói ytu  ‘let’s go!’
**tagam-** tagamítu  ‘let’s sleep!’
**tiid-** tiidítu  ‘let’s put!’
**tsuf-** tsufítu  ‘let’s lie down!’
**yaw-** yawítu  ‘let’s stop!’
**yawsan-** yaw sanítu  ‘let’s make stop!’

3.9.8. **Infinitive.** Verbs in the basic stem, both monosyllabic and bisyllabic, make their Infinitive with the suffix -Co (where C is the last stem consonant); the accent falls on the first syllable. The Infinitive is used in object and subject clauses (cf. 4.8).

(176) **kata** kara šúbbo ka=ḥáabiní  ‘I want to kill fish’
I fish kill.INF 1S-want.PROG

(177) **rotto** ka=ḥáabiní  ‘I want to go’
go.INF 1S-want.PROG

(178) **jami** xoʔ?o ka=ḥáabiní  ‘I want to hit you’
you.OBJ hit.INF 1S-want.PROG

(179) **caʃíw báʔco** ka=ḥáabiní  ‘I want to carry water (on the back)’
water carry.INF 1S-want.PROG

(180) **laalbe šúdammo** ka=ḥáabiní  ‘I want to put on the dress’
dress wear.INF 1S-want.PROG

(181) **oxoni ɣúyyo** ka=ḥáabiní  ‘I want to kindle the fire’
fire kindle.INF 1S-want.PROG

(182) **kata tágammo** ka=ḥáabiní  ‘I want to sleep’
I sleep.INF 1S-want.PROG

(183) **kuta šuʔuna šúgucco** ku=ḥáabiní  ‘she wants to smear butter’
she butter smear.INF 3S.F-want.PROG
(184) *kata šikkišəddo/ ka-háabin*  
I sneeze.INF 1S-want.PROG  
‘I want to sneeze’

(185) *kata jan=tu bine fillo ka-háabin*  
I you.OBJ-from head comb.INF 1S-want.PROG  
‘I want to comb you’

(186) *inta wora=ki gīško ki-háabin*  
man house-to enter.INF 3S.M-stop.PROG  
‘the man wants to enter the house’

Vowel-ending stems have a suffix *-le*; again, the accent falls on the first syllable.

(187) *bóyle ke ka-háabin*  
cry.INF 1S-want.PROG  
‘I want to cry’

(188) *gáadile ka-háabin*  
lie_down.INF 1S-want.PROG  
‘I want to lie down’

(189) *šóxele ka-háabin*  
have_sex.INF 1S-want.PROG  
‘I want to have sex’

(190) *gidata kūšile ka-háabin*  
you.P.OBJ hit.INF 1S-want.PROG  
‘I want to hit you (P)’

3.9.9. *to have*. “to have” is expressed by the construction “from me X is”, widely found in Ethiopian languages. It has a parallel also in Ts.

(191) a. *ka=tu darbo ku=ida*  
me-from skin 3S.F-there_is  
‘I have a skin’

b. Ts:  
*ceča doolte šagay*  
to-me skin there_is

(192) a. *gid=tu darbo ku=ida*  
you(P)-from skin 3S.F-there_is  
‘you (P) have a skin’

b. Ts:  
*inento doollo šagay*  
to-you (P) skin there_is

The negative form employs the negative of *ba* ‘to be’, which is a borrowing from Ts.

(193) a. *ka=tu ba*  
me-from not_be  
‘I do not have’

b. Ts:  
*eta ba*  
to-me not_be
A sketch of Ongota

‘to have’ is also expressed through the Progressive form of the verb Ḣee- ‘to bring’.

(194) kata ayma ka=iṣeeni
     I woman 1S-bring.PROG
     ‘I have a woman’

(195) kita huugu ki=iṣeeni
     he itching 3S.M-bring.PROG
     ‘he is itching’

(196) kata bor=mi jata ka=iṣeeni
     I stomach-with you 1S-bring.PROG
     ‘I remember you’
     (‘I bring you in the stomach’)

(197) inta iiwa ki=ma=iṣeeni
     man mouth 3S.M-NEG-bring.PROG
     ‘a man who has no mouth’
     (i.e. a dumb man)

4. Syntax

O is an SOV, dependent-marking language. The verb is the last element of a sentence, but a pronominal object often follows the verbal form (v. 4.3.2).

4.1. Noun Phrases. The Noun is the first element of the phrase; a Possessive immediately follows the head, but the relative order of other modifiers is apparently free.

(198) wura sinni lama
     house my two
     ‘my two houses’

(199) wura sinni lama giddejeta
     house my two big.P
     but:

(200) wura sinni minjeta lama
     house my little.P two
     ‘my two little houses’

(201) ayma=ko maar ku=ma=xódi(=ʔi)
     woman-DET child 3S.F-NEG-generate.PST(-NEG)
     ‘a woman who did not gave birth to a child’

4.2. Genitive phrases. The Possessed precedes the Possessor; in closed, possibly frozen, expressions, no element intervenes.

(202) iiifa Šongota
     mouth O.
     ‘the Ongota language [“mouth”]’

Generally, the Possessor is further followed by an element =te:

(203) iiifa inta=te
     hand man-
     ‘the man’s hand’
(204) cawo inta=te    gun man-?  ‘the man’s gun’
(205) wura inta=te/ayma=te/yooab=te  house man-?, woman-?, people-?  ‘the man’s, woman’s, people’s house’
(206) ippa wura=te    door house-?  ‘the door of the house’

The possessed may be followed by se, glossed ‘of’, which is also found in the Possessive pronominal elements. Its use is sporadic; it could also result from the transfer into O of the common Ts Determinative or connector -se.

(207) ii?a se inta=te    hand of man-?  ‘the man’s hand’
Frequently the first element is followed by the Determiners =ko or =nki.

(208) ii?a se inta=nki=te  hand of man-DET-?  ‘the man’s hand’

A reverse Possessor-Possessed is possible but, apparently, less used. In this case, the Possessor precedes, followed by the eventual Determiners and the case-marker =tu ‘from’; the Possessed is, in its turn, followed by the Possessive pronominal referring to the Possessor following the possessed.

(209) inta=nki tu ii?a seena  man-DET from hand his  (“from the man, his hand”)
(210) ayma=nki tu ii?a  suwitu  woman-DET from hand her  (“from the woman, her hand”)

This order is instead normal when further modifiers are present.

(211) wura sinni tu  ippa  house my from door  ‘the door of my house’  (“from my house, the door”)
(212) wura ayma=ko tu  ippa  house woman-DET from door  ‘the door of the woman’s house’  (“from the woman’s house, the door”)

4.3. Sentences. Although verbs are the prototypical predicates, also nouns, adjectives, possessives, and numerals may act as predicates in nominal sentences (see 4.6).

4.3.1. Subjects. A nominal subject is normally found in sentence-initial position; there are reasons to believe that such nouns do not act as the syntactic subjects of the sentence, a function which is rather filled by a Subject Clitic; only the presence of a Subject Clitic is mandatory for any declarative clause, while a noun may
appear in the first position in the clause or also (possibly as a right-dislocated topic?) at the end, or may be altogether absent.

4.3.2. Objects. The only element that can intervene between the Subject Clitic and the Verb is the Negative marker ma. An Object Pronoun can take the position of a corresponding object noun before the Subject Clitic.

(213) kata uke ka=ji? 'I shot an elephant'
     I elephant 1S-shoot.PST
and:

(214) kata ki ka=ji? 'I shot him'
     I 3S.M 1S-shoot.PST

Sentence (214) above may be analyzed as having the structure:

[kata]_Top [([uke]_O [[ka]_S [ji?]_Y]_VCL)S
     I elephant 1S shoot.PST

More commonly, an Object Pronoun is affixed after the verbal form. It can also be introduced with an Emphatic Pronoun or repeated after the verb.

(215) kita cata ki=ga? 'he bit the meat'
     he meat 3S.M-bite.PST
     vs.

(216) gabare ki=ga?=ki 'a snake bit him'
     snake 3S.M-bite.PST-him

An indirect object precedes the direct object.

(217) šiggi=tu maara xódi 'a boy was born to us'
     us-to boy generate.PST

4.3.3. Passive (Impersonal construction). A passive construction is expressed through the use of the Impersonal Subject Pronoun a (ISP); the object follows the verbal form:

(218) (kata) a=xódi=ka 'I was born' ("me, they generated me")
     I ISP-generate.PST-me

(219) (janta) a=xódi=jámi 'you (S) were born'
     you ISP-generate.PST-you

(220) (kita) a=xódi=ki 'he was born'
     he ISP-generate.PST-him
The Negative Paradigm involves the (optional?) use of the Negative particle *ma* (NEG), which is often missing, and, obligatorily, of the suffix =ʔi at the end of the verbal form:

(225) (kata) a=(ma) xódi=ka=ʔi  
I ISP-(NEG) generate.PST-me-NEG  
'I was not born'

(226) (janta) a=(ma) xódi=jámi=ʔi  
you ISP-(NEG) generate.PST-you-NEG  
'you (S) were not born'

4.3.4. Reciprocal and Reflexive. Both a Reciprocal and a Reflexive are expressed through the use of *ella* or *elella* 'self' and 'together' (from Ts) and the clitic =*na* 'and' after the first element:

(227) ka=na jami ju=šúb ella  
1S-and 2S 1P-kill.PST self  
'we (me and you) killed each other'

(228) ki=jí? ella  
3S.M-kill.PST self  
'hе killed himself'

(229) ka=gsá? ella  
1S-cut.PST self  
'I cut myself'

(230) juta elella ju=éení  
we together 1P-come.PROG  
'we come together'

Followed by a postposition:

(231) csáw=na eefi ella=ki reekisá  
water-and milk self-in mix.IMPV.S  
'mix milk with water!'

4.4. Questions

4.4.1. Content questions. Content questions ("Wh-questions") do not have fronting of the question word. When the question word is subject of the sentence, no Subject Clitic is found, a fact that can be assumed to imply that the question word is always focalized.
haka ‘who?’:

(232) **haka éé**

who come.PST

‘who came?’

Note the following idiom:

(233) **meša=ko sidu haka**

name-DET your.S who

‘what’s your name?’

sae ‘whose?’:

(234) **wura=nki sae**

house-DET whose

‘whose is the house?’

A possible elliptical answer is:

(235) **se ayma=te**

of woman-of

‘It is the woman’s’

na ‘what?’:

(236) **na ki=xá**

what 3S.M-happen.PST

‘what did he do?’

haw= ‘where?’:

The element haw= ‘where’ is always followed by a postposition:

(237) **haw=ki i=áskam**

where-to 2S-go.PST

‘where did you go?’

(238) **haw=tu i=éeni**

where-from 2S-come.PROG

‘where are you coming from?’

bari ‘when?’:

(239) **bari i=ée**

when 2S-come.PST

‘when did you come?’

ayta ‘which?’:

(240) **cawo ayta i=héeni**

gun which 2S-like.PROG

‘which gun do you like?’

mi?a ‘how much/many?’:

(241) **kara mi?a i=jí?**

fish how-many 2S-catch.PST

‘how many fish did you catch?’
na=kú ‘why?’ (“what-for”):

(242) na=kú  i=ééni
       what-for 2S-come.PROG

ašana ‘how?’:

(243) ašana ki=dángat
       how  3S.M-do.PST

4.4.2. Polar questions. Polar questions are marked by a final =ʔi (INT) on the verb and by a rising intonational contour.

(244) janta naxani  kara i=qáfáʔi
       you  yesterday  fish  2S-fish.PST-INT

‘did you go fishing yesterday?’

When the question relates to the subject of the sentence, no Subject Clitic is present on the verb; as in the case of content question words (cf. 4.4.1), it can be assumed that this is because a questioned nominal is inherently focused.

(245) mole=mu aburre  éé
       M.-or  A.  come.PST

‘was it Mole or Ayorre who came?’

4.4.3. Greetings

(246) a. ašana i=tág
       how  2S-sleep.PST

   b. janta nágayko tág=í
       you  peace  sleep.PST-INT

‘how did you sleep?’

‘did you sleep in peace?’

answer:

(247) abba ka=tág
       good 1S-sleep.PST

‘I slept well’

or simply nágayko ‘peace’ (from Ts).

4.5. Direct speech. The quoted speech follows the main clause.

(248) kita ku=tu  ki=gísí=na  casáw laxá
       he  her-to 3S.M-tell.PROG-and  water  mix.IMPV.S

‘he told her: “mix the water!”’

4.6. Nominal sentences. In nominal sentences no verb appears and the role of predicate is fulfilled by an adjective or a noun, introduced by a Subject Clitic. Absence of the latter is found in focalized nominal sentences (see 4.11), in which
the subject noun (or an Emphatic pronoun) is followed directly by the nominal predicate.

(249) kata munnusu’uni  ‘I am small’
       I    small

In negative nominal sentences the usual negative markers ma and =?i (affixed to the noun or adjective in predicative position) appear. ?i and ma can also both follow the predicate.

(250) a. kata gadda’uni =?i=ma  ‘I am not big’
       I    big       NEG-NEG

       b. kata ma gadda’uni=?i  ‘I am not big’
          I    NEG-big-NEG

(251) kata gadda’uni =?i=ma munnusu’uni  ‘I am not big, I am small’
       I    big       NEG-NEG small

(252) ayma sinni wura=tu  ‘my wife is at home’
       woman my house-from

For the past, the verb ida ‘to be’ is used.

(253) ayma sinni wura=tu ku=id a  ‘my wife was at home’
       woman my house-from 3S.F-be_there.PST

(254) kata songotita  ‘I am Ongota’
       I    O.SING

(255) ki?ita songota  ‘they are Ongota’
       they O.

(256) a. kata songota=?i  ‘I am not Ongota’
       I    O.-NEG

       b. kata songotita=?i  ‘I am not Ongota’
          I    O.SING-NEG

(257) wura=ko addate gidde?eta lâmbano ku sinni  ‘those two big houses are mine’
       house-DET there big.P two 3S.F my

4.7. Relative clauses. The following rules apply:
— relative clauses precede the matrix clause;
— the end of the clause is marked by the Indirect Clitics of third person =na ‘him’ if its head is masculine, and =ta ‘her’ if feminine (cf. 3.3.4).
— the relative verb is generally not preceded by a Subject Clitic; this is especially the case when the subject of the relative is also the subject of the main clause.

(258) naxani inta=nkí áddate kara qáfíní=na aza sinní
yesterday man-DET there fish fish.PROG-him sibling my
'that man who yesterday caught the fish is my brother'

(259) inta kara qáfíní=na ka=yób
man fish fish.PROG-him 1S-see.PST
'I saw the man who caught the fish'

(260) ayma=ko janta ifán=ta ka-tsíni
woman-DET you marry.PST-her 1S-know.PROG
'I know the woman you married'

(261) ayma=ko kita ifán=ta ka-tsáni
woman-DET he marry.PST-her 1S-know.PROG
'I know the woman he married'

(262) ayma maara xódi=ta aza sinní
woman child generate.PST-her sibling my
'the woman who gave birth to a child is my sister'

(263) ayma=ko janta ifán=ta maara ku=xódi
woman-DET you marry.PST-her child 3S.F-generate.PST
'the woman you married gave birth to a child'

The presence of the Object Clitic representing the head is excluded if the relative clause contains an Object Clitic.

(264) inta kimíša cák=ta ki=tíb
man crocodile eat.PST-her 3S.M-die.PST
'a man who eats a crocodile dies' (crocodile is feminine)

not: *inta kimíša cák=ta=na ki=tíb
eat.PST-her-him

(265) inta kara ji=ta aza sinní
man fish shoot.PST-her (= it) brother my
'the man who caught fish is my brother'

(266) inta=ko burinki cašáw=ki ki=róota aza sinní
man-DET today river-to 3S.M-go.PST brother my
'the man who today went to the river is my brother'

In negative relative clauses:
— the Subject Clitic is present, followed by the Negative marker ma, which, evidently, cannot stay alone before the verb;
— the suffixed negative marker =?i generally does not appear after a relative verb;
— the end of the clause is not marked by =na ‘him’ if its head is masculine, and by =ta ‘her’ if feminine.

(267) inta cata ki=ma=cák aza sinni
    man meat 3S.M-NEG-eat.PST brother my
    ‘the man who did not eat meat is my brother’

(268) inta=nki kara ki=ma=jí=ta aza sinni
    man-DET fish 3S.M-NEG-shoot.PST-her (= it) brother my
    ‘the man who did not catch fish is my brother’

(269) inta ayma ki=ma=ifam aza sinni
    man woman 3S.M-NEG-marry.PST brother my
    ‘the man who didn’t marry the woman is my brother’

4.8. Object and subject sentences. The Infinitive (cf. 3.9.8) is used in the object or subject clause, which precedes the matrix clause:12

(270) kata jami śu?una=me šu?ucco ka=háabiní
    I you.OBJ butter-with smear.INF 1S-want.PROG
    ‘I want to smear you with butter’

(271) kata tora=me binta cóqqo ka=háabiní
    I spear-with animal hit.INF 1S-want.PROG
    ‘I want to hit the animal with the spear’

(272) wákko kata ka=ma=háabiní=?i
    fall.INF 1S-NEG-want-NEG
    ‘I don’t want to fall’

(273) múxele abba
    laugh.INF good
    ‘to laugh is good’

4.9. Sentence embedding. The embedded clause always precedes the matrix clause.

(274) hawki ki=róó ka=ma=tsíi[ni=?i]
    where 3S.M-go.PST 1S-NEG-know,(PROG-NEG)
    ‘I don’t know where he went’

(275) haw=to ki=ée ka=ma=tsíi[ni=?i]
    where-from 3S.M-come.PST 1S-NEG-know,(PROG-NEG)
    ‘I don’t know where he came from’

12 Ts also uses this infinitive construction.
(276) haw=tu ki=éeni ka=ma=tsii[ni=ʔi]
where-from 3S.M-come.PROG 1S-NEG-know(.PROG-NEG)
'I don’t know where he comes from'

(277) yooba=ko miʔa ée káta ka=ma=tsii[ni=ʔi]
people-DET how-many come.PST I 1S-NEG-know(.PROG-NEG)
'I don’t know how many men came'

(278) báre ki=áskam ka=ma=tsii[ni=ʔi]
when 3S.M-go.PST 1S-NEG-know(.PROG-NEG)
'I don’t know when he went'

(279) haka ée ka=ma=tsii[ni=ʔi]
who come.PST 1S-NEG-know(.PROG-NEG)
'I don’t know who came'

(280) kata ku=mi mórommo ka=haabini
I 3S.F-with speak.INF 1S-want.PROG
'I want to speak with her'

(281) kata ku=mi mórommo ka=ma=haabini=ʔi
I 3S.F-with speak.INF 1S-NEG-want.PROG-NEG
'I don’t want to speak with her'

(282) haka i=yób ŋále na=ku ‘tell me whom you saw’
who 2S-see.PST tell.IMPV.S 1S-for

(283) barama ku éyo ka=haabini ‘I want her to come tomorrow’
tomorrow 3S.F come.INF 1S-want.PROG
(note the irregular Infinitive of éé ‘to come’ with epenthetic /y/)

(284) na i=yób ŋále na=ku ‘tell me what you saw’
what 2S-see.PST tell.IMPV.S 1S-for

(285) barama i=róto=ná ŋále na=ku
tomorrow 2S-go.PROG-and tell.IMPV.S 1S-for
'tell me if you are going tomorrow’

Specific sentence-subordinating (or coordinating?) devices are =na ‘and’ and =ba ‘if’ (possibly borrowed from Ts.).

(286) ayki šera i=ma=náši na=ku=na barama tora ka=ma=náši=ʔi
today knife 2S-NEG-give me-for-and tomorrow spear 1S-NEG-give-NEG
‘if today you don’t give me your knife, tomorrow I won’t give my spear’

(287) kimiša inta ki=haši=ba ki=jif=ni
crocodile man 3S.M-bite-and 3S.M-kill(PROG)
‘if a crocodile bites a man, it kills (will kill) him’
4.10. Coordination. Sentences are often linked without marking:

(288) janta rootá hança=ko ʧadá ‘go and cut the tree!’
you go.IMPV.S tree-DET cut.IMPV.S

Apart from =na ‘and’ and =ba ‘if’ (cf. 286, 287), a partial list of coordinating elements—all of them clitics—follows here below.

=ʔi ‘also’

(289) ki=ʔi ʧaddaʔuni ‘he too is big’
3S.M-too big

=ma ‘but’

(290) kata ʧaddaʔuni=ma kata munnuʔuni ‘I am not big; instead, I am small’
I big-but I big

=mu ‘or’

(291) caʧawa=mu ʧiʧi haʔabin ‘do you want water or milk?’
water-or milk want.PROG

4.11. Focus. As far as one can tell from our data, the absence of the Subject Clitics in declarative sentences is a focus-marking device, as shown above in nominal sentences (v. 4.6), and in:

(292) gabare ʧaʔi ki ‘a snake bit him’
snake bite.PST 3S.M

No specific focus-marking element has been identified, except for the following contrastive-marking repetition of a Subject Clitic.

(293) ka=ʔi ki=ki=ʔam ‘not me; he was (to do it)’
I-NEG 3S.M-3S.M-be

As anticipated, the absence of the Subject Clitics in Content and Polar Questions (cf. 4.4.1., 4.4.2) is probably to be explained on the basis of the inherently focalized status of the word on which the question bears.
5. Ongota lexicon

Words are arranged in alphabetical order; vowel-initial words are listed all together at the beginning, followed by /N/-initial words. Ts' amakko and a few other loans are underlined. Verbs are reported under their stem-form; the Imperative Singular and Plural forms are given whenever available.

**aaka** women; females
**aame**- to rest
  IMPV.S: aamè; IMPV.P: aamèta
**abba** good; beautiful; well
**abun**- to embrace, to lull (Ts)
  IMPV.S: abuná, IMPV.P: abûnta
**áddate** that (faraway); there
**afa** eye; afa axay ka=tu — 'the eye hurts me' (calque from Ts)
**ah**- to lose
  IMPV.S: ahá; IMPV.P: áhta;
  CAUS ahsan to make lose
  IMPV.S: ahsaná; IMPV.P: ahsânta
**aka** foot; leg
**akk**a grandfather (both father’s father
  and mother’s father)
**akakalbano** one
**akku**yte father’s older brother/sister
**algas**- can, to be able (Ts)
**am**- to be
**ama** breast; ama=to iifa — nipple
  (“breast’s mouth”; calque from Ts)
**amate** white sorghum (Ts)
**ame**- to suck
  IMPV.S: amè, IMPV.P: amèta
  CAUS amsan to make suck
  IMPV.S: amsaná, IMPV.P: amsânta
**andulle** heron (cf. bargada)
**ardá** ox
**arka** hartebeest (Ts)
**ármata** catarrh, mucous

**arrakko**: F: arratte dark gray (Ts)
**ârrre** donkey (Ts)
**aryitta** friend (Ts)
**askam**- to go
  IMPV.S.: —; IMPV.P: askânta
**ášana** how?
**ásawa** earring (Ts)
**ásinkuni** sister’s son
**átomuni** white
**átolla** pigeon (Ts atole)
**áxaco** sun
**axay**- to rise, stand up
  IMPV.S: axayá; IMPV.P: axâyta
**ayki** now
**ayma** woman, wife; female (P: aaka)
**ayta** which?
**ayyan**e mother
**aza** sibling
**ázole** sp. of edible grass (Ts)
**ee**- to come (irr. IMPV.: háy/háyta);
  IMPV.NEG: Ini ma éa — ‘don’t come!’
**eëda** relative (Ts)
**eëfi** milk; tear
**eëla** children
**ekkeša**d- sad, to be (Ts)
  IMPV.S: ekkešadá
**ékkite** loud; a lot (Ts)
**ella, eëlla** oneself
**erangolle** necklace of white and red beads (Ts)
ereha foetus; ereha ku=áh ‘she had a miscarriage’; kuta ereha ku=ahsan ‘I make her have a miscarriage’
extima tooth; itima miintite incisor (calque from Ts ilge miinante)
ode village, settlement
ooede son’s daughter (Ts?)
oofe beans (Ts)
oofko son’s son (Ts?)
orga SING: orgitta Hamar (Ts)
orma tall (Ts)
orśatte rhinoceros (Ts)
oottako calf (Ts)
oxaya lion
oxoni fire
ucce- to pour, fill (Ts)
ucce, uccē, IMP.V.P: uccēta CAUS uccēš to make fill
uccaš IMP.V.S: uccaša, IMP.V.P: uccēšta
uko elephant
ūkubu sister’s husband
ūkubu sp. of gray fish with many scales
uppatte amniotic fluid (Ts)
šabuya uncle
šabuyte grandmother (both father’s mother and mother’s mother or father’s/mother’s older sister)
šad- to lick
šadā, IMP.V.P: šadē CAUS šadas to make lick
šādaba tongue
šādala bad, ugly
šadda father’s older brother’s wife or son (Ts šadda ‘friend, brother’)
šādiba elder, old man; husband
šahaye bird
šālala kind of dove or pigeon (Ts xalle)
šale Gawwada (and other Dullay-speaking groups of the highlands; Ts)
šale- to tell
šalē IMP.V.S: šalē, IMP.V.P: šalēta


Sangaba big acacia umbrelliphera
Sangati- to mix
  IMPV.S: Sangatá, IMPV.P: Sangátta
Sango wisdom tooth
Sar- to stink
  IMPV.S: Sárá, IMPV.P: Sártta
Sari coffee (Ts)
Sázane younger brother (Ts Sazo)
SebeSe- to vomit
Siqqisii- to sneeze
  IMPV.S: Siqqisií, IMPV.P: Siqqisiíta
Síqad- to hiccough (Ts)
  IMPV.S: Síqadá, IMPV.P: Síqadta
Sízza root, vein (Ts hezze)
Sungóta SING: Sungotíta Ongota (the people and the area); Sungóto=to from Ongota
=bâ and
Baâhante bow (Ts)
Baara armpit (Ts bâaro)
Baaxa dirty
Baaye father
  Bâaye munnuñuní father’s younger brother (“little father”)
Ba?, Baâate there is not (Ts); neg. of ida
Bañatuni poor
Baâce- to carry (on the back)
Baâdio pelican (Ts)
Baâdîde all
Baâgye small portable container for water
Baâgâda back (body part)
Baâfât- to run (P subj.)
  IMPV.P: Baâtta;
  CAUS baftis to make run (P obj.)
  IMPV.P: Baâftista
Baâfsaâ face
Balgo ostrich (Ts balgito)
Balo shrew
Bannádda beetle (Ts)
Baq- to die (P stem?)
  IMPV.P: bâqta
Baqa excrement
Baqaas- to divide, share (Ts)
Barám, Barama tomorrow
Bârgada heron (Ts)
Bargadde collar-bone (Ts)
Bari when?
Barla white-browed sparrow weaver (Ts barlo)
Bâyaâa buffalo
Beâle- to give
  IMPV.P: Beâlé, IMPV.P: Beâléta
Bebatto left (Ts)
Bera year (Ts berko)
Berre- to touch (Ts)
  IMPV.S: Berre, IMPV.P: Berréta
Bia land (Ts bie)
Bih- to lose
  IMPV.S: Bihi, IMPV.P: Bihiîta
  CAUS bihsan to cause to lose
  IMPV.S: Bihsaná, IMPV.P: Bihsánta
Biîbe- to chase, send away
  IMPV.S: Biibe, IMPV.P: Biibeîta
Bine head; hair
Bînta wild animal
Boô- to be hard, strong; to be dry
Boôda saliva
Bor chest, stomach (Ts borko); kata
  Bor=mi išé ka=išëni — ‘I remember you’ (‘I carry/have you in the chest’)
  IMPV.S: Bor=mi išée
  IMPV.P: Bor=mi išëta
Borâhö seed (Ts boraho)
Bositte pubic hair (Ts)
**boš**- to pick up, collect
IMP.V.S: bošá, IMP.V.P: boṣ̌a;
MID boše- to pick up, collect
IMP.V.S: boṣ̌e, IMP.V.P: boṣ̣̌a;
CAUS boṣ̌isan- to make collect

**bote**- wild peas (Ts)

**boye**- to cry
IMP.V.S: boyé, IMP.V.P: boyéta

**bus**- to dry up, become dry
IMP.V.S: buṣ̌á, IMP.V.P: buṣ̣̌a

**bud**- to spit
IMP.V.S: buďá, IMP.V.P: buḍ̣̌a

**buhad**- to bark (subj.: dog)

**bul**- to pull out
IMP.V.S: buľá, IMP.V.P: buľta
PASS bulam- to be pulled out
MID bulit- to pull out
CAUS bulisan- to make pull out

**burinki** today

**buusa** belly (Hamar busa 'lower belly'
[Fleming et al. 1992/93: 210]);
buusa=mi ku=iṣ̣̌ēnī pregnant ('she has a belly')

**buute** sp. of snake (Ts)

**cafa** (masc.) stone; grinding stone (below)

**caṣ̌aw**- to drink
IMP.V.S: caṣ̌awá, IMP.V.P: caṣ̌awa;
CAUS caṣ̌awisan- to make drink;
IMP.V.S: caṣ̌awšá, IMP.V.P: caṣ̌awṣ̣̌a

**caṣ̌awa** water; river; caṣ̌aw=to ki=ṣ̌áb
'he crossed the river'; caṣ̌aw=to gūṣ̌kuto ki=ẓóguy 'he swam in the river'

**cak**- to eat
IMP.V.S: caká, IMP.V.P: cákta; bine
cáki=ka 'my head hurts ('eats') me'
CAUS cakšan- to make eat
IMP.V.S: cakšaná, IMP.V.P: cakṣ̌ánta

**caq**- to hide
IMP.V.S: caqá, IMP.V.P: cáqta
MID caqǐ- to hide for oneself
IMP.V.S: caqįʔá, IMP.V.P: caqįʔta
caq̣mam- to hide oneself
IMP.V.S: caq̣mamá, IMP.V.P: caq̣mánta
CAUS caq̣san- to make hide
IMP.V.S: caq̣saná, IMP.V.P: caq̣sánta

**carba** thin

**cārkamuńi** green

**carke** dew (Ts)

**cata** meat

**cawo** gun, rifle (cf. Ts qawa?i)

**caxtiʔ**- to ask
IMP.V.S: caxtiʔá, IMP.V.P: caxtiʔta

**cayde** pen, enclosure (Ts)

**ciʔ̣i** little stone, pebble (cf. caʃa)

**cig**- to sew
IMP.V.S: cigá, IMP.V.P: cığta

**cikila** elbow (Ts tsekiła)

**cinaqem** ant (cf. Ts shinshalle?)

**coma** ten; coma akkálbano eleven;
coma lama twelve; coma zeha
twenty

**comba** lung (Ts somba)

**congorte** mud

**coq**- to hit, pierce, spear, sting; káta
tóra=me ka=çaq 'I speared with the
spear'; ka=çoq ba ka=ʒi 'I speared
and I killed'
IMP.V.S: coqá, IMP.V.P: cóqta
coqiʔ- to hit for oneself (w/spear)
IMP.V.S: coqiʔá, IMP.V.P: coqiʔta
CAUS coq̣san- to make hit (w/spear)
IMP.V.S: coq̣saná, IMP.V.P: coq̣sánta

**corko** sp. of fish, not eaten

**cuutta** red-fronted tinkerbird (Ts suutta)
daaf- to become blind (Ts)
  IMPV.S: daaфа́, IMPV.P. dәаfта

daafakko F: daafatte; P: daafaykte
  blind (Ts)

daafis- to make be blind (Ts)
  IMPV.S: daafisә, IMPV.P. daafisәta

dәбәrsa genet

dәбәsә baboon

dabb- to miss the target (Ts)
  IMPV.S: dәbbә, IMPV.P. dәbbәta

daggab- to arrive (Ts)
  IMPV.S: daggабә, IMPV.P. daggабта
daggabos- to make arrive

dakakko F: dakakatte; P: dakakaykte
  deaf; stupid (Ts)

damәа giraffe (Ts)

dambalaattte sp. of snake (Ts damba-лаfә)

dangadangaco porcupine (Ts)

dangфad- to plough; to do, make, work
  IMPV.S: dangфadә, IMPV.P. dangфәdәta

daqәse [daqәsa] long-crested eagle

darbo skin; hide

dat- to make fall
  IMPV.S: datә, IMPV.P. —

deela hole

denge neck (Ts; cf. also iiүte)

dibita cat

diga owlet (Ts диге)

dig- to add water (and other liquids)
  (Ts); caәw cata=ki ki=diig 'he added water to the meat'
  IMPV.S: diigә, IMPV.P. diigta
digam- to be poured (?)
  MID diigi?- to pour into
  IMPV.S: diigиятә, IMPV.P. diigитәta
  CAUS diigas- to make pour
  IMPV.S: diigәsә, IMPV.P. diigәsta
  cf. also tu? - 'to add (things, one by one, or other liquids)' and fa? 'to add salt (sand, earth)'

diira sp. of small fish, with many spines

dиза klipspringer (Ts)

dәәosa waterbuck (Ts doәosko)

doore sp. of fish

dәәbaza mongoose (Ts)

dullaya the Weyt’o river (Ts dullayko)

dunko pupil of the eye (Ts)

dәәkәamuni black

dәy to twist the firesticks
  IMPV.S: dәyә, IMPV.P. dәytә

dәyte firesticks (together)

dөәse kidney (Ts)

dөәsә poison; medicine

dехәd- to reach (someone) (Ts)
  IMPV.S: dехәdә, IMPV.P. dехәdәta

dәhe- to stop (intr.); P stem: aame-
  IMPV.S: dәheә, IMPV.P. aamәta

dәbәa hundred (Dullay)

dәím- to plunge (Ts dәim)
  IMPV.S: diimә, IMPV.P. dәinta

donка hornbill (Ts donкә)

dүәgte truth (Ts)
fa? - to kindle; to add (salt, sand, earth),
  to put into; kita soqә ki=fә? 'he added salt'
  IMPV.S: faәʔә, IMPV.P. fәәtә
  faәʔәm- to be added
  faәʔә - to add for oneself
  IMPV.S: faәʔәә, IMPV.P. faәʔәta
  CAUS faәʔәsan- to make add
  IMPV.S: faәʔәsanә, IMPV.P. faәʔәsәntә
  cf. diig- ‘to add water (and other liquids)’ and tuә? - ‘to add (things, one by one)’

fad- to put down; IMPV.P. fәdәta
fíldé [pálde] arrow’s point (Ts pálde)

farat- to send away
  IMPV.S: farátá, IMPV.P: farátta
  CAUS faratsan- to cause to send away
  IMPV.S: farsaná, IMPV.P: farsánta

fiñ- to milk
  IMPV.S: fiñá, IMPV.P: fiñta

fídis- to whistle (Ts fídís)
  IMPV.S: fídisás, IMPV.P: fídisásta

fíliç- to comb (Ts fíli)
  IMPV.S: fíliçá, IMPV.P: fíliçta

fílna comb (Ts)

fооf- to leave; to emerge (P. stem)
  IMPV.P: fооfáta
  CAUS fооfásan- to make leave (P. obj.)

fооlо cloud (Ts poolo)

fugа SING: fugítа Amhara

fultula [pulpula] sacrum (anat.)

gaba bush duiker (Ts)

gabare snake

gaddаšuní P: giddešetá big; old

gallabdi evening (Ts gallaw?: or areal word?)

game corn (Ts)

garабоko shin (Ts garaboko)

gats- to climb; to come out
  IMPV.S: gatsá, IMPV.P: gátsísta

gawarsа bateleur (Therapitius ecaudatus; Ts gawarakko)

gawšo chin (Ts gawso)

gеs- to belch (Ts)
  IMPV.S: gešá, IMPV.P: gešíntá

gечеacute; P: geccауке old (Ts) (not used for S.M)

gеrеf- to steal (Ts)
  IMPV.S: gеrеfá, IMPV.P: gеrеfíntа

geřеfа thief (Ts)

gerеgito enemy (Ts)

gеšante firestick (horizontal) (cf. Ts gešante ‘woman’?)

gibila knee (Ts gibílko)

gibisa femur (Ts gubusko)

gidana hair

gillata fish eagle (Ts giloto)

gira [haji ki...] to lighten

girib- to become night

gis- to say; dугаtе kа=gisin= jantu ‘I tell you the truth’
  IMPV.S: gisá, IMPV.P: gista;
  MID gisir- to say
  IMPV.S: gisirá, IMPV.P: gisíntа

giš- to enter; to understand

gоfа white-headed buffalo weaver (Ts gоhile)

gola beer

gollаnке nine (Ts)

gorgora beehive

goа tribe (Amh)

goxe to put out

gоyаngоyо a sp. of fish, not eaten

gübаle rabbit (Ts)

гуfаs- to cough (Ts)
  IMPV.S: gufаsá, IMPV.P: gufаstá

gula a sp. of lizard (?) (Ts)

gуlbаta strength; intа gulbаta= mіki=dаngfаdі ‘the man worked with strength’

gulma kind of big calabash (Ts)

gúmаra throat

gunturе hartebeest (Ts)

gurа such as, like (Ts)

gurbaña little swift (Ts gurbañakko)

gure hunting dog

gurtulla galago; bush baby? (Ts gurtullo)
gūskutu inside

kusunte navel (cf. also handura)
gutal- to jump; to dance, sing
IMP: gutalá, IMP: gutálta
CAUS gutalis- to make jump, dance, sing
IMP: gutalisá, IMP: gutalista
gutula stamp (Ts gutsunko)
gaf- to bite
IMP: gašá, IMP: gašita
gad- to cut
IMP: gadá; P: stem: gis- (Ts)
gadi?- to cut for oneself
IMP: gadidiá, IMP: gadidiša
CAUS gadisán- to make cut
IMP: gadisáná, IMP: gadisánta
gar- to be happy
CAUS garasas- to cause to be happy;
IMP: garasásá, IMP: garasásta

gas- to hunt (see also qos) (Ts gassa ‘to fish’)
gay- to run
IMP: gayá; P: stem: bagat-
CAUS gayan- to make run
IMP: gayaná

ges- to shave
IMP: filliá, IMP: fillita
gesiš- to shave oneself
IMP: gesišá, IMP: gesišta
gesña rib (Ts)
gesano mosquito
gob- to grow (Ts)
IMP: gobá, IMP: göhta CAUS
gobis- to make grow
IMP: gobisá, IMP: gobisita
gof- to take, get
IMP: gofá, IMP: gofita
guy- to kindle the fire
IMP: guyá, IMP: guyita

haka who

handura navel (Ts handurte; cf. also gusunte)
has- to hear, listen
IMP: ašá, IMP: åsta
hat- to clap the hands
hawki to where?

hawtu from where?
hý P: háyta ‘come!’ (irregular IMP of êe ‘to come’)

hobat-, hob- to wash
IMP: hobatá, IMP: hobátta
hobati?- to wash oneself
IMP: hobatiá, IMP: hobatita

hokam- to exchange (P. subject) (Ts ooki)
IMP: hokánta

haabi- to want (always as háabin PROG)
haasí leaf; grass (Ts ñaaško ‘grass’)

habura wind (Ts háburko)

had- to collect (stem)
IMP: hadá, IMP: hádta
MID hádi- to collect, pick up (P. stem)
IMP: hadíta
CAUS hadsan- to make collect
IMP: hadsaná, IMP: hadsánta

bágalo edible leaves

hagun- smell good, to
IMP: haguná, IMP: hagúnta

haji rain

halo calabash (Ts halte)
hanca tree; wood

bangararo worm (Ts)

hat- to hunt, shoot; kata cawo- me
binta ka=hatá ‘I shot an animal with
the rifle’
IMP: hatá, IMP: hátta; binta
noqótta= ba gida hátta ‘you (P)
take aim and shoot the animal’
hed- to close, tie
  IMPV.S: hedá, IMPV.P: hétta
hee- to like, love (always PROG: héeni)
hizge star (Ts hezge)
hólbatuni short
hooka chest (Ts heko)
hugu itching
jaaka child, baby (P: ecla)
janta -jaami you
ji?- to kill; to hit; to extinguish (fire) (see also šib); kata uke ka=jí ‘I killed an elephant’
  IMPV.S: jíjá, IMPV.P: jíja
tuuka daughter; girl (P: igire)
kaada rope
kaanna since long ago (Ts)
kásaala molar (Ts)
ka- to wait
kacce shoulder (Ts)
kařafrica sp. of snake
kala bead

kamurre, kamurko, kamurte rich (Ts, areal)
kanna in a hurry (Ts)
kano vagina; kanu=du an insult
kara fish (general term); sp. of big black fish (cf. Ts xare?)
kara power, authority (?); used in the sentence: inta cara ki=roota ‘he is powerful’
karawa colobus (Ts karawko)
karbo bird
kat- to leave; to come out, emerge
  IMPV.S: katá; P stem: ŋof-
kawalai cheek
kaykita bridegroom (Ts)
kaykite bride (Ts)

keesa other
kere headrest (Ts)
kermayle zebra (Ts?)
kidisa cooking stones
kimîsa crocodile
kirde testicle (Ts)
kirina ankle (Ts)
kiiti road
kobis- to pinch (Ts)
  IMPV.S: kobísá, IMPV.P: kobísta
kol- to come back, return (Ts)
  IMPV.S: kolá, IMPV.P: kólta
  MID kola- to come back, return
  IMPV.S: kolé, IMPV.P: koléta
  CAUS kolsan- to make return
  IMPV.S: kolsaná, IMPV.P: kolsánta
kolba another time, again
kolokolfo hamerkop (or cormorant, or bishop bird?; cf. Ts qolaqolô)
komba beads necklace (Ts)
kongayle goose
koola wing (Ts koolo)
koom- to dig
  IMPV.P: koomá, IMPV.P: kóonta
kórkîsa [sala] francolin or spurfowl (Ts korkîsa)
kórome fishing hook (Ts kormicco)
kox- to leak
  CAUS koxis- to make leak
kubis flower (cf. Ts bisko?)
kufe tortoise (Ts)
kuhhen fruit
kúlula guinea-fowl (Ts külule)
kum- to finish (intr.) (Ts kum)
  IMPV.S: kúma, IMPV.P: kúnta
kunkumitte cheek (Ts)
kúrruba crow, raven (Ts kúrrube)
**kusu**ku *hyena* (cf. Ts *kušku*šo cock’s mane?)

**kuše** - to beat, hit (obj.: P)
IMPV.P: *kušč*, IMPV.P: *kuščta*

**kutsa** [kutša] vulture (Ts *kutso*)

**kuttunko** mountain (Ts *kuttunko*)

**laahko** arrow (Ts)

**laalbe** dress

**laale** oribi (Ts)

**laamaxode** twins (‘2nd-born’)

**lásakko** plain (Ts *lásakko*)

**lama** two (Cushitic)

**lattu** soft (Ts)

**lax** - to mix (tr.) (Dullay)
IMPV.S: *laxá*, IMPV.P: *laxtá laxam-*
to mix (intr.)
IMPV.S: *laxamá*, IMPV.P: *laxámta*

**leeša** moon; month (Ts *leešo*)

**leeleša** uvula

**lool** - to be, get angry
IMPV.S: *loolá*, IMPV.P: *loolta*
CAUS *loolsan*- to cause to be angry
IMPV.S: *loolsaná*, IMPV.P: *loolsánta*

**louqa** cuckoo or coucal (Ts *lukkale*)

**maaqa** sp. of lizard (Ts *maaqa*)

**maara** 1. son, child (male), boy; 2. sunbird (Ts, this meaning only)

**mac’e** sp. of edible grass (Ts)

**mag** - to go away; to take a different road (Ts)
IMPV.S: *mágá*, IMPV.P: *mágta*
MID *mágfr*- to go away
IMPV.S: *mágfré*, IMPV.P: *mágfréta*
CAUS *mágfr*- to cause to take a different way
IMPV.S: *mágfrsá*, IMPV.P: *mágfrsta*
CAUS *mágfrsan*- to chase away; to cause to take a different way
IMPV.S: *mágfrsána*, IMPV.P: *mágfrsánta*

**malai** - to be tired (Ts)
IMPV.S: *malaiá*, IMPV.P: *maláltá*
malalsi - to tire
IMPV.S: *malalisá*, IMPV.P: *malalisáta*

**marrake** sp. of edible grass (Ts)

**marróte** forearm bracelet (Ts)

**marte** she-calf; *marte orda* he-calf

**martsa** little acacia umbrellaphera (Ts)

**maš** - to cut with a knife, slice; to slaughter (for ‘to cut’ in general see *hadi*-);
*kata šera=me barama kara ká=maš*
tomorrow I’ll cut the fish with a knife
IMPV.S: *mašá*, IMPV.P: *mašta*

**mayye** - to kiss (Ts)
IMPV.S: *mayýe*, IMPV.P: *mayýéta*

**meeš** - to shout (subj.: animal)

**mekente** sterile (F; Ts); for male: *moolo* *tiibto*

**merja** antelope (Ts)

**mesa** name

**miša** how much/many?

**mic’a** bone

**middo** wrist bracelet (Ts)

**midisa** grinding stone

**midifte** clitoris; *midifte=du* an insult

**milimile** sp. of fish, not eaten

**miramatte** intestine (Ts *miramátte*)

**mirila** cheetah; leopard (Ts *morallé*)

**mizigitte** right (Ts)

**moolo** penis; *moolo siidu* an insult;
moolo *tiibto* sterile (said of male;
‘the penis is dead’)

**moora** light gray (Ts)

**moqitte** frog (Ts *muquito*)

**morom** - to speak
IMPV.S: *moromá* IMPV.P: *morónta*
MID *moromí*- to converse
IMPV.S: *moromíá*, IMPV.P: *moromíta*
A sketch of Ongota

CAUS moromís- to make speak
IMPV.S: moromisá, IMPV.P: moromista
CAUS-MID moromsan- to make speak
IMPV.S: moromsáná,
IMPV.P: moromsánta

moyle gerenuk (Ts moyle)
munnu'uni P: min'seta little, small; young
müralla kori bustard (Ts müralle)
muta crane (Ts mute)
muusko sorghum; muusko roomini red sorghum
muuts- to answer; to give back
IMPV.S: muutsá, IMPV.P: múutsa

muxe- to laugh
IMPV.S: muxé, IMPV.P: muxéta
CAUS muxsan- to make laugh
IMPV.S: muxsaná, IMPV.P: muxsánta

naš- to give
IMPV.S: našá, IMPV.S: náša
CAUS našsan- to cause to give

našana food

nabad- to hate (Ts)
IMPV.S: nabadá, IMPV.P: nábádta

nágayke peace; a greeting (Ts)

nah- to be surprised, shocked
IMPV.S: nahá, IMPV.P: náhta
CAUS nahnán- to surprise, to be a cause of surprise
IMPV.S: nahnáná, IMPV.P: nahnánánta

nás- ku why? ("what-for")

narfi needle (Amh)
naxani yesterday

nilla little fish used for bait
nitsina many

noqot- to look, aim at (Ts)
IMPV.S: noqotá, IMPV.P: noqótta
noqotí?- look, aim at, to
IMPV.S: noqotí?á, IMPV.P: noqotí?ta

qaabako sp. of fly (tse-tse?; Ts)
qaade- to lie down
IMPV.S: qaade, IMPV.P: qaadeá
daara monkey (Ts qaarakko)
daba saucepan
dafe- to fish
IMPV.S: qafé ~ qappé,
IMPV.P: qaféta ~ qappéta
dalaya golden cat; hyena (Ts qalate)
dalte sp. of big white fish
dane day (Amh); dane badđe always;
dane qane sometimes (calque from Ts)
daqayo little frog
daqge bark (Ts qaqqatte)
daske dog
daw- to burn (intr.); to catch fire;
dawad- to burn (intr.)
dawte pumpkin (Ts)
dgba finger (Ts qobakko)
dgoe snail (Ts)
dole animal (domestic) (Ts qole)
dolo goat
dooš- to hunt (see also has) (Ts qooši)
qumu container (general term)
raaw- to finish (tr.) (Ts raawi)
IMPV.P: raawá, IMPV.P: ráawta
rakke- to hang (Ts)
IMPV.S: rakke, IMPV.P: rakkéta
CAUS rakkis- to make hang
reekis- to mix (Ts)
IMPV.S: reekisá, IMPV.P: reekista
reex- to go down
IMPV.S: reexá; P stem: ?
renta hippopotamus (Ts rento)
rewa sp. of edible grass
rig- to smooth a skin with a stone (Ts?)
IMPV.S: rigá, IMPV.P: rigda
riir- to shout (Ts riir)
IMP.V.S: riirá, IMP.V.P: rírrta

roo- to go
IMP.V.S: rootá, IMP.V.P: róotta

róomini red

roqinta heart

ruggi=tu in front of

rummatite SING: rummatittta Arbore (Ts)

saalta oryx (Ts šaalto)

sáamule ibis

sagayto wrist

sal- to wait (Ts sál)
IMP.V.S: salá, IMP.V.P: sálta
CAUS salís- to make wait (CAUS)
IMP.V.S: salísá, IMP.V.P: salísáta
CAUS-MID salsan- to make wait
IMP.V.S: salsaná, IMP.V.P: salsánta

sarba calf (body part) (Ts sarba)

sayra dikkik (Ts sawro; cf. also sängere)

sängere dikkik (cf. also sayra)

sey flea (Ts)

sibla iron (areal word)

sidda before

sibde bow string (Ts sibde)

siida eyebrow (Ts sido)

siina nose

siinsad- to smell
IMP.V.S: siinsadá, IMP.V.P: siinsáda

silbe yellow
silbe áttomumi light blue ('yellow+white')
silbe cárkamumi dark green ('yellow+green')
silbe dákkanumí blue ('yellow+black')
silbe róomini pink; violet ('yellow+red')

sippa [tsippa] sweat (Ts sippo)

sira?á sp. of very small fish

sodda sister (Ts 'brother/sister-in-law')

sonon- to blow the nose
IMP.V.S: sononá, IMP.V.P: sonontá

sonqitte fingernail

soorto umbilical cord (Ts)

sogo salt (Ts)

sorra anus; sorra=du an insult

sug- to sniff (obj.: tampo 'tobacco')
IMP.V.S: sugá, IMP.V.P: súgta

suude flank

ša?at- to be afraid
IMP.V.S: ša?atá, IMP.V.P: ša?átta

šaaha urine; sperm

šašalkuni older brother (Ts šašalko)

šab- to cross
IMP.V.S: šábá, IMP.V.P: šábta

šammašiš- to yawn (Ts)
IMP.V.S: šammašišá, IMP.V.P: šammašišta

šanne- to rest (on the headrest) (Ts šání)
IMP.V.S: šanne, IMP.V.P: šannéta

šeera knife

šompola namaqua dove (Ts šumpulo)

šona bongo (or kudu?) (Ts)

šóokaya honey

šoon- to be hot; to be feverish, ill
IMP.V.S: šooná, IMP.V.P: šóonta

šoqta male; bull; firestick (vertical)

šoxe- to have sexual intercourse (subj.: male; female: passive)
IMP.V.S: šoxé, IMP.V.P: šoxéta

šoxo blood

šu?una butter

šu?á to anoint
IMP.V.S: šu?á, IMP.V.P: šú?ta
šub- to kill (see also ji?); kižita šib ella
‘they killed each other’; kata barám
kara šubbo ka=róta ‘I go fishing
tomorrow’; korome=me kara ka= šib ‘I fished with the fish hook’
šud- to cover; to dress (tr.) (Ts)
IMPV.S: šudá, IMPV.P: šúttá
šudam- to dress oneself
IMPV.S: šudamá, IMPV.P: šúdánta,
CAUS šuds- to make dress, cover
IMPV.S: šudašá, IMPV.P: šúdáshta
šuguc- to anoint oneself
IMPV.S: šuguctá, IMPV.P: šugúctá
šumaha sand (Ts šumahto)
ta?- to take, catch
IMPV.S: tásá, IMPV.S: tá?ta
MID ta?an- to take, catch
IMPV.S: ta?amá, IMPV.S: ta?ánta
CAUS ta?san- to make take, catch
IMPV.S: ta?saná, IMPV.S: ta?sánta
tašanta very
taba thorn
tafo thigh (Ts tapo)
tag-, tagam- to sleep
IMPV.S: tagamá, IMPV.P: tagánta
CAUS tagsan- to make sleep
IMPV.S: tagsaná, IMPV.S: tagsánta
CAUS tagansan- to make sleep
IMPV.S: tagsansaná,
IMPV.P: tagansánta
tágara shadow; met. place
tagats- to make go up
IMPV.S: tagatsá, IMPV.P: tagáista
tahanke seven (Ts tahhan)
talañá four (cf. Ts salah?)
tamar- to learn (Amh)
IMPV.S: tamará, IMPV.P: tamártá
tampo tobacco (areal word)
taw- to build
IMPV.S: tawá, IMPV.P: táwta

tajwji- to build for oneself
IMPV.S: tawíňá, IMPV.P: tawínta
taxay- to raise
IMPV.S: taxayá, IMPV.P: taxáyta
tereh- to make go down
IMPV.S: terehá, IMPV.P: teréhta
terekko dust (Ts teerikko)
tib- to die
IMPV.S: tibá, IMPV.P: tibta
tiid- to put, store
IMPV.S: tiidá, IMPV.P: tiitá
CAUS tiidis-, tiidas- to cause to put
IMPV.S: tiidisá, IMPV.P: tiidista
CAUS tiidsan- to cause to put
IMPV.S: tiidsaná, IMPV.P: tiidsánta
tilde paradise flycatcher (Ts tílda)
titile black kite (Ts)
tinniša potato (Amh)
tica liver (Ts tiri)
tókoma heel (Ts tókonko)
tonnakke F: tonnate; P: tonnaye lame;
hump-backed (Ts)
toonte frankincense
toollo stick (Ts toolingo)
tora spear; tora ki=náŋ=na ‘he gave
me the spear’
tu?- to add (things, one by one); naxani
caľa ki=tu? ‘yesterday he added a
stone’
IMPV.S: tuñá, IMPV.P: tuñta
tu?an- to be added
MID tu?i- to add for oneself
IMPV.S: tuñí, IMPV.P: tuñíta
CAUS tu?san- to make add (sth. solid)
IMPV.S: tuñsaná, IMPV.P: tuñsaná
cf. diiq- ‘to add liquid’ and fa?- ‘to
add salt (sand, earth)’
=tu?= also, too
tule buttocks (cf. Ts turde?)
tunaw- to be blunt (Ts tunay)
**tuuts** to push (Ts tuuts)
IMPV.S: tuutsá, IMPV.P: túutsta

**tsáamitsa** louse

**tsal-** to curse
IMPV.S: tsalá, IMPV.P: tsálta
MID tsali?- to curse
CAUS tsalsan- to make curse

**tsan-** 1. to be cold; 2. to heal (intr.), to recover
IMPV.S: tsaná, IMPV.P: tsánta

**tsanafa** six

**tsaqam-** to be salty, bitter

**tsi-** to know
IMPV.S: tsiá, IMPV.P: tsiíta

**tsuuf-** to lie down

**tsuub-** to suck (Ts)
IMPV.S: tsuubá, IMPV.P: tsúubta

**tsoonako** honeybee (Ts ts’oonako)

**waaga** bat

**waala** generic name for various species of colored weavers

**waaga** African hoopoe (Ts wáaqo)

**wáara** forest

**waga** god

**wak-** to fall
IMPV.S: wáká, IMPV.P: wákta

**wal-** to forget (Ts)
IMPV.S: walá, IMPV.P: wálta

**vale** panga (Ts)

**was-** to spend the day
IMPV.S: wasá, IMPV.P: wástá

**wuyam-** to call (Ts wuyá)
IMPV.S: wuyamá, IMPV.P: wuyánta

**wohara** he-goat

**woki** there

**wowa** ear

**wunki** here

**wura** house

**xa?-** to do (irregular)
IMPV.S: xaaxá, IMPV.P: xáaxta

**xaab-** to scratch
IMPV.S: xaabá, IMPV.P: xáabta

**xalle** sp. of fish

**xam-** to become
IMPV.S: xamá, IMPV.P: xánta

**xarat-** to divide

**xaraw** [haji ki...] to thunder

**xasod-** to rejoice (Ts)

**xibte** lip (Ts)

**xo?-** to beat, hit; P stem: kuše-
IMPV.S: xo?á, IMPV.P: xó?ta

**xobbi** five (Ts xobin)

**xod-** to generate; to be born (with ISP a)
IMPV.S: xodé, IMPV.P: xodéta

**xoona** sheep

**xot-** to put down (P. stem)
IMPV.P: xótta
xotam- to go down (P. stem)
IMPV.P: xótánta

**xur-** to leave
IMPV.S: xúra, IMPV.P: xúrta

**yaw-** to stop, stand
IMPV.S: yaaáwá, IMPV.P: yáawta
CAUS yawsan- to make stop, stand
IMPV.S: yawsaná,
IMPV.P: yawsaná

**yaayo** jackal

**yob-** to see
IMPV.S: yobá, IMPV.P: yóbta

**yooba** men; males; people

**zaarrako** F: zaaratte; P: zaarayke
crazy, stupid (Ts)

**zabarna** lie, falsehood

**zanitte** palm lines (Ts)

**zage** cotton (Ts záqe “cotton thread”)
zax- to grind
  IMPV.S: zaxá, IMPV.P: záxta
  MID: zaxi?- to grind for oneself
  IMPV.S: zaxištá, IMPV.P: zaxištà
  CAUS zaxsan- to make grind
  IMPV.S: zaxsaná, IMPV.P: zaxsánta
zeha three (Ts zeh)
zzii?- 1. to pull; 2. to fart
  IMPV.S: ziištá, IMPV.P: ziištà
zilanza sp. of lizard (Ts zilanqa)
zoborko worm (Ts)
zoguy- to swim (Ts zoguy-)
  IMPV.S: zoguyá, IMPV.P: zoguyta
zoo?- to collect honey
  IMPV.S: zooštà, IMPV.P: zóoštà
  MID zoošt?- to collect honey
  IMPV.S: zoošé, IMPV.P: zooshi̓ta
zooba beeswax

6. English-Ongota index

to add (things, one by one) tu?; (obj.
  water and other liquids) dii̓ga

to be afraid saʔat-
all badde
also, too = tuʔi'
Amhara fuga; SING: fugitta
amniotic fluid uppatte
and = ba

to be, get angry lool-
animal (domestic) gola; (wild) binta
ankle kirinca

to anoint suʔa; (obj. oneself) šuguc-
another time, again kolba

to answer; to give back muuts-
ant cincaqe
antelope merja
anus sorra
Arbore rummatte; SING: rummatitita
arm; hand; finger iʔa
armpit baara

to arrive daggab
arrow laahko
arrow’s point falde [palde]
to ask caxtiʔ-
axe irgaʔa
baboon dábaša
back (body part) bahada
bad, ugly šádała
bark gagge

to bark (subj.: dog) buhad-
bat waaga

to be am-
bead kala; beads necklace komba
beans oofe
to beat, hit xoʔ-; (obj.: P) kuše-; coq-
to become xam-
beehive gorgora
beer gola
beeswax zooba
beetle bannádda
before sidda
to belch geʃ-
belly buusa
big; old gaddafuni; P: giddeʃeta
bird (general term) karbo; šaḥaye
to bite gaʃ-
black dákamuni
blind daafakko; F: daafatte; P: daaʃ-
fayke; to become blind daaf-; to
make be blind daafis -
blood sọxo
to blow the nose sonon-
to be blunt tunaw-
bone mic'a
bow baahante
bow string sibde
bracelet (forearm) marrote; (wrist) mīddo
breast ama
bride kaykitte
bridegroom kaykitta
to bring; to have iʃee-
brother (older) šaʃalkuni; (younger)
Ŝazane
buffalo báyafa
to build rau-
to burn (intr.); to catch fire qaw-
bush duiker gaba
bushpig šlaʃa
butter šuʔuna
buttocks tule
calabash halo
calf ottako; she-calf marte
calf (body part) sarba
to call wuyam-
cat dibita
catarh, mucous ārmata
to chase, send away biibe-
cheek kawlal; kunkumitte
cheetah; leopard mirila
chest hooka
chest, stomach bor
child, baby jaaka; P: eela
chin gawʃo
to clap the hands hat-
to climb; to come out gats-
clitoris miditte
to close, tie hed-
cloud foolo
coffee fari
to be cold tsan-
collar-bone bargadde
to collect had-(P. stem); (obj. honey)
zooʔ-
to comb filiʔ-
comb filma
to come ee-
to come back, return kol-
container qumu
cooking stones kidisa
corn game
cotton zage
to cough gutai-
to cover; to dress (tr.) suct-
crane muta
crazy, stupid zaarakko; F: zaaratte; P: zaarayke
crocodile kimësä
to cross šab-
crow, raven kùrrubä
to cry boye-
to curse tsal-
to cut gad-
to cut with a knife, slice; to slaughter mas-
daughter; girl juuka; P: igire; son’s daughter oobde
day gane
deaf; stupid dakkakko; F: dakkatte; P: dakkayke
dew carke
to die tib-; (P stem?) baq-
to dig koom-
dikdik saya; sëngere
dirty baaxa
to divide xarat-
to divide, share bagas-
to do xa?; dangad-
dog qaske
donkey arré
door ippa
dress laalbe
to drink cašaw-
to dry up, become dry buš-
dust terekko
ear wowa
earring ašawa
to eat cak-
edible leaves hágalo
eight ista
elbow cikila
elder, old man; husband ñëdiba
elephant uke
to embrace, to lull abun-
enemy gergitto
to enter; to understand giš-
evening gallabdi
to exchange hokam- (P. subject)
excrement baiga
eye afa
eyebrow siida
face balëasa
to fall wak-; to make fall dat-
to fart zii?-
father baaye; father’s older brother/sister akkyute
femur gibisa
finger qoba
fingernail sonqitte
to finish (intr.) kum-; (tr.) raaw-
fire oxoni
firestick gešante; dayte
to fish qate-
fish (general term) kara
eagle (fish eagle) gillata; (long-crested eagle) daqse [daqsa]
fishing hook körüme
five xobbi
flank suude
flea sek
flower kúbis
foetus ereha
food nañana
foot; leg aka
forest waara
to forget wali-
four talaha
frankincense toonte
friend aryitta
frog mogotte
fruit kuhhen
Gawwada (and other Dullay-speaking
groups of the highlands) sāle
to generate xod-
giraffe damsią
to give nas--; beŋ-
to go roo--; askam--; to go away; to take
a different road mah--; to go down
rek--; to make go up tagats--; to
make go down tereh-
goat qolo; he-goat wohara
god waga
golden cat; hyena galaya
good; beautiful; well abba
goose konqayle
grandfather akka
gray (light) moora; (dark) arrakko;
F: arratte
green cárkamuni
to grind zax-
grinding stone midisa
to grow hoh-
guinea-fowl kúlula
gun, rifle cawo
hair gidana
Hamar orga: SING: orgitta
to hang rakke-
to be happy har-
to be hard, strong; to be dry bof-
to hate nabad-
head; hair bine
headrest kere
to heal (intr.), to recover tsaan-
to hear, listen haş
heart roqinta
heel tókoma
here wunki
heron andulle; bárgada
to hiccough sigad
to hide caq-
hippopotamus renta
hole deela
honey šóokaya
honeybee tsnoonako
hornbill donka
to be hot; to be feverish, ill šoon-
house wiru
how? ašana
how much/many? miʔa
hundred dibba
to hunt, shoot has--; goos--; hat-
hunting dog gure
hyena kuskuso
ibis sáamule
intestine mirʔamatte
iron sibila
itching hugu
jackal yaayo
to jump; to dance, sing gutal-
kidney defise
to kill; to hit; to extinguish (fire) jiʔ;  šub-
to kindle; to add (salt, sand, earth), to
put into fãʔ-
to kindle the fire huy-
to kiss mayve-
klipspringer dizza
knee gíbila
knife šeera
kn to know tsii-
lame; hump-backed tonnakkо:
A sketch of Ongota

F: tonnatte; P: tonnayke
land bia

to laugh muxe-
leaf; grass haaši
to leak kox-
to learn tamar-
to leave xur-
to leave; to come out, emerge kat-; (P subj.) foof-

left behatto
to lick ṣad-
lie, falsehood zabarna
to lie down qaade-; tsuf-
like, love, to heeni-
lion ôxaya

lip xibe
little, small; young munnušuni;
P: minfieta

liver tira
to look, aim at nogot-
to lose ah-; bih-
loud ëkkite
louse tsáamitsa
lung comba
male; bull; firestick šoqta
man; husband; male inta, P: yooba
many nitsina
to marry ifam-
meat cata
milk; tear eeši
to milk fiš-
to miss the target dabb-
to mix šangat-; lax-; reekis-
molar kásala
mongoose dübazza
monkey gaara

moon; month leeša
mosquito hinano
mother ayyane
mountain kuttunko
mouth; language iifa
mud congorte
name meša
navel gusunte; handura
neck ište; denge
needle narti

to become night girib-
nine gollanke

nose śina

now ayki

old geccate; P: geccayke
one akkálbano
oneself ella, elella
oryx saalta

ostich balgo
other keesa
owlet dīga
ox ardo

palm lines zanitte
peace négayko
pelican badio
pen, enclosure cayde
penis mooło

to pick up, collect boš-
to pierce, spear, sting coq-
pigeon štolla
to pinch kobis-
plain lášakko
to play iške-
play išma

to plough; to do, make danhad-
to plunge diim
poison; medicine *deeša*
poor *bašatuni*
porcupine *dangadangaco*
potato *tinniša*
to pour, fill *ucce*
pregnant *erehte*; P: *erehiwa*; to become pregnant *erehi?-*
pubic hair *bositte*
to pull *ziir?*
to pull out *bul-
pumpkin *gawte*
pupil of the eye *dunko*
to push *tuus*
to put, store *tiid-
to put down *fad-, xot-
to put out *goxe-
rabbit *gūbale*
rain *haji*
to raise *taxay-
to reach (someone) *dehad*
red *rōmini*
to rejoice *xasod-
relative *eeda*
to rest *aame-; (on the headrest) *šanne-
rhinoceros *oršatte*
rib *hinaša*
rich *kamurre*, SING.M *kamurko*, SING.F *kamurtė*
right *mizigitte*
to rise, stand up *axay-
road *kiti*
root, vein *fizza*
rope *kaada*
to run *hay-; (P subj.) *bahat-
sacrum (anat.) *fulfula [pulpu]a
to be sad *ekkešad*
saliva *boďa*
salt *sogo*
to be salty, bitter *tsaqam-
sand *šumaha*
saucepan *qaba*
to say *gis-
to scratch *xaab-
to see *yob-
seed *boraho*
to send away *farat-
seven *tahanke*
to sew *cig-
to have sexual intercourse *šoxe-
shadow, place *tāgara*
to shave *hes-
sheep *xoona*
shin *garaboko*
short *hōlabatuni*
shoulder *kacce*
to shout *jiir-; mees-
sibling *aza*
side *hēše*
sister *sodda*; sister’s husband *ākubu*
       sister’s son *āšinkuni*
six *tsanafa*
skin; hide *darbo*
to sleep *tag-, tagam-
slowly; a little bit; softly *āccama*
to smell *šiinsad; (good) *hagun-
to smooth (a skin with a stone) *rig-
snail *gode*
snake *gabare*
to sneeze *šiqqisi?-*
to sniff (obj.: *tampo ‘tobacco’*) *sug-
soft *lattu*
son, child (male), boy maara; P: iila; son's son oofo
sorghum muusko
to speak morom-
spear tora
to spend the day was-
spider innakko
to spit bud-
star hizge
to steal geref-
sterile (F) mekente
stick toollo
to stink far-
stone; grinding stone cafa
to stop (intr.) dehe-
to stop, stand yaw-
strength gulbata
stump gutula
to suck ame; tsuub-
sun axaco
to be surprised, shocked nahe-
sweat sippa [tsippa]
to swim zoguy-
to take, get hoih -
to take, catch ta-
tall orma
to tell fale-
ten coma
termite imatte
testicle kirde
that (faraway) addate
there woki
thief gerefa
thigh tafo
thin carba
thorn taba
three zeha
throat gumar

to thunder xaraw [haji ki ...]
to be tired malal-
tobacco tampo
today burinki
tomorrow baram, barama
tongue sadaba
tooth itima
tortoise kufe
to touch berre-
tree; wood hanca
tribe gosa
truth dugate
twins laamaxode
to twist the firesticks day
two lama
umbilical cord soorto
uncle sabuya
urine; sperm saaha
uvula leelefa
vagina kano
very tasanta
village, settlement olla
to vomit sebeife-
vulture kutsa [kutsa]
to wait kab; sal
to want haabi-
to wash hobat-
water; river casawa
waterbuck doposa
Weyt'o river dullaya
when? bari
(to) where? hawki; from where? hawtu
which? aya

to whistle fidis -
white áttomuni
who haka
why? na=ku
wild peas bote
wind habura
wing koola
wisdom tooth ꙕango
woman, wife; female ayma; P: aaka

worm hangararo; zoborko
wrist sagayto
to yawn šammašśi?-year bera
yellow silbe
yesterday naxani
zebra kermayle
REFERENCES


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