# A grammar of Sheko

# A grammar of Sheko

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag 15 juni 2010
klokke 16.15 uur

door

Anneke Christine Hellenthal
geboren te Nijmegen
in 1980

# Table of Contents

10

# List of structure morphemes

The list contains all bound morphemes and their main allomorphs in alphabetical order. Forms with a syllabic nasal are only listed under n̩... Tone is written v̀ v v̄ and v́ from lowest (1) to highest (4).

| form | gloss | allom. | indication of function/name |
|------|-------|--------|-----------------------------|
| -a | ACC | -əra | accusative case (tone 2 or 3). |
| -a | IMPLC | | Implicative (modal) |
| -a | STD | -ya | stance marker, direct |
| =a | 2SG | ha= | 2sg subject clitic |
| =á | 3MS | há= | 3ms subject clitic |
| -àà | PROX | hàà | proximal demonstrative |
| -àb | REL | -əb | relative clause marker/ complementizer |
| -àbe | REL.mother | -əbe | relative clause marker/ complementizer feminine |
| -ara | NEG | -ra, -r | negation (tone 3/4). |
| -b | REL | -ə̀b | relative clause marker/ complementizer |
| -bààb | father | -bàb | masculine nominalizer/ complementizer, cf. bāāb 'father' |
| -bààstà | WHILE | -bàstà | temporal clause marking, consists of -b-àà-s-tà REL-PROX-M-LOC |
| -be | mother | -bey | feminine nominalizer/ complementizer, cf. báỳ 'mother' |
| -ee | STI | -ə | stance marker, indirect |
| -èʃǹtà | MOTIVE | -ìʃǹtà | motive marker (~ (y)èʃǹtà) |
| -ə | STI | -ee | stance marker, indirect |
| -ə̀b | REL | -àb,-b | relative clause marker/ complementizer |
| -ə̀be | REL.mother | -àbe, -be | relative clause marker/ complementizer feminine |
| -əra | ACC | -ra, -a | accusative case |
| -əra | INCL | k'ərà | inclusive conjunction |
| ha- | 2SG.POSS | | 2sg possessor prefix |
| há- | 3MS.POSS | | 3ms possessor prefix |
| ha= | 2SG | =a | 2sg subject clitic |
| há= | 3MS | =á | 3ms subject clitic |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| hàà- | PROX | -à(à) | proximal demonstrative |
| -ì | F | <ì> | feminine gender |
| -ī | DIST | yī | distal demonstrative |
| =í | 3FS | yí= | 3fs subject clitic |
| <ì> | F | -ì | feminine gender |
| -ìn | F.DEF | <ì>-ǹ | feminine gender-definiteness marker |
| íʃ(ì)- | 3PL.POSS | | 3pl possessor prefix |
| íʃ(ì)= | 3PL | =íʃì | 3pl subject clitic |
| -ìʃǹtà | MOTIVE | -èʃǹtà | motive marker (~ (y)èʃǹtà) |
| ítí- | 2PL.POSS | | 2pl possessor prefix |
| ít(í)= | 2PL | =ítí | 2pl subject clitic |
| -ít | PL.ADDR | -t | plural addressee marker |
| -k | REAL | | Realis |
| -ka | COOR | | coordinating conjunction |
| -ka | WITH | | instrumental case |
| -kn | KNOWN | | Obvious (modal) |
| -kǹ | DAT | -ŋ̀ | dative case |
| -k'à | IN | | inessive case |
| -k'ərà | INCL | -əra | inclusive conjunction |
| -m | IRR | | Irrealis |
| -ǹ | DS | -m̀ | different subject switch-reference |
| -ǹ | DEF | -m̀ | definiteness marker |
| -n | MIDD | -m | middle derivation |
| -n | NEG2 | -m | state negation (tone 3 or 4) |
| -n | PURP | -m | purpose clause (tone 3 or 4) |
| ŋ̩- | 1SG.POSS | m̩- | 1sg possessor prefix |
| ń- | 1PL.POSS | m̄- | 1pl possessor prefix |
| ŋ̩= | 1SG | =ŋ̩, m̩ | 1sg subject clitic |
| ń= | 1PL | =ń, m̩ | 1pl subject clitic |
| -ná | or | -má | alternative conjunction |
| ǹtà | COND | -m̀tà | conditional clause marker/ complementizer |
| -ŋ̀ | DAT | -kǹ | dative case |
| -on(ka) | ASS | -onko | associative plural |
| -o | STI.ADDR | | stance marker, indirect, in vocatives and interrogatives |
| -ra | ACC | -əra, -a | accusative case |
| -ra | NEG | -ara, -a | negation (tone 3 or 4) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **-s** | M | **-z** | masculine gender |
| **-s** | PL | | masculine gender with plural referent |
| **-s** | CAUS | | causative derivation |
| **-s** | OPT | **-ʃ** | Optative |
| **-s** | VIEWP | | Viewpoint |
| **-ʃ** | OPT | **-s** | Optative |
| **-t** | COP | tə | copula verb |
| **-t** | PASS | **-t'** | passive derivation |
| **-t** | SS | **-tə** | same subject switch-reference |
| **-tà** | LOC | | locative case |
| **-tana** | RESUL | | resultative conjunction |
| **-tə** | COP | tə, **-t** | copula verb |
| **-tə** | SS | **-t** | same subject switch-reference |
| **-t'** | PASS | **-t** | passive derivation |
| **-ù** | m | | masculine gender |
| **-ya** | STD | **-a** | stance marker, direct |
| **yī** | DIST | **-ī** | distal demonstrative |
| **yí-** | 3FS.POSS | | 3fs possessor prefix |
| **yí=** | 3FS | **=í** | 3fs subject clitic |
| **-z** | M | **-s** | masculine gender |
| **v̋** | ELAT | | elative, extra high tone (~ tone 4) |

# List of abbreviations

| gloss | name | basic form |
|---|---|---|
| ACC | accusative case | -əra |
| A.FOC | assertive focus | |
| Amh | Amharic | |
| ASS | associative plural | -onka |
| C | consonant | |
| CAUS | causative derivation | -s |
| COOR | coordinative conjunction | -ka |
| COP | copula verb | tə |
| COND | conditional | -ǹtà |
| CNJ | conjunction | |
| CNV | converb | |
| DAT | dative case | -kǹ |
| DECL | declarative | |
| DEF | definite | -ǹ |
| DIST | distal demonstrative | yī |
| DS | different subject | -ǹ |
| ELAT | elative (tone 4 or extra high tone) | |
| EPEN | epenthetic vowel | |
| EV | expletive vowel | |
| F | feminine | <ì>, -ì, -nì |
| FS | Factual stem (Benchnon data) | |
| FOC | focus marker | |
| Gf. | Guraferda variant | |
| H | verb class (tone 4 on the Basic stem) | |
| IDEO | ideophone | |
| IMPLC | Implicative | |
| IN | inessive case | -k'à |
| INCL | inclusive | |
| INF | infinitive | |
| INTJ | interjection | |
| IPF | Imperfective | |
| IRR | Irrealis | -m |
| KNOWN | Obvious | -kn |
| L | verb class (tone 2 on the Basic stem) | |
| LOC | locative case | -tà |
| LCT | locative suffix | -kà |
| M | masculine | -s, -z |
| m | masculine | -ù |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| MIDD | middle derivation | -n̩ |
| MOTIVE | motive case/ clause | -èʃǹtà |
| MP | morphophonological rule | |
| MT | morphotonological rule | |
| N | syllabic nasal in CV-structure | |
| NEG | negation (event negation) | -ara (tone 3/4) |
| NEG2 | negation (state negation) | -n (tone 3/4) |
| NV | non-velar stem | |
| NMLZ | nominalizer | |
| NOM | nominative | |
| NP | noun phrase | |
| O | object | |
| OPT | Optative | -s |
| OQ | open question | |
| PASS | passive derivation | -t' |
| PAST | past tense | |
| PF | Perfective | |
| PL | plural | -s |
| PLUR | pluractional | [reduplication] |
| PL.ADDR | plural addressee | -ít |
| POSS | possessor | [tonal change in noun] |
| PR | phonological rule | |
| PROX | proximal demonstrative | hàà |
| PURP | purpose | -n (tone 3/4) |
| Q | interrogative | |
| RDP | reduplication | |
| REAL | Realis | -k |
| REC | reciprocal | |
| REL | relative | -ə̀b |
| RESUL | resultative conjunction | tana |
| S | subject | |
| S, SG | singular | |
| SIMIL | similative case | gōntʃì |
| sp. | species (kind of) | |
| SS | same subject | -tə |
| STI | stance marker, indirect | -ə |
| STI.ADDR | stance marker, indirect in vocatives and interrogatives | -o |
| STD | stance marker, direct | -a, -ya |
| TEMP | temporal | |
| THV | thematic vowel | |

16

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| V | vowel | |
| V | verb | |
| **v** | tone bearing unit | |
| VIEWP | Viewpoint | **-s** |
| VOC | vocative (term of address) | [tonal change] |
| WHILE | short for: REL.PROX.M.LOC | **-bààstà** |
| WITH | instrumental case | **-ka** |
| < > | orthographic representation | |
| [ ] | phonetic representation | |
| / / | phonemic representation | |
| \| | pause | |
| ° | lexical tone not known | |
| * | ungrammatical | |
| * | form in the protolanguage | |
| 1 | first person | |
| 2 | second person | |
| 3 | third person | |

# Maps
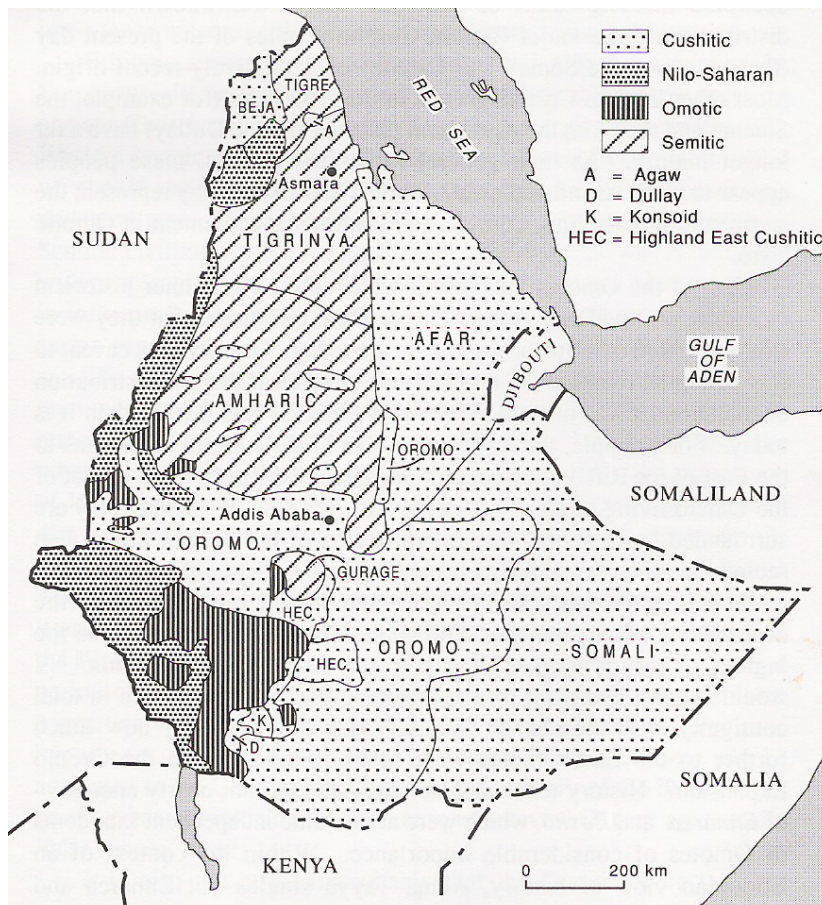


**Language families in Ethiopia. Hayward (1995).**
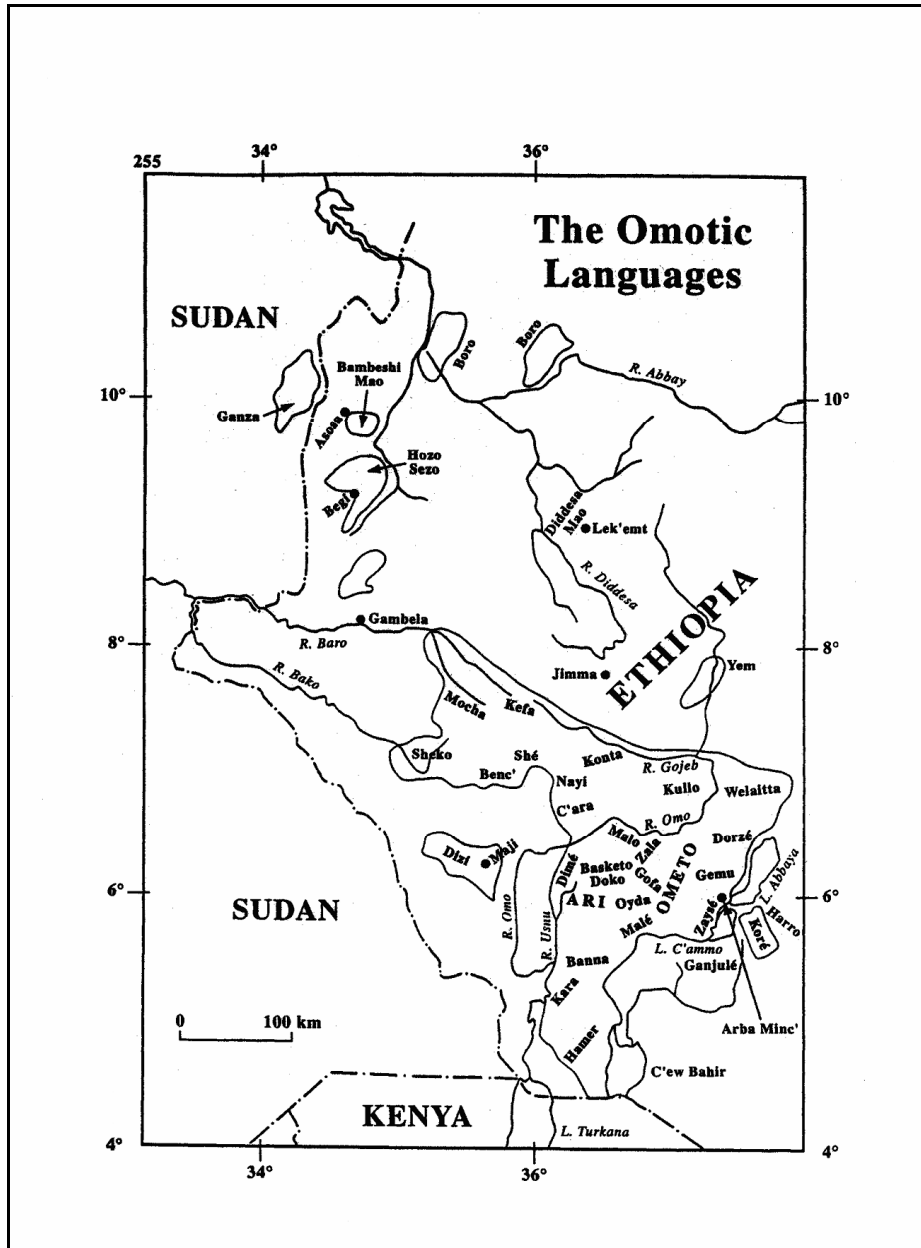
The Omotic language family. Bender (2000).
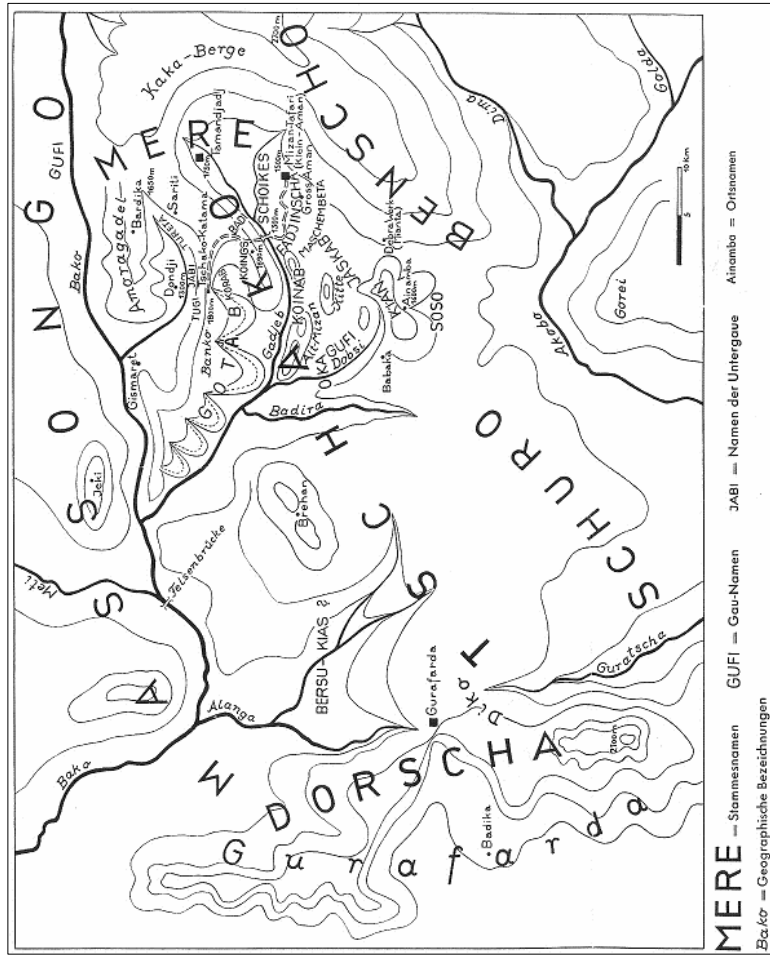
Übersichtskarte von Gimira [Overview of Gimira map]. Straube (1963).
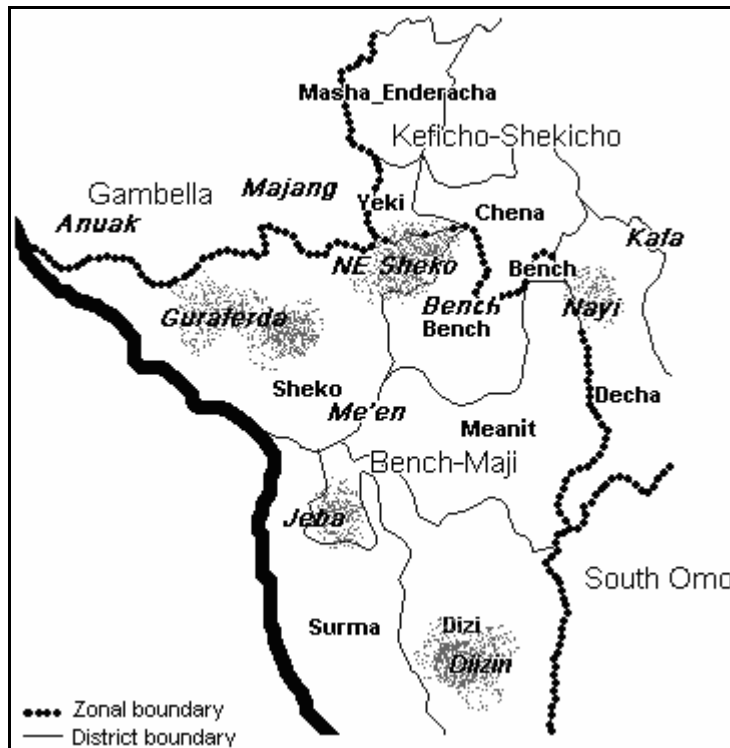
**Approximate location of Majoid languages and dialects
in southwest Ethiopia (in grey).**

# Acknowledgements

In my computer sits a document entitled 'Thanksgiving'. This document contains lists of people I met during my field trips as well as friends, family and colleagues, with shorter or longer notes of praise and thanks. Some persons reappear time and again in the lists, and I am afraid I haven't expressed my thanks to them often enough during the last five years. Other people I met just once, like those who bought me a meal during bus trips - actually an amazing number. And of course I can't possibly repeat the names of all those who taught me Amharic, Sheko, or another language; who happily discussed nothing but linguistics with me for hours and hours; who made a house more like a home (and I've stayed in not a few houses!); who wanted to encourage me although at times they must have wondered what it was that I did... I count myself blessed with all these encounters.

Here is a selection from the Thanksgiving document: first of all, my Sheko family: Ayna Bejih, Worqe Getachew, Adane, Zarin, Wogay, Daniel, Pexros and Dogama. They never got irrated by my quiet listening nor by my sometimes incomprehensible questions, but they urged me to speak and encouraged me to continue working. Participating in their daily life and having long conversations at dusk or in the moonlight shaped my understanding of the language and culture in an unique way. They constitute some of the most precious moments in the past years. I am amazed and thankful that I may know you. *S'u'a tamuka qoyka askn hamsu (66) tiitsəgitə. Ḿ-baab saaqabaab itikn atsásə!*

Qes Pexros Kiatus and Defera Xhonu were and are very helpful and committed, as is Xarəta Alemu who joined in at a later stage (guys, remember the Anbessa Branch?). I learned a lot from the participants of the first Mizan workshop as well. Of my other Sheko friends, teachers, and storytellers, I would like to mention Meseret, Mimi, Shanta, Siqaay, Asxhennaqi, Komtu Shewa Tureta, Henok, Basn, Marta, Endrias, Aberra, Solomon, Hanna, Daniel, Sion, Elias, Luqas, and Marqos. Thankyou to Alemitu Kwanta and other neighbors for both *sini gyanu* and *haay gyanu*.

24

# 1   Introduction

This chapter introduces the Sheko people and the language they speak. Furthermore, it shortly describes previous work on Sheko and the research that forms the basis for this book.

## 1.1   The people

The Sheko (ṣ́ókú yaab 'Sheko people') number about 37.500 people[1] and most of them live in small neighborhoods scattered in the hills of southwest Ethiopia, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, in the Sheko and Guraferda wärädas [2] (Bench-Maji Zone) as well as in Tepi and the surrounding villages (Yeki wäräda, Sheka Zone). They are bordered in the east by Bench, in the south by Me'en, in the west and north by Majang, Anuak, and Shekkacho people. The Sheko have their own names for other people groups. They call the Bench **dīīzū**, the Me'en **sūrù**, the Majangir **t'áámá**, the Anyuak **p'érí**, and the Diizi **màʒī**. Amhara and other northerners are called **góórà**. The Majangir in turn call the Sheko *daan yir* ('daan clan'); the Bench call them *çak* <s'ak>. Generally, they are referred to as Sheko or Shako (after the Amharic ሻኮ 'shäko'), as in public administration and censuses. Sheko must not be confused with Shekkacho, a different Omotic group bordering Sheko on the north, whose language belongs to the Kefoid branch.

### 1.1.1     Notes on the Sheko culture

Straube (1963) is the first resource for anthropological information on the Sheko (in German). Conti Rossini (1937) and Cerulli (1956) also report on the Sheko. A major source of knowledge is Hildebrand (2003), which contains among others an excellent account of daily life and food production. The Sheko share a common origin with the Diizi (Haberland 1993) and Nayi. Furthermore, the Sheko culture has much in common with the Bench culture (Lange 1975).

---

[1] Preliminary results of the 2007 census by the Ethiopian Central Statistic Authority.
[2] wäräda: an administrative unit under the Zone, further divided into qebeles.

*Land and agriculture*
The Sheko areas of settlement lie roughly between 1100 and
1700 meter altitude. Hildebrand (2003) describes the
ecological zones in detail. The land is verdant and rainfall
abundant. Fifty years ago, the area was covered by a dense rain
forest. In northeast Sheko, the landscape is now more open
where people live closer together, in walking distance of roads;
whereas remoter areas remain more sparsely populated. As the
population density grows, the forest gives way to more and
more plots of farmland, where different crops like ʃə́tʼì 'maize',
dōnkʼā 'sorghum', and a variety of tubers are produced. Straube
(1963) lists various indigenous types of maize and sorghum,
but notes that most of them are replaced by types that the
Amhara brought with them. The Sheko are known to be experts
in the cultivation of tubers. baakà 'taro' is their daily staple.
kátʃí 'yam' is highly valued and served particularly as food for
the nobility in the past. Sheko have specially prepared yam
fields and also exploit yams from the forest. According to
Hildebrand (2003:248), 'the degree of sophistication of Sheko
yam farming and their historical focus on this crop are unique'.
However, the farming of yam is perceived as labor-intensive
and in present-day farming, the focus is shifting to cash crops
such as maize. Taro remains important, since it is available
during most of the year. If nothing else is available, not only
breakfast but also lunch and dinner may consist of baakà 'taro'.

Coffee constitutes the main economic product in northeast
Sheko. The coffee grows naturally in the forests that cover the
hills, although nowadays large parts of the forest are
manipulated to produce larger quantities of coffee. In
Guraferda, coffee is gathering importance as markets become
more accessible, but the region is better known for its quality
honey from various parts of the forest.

Nowadays, the Sheko use the Amharic way of counting the
months of the year. In the past, however, the year was
measured by the practices surrounding dōnkʼā '(red) sorghum'
and divided into two. The rainy season or turà bèngì started
with the preparation of the fields for sowing the sorghum,
around May. It lasted until the seventh month, when the
sorghum was ripe. The dry season or kāym̀ bèngì started in the

eighth month, December, when the sorghum was harvested. In the ninth month, people drank the beer made of the harvested grain. The long tenth month at the end of the year was the period in which no activities related to sorghum took place.

*Social organisation*
Historically, Sheko society was probably quite hierarchical in nature (cf. a.o. Haberland (1993) on Diizi). The chiefs, which had political and spiritual authority, lived in courts and were approached deferentially. There were special rules for behaving in the presence of a chief, and also the chief himself was bound by regulations which prescribed behaviour different from common people. At the lower end of the social stratification were the Bəndu. They were hardly considered human, had to sit on the ground near the door, got food presented in leaves because plates touched by them could not be used by others, etc. One of the reasons they were looked down upon is their habit of eating bush meat (e.g. wild pigs and bushbuck), something which is taboo for other Sheko. Straube (1963:46) states that the Sheko did not eat meat at all, except for meat of wild buffalos. Though their social status has improved since, the Bəndu still live in separate villages today. The main occupations of the Bəndu are pottery making and tanning. They are sometimes asked to hunt wild pigs as these animals damage the crops.

The Sheko are divided into numerous clans, among which are the following (alphabetically listed):

(1)    **Aaka, Bəndu, Baykes, Benti, Bersu, Duudu, Era, Fazha, Gomkes, Goota, Karti, Korzha, Maana, Qorma, Sim, Suumu, S'oykes, Tuud, Uri, Zooz**

Descent is patrilineal and virilocal, i.e a wife will normally move to her husband's village. Marriage is exogamous. Some clans can traditionally not intermarry. Of the clans, **gootà**, **báykés** and **fāʒā** are the highest in rank. The leaders of high clans were each specialized in dealing with certain problems, e.g. rain making in times of drought, or warding off evil in case of disease. The chief had always a member of an associated

lower clan at his side, called **búrʒà**. This person tasted the food for the chief and performed rituals in his presence.

### 1.1.2    Notes on the Sheko history

Sheko oral history claims that the Sheko migrated from the Maji highlands to their present territory. Two well-known figures play an important role in the stories of the separation of the Sheko from the Diizi: Jeba Burzh, who sent the Sheko away, and Koynəb, his younger brother. Koynəb went from Egita to Badik'a in Guraferda and became a king whose sons spread out over the land and founded important lineages. As Hildebrand (2003:522-530) shows, accounts vary on several points (Koynəb was the son of Jeba Burzh, not his brother; the sequences of migration differ from each other). According to Straube (1963:37), the first king of the Sheko was Wurkenbe, whose elder brother was "Ğă Bŭrğa". Having come from Egita, they lived for a while in the "Schuro" area (Me'en country?) until they didn't feel safe anymore. The elder brother then went to Jeba and the younger brother to the present Sheko area. The Sheko today see the Diizi as their brothers, and some still pay tribute to the local chief of Jeba on important occasions.

The first written sources referring to "Gimira" people living to the southwest of the Kafa state are from the late seventeenth century. Lange (1975) cites these early references, which are vague and partly contradictory in nomenclature and location. Cecchi (1886) equated Gimira with the "Binenso" (Bench?) and reports that the "Ghimirrá" and "Sciancallà-Sciurò" are 'the main slave sources for the Kafa, yielding ca. 7000 slaves annually' (Lange 1975:11). Oral traditions of the Shekkacho bring up the presence of 'Gimira (specificially Čako) slaves' at the court of a Shekkacho ruler in the seventeenth century, according to Lange (1975:2). Sheko oral tradition as received by Straube (1963) says that the Sheko would have had to pay a cow and an elephant tusk as a yearly tribute to the Kafa king. They would have become independent from Kafa two generations before the Amhara brought Gimira under their control, killing the Sheko king Kóins. (Straube arrived in Gimira in 1955, one year after his successor had died (Straube 1963:36).)

The Russian officer Bulatovich was one of the first writers to actually traverse the Gimira country with a military expedition in 1897. He lists as political units among others the "Scevo" [She], "Benescio" [Bench], "Sciara" and "Sciaco" [Sheko], which were 'tributary to the Abyssinians', and was impressed by the fertility and productivity of the country (Lange 1975:16). In the following decades, the Amhara launched several military campaigns to bring the land under their control, massacring hundreds of people, raiding slaves, and establishing military encampments (katamas) in Mizan Teferi and Maji. Around the military settlements, the people were forced into the gebbar-system of labor. The rest of the area was basically a hunting area for slaves and animals. Haberland (1993) points out that the Diizi, being sedentary, were prone to the destructive gebbar-system (Garretson 1986) and states that the Diizi population was decimated in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Next to violence from their Amharic overlords, raids from the Anuak and Majangir also formed a threat for the farmers. As the population declined, erstwhile fields were reclaimed by the forest.

The Europeans who traveled through the Gimira area, e.g. Montadon in 1910, Athill in 1919, and Hodson in 1924-1927, describe the land as devastated (Lange 1975:21ff). Although Ethiopia officially banned slavery in 1923 as part of the drive to enter the League of Nations, slavery continued for more than a decade. The government advisor De Halpert noted slavery, criminality and gebbar-work (serfdom) as late as 1934 (Lange 1975:23, citing Perham 1948:328-331). Hildebrand (2003:106) reports of one elder in a remote Sheko village, who 'was taken as a young man by slave traders to northern Ethiopia; after many years of captivity he escaped and somehow returned to his natal village.'

During the short Italian occupation (1937-1941), a few road construction projects were initiated to improve accessibility of the region. Some Sheko state that their people have fought the Italians by laying in ambush and killing them by spear. In the 1950's, the first anthropological research devoted to the Sheko took place (Straube 1963, cf. Cerulli 1965). When the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie was ended by the coup of the Dergue in

1971, its leader Mengistu Hailemariam imposed a series of radical changes in the political landscape. The Dergue regime was infamous not only for warfare with Eritrea and disregard of food shortage and hunger in rebellious areas, but also for its involuntary resettlement schemes and dismantling of indigenous leadership. Villages were formed into *qebele*s, administrative units governed by Peasant's Associations. In Sheko, this was also a time during which a number of schools, health clinics and roads were built. In Aman, near Mizan Teferi, the former Catholic Mission grounds were converted into a hospital.

After the downfall of the Dergue in 1991, development of the Sheko area slowly continued. Settlements along the road connecting Mizan Teferi and Tepi grew and trade in coffee increased. In 1992, there were violent clashes between Sheko and other ethnic groups in the town of Tepi. Christianity spread during the last thirty years and reached the inaccessible Guraferda area in the second half of the 1990's. The increase of Christendom further weakened the authority of local chiefs. Another development, especially since the turn of the century, is the settling of a considerable number of farmers from other parts of Ethiopia in the Guraferda area.

## 1.2    The language

Sheko (**ʂókú noogù**, cf. **nóógù** 'word, language, matter') is described in this section by pointing out its classification, socio-linguistic situation, division into dialects and by providing a short typological sketch.

### 1.2.1    Classification

Sheko forms the Majoid (Dizoid) branch of the Omotic language family together with Diizi (Dizi) and Nayi, also called Na'o. The branch is called Majoid because the oral history of all three groups name the area around Maji town as their place of origin (Aklilu 2003:59). In the literature, the name Dizoid is also used, because the Diizi people were the better-known of the three groups.

One of the first classifications of Sheko is given by Montadon (1912); he was a Swiss doctor who stayed in the "Gimira" area around 1910. He categorized the Gimira languages 'into four separate linguistic groups: 1) "Dizou" [probably stands for She, ACH] and "Bennecho" [Benchnon] 2) "Batchi" [?] and "Chako" [Sheko] 3) "Gourafarda" and 4) "Kayégou" [Kwegu?]' according to Lange (1975:20). The ethnographic work from Conti Rossini (1937) describes the "Ghimira group", including Sheko, but gives virtually no language data. Similarly, Cerulli (1956) gives mainly ethnographical and socio-linguistical information. Both authors list different groups as belonging to the "Gimira". By and large a picture emerges in which Bench varieties on the one hand (sometimes with the addition of "Caba") and Majoid varieties on the other hand are grouped together. However, a remark like Cerulli (1956: 89) that 'the Gimira language of Gurafarda (Šakko) is called the language of Dizi, or Dorso (from the name of the southern plateau in its most northern area) by the Abyssinians although it is only a Šhakko dialect' is elucidating only to a degree. Tucker and Bryan (1956:128f) write that Gimira is the name that the Oromo use for some 'tribes' (they list "Shakko (Shako)", "Bienesho", "She or Dizu", "Kaba", and "Nao") and they consider the languages that these groups speak as the Gimira dialect cluster, with the addition of "Maji" (i.e. Diizi).

In the 1970's the first comparative wordlists were collected for all languages and Dizoid was set up as a separate group from Gimira, which was now limited to Benchnon varieties. Bender (1971) and Fleming (1976) classified Dizoid as a subbranch of North Omotic, placing it on a par with Gonga-Gimojan, i.e. they saw Dizoid as the first split-off from Proto-North-Omotic. In later classifications, its outlying position within North Omotic did not change, although the internal arrangements of other branches were refined and the little-known Mao languages were set apart as the first offshoot from Proto-Omotic.
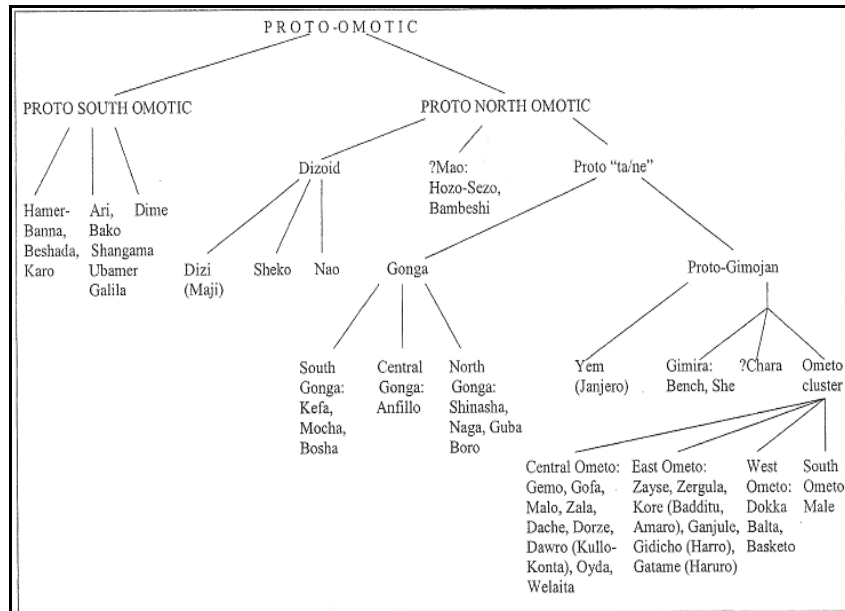
**Language tree after Fleming (1976). Copied from Hildebrand (2003). Gonga = Kefoid; Gimojan = Gimira (Benchnon), Macro-Ometo, and Janjero (Yemsa).**

In contrast, Bender (2000; 2003) classified Dizoid as South Omotic together with Dime and the Aroid languages. A main reason for this shift lies in the forms of the pronouns. Thus, Majoid is dissimilar from North Omotic, and at the same time its similarity to South Omotic languages is limited, so that Majoid was only recently associated with the South Omotic branch. Hayward (2009: 92) remarks on Majoid that 'this group stands somewhere midway between Aroid and the TN languages[3]. It shares certain features with one group and certain features with the other.'

On the internal classification of Majoid, Aklilu (2003) proposes a split between Diizi on the one hand and Sheko-Nayi on the other, based on phonological correspondence-sets.

---

[3] i.e. North Omotic languages characterized by **t** and **n** elements for 1sg and 2sg pronominals respectively.

```
              Proto-Maji
           /              \
       Sheko-Nayi         Dizi
        /      \
    Sheko      Nayi
```
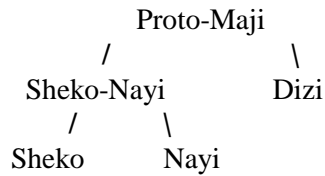
**Subgrouping of Majoid languages, from Aklilu (2003).**

Further linguistic research suggests that there is more or less a continuum from Maji to Jeba to Guraferda to Tepi and Sheko. The Diizi and Sheko communities live in the midlands and uplands, and the settlement areas are separated from each other by less inhabited lowlands. The Maji and Jeba massifs (Diizi) are separated by the Dima lowlands from the Guraferda massif (Sheko), which in turn is separated from the Sheko and Tepi area to the northeast by the lowlands through which the Akobo (Gilo) river runs. The dialect situation correlates with the geographic-ecological conditions. It is not clear how Nayi fits into the picture. The Nayi language, which is highly endangered since its speakers are switching to Kafa (Aklilu 2003:62), is spoken to the east of the Bench-She area. Sheko speakers generally are not familiar with the term Nayi or Na'o, although some know that there live people 'who speak like Diizi' near Shewa-Bench.
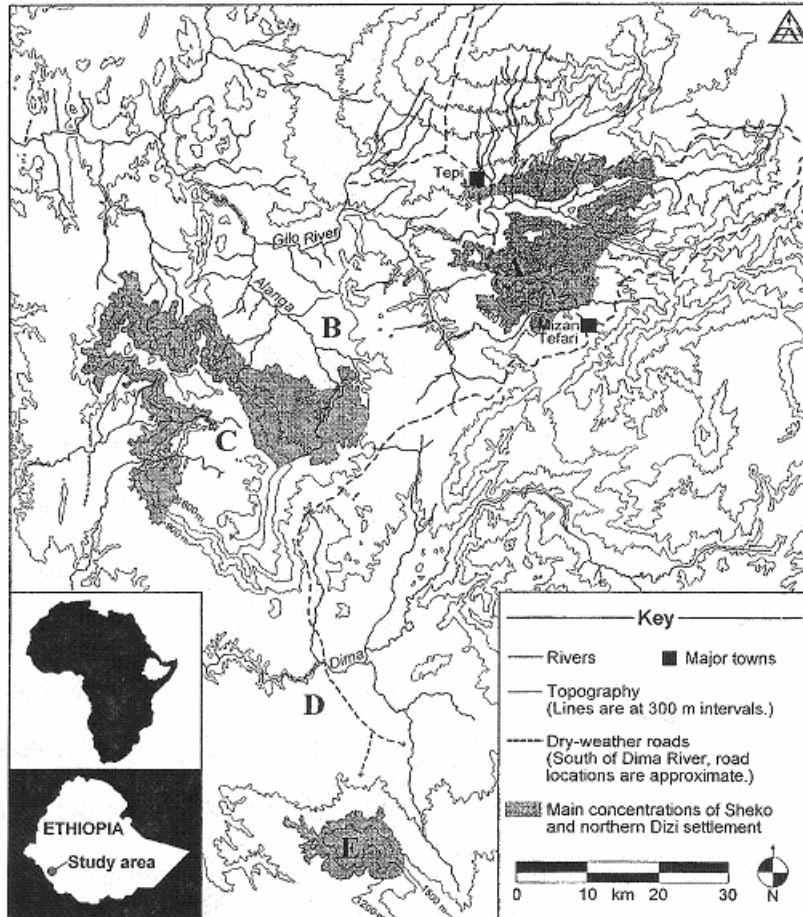
Map copied from Hildebrand (2003:110). A: northeast Sheko highlands. B: Alanga lowlands. C: Guraferda massif. D: Dima lowlands. E: Jeba massif.

### 1.2.2    Socio-linguistic situation

Sheko is clearly a minority language. Especially in towns and in the area bordering Bench, there is a strong pressure from Benchnon and Amharic, which have both gained a positive attitude. Intermarriage with Bench is a widely accepted practice, and Sheko may refer to them as **zyáāmā** 'in-laws'. Benchnon is spoken in and around the regional centre Mizan Teferi. Amharic is valued highly due to the school system, use in church, and the job possibilities it offers, however limited in the Sheko area itself. In 2006, there were about seventeen schools in the Sheko wäräda (district), of which only one

provided classes till grade 10, four till grade 8. Sheko is not used as language of instruction; there are almost no Sheko teachers. Few Sheko continue their study on higher levels. There is a high grade of bilingualism in the languages mentioned: although only 30% or less of the children go to school, almost all people, except elderly and some women, speak Amharic to a fair degree. Especially in towns, the children start learning Amharic when they are still young, if not in school then from playmates. In areas bordering on Bench there is also bi- and trilingualism. I met some people in Mizan Teferi, the regional centre, who had given up Sheko, since they lived in a non-Sheko area. Even in Sheko-town some people raise their children in Amharic rather than Sheko. For the Guraferda area there may be influence from other languages next to Amharic, such as Me'enit.

At present, the use of Sheko in home-situations is still stable. It is also used outside the house in most situations when only Sheko are present. However, in dealing with outsiders people mostly switch to Amharic or another language. Outsiders, like teachers (even if they have lived for many years in the area) usually do not learn Sheko. Some Bench women married to Sheko men do learn Sheko. In church, Sheko is the second language, even when no outsiders are present. Most of the time, the service is interpreted from Amharic into Sheko. More socio-linguistic information can be found in SIL (2002) (data gathered in 1993). Recently, the zonal government has expressed a wish to develop mothertongue education materials for Sheko. In 2009, a trial orthography was accepted. This development may strengthen the position of the Sheko language in the future.

### 1.2.3    Dialects

Sheko is considered one language by all speakers. The main dialects of the Sheko language are usually referred to with place names. People commonly recognize three variants:
- Sheko (Sheko wäräda, spoken around Sheko town)
- Tepi (around Tepi town, in Yeki wäräda)
- Guraferda (Guraferda wäräda)

Formerly, dialects called Bulla and Dorsha or Daanyir were reported (Conti Rossini 1937; Straube 1963; SIL 2002), but according to my informants these do not exist, cf. Aklilu (1988:vi). 'Daanyir' is a Majangir clan with many people from Sheko origin, according to Unseth (1998). While Sheko and Tepi variants do not differ much from each other, the most divergent dialect appears to be the Guraferda variant. People in Sheko town can tell a few words which are different in the Guraferda and Tepi variant (the item 'four' is popular: **kūbm̄** in Sheko vs. **kīrkū** in Tepi and Guraferda). Generally, the people in Sheko do not know in what other respects the Guraferda variant is different, but they do not readily understand the dialect since most Shekos have hardly any contact with people from Guraferda. However, they maintain that it is the same language and, according to some, "the original way of speaking Sheko." People from Guraferda identify themselves and the language they speak as Sheko. They usually understand speakers from Sheko town better than vice versa.

Below, a few examples of lexical differences between the Sheko and Guraferda variants are given. These include kinship terms; basic verbs; quantifiers, and others. Tone in the Gurafera list is very tentative.

(2)   *Sheko*       *Guraferda*                    *English gloss*
      yááb         yám̀                           'man, person'
      báádù        óʈʂú                           'younger sibling'
      bāāyā        gāāzì                          'lion'
      éd           ʃéébú                          'mouth'
      ʔyáts'ń       ʃāātā                          'moon'
      sə́g          t'aay                          'see'
      maak         gants                          'tell'
      tʃór         bóór    (Sh: 'move away') 'finish'
      k'yaas       oy      (Sh: 'reject')    'leave'
      kéta         ùfa                            'all'
      āngā         nòka                           'much'

From data gathered during two short visits to Kuki and Samərta in Guraferda, it appears that there are considerable grammatical differences between the variant of Sheko spoken around Sheko-town and the variant spoken in Guraferda. This

goes from pronouns which resemble those in Diizi (section 6.1.2), to different verbal morphology and sentence type marking. Further research could uncover a wealth of insights on the relation between Sheko and Diizi, the possible historical developments of Sheko and the various pathways dialects can take when they develop more or less separately.

### 1.2.4    Profile of the Sheko language

Sheko is an agglutinating language which generally follows an SOV-typology. The language is strictly verb-final, dependent clauses precede main clauses, and most affixes are suffixes, although there is one series of possessive prefixes and a gender infix. However, in the noun phrase, the unmarked order appears to be head-initial rather than head-final. Modifiers occur on both sides of the head noun, and the head noun is marked tonally if preceded by a modifier.

In the phoneme inventory, most remarkable is the series of four retroflexes (plain and ejective stops, voiceless and voiced fricatives). Vowel length is phonemic and the language has a (much-used) syllabic nasal. Sheko has four level tones and borders Benchnon which has five levels of height. Lexical tone of verbs is however restricted to two classes. Furthermore, tone on verb stems varies to reflect modal distinctions.

Nouns are marked for definiteness and gender, and indirectly for number, although nouns are basically transnumeral. Definiteness marking excludes plural marking and is always accompanied by a gender marker: -ǹ-s -DEF-M for masculine and <ì>-ǹ <F>-DEF for feminine. In compound nominals with bāāb 'father' as second element, there is apparently a gender mismatch when the compound is made definite. Surprisingly, nominal morphology is used on verbs as well: definiteness-gender marking can attach directly to verb stems in adjective derivation; and -bààb 'father' and -be 'mother', which are extensively used as nominalizers/ complementizers, can attach to Irrealis verb forms. In relative clauses, a resumptive pronoun may be present. The resumptive pronoun can occur before its antecedent, which is claimed to be rare cross-lingustically (Keenan 1985:148-149). In possessive

constructions, juxtaposed and case-marked noun phrases are employed to signal (in)alienability.

In the verb system, modal distinctions in main clauses include Imperative-Jussive (unmarked), Optative, Realis, Irrealis, Obvious and Implicative. Furthermore, negative and interrogative clauses have their own marking. Next to modal markers, there are stance markers, which indicate the attitude of the speaker towards his utterance: an indirect stance marker signals distance and is used e.g. for politeness and reported speech, whereas a direct stance marker makes an utterance more direct and less polite. Sheko distinguishes between final main verb forms, which have aspectual and modal markers, and medial verb forms, i.e. cosubordinate verbs which have no aspectual and modal markers (although the tone on the verb stem indicates modal distinction to a degree). Medial verb forms are marked for switch-reference and medial verb clauses often form long chains. The language has verb-verb sequences which can be analysed as serial verb constructions; they differ morphologically from medial clause chains in that the first verb form consists of a bare stem, and functionally in that they present actions as a single event.

Verb derivation includes causative, passive and middle. Interestingly, the reciprocal is built by causative-middle suffixes. Some experiencer verbs are causative, with the Experiencer as an object.

Interrogatives are marked in several ways. First of all, interrogatives do not have a modal marker, unlike their declarative counterparts. Dropping off a grammatical element which is obligatorily present in the declarative is one of the divergent ways in which Omotic languages mark interrogatives. Secondly, falling intonation marks clauses with a simple negative verb and negative copula as interrogative, and is optionally present in other clauses. Additionally, the form of the indirect stance marker indicates interrogativity if it is present.

Subject agreement clitics play an important role in the informational structure of a clause. When they procliticize to

the verb in main clauses or to the first constituent of medial clauses, they signal verbal predicate focus, which correlates to a topic-comment structure. When they encliticize to other hosts, they signal different informational structures. They enclitize to non-subject constituents in focus; their enclitization to certain verb stems indicates verb polarity focus; and finally, they are absent in subject focus constructions.

## 1.3    Research on Sheko

This section discusses previous linguistic work on Sheko and Majoid languages and describes the fieldwork situation and methods for the research that underlie this thesis.

### 1.3.1     Previous linguistic work

As for linguistic analysis of Sheko, there are only a few accessible data on the language. There are some unpublished fieldwork notes from the early '70s (Bender, Fleming) and we find some notes in Fleming's "Omotic overview" (Bender (1976)). The main work on Sheko is Aklilu (1988), which deals with the phonology, morphophonemics and basic syntax of the Sheko language; I started the preliminary research with his highly valuable grammar in mind. Aklilu presented some more (unpublished) materials at conferences; such as a paper on aspects of Sheko morphology (1989). The first published material on Sheko is found in a phonological comparison of Bench and two Majoid languages (1994b). Furthermore, Aklilu Yilma's 1996 article "Sheko phonology and morphophonemics" was published in the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 29(2): 23-46. Bender (2000; 2003) draws from the work by Aklilu.

The record of Majoid languages owes a lot to Aklilu as he also worked on Nayi and Diizi (see bibliography). Comparative work is limited to phonology and morphophonemics, in the pioneering work of Aklilu (2003). Furthermore, there are several articles on Diizi (Dizi), such as Allan (1976a,b); Claudi (1985); Claudi and Serzisko (1985), and two BA theses at Addis Abeba University. A major step forward in the linguistic knowledge on Diizi is the appearance of Beachy (2005).

### 1.3.2    Research for this book

My research on Sheko started with a short preliminary research in January 2005, partly financed by the Leiden University International Study Fund (LISF). In September 2005 I started my PhD studies at Leiden University in the project "The morpho-syntax of two modal categories in Omotic". [4] This project, led by prof.dr. M. Mous and dr. Azeb Amha, aimed at a comparative overview of the way Omotic languages distinguish between declaratives and interrogatives. The subproject on Sheko, as a representative language of the understudied Majoid languages, aimed at providing a detailed analysis of Sheko grammar, including an investigation of sentence types.

I went to Ethiopa for two fieldwork periods. During both stays, I took courses of a month in Amharic, which I used as a meta-language when necessary. I tried to speak Sheko when possible. The data for this thesis are mostly gathered in Boyta, a place where  almost everybody is Sheko, apart from the school teachers. I lived at the house of Ato (Qes)[5] Ayna Bejih and his family, who did everything they could to make me feel at home. I stayed with them in January 2005; two times seven weeks during my fieldwork period in the first half of 2006; 15 weeks in total in the first half of 2008 and a few days in February 2009.

Next to participant observation, for which Boyta was an ideal location, I worked with semi-structured elicitation and transcribed oral texts. The texts are an invaluably rich source of data on semantics (e.g. metaphorical use of words), structural analysis (e.g. use of certain constructions, clitic placement and word order) and discourse features (e.g. use of conjunctions and highlighting devices). As such, the texts complemented data collected through elicitation, while at the same time providing new input for elicitation. Lastly, apart from the linguistic value, the various types of texts form part of the cultural heritage of the Sheko and some will be used in alphabetisation as reading materials.

---

[4] This project is part of the endangered languages programme of the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).
[5] Ato (Amh) 'mister'; Qes (Amh) 'reverend'.

Ato Ayna was my main help during many hours of transcribing stories. He also took me to Ato Ziiti Bani and Komtu Shewa Tureta, whom we interviewed about Sheko history. Of the neighbors, Meseret Deesa took an interest in working with me, but he had left to study in Awassa when I returned to Boyta in 2008. Others who worked with me one or more times include Qes Wandimu Jarka, Ato Wondu Tadese, Adane Ayna, Mimi Deesa, Ato Ali Bejih, Marta Shibe, Siqaay Xhonu, Shanta Mashku, Mesqerem, and Asxhennaqi Beqele.

As Boyta is close to Sheko town, I used to walk every other day to town to recharge my computer. The bible translators' office kindly let me use their generator when power was off, and the translators themselves also became important language consultants: Ato Defera Xhonu (from Boyta) and Qes Pexros Kiatus (from Qorxha near Tepi). In 2008, I also met a few times with Ato Xərata Aləmu, a school teacher who grew up in Goota but has lived in Sheko town for many years. He obtained permission from the wäräda administration to join Qes Pexros, Defera and myself for a six-week tone workshop in Addis Abeba, organised by SIL in June-July 2008, during which we (finally) nailed down most of the tone system. We concentrated on the noun, noun phrase, verb paradigms and simple sentences. We also gained basic knowledge of tone in medial and subordinate clauses; tone in relative clauses is based more on extrapolation. I hope future research will refine the present tone analysis.

On trips to the Guraferda area with Qes Ayna, I learned to speak a few words of that local Sheko variety. In 2006, I shortly visited Kuki, and stayed in Samərta for ten days together with Josine van der Wal, a BA student from Leiden University. In 2008, I wanted to go as far as Dorita, but had to remain in Samərta for health reasons. I worked there for about five days with Aberra Toosu and others; the verb and clause morphology proved to be quite different from what I was used to and merits its own documentation. In this thesis, I have only included data from Guraferda (Samərta) where I thought it could further comprehension or evaluation of the Sheko data.

In February 2009, I returned to Mizan Teferi for a SIL workshop on orthography and learned new things from the enthousiast participants Pextros Kiatus, Defera Xhonu, Ayna Bejih, Xərata Aləmu, Gaata Zentu, Gutema Chukusa, Aberra Toosu, and Adisu Ayina. Unfortunately, there was no time to do much checking of earlier work.

### 1.3.3 The present study

The aim of this book is a descriptive grammar of Sheko, which includes phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language. In presenting the analysis, terminology is kept as basic as possible to ensure accessible reading for people from different theoretical backgrounds; terminology which is particular to a single theory is avoided. The presentation is data-intensive, and some texts are made available in the appendix. In this way, the reader is invited to check the analysis and come up with counter-analyses where necessary.

Although this work is first and foremost descriptive, I have added comparative notes wherever I thought it might be fruitful. The careful reader will discover a tendency to cite from works on Benchnon, Zargulla and Dime in particular. Benchnon is the geographical neighbor of Sheko and belongs to North Omotic, together with Zargulla. Dime is a South Omotic language. Since the classification of Majoid languages has switched from being North Omotic to being South Omotic, it makes sense to look for parallels in both branches of the family. Moreover, the research project of which my work forms a part is in many ways a continuation from earlier research on Dime and Zargulla. In addition, Sheko is compared in a few places with its sister languages Diizi and Nayi.

### 1.3.4 Orthography and representation

The Sheko data are represented using IPA symbols, following the recommendations of the International Phonetic Association except in a few cases (see section 2.1.2). The main exceptions are the Africanist use of **y** for **j** and the absence of a written glottal stop in word-initial position before a vocoid. Tone is written v̀ v v̄ and v́ from lowest (1) to highest (4). Contour tones other than v̌ or v̂ on a short vowel have been represented

with the end point symbol on the following consonant (e.g.
b̄ārkā ̀ɣ̀ 'monkey').

The transcription of Sheko data generally follows a
surface-phonemic principle, except when it occurs between
phonetic brackets. Applying this principle means that an
allophone of an underlying phoneme is written different from
the default realisation if the allophone can be represented by
(is very similar to) the default realisation of another phoneme.
Thus, the syllabic nasal / ṇ /, which is underlying alveolar but
assimilates to the preceding or following consonant is written
m̩ when it has the phonetic value of [ m̩ ] adjacent to a labial.
If the allophone does not correspond to an existing Sheko
phoneme, it is represented by the default realisation, e.g. the
phonetic value of the syllabic nasal adjacent to a post-alveolar
or velar [ ɲ̩, ŋ̩ ] is written ṇ since ɲ and ŋ are not phonemic in
Sheko. Exceptions are the dative case marker following first
person pronouns, which is written -ŋ̀ (basic form -kŋ̀); and verb
forms of the verb noŋ 'talk' without adjacent velar (cf. nóógù
'word, language'). The surface-phonemic principle is generally
not followed in the rules that simplify or delete a stop
preceding a syllabic nasal.

Verbs are cited in their Imperative form. Verbs and nouns
whose lexical tone is not known are marked by the symbol ° in
the gloss. In transcriptions between phonetic brackets and
elsewhere, post-lexical H-spreading is not represented.

Translations have been kept quite literal. In some cases, an
even more literal wording follows between brackets if it may
help to understand the Sheko structure better. In a few cases,
possible additional translations are added which may help to
highlight the sense of the utterance. Usually, only one
translation is given (often based on the context of the example)
where several translations lie within the semantic scope (in or
out of context). For instance, an Irrealis form can be rendered
only with a deontic modal verb form (*should*), whereas other
modal values (*could*, *would*) as well as habitual and generic
also fall within the scope of the Irrealis. In the glosses, Sheko
names are generally represented in the Sheko orthography,
unless a well-known English equivalent exist. Thus, ṣókú is

glossed Sʼoku. In the translation and running text I use
<Sheko>, as that name is common in the literature. The
Sheko alphabet is presented in Appendix B.

# 2    Phonology

This chapter discusses the phonological inventory of Sheko and the possible combinations of sounds.

Sheko has 28 consonant phonemes, 5 long and 6 short vowel phonemes and a syllabic nasal phoneme. Furthermore, it has four tonemes. The phonemes, their possible combinations and allomorphs are discussed, as well as word structure.

The phonology of Sheko has much in common with Benchnon, its geographical neighbor. Aklilu (1994b) draws attention to the phonological similarities in his article on phonological comparison of Benchnon and two Majoid languages, concluding that Benchnon has more in common with Majoid than with Ometo.

## 2.1    Consonants

### 2.1.1    Consonant phonemes overview

Sheko has the following consonant phonemes:

|  | labial | alveolar | post-alveolar | retroflex | velar | glottal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ejective stops | p' | t' |  |  | k' |  |
| voiceless stops |  | t |  |  | k | ʔ |
| voiced stops | b | d |  |  | g |  |
| ejective affricates |  | ts' | tʃ' | tʂ' |  |  |
| voiceless affricates |  | ts | tʃ | tʂ |  |  |
| voiceless fricatives | f | s | ʃ | ʂ |  | h |
| voiced fricatives |  | z | ʒ | ʐ |  |  |
| nasal | m | n |  |  |  |  |
| tap |  | r |  |  |  |  |
| approximants |  |  | y |  | w |  |

Table 1. Consonant inventory

The phonological representation follows the conventions of the International Phonetic Alphabet, except in the following cases: affricates are not marked by a tie bar (**ts** = $\widehat{\text{ts}}$); **r** is used instead of **ɾ**; and **y** is used for IPA **j**, following Africanist tradition.

As a writing convention, word-initial glottal stop is not written before a vowel or syllabic nasal. (Tone is written v́, v̄, v, v̀ from high to low.)

The phoneme inventory given here is basically the same as Aklilu (1988).

### 2.1.2     Notes on the table

The sibilants in table 1 are put in a box, because of the sibilant harmony which applies to this group of phonemes. Sibilant harmony is discussed in section 2.5.4 and 3.1, *PR 13*. In the context of Omotic languages, the series of retroflex sibilants is unique to the Majoid languages. It occurs in Sheko, Nayi and the western dialects of Diizi (Aklilu 2003:66). The equivalent segments in the neighboring Benchnon language are analysed as alveo-palatals (Rapold 2006:64).

The velar nasal **ŋ** is not considered phonemic. In all cases, **ŋ** is adjacent to a velar and can thus be analysed as an assimilated **n**. Therefore **ŋ** is not represented in table 1. In two cases, a velar element is only found in related words. In the dative first person pronoun, the dative marker is -**ŋ̀**; in other environments the dative is [ -**kŋ̀** ]. Secondly, verb forms of the verb **noŋ** 'talk, discuss' contain an **ŋ**; the corresponding noun **nóógù** 'word, matter, language' has a voiced velar stop. In Diizi, however, **ŋ** is phonemic. It is contrastive in word-final position following a vowel, according to Beachy (2005:29).

The labio-velar phoneme **w** is grouped with the velar consonants, because it does not trigger labialisation of **n** as the labial consonants do (see section 2.3.1 for examples). In initial position, **w** occurs only preceding the back vowels **o** and **u.**

Sheko has no contrast between **l** and **r**, unlike the other Majoid languages and unlike Benchnon. **l** has merged into **r** in Sheko (Aklilu 1994b:1055, 1061). Furthermore, **r** does not appear in

word-initial position. Loanwords starting with **l** or **r** in the source language are pronounced with an initial **n** in Sheko.

(1)  **níkí**    'right, correct' < **lĭkk** (Amh)
     **námád** 'be used to'    < **lämmädä** (Amh)
     **nado**   'radio°'       < **radion, radio** (Amh/ Ital/ Engl)
                               (~ **nadiyo, radiyon, rediyo**)
     **nobra**  'airplane°'    < **awroplan** (Amh)
                               (Guraferda dialect)

### 2.1.3    Geminated consonants

Geminated consonants are rare, except in emphatic expressions such as ideophones (2) and elatives (3). Therefore, gemination has a clear functional load (i.e. it codes intensity), but hardly any lexical load.

(2)  **dóddo** 'very red'
     **óʃʃoʃ** 'look intently'

(3)  **kɛ̃tta**  'all'         cf. **kéta** 'all'
     **nɛ̃ʃʃā**  'very firmly'  cf. **nèʃā** 'firmly'

A few adverbs (4) have a geminated consonant. Two nouns vary in pronunciation between a single and geminated consonant (5).

(4)  **ṣòtta**  'distant'
     **syàtta** 'quietly'

(5)  **kādū ~ kāddū**    'three'
     **toka ~ tokka**    'dot, full stop°'

### 2.1.4    Series to substantiate phonemic status

This section presents data to indicate the phonemic status of the consonants given above. The data is ordered first according to place of articulation, while manner of articulation is kept constant, and secondly according to manner of articulation and airstream mechanism, while place of articulation is kept constant. Sibilants are presented in additional environments in order to show that vowel quality does not affect their

articulation. At the end, the phonemic status of the glottal consonants **ʔ** and **h** versus the approximants **w** and **y** is illustrated.

*contrasting place of articulation:*

**p' - t' - k'**    word-initial

(6)    **p'éép'**    'pray'
       **t'eer**    'swell'
       **k'eet'**    'swallow'

       word-medial

(7)    **ōp'ā**    'vine sp.'
       **k'ōt'à**    'comb'
       **ʂūk'à**    'stiff porridge'

       word-final

(8)    **ʂááp'**    'tear off'
       **káát'**    'dig, hoe'
       **tʃaak'**    'have a headache'

**t - k - ʔ**    word-initial

(9)    **tarà**    'wasp'
       **karà**    'leaf'
       **árà**    'brains, thought'

       word-medial

(10)    **kátá**    'grass sp.'
        **bākā**    'tree sp.'
        **dáʔà**    'battering, to batter'

       word-final

(11)    **kyát**    'sting'
        **mák**    'measure in cups'
        **dáʔ**    'batter, make dough'

**b - d - g**       word-initial

(12)  **bārkā**  'thigh'
      **dargà**  'plant sp.'
      **gárgá**  'termite'

          word-medial

(13)  **záábá**  'line'   (also **záábà**)
      **gāādā**  'wall'
      **náágá**  'iron'

          word-final

(14)  **daab**  'create'
      **máád**  'deceive'
      **daag**  'invite'

**t' - ts' - tʃ' - ʈʂ'** word-initial

(15)  **t'árà**   'injera'
      **ts'ámà**  'eagle'
      **tʃ'áárù** 'waterfall stone'
      **ʈʂ'át'ì** 'top ring of grass roof'

          word-medial

(16)  **ʃīrt'ū**   '(clan name)'
      **hárts'ù** 'top of tree' (also **hárts'ú**)
      **p'èrtʃū** 'grass sp.'
      **k'árʈʂ'ú** 'wrist/ ankle joint'

          word-final

(17)  **báát'**  'turn away'
      **ts'ááts'** 'shine (sun)'
      **bátʃ'**  'be angry'
      **k'aaʈʂ'** 'hit with stone'

          preceding **i**

(18)  t'īsì̀          'bird sp.'
      ts'ír          'clay'
      tʃ'írú         'unripeness, being green'
      gèètʂ'=í-k     'she laughed'

            following **i**

(19)  mīt'ì̀         'pepper'
      gits'          'girdle, put on trousers/ skirt'
      íítʃà          'witchcraft, evil'
      -

            preceding **u**

(20)  t'uus          'know'
      ts'úúts'       'whistle'
      tʃ'úbí         'small knife'
      tʂ'ūūrū        'knot of a tree'

            following **u**

(21)  nūūt'ū         'wild animal'
      ts'úúts'       'whistle'
      mútʃà          'bird of prey sp.'
      búútʂ'         'pluck (chicken)'

**t - ts - tʃ - tʂ**   word-medial

(**tʃ** and **tʂ** do not appear in word-initial position)

(22)  kátá          'grass sp.'
      yatsà         'flat basket'
      batʃà         'bed'
      hāātʂ'ā       'shoot at treetrunk'

            preceding **i**

(23)  **tīītī**           'back'
      **útsì**           'fly'
      **kóótʃì**         'mother-in-law'
      **keeʈʂ=í-k**      'she spins, twists'

             following **i**

(24)  **tíít**   'look, stare'
      **iits**   'boil'
      **ditʃ**   'sneeze'
      -

             preceding **u**

(25)  **tīītù**   'bird of prey sp.'
      **bītsù**   'fern'
      **gāātʃū**  'teff'
      **kúʈʂú**   'hand, arm'

             following **u**

(26)  **ūtī**    'love'
      **útsì**   'fly'
      **kútʃì**  'chicken'
      **buʈʂà**  'nest'

**f - s - ʃ - ʂ - h**  word-initial

(27)  **fāānà**  'fork (in branch, in road)'
      **sāāyā**  'fable'
      **ʃāārà**  'song'
      **ʂáánà**  'baldness'
      **háárá**  'knife'

             word-medial

(28)  **kafà**   'bird'
      **kasà**   'mamba'
      **bākāʃà** 'three-legged stool'
      **máʂá**   'flat storage place under the **dámà** rack'
      **kyáhà**  'stake (for stretching a hide)'

word-final

(29)    **syaf**    'be wet, rotten'
       **myás**    'hew'
       **máʃ**    'be patient'
       **aʂ**    'plant'
       **ts'áh**    'dry, ripen'

preceding **i**

(30)    **fīīsī**    'afterbirth (of humans)'
       **sítsú**    'hair'
       **ʃítɨ̀**    'lake'
       **ʂííʐ**    'plant sp. (parasitic)'

following **i**

(31)    **ʃiif**    'add'
       **síís**    'listen'
       **yiiʃ**    'pull out, dig up'
       **giiʂ**    '1. pull 2. abduct for marriage'

preceding **u**

(32)    **fūūk'ū**    'straw'
       **súkú**    'rope, vein'
       **ʃúfá**    'smell'
       **ʂúúkù**    'handle'

following **u**

(33)    **dúúf**    'hit'
       **fus**    'finish a period of time'
       **kuʃ**    'be sick'
       **wúʂ**    'kill'
       **búh**    'bark'

**z - ʒ - ʐ**      word-initial

(34)  zārā   'seed'
      ʒáʒá   'peace'
      ẓaak'ǹ  'afternoon'

      word-final

(35)  gaz    'snap, break'
      kááʒ   'be happy'
      gaaẓ   'prune'

      preceding **i**

(36)  zīrkū        'day'
      ʒírbí        'cotton'
      mùẓ=í-k      'she shredded'

      preceding **u**

(37)  zūmà   'veins and ribs of plant'
      ʒufì   'bat'
      gòrẓū  'lizard' (also **gòrẓūbe**)

**m - n**        word-initial

(38)  maarù  'mercy'
      nāārū  'wind'

      word-medial

(39)  gōōmā  'equal (born during the same period of time)'
      gōōnā  'beehive half'

      word-final

(40)  daam   'plant (v.) sticks for yam'
      gaan   'make consenting noises'

*contrasting manner of articulation, voicing and airstream
mechanism*

**p' - f - b - m**   word-initial

(41)  **p'urk'**  'be uprooted'
      **fuur**   'trade'
      **búr**    '1. flow by; 2. ask payment of a debt'
      **mū̠sk'n̄** 'swim'

         word-final

(42)  **s̠ááp'**  'tear off'
      **kaaf**   'build'
      **k'ááb**  'pour out'
      **k'áám**  'rear someone else's child'

**t - t' - d - n - r - y**    word-initial

(43)  **tárà**   'spur'
      **t'árà**  'injerra'
      **dárú**   'plant sp.'
      **náánú**  'elder brother'
      **-**
      **yākū**   'six'

      (**r** does not occur word-initially)

         word-final

(44)  **kyát**   'sting'
      **mat'**   'ferment'
      **gad**    'start'
      **án**     'put'
      **ár**     'think'
      **áy**     'dance'

**ts' - ts - s - z**   word-intial

(45)  **ts'ámà**  'bird of prey sp.'
      **-**
      **sam**    'remain behind'
      **zámà**   'machete'

(**ts** does not occur word-initially)

       word-final

(46)    **ts'úúts'** 'whistle'
          **búúts** 'cut with horizontal movement, mow'
          **boos** 'filter'
          **booz** 'stroll'

**tʃ' - tʃ - ʃ - ʒ**   word-medial

(47)    **dāātʃ'ù** 'worm'
          **gāātʃū** 'teff'
          **tāāʃū** 'skirt of grass'
          **gāāʒū** 'sideboards, whiskers'

**tʂ' - tʂ - ʂ - ʐ**   word-medial/-final

(48)    **k'aatʂ'** 'hit with a stone'
          **hāātʂā** 'shoot at treetrunk, bud (n.)'
          **ááʂ**    'stand'
          **gaaʐ**  'prune'

**ʔ - h - k - k'- g** word-initial

(49)    **árà**     'brains'
          **háárá** 'knife'
          **karà**   'leaf'
          **k'árá**  'newly, raw, green'
          **gárgá** 'termite'

       word-final

(50)    **gyáʔ**  'chew'
          **ts'áh**  'dry, ripen'
          **ʃák**   'weave'
          **kák'**  'suspend, hang'
          **nyag**  'be spread out'

*contrasting the approximants and glottal consonants*

**ʔ - h - w - y**    word-initial

(51)   **ááb**   '1. eye; 2. fruit'
       **hāāy**   'water'
       **yááb**   'man'
       **-**

       (**w** and **y** are in complementary distribution in word-initial position, see section 2.4.1)

              word-medial

(52)   **dáʔà**   'battering, to batter'
       **kyáhà**  'stake for stretching hides'
       **dayà**   'bow'
       **kawà**   'fat'

              word-final

(53)   **baʔ**    'carry on back'
       **ts'áh**  'dry, ripen'
       **k'áy**   'rise'
       **ts'aw**  'darken, become black'

## 2.2    Vowels

### 2.2.1    Vowel phonemes overview

Sheko has the following vowels:

(54)   **i  ii**                    **u  uu**

       **e  ee**        **ə**        **o  oo**

                    **a  aa**

Long vowels are written with double graphs instead of a colon.

The schwa (ə) has no long counterpart like the other vowels. Its pronunciation varies; for some people, including my consultants from the Boyta area, the schwa somewhat

resembles [e], while for others it is almost pronounced as [ɑ]. The schwa appears to be not very frequent in lexical items, but it also occurs in some frequently used grammatical morphemes, e.g. the indirect stance marker -ə.

(55)  gə́rī̄            'head'
      sə́rì            'legume sp.'
      gōp'ə̄rà ~ gōp'ārà   'boulder'
      ʃə̄ʃkn̄         'snake sp.'
      ʃə́t'ì           'maize'

According to one language consultant, the independent pronouns given in (56) also have a schwa. However, all other consultants disagreed.

(56)  yeta ~ yəta     'you (sg)'
      nata ~ nəta     'I'
      náta ~ nə́ta     'we'

The status of schwa in Omotic is difficult. Bender (2003) mentions a sound correspondence **a**~**e** and suggests it might be a sixth vowel, but it is not straightforwardly reconstructable for proto-Omotic (see Bender 2003:133-4; 263; 311).

The vowels **e, o** and **ə** do not occur as terminal vowel in nouns underlyingly. One word with final **ay** contracts to **e**, notably **bá̀y** ~ **bé** 'mother'.

### 2.2.2    Vowel length

All vowels except schwa occur short and long. To support the phonemic status of vowel length, the following pairs are given:

(57)  dīīk'n̄   'be mute, dumb'       díkǹ   'heel'
      k'iiş    'milk'                 k'íş    'drink'

      ēēd      'door'                 éd      'mouth'
      k'éédà   'ring'                 k'ēdā   'oath'
      ééná     'wealth'               énà     'later today'
      k'eets'  '1. be sharp           k'ets'  'roast cooked food
                2. catch fire'                 on coals' (caus.)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| dāādū | 'lightning' | dādū | 'child' |
| zāārā | 'clan' | zárá | 'fly sp.' |
| báár | 'take a mouthful' | bár | 'become blind' |
| gaar | 'bear fruit (non-tuber)' | gar | 'sing drunkenly' |
| maak | 'tell' | mák | 'measure in cups' |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bōōtā | 'dust' | bōtā | 'big mortar' |
| gōōnā | 'beehive half' | gōnā | 'tree sp.' |
| oorà | 'snare' | órá | 'wet dung' |
| bóór | 'move to far area' | bór | 'curse (revocable)' |
| toos | 'bind on rope to haul up' | tos | 'storytell' |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| búúrá | 'waist-cloth' | burà | 'flood' |
| kúúʃú | 'plant sp.' | kuʃ(u) | 'sickness' |
| ts'úúts' | 'whistle' | ts'uts' | 'itch' |
| búúr | 'slaughter a pregnant animal' | búr | '1. flow; 2. ask for payment of a debt' |

In nouns, long vowels are restricted to the initial syllable. Verb stems mostly consist of only one syllable and the vowel can be long or short. Long vowels cannot co-occur with complex codas in the same syllable.

## 2.3   Syllabic nasal

In addition to the vowels, Sheko has syllabic nasals. A syllabic nasal forms the nucleus of a syllable and bears tone, just like vowels. On the other hand, a syllabic nasal differs from vowels in the way it is distributed.

### 2.3.1      Nasal assimilation

The syllabic nasal is analysed as alveolar underlyingly, since the place of articulation is alveolar preceding glottal consonants (58a,b) (and preceding alveolar consonants (58c,d)).

(58)   a.   n̩=hàày-k            [ ʔn̩ɦààyk ]

        1SG=spend.night-REAL

        'I spent the night'

b. ṇ̩=ʔom-k        [ ʔṇ̩omk ]
     1SG=replete-REAL
     'I am replete (ate my fill)'

c. ṇ̩=dòòr-k        [ ʔṇ̩dòòrk ]
     1SG=run-REAL
     'I ran'

d. ṇ̩=ts'èsǹ-k        [ ʔṇ̩ts'èsɳ̀k ]
     1SG=be.satified-REAL
     'I am satisfied'

The syllabic nasal assimilates in place to the adjacent consonant.

(59)    ts'āp'm̄      [ ts'āp'm̄ ]      'root'
       básń        [ básń ]        'doorstep'
       tútʃǹ        [ tútɲ̀ ]        'top of the head'
       ṣúk'ń        [ ṣúk'ŋ́ ]        'eyebrow'

Orthographical note: Syllabic nasal is written as m̩ when it is adjacent to a labial, and ṇ in all other cases. Thus, assimilation to palatal or velar place of articulation is not indicated, except between phonetic brackets. See *PR 9. Assimilation of alveolar nasals* in section 3.1 for further description of nasal assimilation.

The phoneme **w** triggers velarization of a nasal, rather than labialization. Therefore it is presented together with velar consonants rather than bilabial consonants in the consonant overview at the beginning of this chapter. The example below demonstrates that **w** patterns with the velar consonants.

(60)   a.     m̩=bààs-kì-k        [ ʔm̩bààskɪ̄k ]
          1SG=want-exist-REAL
          'I want'

     b.     ṇ̩=gèètʂ'ù-kì-k        [ ʔŋ̩gèètʂ'ɔ̀kɪ̄k ]
          1SG=laugh-exist-REAL
          'I am laughing'

c.  ṇ=wuṣ-kì-k          [ ʔŋwuṣkìk ]
1SG=kill-exist-REAL

'I am killing'

### 2.3.2    Distribution

The distribution of the syllabic nasal in nouns is restricted to the second syllable.

(61)  ʃāp'm̄   'larvae of bees'     dīkṅ̀    'heel'
      kūbm̄    'four'               kōōkn̄   'road'
      ʈʂ'ádṅ̀  'war'                ts'íík'ṅ̀  'charcoal'
      ūūtṅ̀    'rat'                ʔyáts'ń  'moon'
      sagṅ̀    'nine'               úʃń      'flower'
      kásń    'whiskers'           góórzń   'throat, gullet'
      ʔyázń   'right'              ʃōrṅ̀    'fear'

Like nouns, verb stems never have a syllabic nasal in the initial syllable. Syllabic nasals in verb stems may all be related to the middle derivation (62), see section 12.3.

(62)  zīīp'm̄   'chase away'
      dēfṣ̄n̄   'be rotten (wood)'
      gāts'n̄   'help'
      āyn̄     'think much about'
      t'ōsk'n̄   'leak'
      ts'úbm̄   'be narrow'

N.B. The syllabic nasal can occur in the first syllable of a word. The first person possessor prefixes (63) and subject clitics (64) occur word-initially.

(63)  ṇ-kyànù
      1SG.POSS-dog

      'my dog'

(64)  m̄=baʒ-ə
      1PL=work-STI

      'let us work'

### 2.3.3    The status of syllabic nasals

This section discusses evidence concerning the independent phonemic status of syllabic nasals.

The syllabic alveolar nasal is in opposition with vowels. Although the distribution of syllabic nasal is limited compared to vowels, many examples showing contrast can be found, except word-initially. Word-medial pairs are presented below.

(65)    a.    **kì＝a-k-ə**
            exist＝2SG-REAL-STI
            'you were there'

     b.    **kì＝n̩-k-ə**
            exist＝1SG-REAL-STI
            'I was there'

(66)    a.    **gyādū-s**
            rope-PL
            'ropes'

     b.    **gyād-n̄-s**
            rope-DEF-M
            'the rope'

(67)    a.    **íʃì＝t'ùsù-s-k-ə**
            3PL＝know-CAUS-REAL-STI
            'they made known'

     b.    **íʃì＝t'ùs-n̩-s-k-ə**
            3PL＝know-MIDD-CAUS-REAL-STI
            'they introduced themselves (made themselves known)'

Some word-final pairs are given in (68) and (69).

(68)    a.    **ń＝síís-â**
            1PL＝listen-put.Q
            'shall we listen?'

     b.    **ń＝síís-ń**
            1PL＝listen-MIDD
            'let us listen (for our own benefit)'

(69)   bākā    'tree sp.'
       bákń    'molar tooth'

       dōrī    'rainbow'
       dōrǹ    'running'

       gíbù    'cloud'
       gíbm̀    'wrestling'

Moreover, the tone on the syllabic nasals in (69) is not predictable: all six tonal patterns in nouns are found with final vowels as well as nasals (see section 4.7 for examples).

The opposition to consonantal nasals is a more complicated issue in Sheko, partly because of the distribution of syllabic nasals and consonantal nasals; and partly because of the scarcity of suffixes starting with a consonantal nasal. But with help of simple and morphologically complex words, opposition to consonantal nasals can be found in the same environment (the dot indicates a syllable boundary):

(70)   a.    gin.k'-ə                (non-syllabic nasal)
             doze-STI

             'doze!'

       b.    kì.=ń.-k-ə              (syllabic nasal)
             exist=1PL-REAL-STI

             'we are there'

(71)   a.    kān.tà 'basket'         (non-syllabic nasal)

       b.    tə.-ǹ.tà                (syllabic nasal)
             COP-COND

             'if it is'

(72)   a.    fín                     (non-syllabic nasal)
             descend

             'descend!'

       b.    kì.-ǹ                   (syllabic nasal)
             exist-DS

             '...is, ...'

The (b) examples are subject to optional desyllabification.

There are numerous morphemes which start with a syllabic nasal. The morphemes are from nominal as well as verbal domains. A list is presented in (73).

(73)   ṇ=    (tone 2)      1sg subject clitic
       ṇ-     (tone 2)      1sg possessor prefix
       ń=    (tone 4)      1pl subject clitic
       ń-     (tone 4)      1pl possessor prefix
       -ǹ     (tone 1)      definiteness marker
       -ṇ     (unpred.)    (terminal vowel/ nominalizer)
       -ṇ     (tone 3/4)   state negation marker
       -ṇ     (tone 3/4)   middle derivation
       -ṇ     (tone 3/4)   purpose
       -ǹ     (tone 1)      different subject switch-reference
       -ǹtà  (tone 1.1)   conditional

There is only one suffix which starts with a non-syllabic nasal. This is the conjunction -**ná** 'or'. Contrasting forms which are morphologically complex can be found. Examples are given in (74) and (75).

(74)   a.    **fāāfā-ná**      **māngō**
          papaya-or      mango
          'papaya or mango'

     b.    **ééz-ǹ-s-ka**      **úk'-ń-s-ka**
          honey-DEF-M-COOR    milk-DEF-M-COOR
          'the honey and the milk'

(75)   a.    **gēbe-ṇ-o**
          queen-1SG.POSS-STI.ADDR
          'oh my queen'

     b.    **gēbe-ná**
          queen-or
          'a queen?'

     c.    **yàb-m̄-o**
          man-1SG.POSS.VOC-STI.ADDR
          'oh my friend'

d.  **yááb-má**
    man-or
    'a man/person?'

Given the number of grammatical morphemes containing ŋ̩, the clear opposition to vowels and the opposition to consonantal nasals, as well as the distribution of tone on the syllabic nasal, the syllabic nasal can be established as an independent phoneme of Sheko.

The following remark relates to the tone on syllabic nasals. The tone of most morphemes in (73) is predictable from the preceding tone. After a non-factual verb stem (which can have tone 3 or 4 depending on lexical class), the syllabic nasal has tone 3 or 4 (e.g. for permissive, purpose) and after a factual verb stem with tone 1 or 2 it has tone 1 (e.g. for DS, COND). After nouns, the definiteness marker has tone 1 if the noun is monosyllabic and otherwise it has the same tone as the terminal vowel would have. However, the tone on the minimal pairs ŋ̩ 'I' vs. ń 'we' cannot be explained by tone rules. Also, the tone of the terminal vowel is unpredictable, see (76) below.

(76)  **dōrŋ̀**  'race'     **door**  'run'
      **sīp'm̄**  'awl'      **siip'**  'sew'
      **ʔyázń**  'ability'  **ʔyáz**  'be able'

### 2.3.4    A bilabial syllabic nasal?

As has been discussed in the previous section, syllabic nasals are phonemic, at least the alveolar syllabic nasal. From the existing literature on Sheko, the status of the bilabial nasal is unclear. The data of the present research are not conclusive either.

Aklilu (1994b) posits one alveolar (syllabic) nasal, which assimilates in place. However, Aklilu (2003:60) has both m̩ and ŋ̩ as phonemes. It is stated that diachronically the syllabic nasals come from *um and *un respectively (Aklilu 2003:77-78). His data are the following:

(77)

| | Sheko | Nayi | Dizi | Proto-Maji |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ashes[6] | ts'eákn̩ | ts'eákn̩ | ts'yákn̩ | *ts'eákun |
| grandfather | ákn̩ | ákú | ákn̩ | *ákun |
| short[7] | ʃík'n̩s | ʃík' | ʃíguz | *ʃík'uns |
| eat! | m̩ | m̩ | m̩ | *um |
| tomorrow | bern̩ | bearn̩ | byaru | *bearun |
| wide | (h)aʃkn̩shaaʃu | haaʃuz | | *haaʃkuns |
| bark (of tree) | órk'n̩ | - | ork'ú | *ork'ún |
| four | kubm̩ | kubm̩ | kubm̩ | *kubum |
| die | ʃub | ʃubm̩ | ʃubu | *ʃubum |
| green | tʃ'irn̩s | tʃ'ilu | tʃ'iluz | *tʃ'iluns |

It is possible that **\*un** and **\*um** are the sources of the present day sounds in nouns. But it needs to be noted that the syllabic **m** always occurs adjacent to a bilabial, and the occurrence of this syllabic nasal can be accounted for by assimilation. There is one exception where **m** is not adjacent to a bilabial, i.e. the verb 'eat'. This verb is given as **m̩** for the three daughter languages. It is analysed **ʔm** in Diizi (Beachy 2005).

In my corpus of Sheko, the stem for 'eat' alternates between **ʔúm-** (78) and **m-** (79). In example (78), the subject agreement marker does not assimilate, which it would if it were adjacent to a bilabial.

(78)  a.    **n̩＝ʔum-kì-k**    [ ʔn̩umkɨk ]    *[ ʔm̩m̩kɨk ]

          1SG＝eat-exist-REAL

          'I am eating.'

     b.    **úm-árá**        **k'é-ə**

          eat-NEG          remain-STI

          'Don't eat!'

(79)  a.    **m-â**

          eat-INF

          'to eat/eating'

---

[6] In my data: **ts'yākn̩** 'ashes'; **ākā** (vocative **ákn̩**) 'grandfather'; **ʃík'** 'be short'; **um/ m–** 'eat', **byārn̩** 'tomorrow'; **hāʂkn̩** 'be wide'; **ōrk'n̩** 'peelings' (**gōp'ārà** 'bark'); **kūbm̩** 'four'; **ʂúb** 'die'; **tʃ'ír–n̩–s** 'green' (**tʃ'ír** 'be wet, unripe, fresh (maize)').

[7] The adjectives 'short', 'wide' and 'green' are words consisting of multiple morphemes, i.e. a verb root plus nominal suffixes. See section 7.2.

b. **há = m-á-m**
3MS = eat-put-IRR
'he will eat'

However, a single syllabic nasal is accepted as a possible pronunciation of the (affirmative) imperative, as in (80).

(80) **úm**          [ **ʔúm** ] ~ [ **m̀** ]
eat
'eat!'

Apart from **m-/úm** 'eat', there is a syllabic bilabial nasal as an allomorph of the Irrealis marker **-m**. Its syllabicity seems to depend on the CV-structure: only in (81c) and (d), where a consonant follows, does it occur as a syllabic nasal. In (a) and (b), there would be three or four nucloid elements following each other if the bilabial nasal were syllabic. On account of (d), one could posit the syllabic bilabial nasal as the underlying form, but it needs to be noted that all occurrences of it are with the form **-m-bààb** and it could thus be syllabic analoguous to (c) (since CVC stems are frequent and CV stems rare). Moreover, the form in (d) is given as [ **há.kīm.bààb** ] as well. Therefore, it would also be possible to posit the non-syllabic labial as the underlying form. (Besides, it is hard to hear the difference between a syllabic and non-syllabic bilabial nasal in this context, in spoken as well as in whistled speech, since the syllabic nasal is silent in whistling).

(81) a. **há = sə́g-á-m-ə**
3MS = see-put-IRR-STI
'he will see'

b. **há = séé-m-ə**
3MS = see.NV-IRR-STI
'he might see'

c. **há = sə́g-m̀-bààb-ə**
3M = see-IRR-father-STI
'he must see'

d. **há = kī-m̄-bààb**
3MS = exist-IRR-father
'who will live'

There is no other place in Sheko where questions arise about the necessity of positing a second (bilabial) syllabic nasal as a phoneme.

It should be noted that for the other Majoid languages the verb 'eat' is the only 'evidence' given for positing m̥ as a phoneme. However, in Benchnon, the dative m̥ on pronouns is underivable and gives evidence for the phonemic status of m̥ in addition to the verb 'eat'. Still, its distribution remains very limited (Rapold 2006:55-62).

## 2.4   Phonotactics

### 2.4.1      Occurrence restrictions in word-initial position

The phoneme **r** does not occur word-initially, except in the ideophonic word **rururu** '[call a cat]'.

The non-ejective affricative sibilants **ts**, **tʃ**, **tʂ** do not occur in word-initial position.

**w** in word-initial position only occurs when followed by a back vowel **o** or **u**, whereas **y** in word-initial position only occurs when followed by a front vowel **i** or **e** or by **a**[8]. **w** and **y** are thus in complementary distribution in word-initial position. In other positions, they are contrastive, as shown in the last series of section 2.1.4.

Non-initial sequences of **y** and a back vowel or **w** and a front vowel do occur on morpheme boundaries.

(82)   **bǎy-o**
        mother.VOC-STI.ADDR
        'oh mother'

(83)   **kyàw=í-k**
        shout=3FS-REAL
        'she did shout'

---

[8] The word 'uniform' is borrowed as **yinifo(r)m** accordingly.

Finally, the consonant-vowel sequences **p'a**, **p'i** and **p'o** have not been found in word-initial position.

### 2.4.2    Restrictions on combinations of consonants and vowels

The non-ejective affricative sibilants **ts**, **tʃ**, **tʂ** are not attested preceding **e**, **ə** and **o** in mono-morphemic words, because they do not occur in word-initial position, and the vowels **e**, **ə** and **o** do not occur as final vowel of nouns or other mono-morphemic words. However, verbs ending in one of these consonants can suffix the indirect stance markers **-ə** and **-o**. Furthermore, the sequences **ots** and **itʂ** are not attested in mono-morphemic words.

The ejective affricate sibilants also have gaps in their distribution with respect to vowels. The sequences **tʃ'e**, **itʂ'**, **otʂ'**, **tʂ'e**, **tʂ'i**, and **tʂ'o** are not attested in mono-morphemic words in my corpus.

The fricative voiced sibilants too display a few gaps. Sequences that are not attested so far in mono-morphemic words are **iz**, **eʒ**, **eʐ**, and **ʒo**. For **ʐ**, which is rare, **ʐa** is the only consonant-vowel sequence found in mono-morphemic words.

These gaps may be due to the relative infrequency of the sibilants in question and the distribution of the vowels.

Other unattested vowel-consonant sequences in mono-morphemic words are **uw**, **ih**, **iʔ**, **eʔ**, **oʔ** and the consonant-vowel sequence **p'o**.

### 2.4.3    Restrictions occurring with the syllabic nasal

In mono-morphemic words, only stops (84) and fricatives (85) occur as onset in a syllable with a nasal nucleus.

| (84) | ʂòr.t'n̄ | 'lungs' |
|---|---|---|
| | dūp'.k'ǹ | 'leaf at the bottom part of an ensete' |
| | mūʂ.k'n̄ | 'swim' |
| | zér.kn̄ | 'time' |

|  | wōʃ.kn̄ | 'move' |
|--|---------|--------|
|  | yár.bm̄ | 'blood' |
|  | úr.gǹ | 'hail' |

| (85) | ʃūr.fm̄ | 'slurp' |
|------|---------|---------|
|  | kúy.sǹ | 'drizzle' |
|  | būr.ʃn̄ | 'slip' |
|  | dēf.ṣn̄ | 'be rotten' |
|  | góór.ẓ́n | 'gullet' |

The only consonants which can follow the syllabic nasal are voiceless sibilants. This is the masculine gender marker -s and its allomorphs following the definiteness marker -n.

| (86) | sārk-n̄-s | [ sār.kn̄s ] |
|------|-----------|-------------|
|  | be.hot.NV-DEF-M | |
|  | 'hot' (adjective) | |

|  | k'éétṣ'-ń-ṣ | [ k'éét̪.ʔń̩ṣ ] |
|--|-------------|-----------------|
|  | be.cold-DEF-M | |
|  | 'cold' (adjective) | |

### 2.4.4    Sequences of consonants

Apart from a **Cya** onset, sequences of consonants occur in word-medial and word-final position. The word-final sequences occur for instance in Imperatives.

C1 cannot be filled by an affricate, **h** or **w**. The preferred sequences are **r** and **n** followed by a stop. However, many other combinations are possible. They are exemplified below. Note that in the verbs in (87), the sonority sequencing scale is violated, i.e. the segments do not have a decreasing sonority counting from the nucleus towards the edges of the syllable.

| (87) | dūp'k'ǹ | 'leaf at bottom of ensete' | stop - stop |
|------|---------|----------------------------|-------------|
|  | áábdà | 'floor smeared with dung' | |
|  | k'áp'ts' | 'cut (scissors)' | stop - affricate |
|  | kóbtʃ | 'make roof beams' | |
|  | mùkmūrì | 'top leaf of ensete' | stop - nasal |

|  | gubsì | 'tree sp.' | stop - fricative |
|  | zibs | 'look for, beg' | |

(88) | kāntā | 'basket' | nasal - stop |
|  | sínt'ù | 'nose' | |
|  | kāmdì | 'cow with much offspring' | |
|  | ʂōngū | 'lyre' | |
|  | wunk' | 'steal' | |
|  | díntʃà | 'black spotted maize' | nasal - affricate |
|  | damtʃ'àrà | 'ginger' | |
|  | dāmfā | 'sycamore tree' | nasal - fricative |
|  | kumʂ | 'be pulverized' | |

(89) | bìsbīrì | 'basilicum sp.' | fricative - stop |
|  | gáʃtù | 'pig' | |
|  | āʂkū | 'meat' | |
|  | ts'ezgà | 'udder' | |
|  | aft | 'be drunk' | |
|  | dāfʂù | 'evil' | fricative - fricative |
|  | mūzɽī | 'melt' | fricative - tap |

(90) | gērbī | 'armpit' | tap - stop |
|  | gúrdí | 'skirt' | |
|  | ts'ertì | 'rue (herb)' | |
|  | ts'írkú | 'diarrhea' | |
|  | k'írk' | 'bend' | |
|  | wúrts'ú | 'tadpole' | tap - affricate |
|  | úrmà | 'platform' | tap - nasal |
|  | kúrsì | 'insect sp.' | tap - fricative |
|  | gòrzū | 'lizard | |
|  | gīrfū | 'spider' | |

(91) | fayt' | 'be weak' | approximant - stop |
|  | gáydú | 'problem' | |
|  | āynā | 'grief' | approximant - nasal |
|  | ʃáyʃń | 'squirrel' (ꜰ) | approximant - fricative |

## 2.4.5 Ambiguous sequences

*Affricates*

Potentially, affricates could be analysed as a sequence of two phonemes, i.e. homorganic stop-fricative sequences. However, there are at least two reasons to analyse them as affricates, i.e. as single phonemes. First, syllabification by native speakers shows that the affricates are treated as single segments. Homorganic stop-fricative sequences are never divided over two syllables but always assigned to one syllable.

(92)  **ú .tsí**      'fly'          **ká .tʃí**     'yam'
      **wúr .ts'ú**    'tadpole'      **ʃeb .tʃà**    'taro sp.'
      **k'āb .ts'ī**   'cockroach'    **k'áá .tʂ'ù**   'ant sp.'

Secondly, the list of syllable patterns would have to be enlarged to accommodate stop-fricative sequences, but only because of homorganic ones. Homorganic stop-fricative sequences are found in all positions where other consonants are also found. While the present analysis of the sequences as affricates increases the phoneme inventory, the number of syllable patterns is kept constant. If the affricates would be analysed as sequences of separate phonemes not only the number of syllable types would have to be enlarged but also the number of phonemes, since the palatal and retroflex affricates do not have a corresponding stop. These phonemes would only occur in a homorganic sequence but nowhere else.

In short, the above arguments support an analysis of affricates as single segments.

*Vowel-glide sequences*

The following nouns and verb stems serve to show the vowel-glide sequences which could be analysed as vowel-consonant sequences, vowel-vowel sequences or diphthongs.

(93)  **gōytā**    'shaft'
      **gōydù**    'guereza monkey'
      **bóytú**    'plant sp.'
      **ʃooy**     'be spilled (of liquid)'
      **boy**      'drive'

| | |
|---|---|
| gáydú | 'problem' |
| màyzā | 'herb sp.' (var. **mèèzī**) |
| gàyzīrì | 'long knife' |
| k'áy | 'rise' |
| èywū | 'locust' |
| zey | 'attract force' |
| gúy | 'farmland which has to be tilled' |
| gūym̄ | 'bow down, worship' |
| iw | 'live, reside' (Gf.) |
| kew | 'shout' |

I analyse **y** and **w** as consonants. This does not increase syllable patterns, since the presence of codas is established independently. Furthermore, the tonal melodies for the words given above suggest that **y** and **w** do not bear tone. If **y** and **w** would be viewed as the vowels **i** and **u**, we would have to increase the vowel inventory with diphthongs or the possible syllable structures with sequences of different vowels. Therefore it is more economical to adopt the view that **y** and **w** in this position are consonants.

### *Cya* sequences
Preceding the vowel **a**, both plain consonants and consonants followed by a palatal element appear in root-initial position. Phonetically, the palatal element is heard as a short off-glide of the preceding consonant. Phonologically, I adopt an analysis of a sequence of two phonemes.

| (94) | fyáánú | [ fʸáánú ] | 'frog' |
|---|---|---|---|
| | nyākū | [ nʸākū ] | 'young man' |
| | syangà | [ sʸangà ] | 'dried vines' |
| | tyáárà | [ tʸáárà ] | 'calabash for drinking' |
| | dyaas | [ dʸaas ] | 'soak in water' |
| | k'yááf | [ k'ʸaaf ] | 'kick' |
| | tyaak' | [ tʸaak' ] | 'cut a yam root' |

So far, **t'y, ts'y, k'y, ty, ky, ʔy, by, dy, gy, fy, sy, zy, my, ny** are attested in my data. The following consonants do not have palatalised counterparts: the palatal and retroflex sibilants **tʃ**,

tʂ', ʃ, ʂ, ʒ, z̪, as well as **w, h** and **p'**. The gap for **p'** is due to scarcity of word-initial occurrence. (Consonants not mentioned do not appear in initial position.) The following pairs serve to show the distinctivity of palatalised consonants as opposed to plain consonants.

(95)  **bāà**      'crow'                **byāà**      'calf'
      **gádà**      'to start'            **gyādū**     'rope'
      **āngā**      'much, very'          **ʔyāngā**    'ram'
      **zámà**      'machete'             **zyāāmà**    'in-law'
      **kats**      'cook'                **kyats**     'fell'
      **káám**      'be lit (of light)'   **kyam**      'meet'
      **k'aatʂ'**   'hit with stone'      **k'yaas**    'leave'

There are four ways to analyse the palatal element in this position.

1. $V_1V_2$ vowel sequence. This solution goes against the lack of $V_1V_2$ sequences within single morphemes. Underlying $V_1$-$V_2$ sequences on morpheme boundaries are changed by phonological rules, so that phonetically $V_1V_2$ is not present (see section 3.1, *PR 18* and *PR 19*). If vowel sequences are allowed, it is strange to do so because of **ia** in this environment only. Note also that palatalised consonants appear before short and long vowels (**a** and **aa**); a CVVV(C) syllable would be odd.

Aklilu (1996:28-31; 2003:61-62; 79-80) has analyzed the **Cya** sequence as a vowel-vowel sequence on an underlying level, i.e. **Cea** surfacing as [ **Cʲa** ]. He does so on the basis of the following pieces of evidence (examples taken from Aklilu 2003:61-62, in my own words):

- affixation and derivation - the underlying front vowel /**e**/ is revealed when a morpheme is added, as is the passive **-t** to the stem **fyats'** 'shave' in the example below

(96)   [ **fyats'-t** ]      >      [ **fest'** ]

Commentary: although Aklilu shows how the basic stem **fyats'** could be derived from underlying **feats'** (palatalisation

preceding front vowel and deletion of the palatalizing segment) he does not go on to explain how to arrive from the underlying form at the pronunciation of the passive [**fest'**], leaving it to his readers to explain the disappearance of the other underlying vowel **a** in this case.

- deletion of front vowels at morpheme boundary - the examples given are with the relative clause marker after the verb stems **gé** 'say' and **ki** 'exist'.

(97)  /ge-àb/        >        [ gʸàb ]        'who said'
      /kì-àb/        >        [ kʸàb ]        'who lived'

- dialectal variation and cognates in Nayi

(98)  [**gyanu**]        'coffee' (around Sheko)
      [**gyenu**]        'coffee' (around Tepi)
      [**kyanu**]        'dog'   (Sheko)
      [**keenu**]        'dog'   (Nayi)

These points lead Aklilu to adopt / **Cea** / for all instances of [ **Cʸa** ] in mono-morphemic words.

Variation in pronunciation of the same word occurs even with speakers from the same area and maybe even for the same speaker at different rates of speed or different occasions. This applies to all the examples below, although with long vowels variation is less acceptable (99b).

(99)  a.   **ʔyázń**        [ʔʸázń ] ~ [ ʔézń ]    'ability'
           **tyārbū**       [ tʸārbū ] ~ [ tērbū ] 'drum'
           **byārī**        [ bʸārī ] ~ [ bērī ]   'tomorrow'

      b.   **byāāsū**       [ bʸāāsū ] ~ ?[ bēēsū  'crocodile'
           **ts'yāāts'ù**   [ ts'ʸāāts'ù ] ~ ?[ ts'ēēts'ù ]
                                                  'sunshine'

(100) a.   **fyàst'=á-k**   [ fʸàst'ák ] ~ [ fèst'ák ]
           shave.PASS=3MS-REAL
           'He was shaven'

b.     **ʔyàtʃ = á-k**      [ **ʔyàtʃák** ] ~ [ **ʔètʃák** ]
          hide.PASS = 3MS-REAL
          'It is hidden'

(101) a.     **ge-àb**          [ **gʸàb** ] ~ [ **gèb** ]
           say-REL
           'who said'

b.     **kì-àb**          [ **kʸàb** ] ~ [ **kèb** ]
          exist-REL
          'who was'

Given the fact that variation in pronunciation occurs regularly, I fail to see this as sufficient evidence for positing an underlying vowel **e**. One can view **Ce** as contraction or simplification not only of **Cea** (Aklilu), but of **Cia**, **Cʸa** or **Cya** as well. Moreover, I have not attested any contour tone in mono-morphemic words with **Cya** sequences, except for **byāà** 'calf'. A contour tone could have been used as an argument for a previously lost tone bearing unit.

If one adopts the $V_1V_2$ analysis it would be impossible to decide whether $V_1$ is **i** or **e** in most instances, unless comparative evidence exists[9]. However, this impossibility does not disprove the analysis or make it less favourable than the other solutions.

2. **ⁱa** diphthong. An unambiguous diphthong of this kind has not been reported for any of the Omotic languages (Bender 2003; cf. Rapold 2006:102).

3. **Cʸa**, i.e palatalised consonants before **a**. This analysis would increase the phoneme inventory with 14 consonants. It would be a quite systematic increase, except for the gap **pʼʸ** (all [+

---

[9] Bender (2003:238) remarks that **ia** in Dizoid corresponds to **i** in Aroid, and does not occur in the TN–family. Thus he confines **ia** to Dizoid. The correspondence to **i** in Aroid is true for 1 out of 4 mentioned correspondence series (no. 6, the other 3 do not correspond to **i**). Other series such as 35, 129 which contain **ia** are not mentioned, although Dime has **e/a** in 35. Benchnon (TN) has **ia** in 6 and 35 as well. Compare this to p. 295, where the anaylsis of **ia** also causes problems in Mao: there are 4 **ia**–series in which 'perhaps some cases' are 'best seen as palatalisation of the preceding C'; the reconstructed items show **ia**, **i** and **aa** vowels. Moreover, transcriptions of **ia** in the same word by different authors vary (eya, ia, iya, ya, etc.). All this is not very helpful for setting up an underlying V1.

consonantal] consonants which are not [+ post-alveolar] or [+ retroflex] can be palatalised). However, this large number of extra constonants would be limited in distribution to initial syllables with **a** or **aa** as nucleus.

4. **CCa** analysis. While in this analysis the number of phonemes would not increase, the number of syllable patterns would. The second consonant position can only be filled by **y**. A consonant-approximant onset is attested for other languages cross-linguistically, even if no other consonant-consonant onset is allowed. (This analysis is followed in a similar situation for Benchnon (Rapold 2006:102) and Mao (Ahland 2010).

All four solutions do not explain why the **Cya** sequence occurs only word-initially.

All of the possible solutions have advantages and disadvantages. In this thesis, solution 4 is followed. The consequence is the acceptance of five extra syllable types (CCV, CCVV, CCVC, CCVVC, CCVCC).

*Pre-vocalic glottal stop*
The phonemic status of the glottal stop is established with examples at the end of section 2.1.4. Another example is given below.

(102) ʃē̱ʔī̱   'stone'
      yéhí   'sieve'
      ēkī   'money'

Given that in some languages a glottal stop is inserted automatically before a word-initial vowel, the status of the glottal stop in this position in Sheko is worth some consideration.

(103) **hárkú** 'taboo'   [ **ɦarku** ]
      **árkú**  'log'     [ **ʔarku** ]
                         *[ **arku** ] (does not exist)

Glottal stops are prone to deletion. Preceding syllabic nasals, glottal stop can be optionally deleted. Intervocalic glottal stops may also be deleted.

(104)  ṇ-gərì          [ ʔŋgərì ] ~ [ ŋgərì ]
       1SG.POSS-head
       'myself'

Observe that the glottal stop is not predictable in initial position before **y**, as in (105) and (106)-(107) below.

(105)  **ʔyááná** 'pot'
       **yáánà** 'planting yam, to plant yam'

Phonetically, the palatal element is heard as a short off-glide of the preceding glottal stop. The glottal stop behaves the same as other consonants which occur plain and with the palatal off-glide. This environment implies that the initial glottal stop is present underlyingly.

Moreover, some words with initial [ **ʔya** ] sequence vary in pronunciation with [ **ʔe** ]. Now we are back at the starting point of the discussion with a glottal stop preceding a word-initial vowel.

(106)  **ʔyár**   'praise (elegy)' [ **ʔyár** ] ~ [ **ʔér** ]
       **yárì**   'sesame'
       **ár**     'think'

(107)  **ʔyázń** 'ability'          [ **ʔyázń** ] ~ [ **ʔézń** ]
       **yāzń**  'reproach'

In addition, glottal stops are present in reduplication.

(3)    a. **í-ʔíík'ńsə̀b**       'old ones' [ **ʔíʔíík'ńsə̀b** ]

       b. **irk'-ʔirk'a gé**   'be damp (getting wet)' [ **ʔirk':irk'a** ]

For the reasons given above, I treat the word-initial glottal stop preceding a vowel as present underlyingly. Writing convention: initial glottal stop is not written, except in the sequence **ʔya**.

## 2.5 Word structure

### 2.5.1 Syllable structure

The following syllable types are attested in Sheko:

(108)  CV        CVV       CN
       CVC       CVVC      CNC
       CVCC
       CCV       CCVV
       CCVC      CCVVC
       CCVCC

Only in suffixes, additional onset-less syllables are found (109). It is possible to view them as CN and CNC, if one posits a glottal stop as the first C, which is deleted in suffixation. A glottal stop in medial position often is deleted, according to phonological rule 5 in section 3.1. An initial stop before a syllabic nasal may be deleted as well. As for vowel-initial suffixes, they exist, but the language avoids having sequences of different vowels on a phonetic level (see section 3.1 *PR 18, 19*) and one could again posit a glottal stop which is deleted in suffixation.

(109)  N
       NC

Below, all possible syllable types are illustrated, starting with those in the upper row of (108), then going down row by row.

*open syllables*

(110)  a. CV        só              [ só ]
                    'up there'

       b. CN        ń-ò<i>t-ǹ       [ ʔń.ʔòy.tǹ ] ~ [ nôy.tǹ ]
                    1PL.POSS-cow <F>-DEF
                    'our cow'

       c. CVV       gēēṣū           [ gēē.ṣū ]
                    'lower back'

*closed syllables*
C following N is always a sibilant.

| (111) | a. CVC | éd | [ ʔéd ] |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 'mouth' | |
| | b. CNC | kārb-m̀-s | [ kār.bm̀s ] |
| | | be.strong-DEF-M | |
| | | 'strong' (adjective) | |
| | c. CVVC | faad | [ faad ] |
| | | 'body' | |

*closed syllables with a complex coda*
See section 2.4.4 on the restrictions of co-occurrence of the consonants in the coda.

| (112) | a. CVCC | besk | [ besk ] |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | divide | |
| | | 'divide!' | |

*syllables with a complex onset*
Complex onsets always consist of **Cy** followed by **a** or **aa** in the nucleus. This ambiguous sequence is discussed in section 2.4.5.

| (113) | a. CCV | kyáhà | [ kyá.hà ] |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 'stake' | |
| | b. CCVV | gyāāsū | [ gyāā.sū ] |
| | | 'shield' | |
| | c. CCVC | myāngū | [ myāŋ.gū ] |
| | | 'forefather spirit' | |
| | d. CCVVC | ts'yááts' | [ ts'yááts' ] |
| | | tie | |
| | | 'tie! / imprison!' | |
| | e. CCVCC | ʔyard | [ ʔyard ] |
| | | enter | |
| | | 'Enter!' | |

*Onset-less syllables with a nasal as nucleus*

Onset-less syllables occur with suffixes starting in a syllabic nasal. The syllable may remain onsetless if the nasal does not lose its syllabicity.

(114)  a. N          **an-ǹtà**         [ ʔā.ǹ.tà ] ~ [ ʔàn.tà ]
                      put-COND
                      'if (he) put'

       b. NC         **bō-ñ̩-s**         [ bō.ñs ] ~ [ bōns ]
                      belly-DEF-M
                      'the belly'

As said elsewhere, initial ņ-syllables may optionally be pronounced without glottal stop.

(115)  **ņ-zègù**         [ ʔņ.zè.gù ] ~ [ ņ.zè.gù ]
       1SG.POSS-ox
       'my ox'

The syllable types are not equally distributed: in lexical items, the nucleus of the initial syllable is always a vowel, never a nasal. The vowel can be long or short. (However, if a word starts with an inflecting morpheme, e.g. subject clitic, the nucleus may be a syllabic nasal.) The nucleus of the second syllable may be a short vowel or a syllabic nasal. If the nucleus of the second syllable is a nasal, no coda will follow. A complex onset occurs only in the initial syllable of a lexical item.

### 2.5.2    Syllable patterns of nouns and verbs

A noun shows one of the following canonical syllable patterns. The preferred CV-structures for nouns are CV.CV, CVV.CV and CVC.CV. Section 4.7 treats tone in combination with CV-structure. It discusses some aberrant CV-shapes as well.

(116)  CV       ʃí        'faeces (of dog etc.)'
       CVC      ṣōw       'cold'
       CVVC     yááb      'man, person'
       CCVC     t'yám     'breast'
       CCVVC    kyāāz     'lord'
       CCVCC    ʔyārb     'tongue'

(117) CV.CV      **défí**      'treshold'
         CVV.CV      **zóófí**      'plant sp.'
         CVC.CV      **yéngí**      'deadwood, firewood'
         CVVC.CV      **áábdà**      'floor smeared with dung'
         CCV.CV      **ʔyāmī**      'paternal aunt'
         CCVV.CV      **myáák'ú**      'egg'
         CCVC.CV      **myāngū**      'forefather spirit'

(118) CV.CV.CV      **sēkīrì**      'wattle, sixth finger/toe'
         CVC.CV.CV      **mùkmūrì**      'middle ensete leaf'
         CVC.CVC.CV      **gìngīngà**      'milipede'

(119) CV.CVC.CVC.CV  **s̪àkàrbārtì**  'large edible mushroom'

The ordinary shape of Sheko verb roots is monosyllabic. A few verbs consist of only CV(V). CVC and CVVC are the most common. Disyllabic verb roots are relatively few in number, and trisyllabic verb roots have not been attested. One verb varies in shape between C and CVC; this is the verb **m-/ úm** ' to eat'.

(120) CV
         **gé**      'say'
         **ki**      'exist, live'

(121) CVV
         **téé**      'go' (Non-Factual stem)

(122) CVC                      CCVC
         **k'or**    'beg'            **k'yár**      'beat'
         **séh**    'erase'        **gyaʔ**      'chew'
         **gób**    'jump'
         **k'uts'**    'cut'

(123) CVVC                    CCVVC
         **tíít**    'look'        **ts'yááts'**    'tie'
         **maak**    'tell'        **fyaan**      'peel'
         **búúts**   'mow'
         **k'iis̪**    'milk'

(124)  CVCC                       CCVCC
        **k'áp'ts'** 'cut'             **ʔyárd**        'enter'
        **gásk**   'insult'
        **ints**    'be heavy'

Underived disyllabic verb roots all end in **-ar** or **-ər**, which might be a frozen suffix. A possible derivational suffix **.ar** is also reported for Benchnon (Rapold 2006:197ff). Note that all of these verbs have H tone.

(125)  CVCVC
        **gédər**  'exchange'
        **k'ók'ár** 'be incomplete (?)'
        **ʃíbár**  'stroke over the head'
        **túk'ár**  'gush, spring forth'
        **ákár**   'seem, resemble'
        **úk'ər**   'crow (of cock)'

(126)  CVCCVC               CCVCCVC
        **bángár** 'return'      **kyángár**    'curse'
                             **byángár**    'be crooked'

Rapold reports nouns ending in **.ar** for Benchnon. In Sheko, a couple of nouns end in **.arà**. These are listed in (127). The words in (128) might also be related.

(127)  *words in* **.arà**
        **bákárà**       'griddle'
        **dūfārà**      'elephantiasis'
        **gōp'ārà**     'bark'
        **ībārà**       'truth' (cf. Benchnon **ībār** 'truth')
        **k'ōp'ārà**   'open place in stone or wood'
        **sāmbārà**   'tree sp'
        **damtʃ'àrà**  'ginger'
        **gofàrà**     'toad'

(128)  **tumʒèrà**     'tree sp.'
        **úndérkì**    'day before yesterday' (**.kì** <dative?)
        **zùngàra**   'turn halfway back' (with **gé** 'say')

Verbs borrowed from Amharic are made to fit one of the above mentioned patterns. Most are of the pattern CVCVC, since most Amharic verbs consist of three radicals (consonants), but CVC does occur as well.

(129) **támár** 'learn'      < tämarä      'learn'
      **nábáb** 'read'      < anäbbäbä 'read'
      **dáwár** 'phone'    < däwwälä 'ring a bell, phone'
      **ts'af** 'write'      < ts'afä      'write'

### 2.5.3    Length of words

While verb roots commonly consist of one syllable, as shown in the preceding section, verb forms composed of multiple morphemes can be much longer.

(130) **íʃì=kyàngàr-sù-s-ǹ-kì-kǹ-ya**      (9 syllables)
      3PL=curse-CAUS-CAUS-MIDD-exist-KNOWN-STD

      'they are cursing each other (as you should know)'

The majority of nouns has two syllables, some have one and a few have three syllables. Nouns of four or more syllables are mostly compounds. Compounds are discussed in section 5.5.3. The following are examples of multisyllabic nouns which are not considered compounds:

(131) **ṣàkàrbārtì**      'large edible mushroom'
      **gārāmātsī**      '(name of spirit)' (but see 4.7, (40) on **tsī**)

Numbers, quantifiers and adverbs have mostly two, sometimes one syllable, like nouns. Pronouns have one or two syllables as well. Ideophones are generally two or more syllables, but display a lot of reduplication. The structure of ideophones is dealt with in section 8.1. Derivational and inflection morphemes are short. Most consist of a single consonant or one syllable; the maximum is two syllables (-**ǹtà** 'COND', **íshì-** '3PL.POSS')

### 2.5.4    Root structure condition

In Sheko, sibilant harmony occurs not only across morpheme boundaries but also root-internally. The following three

examples shows that root-internally, the sibilants have the same place of articulation, even if other consonants occur in between the sibilants. Example (132) illustrates alveolar sibilants, example (133) post-alveolar sibilants, and example (134) retroflex sibilants.

(132)    sískǹ         'scorpion, crab'
        sítsú         'hair'
        ts'ēts'ì       'grass sp.'
        ézk'úsì      'plant sp.'
        sááts'        'dawn, become light'
        síís           'listen'
        ts'uts'        'itch'
        ts'yááts'      'tie'
        ts'yāsǹ      'break off with fingertips'

(133)    ʃáyʃń        'squirrel'
        ʃéntʃú       'sin'
        ʃebtʃʼà      'taro sp.'
        ʃáʃ          'wet, make sharp'
        ʃátʃ         'herd'
        ʒááʒ         'be good'

(134)    ʂííʐ          'plant sp.'
        ʂóóʐ         'snake'
        ʂórʂú       'plant sp.'
        ʂúʂkú       'weed'
        tʂʼūūtʂʼù     'louse'
        ʂóóʂ         'parch, roast'
        ʂōʂkǹ       'be light, easy'

This root structure condition occurs in other Omotic languages as well, e.g. Benchnon (Rapold 2006:115), Bambassi Mao (Ahland 2010:11), Maale (Azeb 2001a:19), and other languages. The Sheko data once again support Hayward's claim that sibilant harmony as a root structure condition is reconstructable for proto-Omotic (Hayward 1988:287). Sibilant harmony applies across morpheme boundaries in Sheko, see section 2.6.2, *PR 13*.

# 3   Phonological and morphophonological processes

This chapter aims at giving an overview of the (morpho)phonological processes in Sheko, captured in phonological rules (*PR*) and morphophonological rules (*MP*). Furthermore, the chapter discusses reduplication processes.

## 3.1   Phonological rules

The phonological rules in the following subsections are numbered *PR 1 - PR 21*. The numbering does not imply rule ordering. The rules are roughly organised from rules that apply to single segments to rules that apply to groups of segments.

*PR 1. Free variation of ʒ allophones*
*PR 2. Lenition of **b***
*PR 3. Strengthening of **f***
*PR 4. Realisation of **h***
*PR 5. Intervocalic glottal stop deletion*
*PR 6. Optional deletion of glottal stop preceding a syllabic nasal*
*PR 7. Desyllabification of syllabic nasal*
*PR 8. Resyllabification of **uy***
*PR 9. Assimilation of alveolar nasals*
*PR 10. Nasal-nasal merging*
*PR 11. Sibilant merging*
*PR 12. Realisation of retroflexes*
*PR 13. Sibilant harmony*
*PR 14. Devoicing of fricatives preceding voiceless stops*
*PR 15. Simplification of affricates preceding a syllabic nasal*
*PR 16. Palatalisation preceding **e***
*PR 17. Labialisation preceding back vowels*
*PR 18. Reduction of vowel to glide and contraction*
*PR 19. Glide insertion between vowels*
*PR 20. Internasal stop reduction*
*PR 21. Internasal stop deletion in rapid speech*

*PR 1. Free variation of ʒ allophones*
For ʒ, there are free variants [ ɟ ] and [ dʒ ]. Impressionistically, ʒ is more prominent in the Sheko dialect, whereas dʒ and ɟ are more prominent in the Guraferda dialect.

(1)  **bāʒà**   [ bāʒà ] ~ [ bādʒà ] ~ [ bāɟà ]      'work'

The variation can occur word-initially as well as word-medial and -final, but if a word contains two / ʒ / fricatives, the second allophone cannot be more closed than the first.

(2)  **ʒáʒá**   [ ʒáʒá ] ~ [ dʒáʒá ] ~*[ ʒádʒá ]    'peace'

*PR 2. Lenition of b*
The labial voiced plosive / b / is optionally weakened to [ β ] following a vowel. For some people, the resulting fricative is subject to *PR 14, Devoicing of fricatives.*

(3)  **yááb**     [ yááb ]       ~ [ yááβ ]   'man'
     **kùbayà**   [ kùbayà ]     ~ [ kùβayà ] 'cup'
     **dòòbū**    [ dòòbū ]      ~ [ dòòβū ]  'nettle plant'
     **ábsì**     [ ʔábsì ]      ~ [ ʔáβsì ]  'up'
                                 ~ [ ʔáɸsì ]

*PR 3. Strengthening of f*
The labial voiceless fricative / f / has the allophones [ ɸ ] and [ p ]. [ ɸ ] can occur in all environments. The allophone [ p ] occurs adjacent to a labial stop or nasal, i.e. it is strengthened by the stop feature. Some language consultants did not accept [ f ] adjacent to a labial stop or nasal.

(4)  **ʃáfá**    [ ʃáfá ]       ~ [ ʃáɸá ]   'fingernail'
     **gīrfū**   [ gīrfū ]      ~ [ gīrɸū ]  'spider'
     **dāmfā**   [ dāmɸā ]      ~ [ dāmpā ]  'tree sp.'
     **ʃūrfm̄**  [ ʃūrɸm̄ ]     ~ [ ʃūrpm̄ ] 'gulp down'

*PR 3* can also be described as the reverse, i.e. lenition of **p**, which is probably the historic reality. However, synchronically, my consultants preferred to write the grapheme <f> for all

occasions. Therefore I have chosen / **f** / as the basic form, by lack of a phonological reason to choose one over the other. Word-initial **f** has become [ **h** ] in Diizi.

*PR 4. Realisation of **h***

/ **h** / in word-initial position is most often pronounced with voicing, and little friction, as in e.g. [ **ɦáárá** ] 'knife'. Therefore, it is hardly audible. Before back vowels, it may be heard as a soft **w** (5b). Before front vowels, it seems to have merged with **y**. The only trace left may be a variation **y** ~ **ʔ** before front vowels in a few items (5c). Whereas language consultants readily distinguish between / **ʔa** / and / **ha** /, it is hard for them to differentiate / **wo** / and / **ho** /, and they do not make a distinction between / **yi** / and / **hi** /.

(5)  a.    **hāātʃ'ā**    [ **ɦāātʃ'ā** ]    'shoot at treetrunk'
               **haay**      [ **ɦaay** ]        'water'
               **hártʃ'**      [ **ɦártʃ'** ]     'rip, tear'
               **hark**       [ **ɦark** ]       'respect (a taboo)'

    b.    **hōmfā**     [ **ʷōmɸā** ]    'canoe'
               **húmtʃ'à**   [ **ʷúmtʃ'à** ]   'rib of ensete leaf'
               **húunú**     [ **ʷúunú** ]    'flower sp.'

    c.    **(h)èʃǹtà**    [ **yèʃǹtà** ] ~ [ **ʔèʃǹtà** ] 'for, about'

/**h**/ in medial or final position is a voiceless fricative (6). See also *MP 8* where **h** is grouped with the voiceless fricatives.

(6)  **yéhí**     [ **yéhí** ]    'woven sieve'
      **kyáhà**    [ **kʸáhà** ]   'stake (for stretching hide)'
      **byáh**     [ **byáh** ]    'open'

Schematically:

(7)  **h**     > ʷ / #_ **o, u**
            > ʸ / #_ **i, e**
            > **ɦ** / #_ **a**
            = **h** / elsewhere

The weakening of **h** in initial position may be linked to the free variation **h/ w/ y/ ʔ** in initial position in some Omotic languages. In these languages, the variation is limited to a certain group of lexical items, and does not occur across the board. Variation is reported for e.g. **h~ʔ** in Wolaitta (Lamberti 1997:29f); **h~y** before front vowels and **h~w** before back vowel **o** in Maale (Azeb 2001a:15f); as well as **h~ʔ** before **a** and **h~y** before **i** in Dime (Mulugeta 2008:24); cf. also initial **h** in Benchnon (Rapold 2006:79).

*PR 5. Intervocalic glottal stop deletion*
A glottal stop between two vocoids is deleted in fluent speech. The result of the glottal stop deletion rule may be subject to other rules. Example (8) is subject to the rules of glide formation and vowel assimilation (*PR 18*).

(8)　　**bàʔù-tə**　　　　　[ **bàwtə**] ~ [ **bòòtə** ]
　　　　carry.on.back-SS
　　　　'carried'

(9)　　**ṇ=ʔàtsù-tə**　　　　[ **ʔṇàtsùtə** ]
　　　　1SG=give-SS
　　　　'I gave'

*PR 6. Optional deletion of glottal stop preceding a syllabic nasal*
A glottal stop preceding a syllabic nasal is optionally deleted.

(10)　　**ń=tág-ə**　　　　　[ **ʔńtágə** ] ~ [ **ńtágə** ]
　　　　1PL=go-STI
　　　　'Let's go'

*PR 7. Desyllabification of syllabic nasal*
A syllabic nasal may loose its syllabicity if it can fill an onset or coda position. Since it looses the ability to carry tone, the syllable to which it is reassigned may obtain a contour tone. The tendency to desyllabify is naturally stronger in rapid speech.

(11)  ń-ʔò<i>t-ǹ          [ ʔńòytǹ ] ~ [ nôytǹ ]
      1PL.POSS-cow<F>-DEF
      'our cow'

      (for the deletion of the glottal stop, see *PR 5, 6* above)

(12)  há=kì-ǹtà          [ ɦákìǹtà ] ~ [ ɦàkìntà ]
      3MS=exist-COND
      'if he is'

## PR 8. Resyllabification of uy
The sequence **uy** may be resyllabified to **ʷi**.

(13)  gùym̩-ít-ə          [gùymítə] ~ [gʷìmítə]
      worship-PL.ADDR-STI
      'worship (pl)!'

## PR 9. Assimilation of alveolar nasals
An alveolar nasal assimilates in place to the adjacent consonant. This applies to the syllabic as well as to the non-syllabic alveolar nasal. Examples (14) and (15) show the assimilation of the (non-syllabic) alveolar nasal consonant to the adjacent consonant.

(14)  yéntʂ'à      [ yéɳʈʂ'à ]      'continence'
      fúntʃú       [ fúɲtʃú ]       'chaff'
      bonk'        [ boŋk' ]        'burn, be on fire'
      béngár       [ bʸéŋgár ]      'be crooked'

(15)  áz-náà ha-bààb-máà       emà        tə̀
      3MS-or  2SG.POSS-father-or  so.and.so   COP.Q
      'Is it he or your father or so-and-so?'

A bilabial nasal consonant does not assimilate, thus non-homorganic sequences do occur.

(16)  kōmtū       [ kʷōmtū ]   'chief'
      k'ámtʃù      [ kámtʃù ]    'sand'  (also **hámʃù**)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **kūm̥ṣūṣ** | [ **kūm̥ṣūṣ** ] | 'pulverize by hand' |
| **gómkés** | [ **gómkés** ] | 'name of a clan' |

Example (17)-(19) show assimilation of the syllabic nasal ṇ̥ to the following consonant. The syllabic nasal may be a clitic, affix or part of the root.

(17)  a.  **m̥=bààs-k**            [ ʔm̥bààsk ]
          1SG-want-REAL

          'I wanted'

      b.  **ṇ̥=yììʃ-k**            [ ʔɲ̥yiiʃk ]
          1SG=pull.out-REAL

          'I pulled out'

      c.  **ṇ̥=tṣ'àdǹ-k**          [ ʔɳ̥tṣ'ɑdŋ̀k ]
          1SG=fight.MIDD-REAL

          'I fought'

      d.  **ṇ̥=gàdù-k**            [ ʔŋ̥gàdùk ]
          1SG-start-REAL

          'I started'

(18)  a.  **yí=mùẓ-ǹ**            [ yímòẓɳ̀ ]
          3FS=shred-DS

          'she shredded' (e.g. cabbage)

      b.  **yí=gòòf-ǹtà**          [ yígòòɸm̀tà ]
          3FS=brood-COND

          'if she broods'

      c.  **āṣ-ǹ-s**              [ ʔāṣɳ̄ṣ ]
          leg-DEF-M

          'the leg'

(19)  **k'ōp'm̄**  [ k'ōp'm̄ ]  'eyelash'
      **yárbḿ**   [ yárbḿ ]   'blood'
      **ūṣn̄**    [ ʔūṣɳ̄ ]   'horns'
      **ʃíʃkǹ**   [ ʃíʃkɳ̀ ]  'claw'

Progressive assimilation is stronger, as speakers accept variation preceding but not following a noun, as in (20a,b) below. In case of conflict, usually progressive assimilation is strongest as well (20c).

(20)  a.  **m̩-bààb**        [ m̩bààb ] ~ [ n̩bààb ]
          1SG.POSS-father

          'my father'

      b.  **báb-m̀**        [ bábm̀ ] *[ bábǹ ]
          father.VOC-1SG.POSS

          'my father' (term of address)

      c.  **há = ʃiʃk-ǹtà**    [ ɦáʃiʃkɳ̀tà ]
          3MS = be.sweet-COND

          'if it is sweet'

The rule of assimilation is ordered before internasal stop reduction and merging of nasals.

*PR 10. Nasal-nasal merging*
Nasal-nasal sequences merge into one nasal element. It is also possible to say that the first nasal is deleted, since under *PR 21*, the nasal element preceding the stop is deleted.

(21)  **an-ǹ**              [ ʔaǹ ]
      put-DS

      'he put'

*PR 11. Sibilant merging*
Sibilant-sibilant sequences merge into one sibilant.

(22)  **k'íʂ-s** + tone change  **>**    **k'ìʂ**    [ k'ìʂ ]
      drink-CAUS

      'cause to drink'

The causative suffix **-s** merges with a preceding sibilant element, i.e. a sibilant fricative or last part of an affricate. (Other changes also take place in derivation, see chapter 12 for a detailed description.)

(23)  **k'íʂ**   'drink'         **k'ìʂ**    'cause to drink'
      **ts'óóts'**  'be full'     **ts'òts**  'fill'

*PR 12. Realisation of retroflexes*
Retroflexes can have an accompanying lip-rounding and color adjacent vowels, since the tongue is pulled backwards.

(24)  maṣa       [ maṣʷa ]       'spirit'
      ẓāākɨ̀      [ ẓwāākɨ̀ ]      'noon'
      tuutʂ'ù     [ tuʊtʂ'ʷ ʊ̀ ]    'knot'


*PR 13. Sibilant harmony*
Sibilants in suffixes assimilate to the place of preceding sibilants. Sibilants include affricates, see table 2 below.

|                      | alveolar | post-alveolar | retroflex |
|----------------------|----------|---------------|-----------|
| ejective affricates  | ts'      | tʃ'           | tʂ'       |
| voiceless affricates | ts       | tʃ            | tʂ        |
| voiceless fricatives | s        | ʃ             | ʂ         |
| voiced fricatives    | z        | ʒ             | ʐ         |

Table 2. Sibilants.

In Sheko, sibilant harmony is a root structure condition (root-internal harmony, see section 2.5.4) and also applies across morpheme boundaries.

Suffixes containing an **-s** obligatorily assimilate in place if the syllable to which the suffixal **-s** belongs contains a sibilant. Examples are given with the causative suffix (25) and the plural suffix (26) and the masculine suffix (27). Assimilation is in place only, not in voicing, as can be seen from such examples as **bāʒ-ūʃ** 'cause to work' and **ʂóóʐ-ù-ʂ** 'snakes'.

(25)  yííts'    'sprinkle'        yīts'-ūs   'cause to sprinkle'
      baʒ       'work'            bāʒ-ūʃ     'cause to work'
      ʃooy      'spill a liquid'  ʃoy-ʃ      'cause to spill'
      aʂ        'plant'           āʂ-ūʂ      'cause to plant'
      ẓár       'spill grain'     ẓar-ʂ      'cause to spill'

(26)     sāzā         'beetle sp.'       sāzā-s       'beetles'
         gātʃī         'stick'            gātʃī-ʃ       'sticks'
         ʈʂ'ūūʈʂ'ù    'louse'          ʈʂ'ūūʈʂ'ù-ʂ   'louses'
         ʂóóʐ        'snake'         ʂóóʐ-ù-ʂ    'snakes'

(27)     úʃń          'flower'        úʃ-ń-ʃ        'the flower'
         buʈʂà        'nest'           buʈʂ-ǹ-ʂ     'the nest'

If the preceding sibilant is not in the same syllable, the suffix does not assimilate in careful speech, as evidenced by the examples below.

(28)     ʃik'     'be short'           ʃīk'-ūs   'make short'
         ʐáák'   'peel maize'       ʐāk'-ūs   'cause to peel'

(29)     ʃáfá     'fingernail'        ʃáfá-s         'fingernails'
         tʃ'āārū   'medicine'      tʃ'āārū-s      'medicines'
         ʒáká     'anklet sp.'       ʒáká-s         'anklets'

In fast speech, sibilant harmony may apply even when the sibilants are separated by more elements and do not belong to the same syllable.

(30)     ʂə́fī     'fan'

        ʂə́f-ǹ-s        [ ʂə́ɸǹs ] ~ [ ʂə́pǹʂ ]
        fan-DEF-M
        'the fan'

Sibilant harmony does not apply between the root and the third person plural subject clitic íʃì= ~ =íʃì (31). There is also no harmony between the root and the possessive prefixes in (32), except in fast careless speech when íʃì- is reduced to íʃ-.

(31)     a.     gààʐ=íʃì-k-ə
             prune=3PL-REAL-STI
             'they pruned'

       b.     kààs=íʃì-k-ə
             play=3PL-REAL-STI
             'they played'

    c.    **íʃì = zèèr-k-ə**
        3PL = advise-REAL-STI

        'they advised'

    d.    **íʃì = z̧aak'u-k-ə**
        3PL = husk-REAL-STI

        'they peeled (e.g. maize)'

(32)    **íʃì-ṣòngù**    'their lyre'
        **íʃì-zààrà**    'their clan'

While in the above cases none of the affixes and clitics can impose harmony, the Optative complicates the picture: the Optative marker **-s** changes to **-ʃ** after the 3pl clitic. The 3pl form is as a rule contracted to **-íʃ-ə** after the verb stem. The **-ʃ** in the 3fs form may be a case of paradigmatic leveling; it is not phonologically conditioned. Except for third person plural affixes and clitics, there are no other morphemes with a non-alveolar sibilant.

(33)    3ms    **kááts = á-s-ə**    'may he ripen'
          3fs     **kááts = í-ʃ-ə**    'may she ripen'
          3pl    **kááts = íʃì-ʃ-ə**    'may they ripen' ~ **kááts = íʃ-ə**

In any case, a sibilant cannot bring about harmony on preceding sibilants, and affixed sibilants do not impose harmony on the root. From these examples it is evident that sibilant harmony at root level and word level are different. In a root, all sibilants agree in place, whereas on word level the harmony is not necessarily complete.

*PR 14. Devoicing of fricatives preceding voiceless stops*
Voiced fricatives (i.e. voiced sibilants and voiced stops which underwent lenition) devoice when they precede a voiceless plosive in fluent speech (34). They may also devoice before a pause (35).

(34)    **áz-ka**    [ ʔáskā ]    3MS-WITH    'with him'
        **yīz-tà**    [ yīstà ]    DIST.M-LOC    'at this'
        **íʒ-kǹ**    [ ʔíʃkǹ ]    3FS-DAT    'her'
        **ŋ = booz-k**    [ m̩bòòsk ]    1SG = stroll-REAL    'I strolled'

| (35) | yīz | [ yīs ] | | 'this' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | yááb | [ yááɸ ] | < [ yááβ ] | 'man' |

Note that ejectives are not specified for voice and normally do not trigger devoicing of a sibilant.

| (36) | ezk'usi | [ ʔezk'usi ] | | 'plant sp.' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | yiz-k'a | [ yizk'a ] | DIST.M-IN | 'in this' |

*PR 15. Simplification of affricates preceding a syllabic nasal*
Affricates loose their fricative part preceding a syllabic nasal. (Affricates do not occur as the first member of a consonant cluster, therefore affricates do not occur preceding a non-syllabic nasal.)

This rule is illustrated in example (37) below where the definiteness-gender marking **-n̩-s** DEF-M is suffixed to nouns. Besides the deletion of the terminal vowel of the nouns, the affricates become simple stops. Likewise, if the last consonant of a verb stem is an affricate, it looses its fricative part when a suffix with a syllabic nasal is added (38).

| (37) | bītsù | 'fern' | bītsn̩s [ bītn̩s ] | 'the fern' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ts'ēts'ì | 'grass sp.' | ts'ēts'n̩s [ ts'ētn̩s ] | 'the grass' |
| | gātʃī | 'stick' | gātʃn̩s [ gāɟn̩ʃ ] | 'the stick' |

(38)  **há=wùmtʂ'-n̩** [ ɦáwùmʈn̩ ]
      3MS=rinse-DS
      'he rinsed (his mouth)'

*PR 16. Palatalisation preceding* **e**
Consonants are optionally palatalised preceding the vowel **e** in the first syllable of a stem.

| (39) | géék'ù | [ géék'ù ] ~ [ gʸéék'ù ] | 'goat' |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ts'ēzga | [ ts'ēzgà ] ~ [ ts'ʸēzgà ] | 'udder' |
| | meen | [ meen ] ~ [ mʸeen ] | 'buffalo' |
| | kéés | [ kéés ] ~ [ kʸéés ] | 'go out' |

(40) há=tee-tə      [ ɦáteetə ] ~ [ ɦátʸeetə ]
    3MS=go.NV-SS
    'he went and...'

It is my impression that there is no palatalisation before the vowel **i**. Therefore, one could argue that the above examples are a sign of underlying **ie** sequences (cf. the section on **Cya** sequences). The optional nature of the palatalisation, the parallel with labialisation and the occurrence before short and long vowels make that less likely.


*PR 17. Labialisation preceding back vowels*
Consonants are also optionally labialised preceding the back vowels **o** and **u**. The tendency is strongest with velar and bilabial pulmonic plosives.

(41)   **kóóká** [ kóóká ] ~ [ kʷóóká ]     'low point of valley'
      **góórà** [ góórà ] ~ [ gʷóórà ]     'Amhara'
      **bókń**  [ bókń ] ~ [ bʷókń ]     'time'

(42)   **ha=kùʃù**         [ ɦakùʃù ] ~ [ ɦakʷùʃù ]
      2SG=be.sick-[Q]
      'Are you sick?'


*PR 18. Reduction of vowel to glide and contraction*
Sheko does not allow a sequence of two unlike vowels. Normally, underlying $V_1V_2$ sequences will be reduced to glide-vowel or vowel-glide sequences. The remaining vowel may be lengthened to compensate for the loss of a tone bearing unit.

(43)   **sà-ù-tə**         [ sàwtə ]
      arrive.NV-EV-SS
      'arriving...'

In the Tepi and Guraferda variants, the above verb form is rendered **sàk-ù-tə**. However, the negative is identical in all variants and displays the stem **sa**, as shown below.

(44)    **sā-ārā**
        arrive.NV-NEG
        'not arriving'

Furthermore, a sequence of two vowels or of vowel and glide may be contracted. An alternative pronunciation for (43) is given in (45). **ya** and **ay** sequences may be contracted to **e** or **ɛ** (46)-(47).

(45)    **sà-ù-tə**            [ sòòtə ]
        arriving.NV-EV-SS
        'arriving'

(46)    **ʔyard-ə**         [ ʔ$^y$ardə ] ~ [ ʔerdə ]
        enter-STI
        'Enter!'

(47)    **ń-ʔà\<ì\>g-ǹ**     [ ʔń̀ʔàygǹ ] ~[ ń̀ʔɛ̀gǹ ]
        1PL.POSS-grandmother\<F\>-DEF
        'our grandmother'

In case of prohibitives for plural addressee, the glide may be assimilated in vowel quality in rapid speech.

(48)    **kāās-ārā**    **k'é-ít**  [ kāāsārā k'éyt ] ~ [ kāāsārā k'éét ]
        play-NEG      remain-PL.ADDR
        'Don't play (pl)!'

Note that subject clitics do not assimilate.

(49)    **kì=á-k**           [ kyăk ] ~ [ k$^y$àák ]  but *[ kĕk ]
        exist=3MS-REAL
        'he exists'

*PR 19. Glide insertion between vowels*
An alternative solution for avoiding $V_1V_2$-sequences is to insert a glide between the two vowels. This is mostly done in slow, careful speech.

(50)     **náánú-onka**             [ **náánúwoŋka** ]
         elder.brother-ASS
         'elder brothers'

(51)     **kì=á-k**                [ **kìyák** ] ~ [ **kʸàák** ]
         exist=3MS-REAL
         'he exists'

*PR 20. Internasal stop reduction*

In normal fluent or careful speech, a voiceless stop between two nasals is still audible as a voiceless nasal. This is because the feature [-voice] is retained. Since the nasal cavity is not closed, the air goes through it and the stop becomes a voiceless nasal.

This rule is ordered after the nasal assimilation rule (*PR 9*). The preceding nasal may or may not be deleted. (A voiced stop is not detectable between two nasals: since it would become a voiced nasal it would not be distinguishable from the neighboring assimilated nasals.)

(52)     **ùn-t-ǹ**                [ **ʔùnⁿ̥ǹ** ] ~ [ **ʔùⁿ̥ǹ** ]
         ignite-PASS-DS
         'was ignited'

         **há=yank'-ǹ**        [ **ɦáyaŋⁿ̥ŋ̀** ] ~ [ **ɦáyaⁿ̥ŋ̀** ]
         3MS=be.angy-DS
         'he was angry'

(53)     **ḿ-bààb-on-kǹ**       [ **ʔḿbààboŋⁿ̥ŋ̀** ] ~ [ **ḿbààboⁿ̥ŋ̀** ]
         1PL.POSS-father-ASS-DAT
         'to our fathers'

*PR 21. Internasal stop deletion in rapid speech*

In rapid speech, an internasal stop is deleted completely. This rule occurs for example in (passive) verbs preceding the different subject marker -**ǹ** (54) or the conditional marker -**ǹtà** (55), and in nouns preceding the definiteness-gender marker

**ǹ-s** 'DEF-M', see section 5.2.1. This rule is ordered after *PR 9*, assimilation of alveolar nasals. The output of this rule may be subject to further rules, such as *PR 10*, merging of nasal-nasal sequences.

(54) **há=kānt-ǹ**          [ ɓákāǹ ]
      3MS=beg.milk-DS
      'he begged milk'

      **há=fāng-ǹ**          [ ɓáfāŋ̀ ]
      3MS=spread.legs-DS
      'he spread his legs'

(55) **àn-t-ǹtà**          [ ʔàǹtà ] ~ [ ʔàntà ]
      put-PASS-COND
      'if it was put'

## 3.2    Morpho-phonological rules

The morpho-phonological rules are numbered *MP 1 - MP 12*. They are presented here together to give an overview of the morpho-phonology of Sheko. The first five rules concern nominal morphology, whereas the other rules apply to the verbal domain. *MP 1 - MP 4* involve definiteness-gender marking and *MP 6 - MP 10* involve causative and passive formation.

*MP 1. Deletion of the terminal vowel preceding the definiteness marker*
*MP 2. Deletion of internasal sibilants preceding the definiteness marker*
*MP 3. Realisation of the definiteness marker following **r** in feminine nouns*
*MP 4. **ɲs-C** simplification in rapid speech*
*MP 5. Realisation of the accusative marker*

*MP 6. Shortening of long vowels in derivation*
*MP 7. Deglottalisation of ejective preceding the causative*
*MP 8. Deglottalisation of the passive-middle **-t'** following fricatives*
*MP 9. Metathesis and cluster simplification with velar stops in derivation*

*MP 10. Metathesis and cluster simplification with affricates in
    derivation*
*MP 11. Simplification of 3pl in Optative*
*MP 12. Contraction in compound negative tenses*


### 3.2.1    Rules pertaining to definiteness marking

*MP 1. Deletion of the terminal vowel preceding the definite
    marker*
The terminal vowel of a noun is deleted preceding the
definite-gender marking. (Its tone is then linked to the
definiteness marker -ǹ, see section 4.5 for more information.)

(56)    a.    **zēgū**    'ox'

              **zēg-ī̄-s**        [ **zēgī̄js** ]
              OX-DEF-M

              'the ox'

        b.    **k'osà**    'basket sp.'

              **k'o<ì>s-ǹ**    [ **k'oysǹ** ]
              basket<F>-DEF

              'the little basket' (feminine gender has diminutive
              connotation)


With other suffixes, the terminal vowel may or may not be
deleted.

(57)    a.    **ņ-naanu-onka**        [ **ʔņnaanuwoŋka** ]
              1SG.POSS-elder.brother-ASS

              'my elder brothers'

        b.    **ņ-naan-onka**        [ **ʔņnaanoŋka** ]
              1SG.POSS-elder.brother-ASS

              'my elder brothers'


(58)    **ņ-naanu-ra**                [ **ʔņnaanura** ]
        1SG.POSS-elder.brother-ACC

        'my elder brother (acc)'

*MP 2. Deletion of internasal sibilants preceding the definite marker*

When the definiteness-gender marking is suffixed to a noun with a nasal-sibilant cluster, the sibilant is deleted. The remaining adjacent nasals merge (*PR 10*). (For the tonal side, see *MT 2*.)

(59)  a.    **íntʃù**   'wood'

            **íntʃ-ǹ-ʃ**                [ ʔíɲʃ ]
            wood-DEF-M

            'the wood'

      b.    **ʃénʃí**   'fifty cents coin'

            **ʃénʃ-ń-ʃ**                [ ʃéɲʃ ]
            50.cents-DEF-M

            'the fifty cents coin'

      c.    **hámʃù**   'sand'

            **hámʃ-ǹ-ʃ**                [ hám̀ʃ ]
            sand-DEF-M

            'the sand'

      d.    **ʔyants'à**   'bee'

            **ʔya<ì>nts'-ǹ**            [ ʔyayǹ ]
            bee<F>-DEF

            'the bee'

Note that in other environments a sibilant between two nasals is not deleted.

(60)  **há=sàn-s-ǹ**            [ ɦásànsǹ ]
      3MS=turn-CAUS-DS

      'he turned it'

*MP 3. Realisation of definiteness marker following **r** in feminine nouns*

The definiteness marker in feminine nouns with an **r** as last consonant is realised not as a syllabic nasal, but as a vowel-consonant sequence -**ìn**.

(61) a.    **bāārā** 'young woman'

       **bāā <ì>r-ñ**   > [ **bāā<sup>y</sup>rĩn** ]
young.woman<F>-DEF
'the young woman'

  b.    **túrú**   'tree sp.'

       **tú<ì>r-ń**    > [ **túyrín** ] ~ [ **twírín** ]
tree<F>-DEF
'the tree'

(the resyllabification of **uy** is captured in *PR 8*)

*MP 4. Simplification of **ns-C** cluster in rapid speech*
Generally speaking, in rapid or careless speech the assimilation to adjacent elements is stronger and deletion of elements more likely. A good instance of this is given in (62), where the gender marker **-s** completely disappears. The outcome of this rule is subject to rules of assimilation (*PR 9*) and internasal stop reduction (*PR 20*).

(62)  **zĩĩn-ǹ-s-kǹ**   >   [ **zĩĩŋ<sup>ŋ</sup>ǹ** ]
leopard-DEF-M-DAT
'to the leopard'

### 3.2.2    Realisation of the accusative marker

*MP 5. Realisation of the accusative marker -əra*
The accusative marker **-əra** is **-ra** after a vowel (63)-(64) and tends to be **-a** after a sibilant (65). After the nominalizer -**bààb** the allomorph **-a** is often used (66).

(63)  **ééz-ə̄rā**     **es=à**
honey-ACC      harvest.honey=2SG.Q
'Did you harvest honey?'

(64)  **gyādū-rā**    **há=kééʈʂ-á-m**
rope-ACC      3MS=twist-put-IRR
'He makes rope.'

(65) gyāñ-s-a       íʃ = fùùr-k-ə
     coffee.DEF-M-ACC   3PL = trade-REAL-STI
     'They sold the coffee.'

(66) ha = yə̄g-m̄-bààb-a      íʃ = t'ùùs-k-ə
     2SG = come-IRR-father-ACC   3PL = know-REAL-STI
     'They knew that you would come'

### 3.2.3     Rules pertaining to verb derivation

The following four rules all occur in the causative and/ or passive formation. The formation of causatives and passives is partly lexical. More information on derivation is given in chapter 12.

*MP 6. Shortening of long vowels in derivation*
In causative and passive formation, a long vowel is shortened.

(67) k'ééť  'swallow'   k'ēť-ūs   'cause to swallow'
     door   'run'       dor-s     'cause to run'

(68) deeb   'bury'      deb-ť     'be buried'
     góóm   'pile'      gom-ť     'be piled'

*MP 7. Deglottalisation of p' preceding causative -s*
An bilabial ejective is deglottalised, i.e. becomes a simple voiceless stop preceding the causative marker **-s**.

(69) ť'ip'  'fill up, clog'  ť'ips   'cause to fill up'

Stems ending in another ejective may be suffixed by the causative -**ùs**; or metathesis and cluster simplification may apply.

*MP 8. Deglottalisation of the passive marker*
The passive marker **-ť'** deglottalises and becomes the voiceless plosive **-t** after a voiceless fricative (70). Note that the passive marker does not change after a voiced fricative (71).

(70)  **dúúf** 'hit'            **duft** 'be hit'
      **wos** 'send'            **wost** 'be sent'
      **baaʃ** 'slaughter'      **baʃt** 'be slaughtered'
      **byáh** 'open'           **byaht** 'be opened'

(71)  **baʒ** 'work, do'        **baʒt'** 'be done'
      **muʐ** 'shred'           **muʐt'** 'be shredded'


*MP 9. Metathesis and cluster simplification with velar stops*
In some verbs with a stem-final velar stop, metathesis takes
place. Example (72) illustrates this for the causative **-s** and (73)
for the passive **t'**. It is not fully predictable whether the glottal
element of the passive is preserved.

(72)  **wóók'** 'be tired'          **wosk'** 'tire'
      **tik** 'be extinguished'     **tisk** 'extinguish'

(73)  **duuk'** 'sow (maize)'       **dutk'** 'be sown'
      **haak** 'pick'               **hatk** 'be picked'

Further changes are assimilation in voice, i.e. clusters of a
voiced velar stop and **-t'** 'PASS' or **-s** 'CAUS' become voiceless.
Only the second consonant (after metathesis) may be ejective.
The presence of the ejective feature is not fully predictable.

(74)  **yáb-m̀-s**       **dàtk=á-k-ə**           ( < **daag-t'** )
      man-DEF-M         invite.PASS=3MS-REAL-STI
      'The man was invited.'

(75)  **kátʃí**    **bòsk'=á-k-ə**               ( < **boog-s** )
      yam         harvest.yam.CAUS=3MS-REAL-STI
      'He caused (him) to harvest yam'

(76)  **sòsk=á-k**                               ( < **sok'-s** )
      sleep.CAUS=3MS-REAL
      'He sleeps.'

*MP 10. Metathesis and cluster simplification with affricates*
Furthermore, some verbs ending in an affricate simplify the cluster that is created after suffixing the passive -**t'** to a cluster of homorganic sibilant and stop.

(77)   gúy-ǹ-s          bùst=á-k-ə          ( < buuts-t' )
       grass-DEF-M       cut.PASS=3MS-REAL-STI

       'The grass is cut.'

       há=ts'yàstù-k                         ( < ts'yaats'-t' )
       3MS=tie.PASS-REAL

       'he was imprisoned'/ 'it was tied'

       k'àʂʈ=á-k-ə                           ( < k'aʈʂ-t' )
       stone.PASS=3MS-REAL-STI

       'he was stoned'

Likewise, the causative suffix -**s** sometimes forms one cluster with a verb-final affricate. If the affricate is ejective, the ejective feature is dropped.

(78)   ts'óóts' 'be full'              ts'ots  'fill'
       k'eets' 'be reheated (of taro)'    k'ets   'reheat taro)'

### 3.2.4    Rules pertaining to specific paradigms

*MP 11. Simplification of 3PL in Optative*
The sequence **íʃì-ʃ** in the Optative 3rd person plural is simplified to **íʃ**.

(79)   nyāas=íʃì-ʃ-ə          →     [ nyāāsíʃəə ]
       bear.child=3PL-OPT-STI

       'let them bear children'

*MP 12. Contraction in complex negative tenses*
If a complex negative tense is contracted, the last vowel of the negative suffix -**ārā** is deleted (80b). In the first person, the negative marker and the first person marker are further contracted to -**en** plus tone (81b).

(80)  a.  **maak-ara**      **yí = kì-k-ə**      [ **māākārā ʸíkìkə** ]
          tell-NEG         3FS = exist-REAL-STI
          'She did not tell'

      b.  **maak-ar-í = kì-k-ə**              [ **māākāríkìkə** ]
          tell-NEG-3FS = exist-REAL-STI
          'She didn't tell'

(81)  a.  **māāk-ārā**      **ŋ̩ = kì-k-ə**      [ **māākārā ŋ̩kíkə** ]
          tell-NEG         1SG-exist-REAL-STI
          'I did not tell'

      b.  **māāk-en = kì-k-ə**                [ **māākeŋkìkə** ]
          tell-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI
          'I didn't tell'

## 3.3  Reduplication

There are various reduplication processes in Sheko. This section describes two reduplications found across word categories. In ideophones, more processes are found which are unique to that word class (see section 8.1.1).

The two reduplication processes are full reduplication of the stem and reduplication of the initial CV. It is not clear whether there is a meaning difference between the two processes. They can be used interchangeably at least to some extent (see examples (82), (85) and (86); other examples have not been discussed with language consultants). The reduplicated part is glossed PLUR for 'pluractional'. Although this term is usually connected with verbs, I use it for other word categories as well.

### 3.3.1    Full reduplication

For full reduplication of the stem, the following textual examples are attested: in (83)-(82), a noun is reduplicated; in (83), a question word and in (84)-(85) verbs. Note that the causative derivation is part of the stem and the expletive vowel **u** is also reduplicated.

(82)  **bērgū-bērgū-k'à = ee    zēgū    byaà    úzì**
PLUR-year-IN-STI          ox      calf    firstborn

**há = tə-n̠tà     m̠-bààb-kǹ          órá-tà**
3MS = COP-COND    1SG.POSS-father-DAT    garden-LOC

**hààs-tà     m̠ = bāāʃ-ā-m-ə**
PROX.M-LOC    1SG = slaughter-put-IRR-STI

'Year upon year, I slaughter an ox, preferably a firstborn male calf, here in the garden of my father.'

also possible: **bē-bērgū-k'à**

(83)  **gōmfā-ka     yàf-tù-kì-b          k'ōdāmà**
gomfa-WITH    find-PASS-exist-REL    qodama

**ge-t'ù-b-īs          áás-ʔáás-t = á**
say-PASS-REL-DIST.M    PLUR-how-COP = 3MS

**é-tù-t = á          há = yááb     fày-kìy**
do.NV-PASS-SS = 3MS    3MS = man     be.healthy-exist[Q]

'How is this what is called *qodama* which is acquired from the *gomfa* bird done, and people get better?'

(84)  **dìmbērì        sàskù-tə         íntʃù    dàrk'ùs-dàrk'ùs-tə**
boundary(Amh)    arrive.CAUS-SS    wood     PLUR-chop.off.CAUS-SS

**às-tà        kaarì     íntʃù    bùtù-tə**
PROX.M-LOC    toward    wood     throw-SS

'…making a boundary, they chopped branches into pieces and threw the wood towards it…'

(85)  **yí = zạ̀rsù-zạ̀rsù-t = í          wúʃa    étsń     dirìsì**
3FS = PLUR-spill.CAUS-SS = 3FS    IDEO    month    until(Amh)

**zạ̄rsū-kì-bààstà**
spill.CAUS-exist-WHILE

'she spilled and spilled (the food) and while she spilled it for many months,…'

also possible: **yí = zạ̀-zạ̀rsù-t = í…**

In (86), an adjective has undergone reduplication. Adjectives are derived from verbs by the definiteness-gender marking. Reduplication is the only way to overtly indicate plurality of the referent for adjectives.

(86)  bây    ʔyār-s-ārā-kì-b         ʔyáátìs-ʔyáát-ǹ-s-àb-īs
      woman  enter-CAUS-NEG-exist-REL   PLUR-big-DEF-M-REL-DIST.M

yīs-tə          k'īīʂ-ā-m
DIST.M-COP      milk-put-IRR

'Those who have not yet married a wife, who have become big, it is those who milk (the cows).'

[ ʔyétsʔyétsàbīs ]

also possible: ʔyá-ʔyátsàbīs, cf. example (88))


### 3.3.2    Reduplication of the initial CV

In the following examples, the initial CV of the syllable is reduplicated. In example (87), the first syllable of the noun gə́rì 'head' is reduplicated. (88) and (89) show adjectives, while (90) illustrates an adverb.

(87)  íʃì-gə-gə̀rì-kɨ̀        gúy-k'à        tee-t=íʃì
      3PL.POSS-PLUR-head-DAT   grassland-IN   go.NV-SS=3PL

íʃì-ʔùmt'à      íʃ=kōōʂ-ō-m
3PL.POSS-food   3PL=farm-put-IRR

'...they would go each to their/ to each others' grassland and farm their food.'

(88)  ʔyá-ʔyááts-ǹ-s-əb-a      na-ɨ̀   ats-ə   [ ʔɛʔɛtnsəba ]
      PLUR-big-DEF-M-REL-ACC     1SG-DAT  give-STI

'Give me the big ones.'

(89)  í-ʔíík-ń-s-əb          yaab-ù-s        yīs      tə
      PLUR-be.old-DEF-M-REL    man-m-PL         DIST.M    COP

ōtì-ra   k'īīts'ū-án-kì-b
cow-ACC  tie.cattle-put-exist-REL

'It's the old people who were keeping cattle.'

(90)  kà-kàyástá      t'àw̄là          ha=k'áp'ts'ú-tə
      PLUR-again      board(Amh)      2SG=cut-SS

'then again, you can cut a board and ...' (Context: introducing the next method of preventing a honey badger from reaching the beehive.)

The reduplication of initial CV is also found with manner ideophones. The reduplication processes found with ideophones are discussed in detail in section 8.1.1.

(91)    **nà-nààp'a**    **gé**    **zút-yəg-ə**
        PLUR-step.lightly  say    trample-come-STI

        'Come stepping nimbly.'

        also possible: **nààp'-nààp'a**

Interestingly, the reduplication processes described here are also found in Dime, a South Omotic language. Reduplication is frequent according to Mulugeta (2008:34). E.g. adjectives can reduplicate the full stem or the initial CV; in addition a plural marker **-(i)d** can be used, which occurs only with adjectives (examples from Mulugeta 2008:83):

(92)    a.    **kúlú**    **gičč'ó-gičč'ó-b-is**
              stick    RDP-big-M-DEF

              'big sticks'

      b.    **ʔéh-af**      **č'ə-č'əkk'-ub**
              house-PL     RDP-small-M

              'small houses'

      c.    **kul-af**  **gičč'ó-d**
              stick-PL  big-PL

              'big sticks'

Reduplication in Dime is also common with imperfective verbs, as shown in (93). With some verbs, the final syllable is reduplicated. For more details on this fascinating language the reader is referred to Mulugeta's grammar.

(93)    **de-deis-déé-n**
        RDP-kill-IPF-3/2

        'is killing'

Finally, reduplication can be contrasted with repetition. The Sheko examples below show the repetition of a whole verb form. In (94) and (95), the complete verb form is repeated including subject clitics (for the use of **gé** 'say' see 15.5.2).

(94)  kādū    yí=haay-ǹtà           kādū    íʃ=tūūtʂ-ā-m
      three    3FS=spend.night-COND   three    3PL=knot-put-IRR

      súkú    guru    íʃì=tūūtʂū-gé-t=íʃì
      rope     only     3PL=knot-say-SS=3PL

      tūūtʂū-gé-t=íʃì           ʃə́t'-ǹ-ʃ           gāār-kì-bààstà
      knot-say-SS=3PL           maize-DEF-M        bear.fruit-exist-WHILE

      'When (the moon) appeared in the third night, they made a third
      knot. Knotting and knotting that rope while the maize was
      ripening, …'

(95)  há=tee-t=á            tee-t=á            tee-t=á
      3MS=go.NV-SS=3MS       go.NV-SS=3MS       go.NV-SS=3MS

      há=ōtì           datà      sàk-ǹ
      3MS=cow           near.LOC arrive-DS

      'he went and went and went and reached a cow; …'

# 4   Tone

This chapter gives an overview of tone in Sheko, including its functions, its realisation, and its distribution.

Sheko has four level tonemes. These play a role in the lexicon and in the grammar. The levels are numbered from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest). The tones are written as follows:

tone 4 (highest)          v́
tone 3                        v̄
tone 2                        v
tone 1 (lowest)            v̀

(**v** stands for any tone bearing unit, i.e. a vowel or a syllabic nasal. )

A language with more than three tones is uncommon in Africa. There are just a few languages with four or five tones. These are in Namibia (Khoisan), Ivory Coast (Mande, Kru and Gur), on the Nigerian borders (Benue-Congo), and in Ethiopia (Omotic). These areas are shown in the map below, taken from Wedekind (1985a).
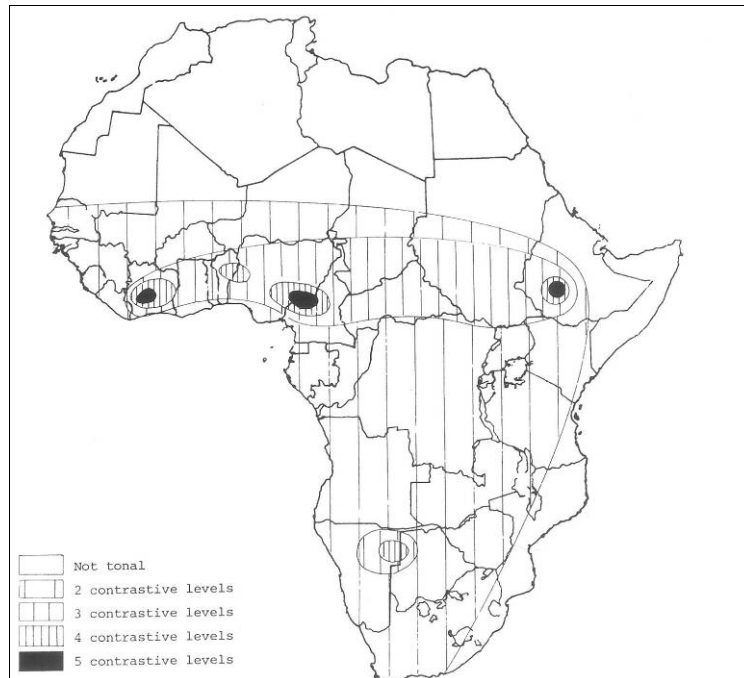
In Ethiopia, Benchnon is the only language which has the rare number of five levels of height. It has six tonemes: five level tones and one glide (Wedekind 1983; Breeze 1989; Rapold 2006). Benchnon is the geographical neighbor of Sheko. Four-tone languages had not been reported for Omotic, although in general on Wedekinds' map five-tone languages are bordered by four tone languages. Aklilu (1988) mentioned that Sheko has three tones but recommended further research. I have analysed Sheko as having four tones. Thus, Sheko is a bridge between Benchnon with five tones and the surrounding two- or three-tone Omotic languages such as Kafa (2 tones, Taddese 2001) and Nayi (3 tones, Aklilu 1994a). Whereas Benchnon nouns commonly have CVC-structure, most Sheko nouns have a CV(V)CV-structure. Wedekind (1985b) suggests that the loss of segments is connected to the development of the fifth level of tone in Benchnon.

Sheko differs from the other Majoid languages in having four levels of height. It is noteworthy that Diizi and Sheko have the same CV-structure. In Diizi, the final vowel may be dropped

when nouns in isolation are elicited. However, Diizi has only three tone levels according to Aklilu (2003) and Beachy (2005). Nayi is reported to have three tonemes as well (Aklilu 1994a:602). It would be interesting to investigate tone comparatively and try to find evidence for the historical circumstances which led to the present divergence in tone systems. It is known from oral history that the Sheko came from the Maji area to their present area.

## 4.1 Overview

Tone in Sheko has a lexical as well as a grammatical functional load. Tone can be characterized as follows:

- On the whole, tone in Sheko appears as stable.
- There is no downstep (not to be expected with four levels of height).
- One of the major functions of tone is to distinguish between persons. This distinction is found with pronouns, possessor prefixes and verbal subject clitics. Compare for example (1a) and (b). The function of tone in this domain is outlined in section 6.1.1.

(1)  a.  **m̩-baadù-ra**                **ha=dùfù**

1SG.POSS-younger.sibling-ACC     2SG=hit.[Q]

'Did you hit my younger brother?'

b.  **m̄-baadù-ra**                **há=dùfù**

1PL.POSS-younger.sibling-ACC     3MS=hit.[Q]

'Did he hit our younger brother?'

Tone in nouns and verbs can be summarized in the following four points:
- Tone on nouns does not change except on head nouns with a preceding modifier, and in some terms of address (masuline and feminine vocatives). Modifiers following the noun or case markers do not have an influence on the tone of the head noun. See section 9.1 on NPs with modifiers and section 5.3.4 on vocatives. The tone of modifiers such as adjectives, demonstratives and possessive prefixes does not change.

- All verbs can be classified "H" or "L". Tone on verb stems in the TAM paradigms is predictable once the lexical tone class is known. The two classes cover the range of four levels of tone in inflection. The lexical class label refers to the relative height within a verb paradigm, not to a specific tone level, i.e. a "L" stem has a lower tone level than a "H" stem in each verb paradigm, but across paradigms the tone level for a "L" stem differs.
- From a tonal point of view, verb paradigms can be grouped into Basic, Factual, and Non-Factual. The Basic paradigm is formed by the Imperative singular and Jussive; in this paradigm the tone on the verb stem is on level 2 for "L" stems and on level 4 for "H" stems. Factual paradigms are e.g. Realis and Obvious, and the tone on verb stems is on level 1 for "L" stems or level 2 for "H" stems. In Non-Factual paradigms, such as Irrealis and Optative as well as Negative, the tone is on level 3 for "L" stems or level 4 for "H" stems. Examples are given in section 4.2 below. The division of verb paradigms is fully discussed in section 10.3.1.
- In verb derivation such as causative formation, all verbs become L, as is shown in chapter 12. The relation between verb and derived adjective is not regular (section 4.7).

Question intonation, if present, is marked by a final falling intonational contour. [10] This intonation in interrogatives is illustrated comprehensively in section 13.3. The high (4) or extra high tone of the elative may be viewed as intonational as well. Furthermore, a high tone or rise on the last tone bearing unit of a clause may signal that the speaker wants to continue the sentence, and it is glossed CONT where attested.

## 4.2   Evidence for contrasts

The clearest evidence for the four levels of height is found in the verbal system. In (2a, c) the verb **síís** 'listen' and in (2b, d)

---

[10] Falling intonation is notated through tone 1 and the gloss .Q where tone 1 is distinctive. The gloss [Q] is used in all other cases. In chapter 13, a downward arrow is used to signal falling intonation.

the verb **kaas** 'play' is used. The segmental make-up of the verbs does not influence the tone. In (a, b) the verb forms are in the Irrealis mood, a Non-Factual paradigm. In (c, d) the verb forms are in the Realis mood, a Factual paradigm. Taken together, (a-d) display four levels of height.

(2)  a.  **n̩=síís-tə**        **n̩=mããk-ā-m-ə**
          1SG=listen-SS      1SG=tell-put-IRR-STI
          'I will listen and talk'

   b.  **n̩=kããs-tə**        **n̩=mããk-ā-m-ə**
          1SG=play-SS        1SG=tell-put-IRR-STI
          'I will chat and talk'

   c.  **n̩=siis-tə**        **n̩=kootu-k-ə**
          1SG=listen-SS      1SG=wait-REAL-STI
          'I listened and waited'

   d.  **n̩=kààs-tə**        **n̩=kootu-k-ə**
          1SG=play-SS        1SG=wait-REAL-STI
          'I chatted and waited'

The tone levels pair in two ways, namely levels 4 and 2; 3 and 1 according to "H" and "L" lexical verb class, as well as 4 and 3; 2 and 1 according to mood. These pairings suggest approaches of 'tone' and 'register', see Yip (2002:42ff) for a summary. An explanation for tone and register phenomena is the involvement of two different muscles in making tone.

In the noun, six tonal melodies are attested. Examples are given in (3). Instrumental measurements in graphs of the six melodies are presented in the following section. Other word classes display additional patterns, exemplified in (4). See further section 4.7 on distribution of tone in several word classes.

(3)  **bádá**  4.4  'tree sp.'
     **tórì**  4.1  'fork which branches into three'
     **k'ēfī**  3.3  'tobacco holder on water pipe'
     **kādì**  3.1  'cactus (*Euphorbia candelabrum*)'
     **utʂà**  2.1  'honey badger'
     **tètʃū**  1.3  'pebble'

(4)    **kétā**    4.3    'all'
         **kóta**    4.2    'little, few'
         **gàma**    1.2    'truly'

Minimal pairs and a few triplets are recorded. Multiplets of more than three nouns have not been found, which is reasonable in view of the complex syllable structure and number of consonants. The nominal triplets are given in (5), and some minimal pairs in (6).

(5)    **tʃʼáárù** 4.1 'waterfall (stone)'    **fōōrū** 3.3    'entrance'
         **tʃʼāārū** 3.3 'medicine'        **foorù** 2.1    'rotation'
         **tʃʼaarù** 2.1 'twin'           **fòòrū** 1.3    'bird sp.'

(6)    **bótà** 4.1    'calabash half'    **tʂʼūbū** 3.3    'smoke'
         **bōtā** 3.3    'mortar'          **tʂʼubù** 2.1    'sin'

         **hāāy** 3      'water'         **zíínà** 4.1    'tree sp.'
         **haay** 2      1. 'ear'         **zīīnā** 3.3    'leopard'
                     2. 'leaf of ensete/yam'

Some minimal pairs for verbs include the following:

(7)    **bár**          'become blind'
         **bar**          1. 'boil (of liquids)'
                        2. 'throw away' 3. 'flower (of trees)'

         **búr**          1. 'flow by' 2. 'ask your money back'
         **bur**          'flood'

         **gáb**          'be collected'
         **gab**          'gossip'

         **ór**           'urinate'
         **or**           'meow, make a sound (of animals)'

If one mixes different categories and uses inflected verbs, multiplets of more than three members do occur.

(8)    **bāārà**          '100'
         **bāārā**          'girl'
         **báárà**          'to take a mouthful' (inf.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **baarà** | 'did you take a mouthful?' |
| | **baarâ** | 'did he take a mouthful?' |
| | | |
| (9) | **órá** | 'wet dung' |
| | **ōrā** | 'garden' (but almost always with -**tà** 'LOC') |
| | **órà** | '1. to meow 2. to unrinate' (inf.) |
| | **orà** | 'did you urinate?' |
| | **orâ** | 'did he urinate?' |
| | **òrà** | 'did you meow?' |
| | **òrâ** | 'did he meow?' |

## 4.3 Phonetic realisations

To give an idea of the four levels of tone, this section presents six graphs with each graph showing the phonetic realisation of one of the six patterns found on disyllabic nouns. All nouns are pronounced by the same male person of about 35 years. The graphs show semitones and in this case, level 4 ≈ 53 semitones, level 3 ≈ 50 semitones, level 2 ≈ 48 semitones and level 1 ≈ 45 semitones.

Graph 1. Tone pattern 4.4. Noun: **kátá** 'grass sp.'
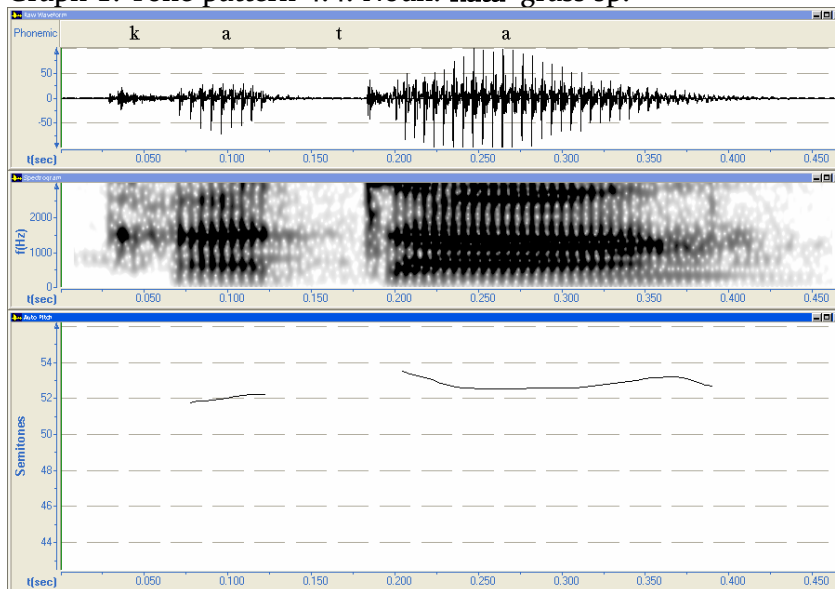
Graph 2. Tone pattern 4.1. Noun: **sínt'ù** 'nose'
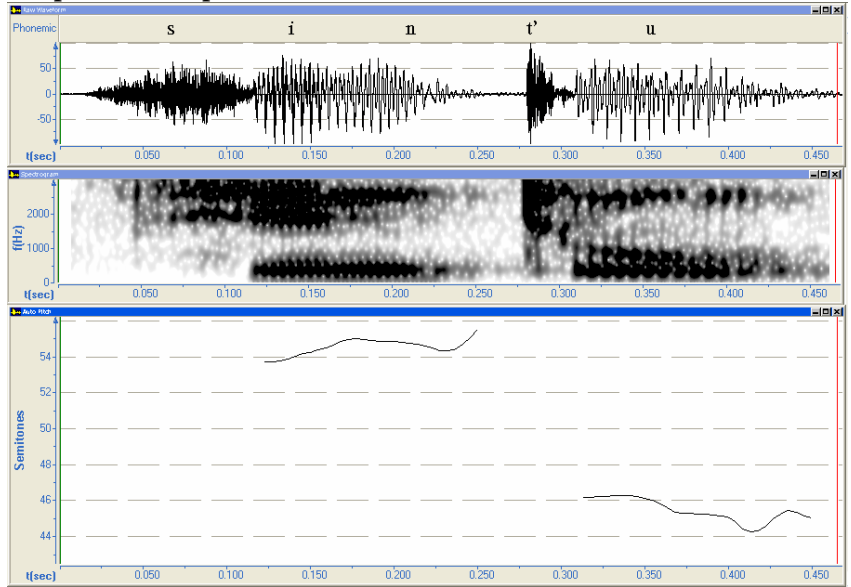


Graph 3. Tone pattern 3.3. Noun: **tʃ'āārū** 'medicine'
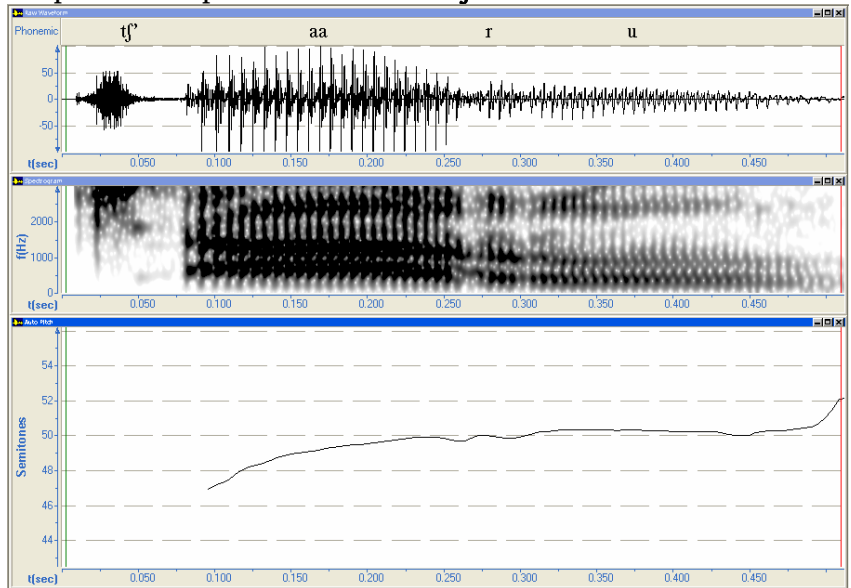
Graph 4. Tone pattern 3.1. Noun: **zūnkù** 'sheep'
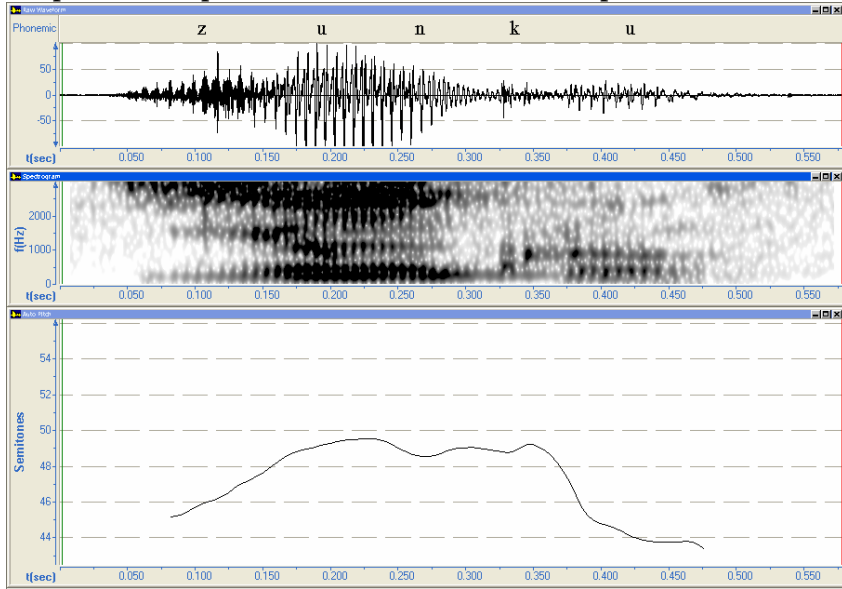


Graph 5. Tone pattern 2.1. Noun: **ɗunkì** 'basket sp.'

Graph 6. Tone pattern 1.3. Noun: **k'yànt'ū** 'flower sp.'



## 4.4    Tonological rules

The only purely tonological rules are *TR 1. Downdrift* and *TR 2. Raising tone 1 in rapid speech*.

*TR1. Downdrift*

A general tendency among languages is a downward inclination, which may be strong in some languages and slight in others. This is called downdrift or automatic downstep. It means that the reference point for the realisation of a tone or string of tones is lowered following a phonological lower tone. Downdrift can be observed in Sheko as well. In example (10), the second set of tones on level 4 is phonetically one to two semitones lower than the first pair. (The level 2 tone at the very end is also slightly lower than the level 2 tone on the pronoun.)

(10)    ʃírá                          ye-kɴ̀   báátʃí   há=yāmz-ā-m-ə
           day.after.tomorrow     2SG-DAT  skin     3MS=hurt-put-IRR-STI

           'The day after tomorrow, your skin will hurt.'

Graph 7. Downdrift.



The exact nature of the rule and the factors which influence setting tonal reference points need further investigation. The effect of downdrift is not marked in this thesis.

*TR 2. Raising tone 1 in rapid speech*
Optionally (in rapid speech) a single tone 1 preceding a tone 2 may be raised to level 2.

(11)  **dàtʃa**          [ **dàtʃa** ] ~ [ **datʃa** ]   'right, correct'

(12)  **emà-ra**         [ **ʔemàra** ] ~ [ **ʔemara** ]
      so.and.so-ACC
      'so and so'

## 4.5    Morphotonological rules
The following rules are described in this section:
*MT 1. Contour formation*
*MT 2. Deletion of tone of definiteness marker*
*MT 3. Contour simplification*
*MT 4. Tone change on a pre-modified noun*

*MT 5. Realisation of tone 2 on case suffixes*
*MT 6. Tone lowering in causative and passive formation*

Additionally, there are some lexicalised, i.e. partly unpredictable tonal changes. For adjectives, these are described in section 4.7 and for vocatives in section 5.3.4.


*MT 1. Contour formation*
*MT 1* happens in the context of loss of a tone bearing unit, such as described by the rule about $V_1V_2$ sequences (*PR 18* on glide formation and vowel contraction). Its output may be subject to *MP 3*.

When two tone bearing units meet across a morpheme boundary the first tone bearing unit loses its syllabicity and thereby its ability to carry tone, then its tone is relinked to the following tone bearing unit.

(13)   há=tēē-b-tà=á  >     [ ɦátʸēēbtǎ ]
       3MS=go.NV-REL-LOC=3MS
       'when he went, he...'

(14)   kì=á-k-ə     >     [ kʸăkə ]
       exist=3MS-REAL-STI
       'he/it is there'

One environment where contour formation does not apply is in definiteness marking (see *MT 2*).


*MT 2. Deletion of tone of definiteness marker*
The basic tone of the definiteness marker -ǹ is 1. This is its realisation when the definiteness marker is suffixed to a monosyllabic noun.

(15)   **yááb**  'man, person'

       **yááb-m̀-s**          [ yáábm̀s ]
       man-DEF-M
       'the man'

When the definiteness marker is suffixed to a noun with two or more syllables, its own tone is deleted. The preceding tone, whose tone bearing unit is deleted in the process, is relinked to it.

(16)  **dīdū**  'scar'

    **dīd-n̄-s**        [ **dīdn̄s** ]        *[ **dīdǹs** ]

    scar-DEF-M

    'the scar'


*MT 3. Contour simplification*

A contour tone is optionally simplified by dropping the first tone. Further investigation into contour simplification is needed, to check under which circumstances simplification takes place, and whether it is always the first tone which is dropped.

(17)  **há=tēē-b-tà=á** >    [ **ɦátʸēēbtǎ** ] ~ [ **ɦátʸēēbtá** ]

    3MS=go.NV-REL-LOC=3MS

    'when he went, he...'


*MT 4. Tone change on a pre-modified noun*

When a modifier precedes its head noun, the tonal pattern on the head noun changes. The following table shows the tonal changes in disyllabic nouns for all six tonal patterns. The numbers in brackets indicate the tone level of the two syllables of the noun. Tone 4 is replaced by tone 2 and all other tones are replaced by tone 1. Note that four of the six contrastive patterns are neutralized by this replacement.

| noun in isolation | | pre-modified noun | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **kábí** (44) | 'axe' | **há-kabi** (22) | 'his axe' |
| **zámà** (41) | 'machete' | **há-zamà** (21) | 'his machete' |
| **tōsā** (33) | 'story' | **há-tòsà** (11) | 'his story' |
| **būdà** (31) | 'pumpkin' | **há-bùdà** (11) | 'his pumpkin' |
| **batʃà** (21) | 'bed' | **há-bàtʃà** (11) | 'his bed' |
| **t'ètʃū** (13) | 'pebble' | **há-t'ètʃù** (11) | 'his pebble' |

Table 1. Tone on pre-modified nouns

Section 9.1 discusses modification of head nouns in detail.

*MT 5. Realisation of tone 2 on case suffixes*
Case suffixes with underlying tone 2, are on level 3 following a tone on level 3 or 4 for some speakers. The case suffixes concerned are the accusative marker -**ra** and the instrumental marker **ka**.

(18)  a.  **háárá-ka**       [ ɦááráka ] ~ [ ɦáárákā ]
          knife-WITH
          'with a knife'

      b.  **gēēnī-ka**       [ gēēnīka ] ~ [ gēēnīkā ]
          pouring.cup-WITH
          'with a pouring cup'

Note that e.g. compounds do not show the same variation.

(19)  **kúʃm̄be**  [ kúʃm̄be ]  'ant sp.' (? + **bé** 'mother' )

*MT 6. Tone lowering in causative and passive formation*
A "H" verb root becomes "L" when followed by the causative suffix -**s** or the passive suffix -**t'**. In the Imperative singular (which is also the citation form), H stems have tone 4 and L stems have tone 2.

(20)  **gób**  'jump'       **gob-s**  'cause to jump'
      **úm**   'eat'        **um-t'**  'be eaten'

The causative or passive verb stem behaves like a "L" verb stem in all paradigms, except in the Imperative singular and Jussive when the derived stem consists of two syllables: then the tonal height on the verb stem is not on level 2 but on level 3. This is exemplified for causative Imperatives in (21) with the verbs **bááʃ** 'slaughter' and **yiiʃ** 'pull out, dig up'.

(21)  a.  **bááʃ**
          slaughter
          'slaughter! (sg)'

b.     **bāʃ-ūʃ**
slaughter-CAUS
'cause to slaughter! (sg)'

c.     **yiiʃ**
pull.out
'pull out!' (sg)

d.     **yīʃ-ūʃ**
pull.out-CAUS
'cause to pull out!' (sg)

## 4.6    Post-lexical H-spreading

At morpheme boundaries, a tone 3 or 4 may spread over the next syllable (22b). In slow or careful speech this will create contour tones, as well as in whistled speech.

(22)   a.     **íʃì-kòmtù**     [ **ʔíʃkòmtù** ]
3PL.POSS-chief
'their chief'

      b.     **ítí-kòmtù**     [ **ʔítíkômtù** ]
2PL.POSS-chief
'your chief'

The graph below compares the third person plural **íʃì-** (22a), which has tones 4.1, with the second person plural **ítí-** (22b), which has tones 4.4 and whose tone spreads over the following syllable. Note that even though the second **i** of **íʃì-** is elided on this occasion, its tone still prevents the first high tone to spread.

Graph 8. Post-lexical H-spreading and blocking.
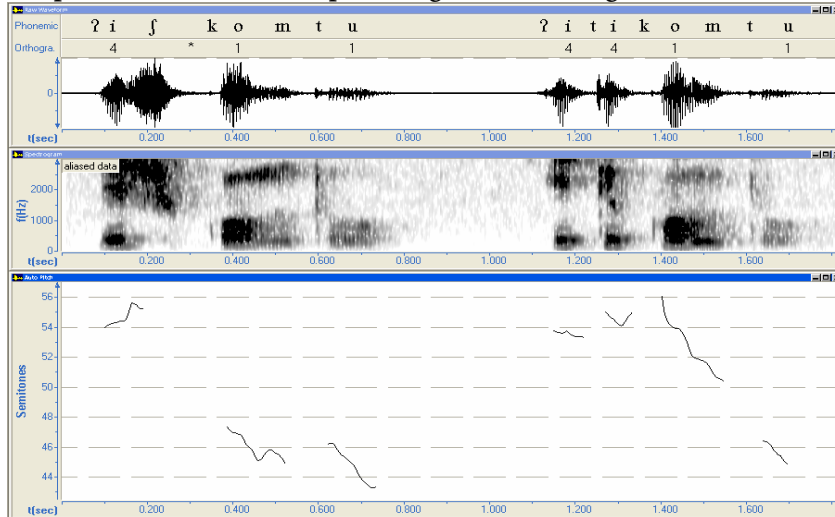


In fluent speech, the phonemically high tone is often realised with a rising tone and the following syllable actually has a higher pitch than the phonemically high one, since the target point of the high tone is delayed in time. However, this does not occur in whistling. The "delayed" H peak is illustrated with the following sentence and corresponding graph. The two circles in the graph show where the highest pitch (tone 4 of the 3fs subject clitics **yí=** and **=í**) is realised on the following syllable instead of on the subject clitic.

(23)  **yí = teè-b**        **gābā-k'à**        **té-ré-e**
      3FS = go.NV-REL     market-IN        COP-NEG-STI

      **bēytēkrīstīyàn**        **t = í**        **tee-k-ə**
      church(Amh)              COP = 3FS      go.NV-REAL-STI

'She didn't go to market, but to church' (Lit: her going was not to market, it was to church she went.)

Graph 9. Realisation of H pitch with target point delayed in time.
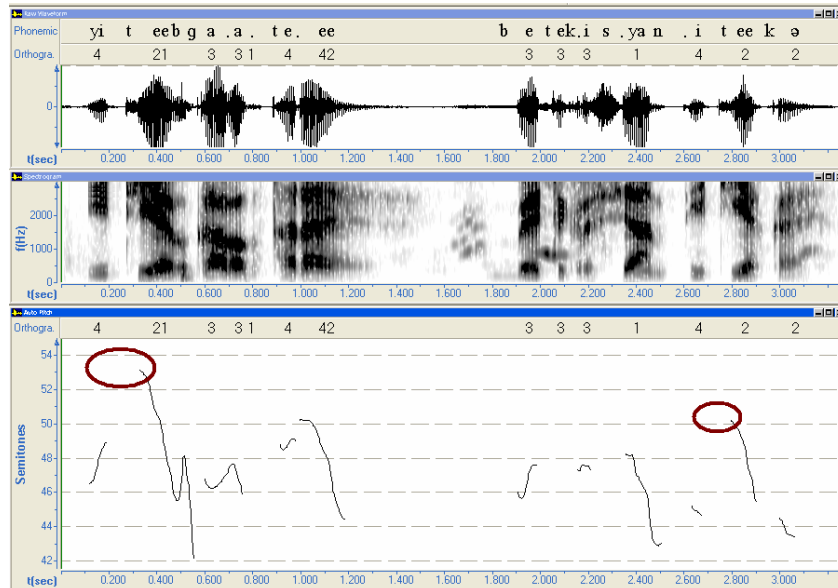


The effects of this rule are not written in this thesis.

## 4.7    Distribution of tone

This section illustrates the distibution of tone in several word classes. The data is organised according to syllable type, and by comparison it is found that there is no correlation between syllable type and tone. There are no signs of depressor consonants leading to a phonological difference in height.

*monosyllabic nouns*
In monosyllabic nouns tone 1 is not attested.

(24)    CVC
      éd        'mouth'         4
      gúb       'chest'
      ts'ír     'clay'
      īy        'house'         3
      ṣōw       'cold'
      gob       'welkin, sky'   2
      kum       'neck'

(25) CVVC
    ééz    'honey        4
    ṣóón    'heart'
    ááb    '1. eye; 2. fruit'
    ēēd    'door'        3
    ṣūūn    'life'
    ṣāād    'well with water containing minerals'
    faad    'body'        2
    gooẓ    'tree sp.'
    meen    'buffalo'

(26) CCVC
    t'yám    'breast'        4
    ʔyāb    'fodder plant' 3

(27) CCVVC
    kyāāz    'lord'        3

(28) CCVCC
    ʔyārb    'tongue'      3

A few monosyllabic words have a contour tone, written here with the low tone mark on the semi-vowel if the vowel is short (29). It is assumed that they have a disyllabic origin. The words in (30) are also analysed disyllabic underlyingly, on the basis of their tonal behaviour when they are made definite. The definiteness marker carries tone 3 instead of tone 1, which would be the case if the noun was monosyllabic (see section 4.5, *MT 2*).

(29) baà    'crow'        < ba.(ʔ)à
    kāỳ    'god'        < kā.(ʔ)ì
    bāỳ    'mother'     < bā.(ʔ)ì
    byaà    'calf'        < bya.(ʔ)à

(30) bōw    'belly '      < bō.(ʔ)ū or ba.ʔu
    bīy    'feather'     < bī.(ʔ)ī

*disyllabic nouns*

All six tonal melodies (section 4.3) are found with frequent syllable structures and gaps are random with less frequent syllable structures. For each CV-shape in disyllabic nouns, four words have been given, if possible, with each of the vocoids which can occur word-finally, i.e. **u**, **a**, **i**, **ṇ**.

(31)　　CV.CV

| 4.4 | **bádá** | 'tree sp.' | 4.1 | **dúbà** | 'maggot' |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **bútʃí** | 'wound' | | **mátì** | 'clay cup' |
| | **kútʂú** | 'arm' | | **k'ámù** | 'servant' |
| | **úʃń** | 'flower' | | **úgì̀** | 'salt' |
| 3.3 | **tōsā** | 'story' | 3.1 | **ʂūk'à** | 'porridge' |
| | **ēkī** | 'money' | | **k'ūdì** | 'lid' |
| | **zēgū** | 'ox' | | **bōdù** | 'corm centre' |
| | **ts'āp'm̄** | 'root' | | **tūkì̀** | 'hole' |
| 1.3 | **t'ètʃú** | 'pebble' | 2.1 | **karà** | 'leaf' |
| | **yàtń** | 'fox' (~ **yàtńbe**) (f) | | **uzì** | 'firstborn' |
| | | | | **atʂ'ù** | 'tooth' |
| | | | | **matì̀** | 'tree sp.' |

(32)　　CVV.CV

| 4.4 | **háárá** | 'knife' | 4.1 | **séémà** | 'tusk' |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **zóófí** | 'plant sp.' | | **tóórì** | 'anklet' |
| | **íírú** | 'rain' | | **k'áátʂ'ù** | 'ant sp.' |
| | | | | **ts'íík'ì̀** | 'charcoal' |
| 3.3 | **gōōbā** | 'mud bed' | 3.1 | **fāānà** | 'fork (road)' |
| | **tūūzī** | 'door closing pole' | | **ʃōōdì** | 'bag sp.' |
| | **tāāmū** | 'fire' | | **nūūtʂù** | 'hyena' |
| | **ēēkń** | 'cabbage' | | **t'īīsì̀** | 'bird sp.' |
| 1.3 | **dààdū** | 'reciprocal labor' | 2.1 | **baakà** | 'tuber ssp.' |
| | | | | **kuurà** | 'donkey' |
| | | | | **ẓaakì̀** | 'noon' |

(33)  CVC.CV

| 4.4 | **gárgá** | 'termite' | 4.1 | **ór̥ʂà** | 'cardamom' |
| | **ʒírbí** | 'cotton' | | **bə́ntī** | 'snake sp.' |
| | **fúntʃú** | 'chaff' | | **sínt'ù** | 'nose' |
| | **zérkń** | 'time' (~ **zírkń**) | | **ʃíʃkǹ** | 'fingernail' |

| 3.3 | **hōmfā** | 'canoe' | 3.1 | **kārkà** | 'forest' |
| | **gērbī** | 'armpit' | | **k'ēmtì** | 'co-wife' |
| | **āʂkū** | 'meat' | | **zūnkù** | 'sheep' |
| | **ʃōrkñ** | 'grasshopper' | | **ʃə̄ʃkǹ** | 'snake sp.' |

| 1.3 | **ʃìʃtū** | 'plant sp.' | 2.1 | **ts'ezgà** | 'udder' |
| | **ʂòrt'ñ** | 'lungs' | | **dunkì** | 'basket sp.' |
| | | | | **ts'ertì** | 'herb sp.' |
| | | | | **ts'uykǹ** | 'firefly' |

(34)  CCV.CV

| 4.4 | **ʔyáts'ń** | 'moon' | 4.1 | **kyáhà** | 'hide stake' |
| | | | | **myáwù** | 'jackal' |
| | | | | **zyátì** | 'adultery' |

| 3.3 | **ʔyāfā** | 'tongue wound' | 3.1 | **kyākà** | 'border' |
| | **gyānū** | 'coffee' | | | |
| | **byāk'ñ** | 'spear' | | | |

(35)  CCVC.CV

| 3.3 | **ʔyāngā** | 'ram' | | | |
| | **myāngū** | 'forefather spirit' | | | |

| 1.3 | **k'yàntū** | 'flower sp.' | 2.1 | **syangà** | 'dried vines' |
| | **ʔyàrkñ** | 'perspiration' | | | |

(36)  CCVV.CV

| 4.4 | **ʔyáaná** | 'pot' | 4.1 | **tyáárà** | 'gourd cup' |
| | **zyáámí** | 'tree sp.' | | | |
| | **myaak'ú** | 'egg' | | | |

| 3.3 | **gyāāsū** | 'shield' | 3.1 | **ts'yāāts'ù** | 'sunshine' |

*tri-syllabic nouns*
Underived tri-syllabic nouns have one of four patterns.

(37)　CV.CV.CV

    4.4.1 **téréʃà**　'clay pitcher'　　　3.3.1　**sēkīrì**　'wattle'
        **ʒúmátà** 'early morning'　　　　　　　**bākāʃà** 'stool'

    1.3.1 **dògāmà** 'dove'　　　　　2.1.1　**gofàrà** 'toad'
        **sùmīnì** '50 cent coin'　　　　　　　**iʒàmà** 'hippo'

(38)　CVC.CV.CV

    4.4.1 **kéngáʃà** 'clay pipe'　　　3.3.1　**dīngūrù** 'viper'
        **búrgíʃà** 'liver'　　　　　　　　　**sāmbārà** 'tree sp.'

    1.3.1 **yànk'ābà** 'red maize'　　　2.1.1　**damtʃ'àrà** 'ginger'
        **mùkmūrì** 'top leaf of ensete'　　　　**tamtàkà** 'tree sp.'

(39)　CVC.CVC.CV

    1.3.1 **gìngīngà** 'milipede'

A fifth melody is only found with words ending in -**tsī** and these words are said to come from Benchnon.

(40)　CV.CV.CV

    3.3.3 **yērōtsī**　　　　'God'
        **dēmētsī**　　　　'(name of spirit)'
        **dēgōtsī**　　　　'(name of spirit)'

Tri-syllabic loan words from Amharic have often the 1.3.1 pattern.

(41)　**kùbāyà**　　　'cup'　　　　< Amh **kubbayya**
      **dàgūsà**　　　'grain sp.'　　< Amh **dagussa**
      **màʃīrà**　　　'millet'　　　< Amh **maʃílla**
      **k'òrk'òrò**　　'zinc sheet'　< Amh **k'ork'orro**
      **mìsmārì**　　　'nail'　　　　< Amh **mismar**

*numerals*
The tone patterns of numerals are a subset of those in nouns.
See section 7.3.1 for a list of numerals.

*adjectives*

Adjectives, derived by the definiteness-gender marking **-ǹ-s** from verbs, display four tone patterns, namely 44, 41, 33 and 31. 44-toned adjectives are always derived from a H verb stem, but not all H stems have their adjective in 44. Since the tone of an adjective is unpredictable from the tone of the verb stem, a list is given in (42) and (43) with H and L verbs respectively.

| (42) | **k'éétʂ'** | 'be cold' | 44 | **k'éétʂ'ńʂ** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ʃáád** | 'be tall' | | **ʃáádńs ~ ʃādńs** |
| | **ts'úbḿ** | 'be narrow' | | **ts'úbḿs** |
| | **tʃír** | 'be green' | | **tʃírńʃ** |
| | **tʃór** | 'be finished' | | **tʃórńʃ** 'last' |
| | **wóók'** | 'be weak, flexible' | | **wók'ńs** |
| | **íík'** | 'be old' | | **ííkńs** |
| | | | | |
| | **kór** | 'be dry' | 31 | **kōrǹs** |
| | **kyát** | 'be sour, stingy' | | **kyātǹs** |
| | **k'áʒk'úʒ** | 'be sour' | | **k'āʒk'ǹʃ** |
| | **máʃ** | 'be patient' | | **māʃkǹʃ** |
| | **méér** | 'be fat' | | **mēērǹs** |
| | **t'éf** | 'be plump' | | **t'ēfǹs** |
| | **wúrḿ** | 'be turbid' | | **wūrǹs** |
| | | | | |
| | **kááts** | 'be ripe' | 33 | **kāātsīs** |
| | **sár** | 'be hot' | | **sārkīs** |
| | | | | |
| | **ʒááʒ** | 'be good' | 41 | **ʒáʒǹʃ ~ ʒééǹʃ** |
| (43) | **dākī** | 'be dirty' | 31 | **dākǹs** |
| | **fayt'** | 'be weak' | | **fāyt'ǹs** |
| | **gaar** | 'be ripe' | | **gāārǹs** |
| | **karb** | 'be strong' | | **kārbǹs** |
| | **k'oʒ** | 'be strong, hard' | | **k'ōʒǹʃ** |
| | **ʃapk** | 'be thin' | | **ʃāpkǹs** |
| | **ʃeen** | 'be bad' | | **ʃēēǹʃ** |
| | **ʃiʃk** | 'be tasty' | | **ʃīʃkǹs** |
| | **ʃōōtī** | 'be sharply pointed' | | **ʃōōtǹs** |
| | **ʂōʂkī** | 'be light (load)' | | **ʂōʂkǹʂ** |
| | **t'yābḿ** | 'be grown together' | | **t'yābǹs** |
| | **ins** | 'be heavy' | | **īǹs** |

| fay | 'be saved' | 33 | fāykn̄s 'alive, healed' |
| gōōtn̄ | 'be white' | | gōōtn̄s |
| sub | 'be red' | | sūbm̄s |
| ʃikʼ | 'be short' | | ʃīkʼn̄s |
| tsʼaw | 'be black' | | tsʼāāns |
| hā̠ṣkn̄ | 'be wide' | 44 | há̠ṣkńs |

Adjectives in attributive function have these tone patterns irrespective of whether they follow or precede their head. When used predicatively, they have tone patterns occur too. It is not known whether adjectives undergo a change in tone pattern, if they function as head and a modifier precedes them.

*adverbs and ideophones*
Next to the six patterns found in disyllabic nouns, adverbs and ideophones and quantifiers may have the following patterns:

(44)  ò̠òza   1.2   'unstable, wobbly'
      wúʃa   4.2   'much'
      kétā   4.3   'all'

*verbs*
The lexical tone is H or L, see section 4.1 above or section 10.3.1. All verbs have a verbal noun with a 4.1 tone pattern, regardless of the lexical tone.

Although Sheko has four tones, it uses just six out of 16 logically possible patterns for disyllabics nouns. With tri-syllabic nouns and adjectives, just four patterns are used. Lexical tone of verb stems, which are normally monosyllabic, is restricted to two classes. If all word classes are included nine patterns are used in total: 4.4, 4.3, 4.2, 4.1, 3.3, 3.1, 2.1, 1.3, 1.2. Excluded are the patterns 3.4, 2.4, 1.4, 2.3, 3.2, 2.2 and 1.1. The latter two patterns are found on pre-modified nouns but do not occur on nouns in isolation. The restrictions in tone patterns can be seen as a trace of historical stages of the language during which it had fewer tone levels. At present, little is known about the processes and interactions between tones which led to the development of more tone levels.

# 5   Noun morphology

This chapter treats the inflectional morphemes of Sheko that attach to nouns, and give an overview of the categories of definiteness, gender and number in the language. Other inflectional markers like case attach to the right of the noun phrase and are treated in chapter 9. Furthermore, this chapter treats noun derivation and compounding.

## 5.1   Gender, definiteness and number

Definiteness, gender and number are interconnected. Although the morphemes for definiteness and gender are not port-manteau morphemes and one can recognise the individual morphemes, they are so closely linked together that discussing gender also involves speaking of number. Likewise, one cannot speak about definiteness without mentioning gender, since a definiteness marker always co-occurs with a gender marker.

The table below and the following of this section give an overview of morphemes concerned with gender, definiteness and number in Sheko. Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 treat gender, definiteness and number respectively in all the relevant word categories.

| | | M | F |
|---|---|---|---|
| definite noun | sg | **-ǹ-s**<br>-DEF-M | **<i>-ǹ**<br><F>-DEF |
| plural noun | pl | **(-ù)-s**<br>-m-PL | **(-ì)-s**<br>-f-PL |
| demonstrative | sg | **-z**<br>-M | **-nì**<br>-F |
| | pl | | |
| nominalizer | sg | **bāāb**<br>father | **bé**<br>mother |
| | pl | | |
| relative clause | sg | **-ə̀b**<br>-REL | **-ə̀be**<br>-REL.mother |
| | pl | | |
| 3rd person<br> pronoun | sg | **áz**<br>3MS | **íʒ**<br>3FS |
| | pl | **íʃì**<br>3PL | |
| 3rd person<br>subject clitic | sg | **há=**<br>3MS= | **yí=**<br>3FS= |
| | pl | **íʃì=**<br>3PL= | |

Table 1: Overview of gender, number and definiteness morphology

Definiteness marking and plural marking exclude each other in nouns. Definiteness is marked by the morpheme **-ǹ** and always co-occurs with gender marking, which consists of an infix **<i>** for feminine and the default gender suffix **-s** for masculine. The combination of the definiteness marker and these gender markers is referred to as definiteness-gender marking. It is not obligatory, i.e. a form morphologically unmarked for definiteness may still refer to a known referent mentioned before. The definiteness-gender marking bears functional resemblance to the distal demonstrative (cf. section 5.2.2 and 7.1.2).

Gender is predominantly a category of the singular. However, gender suffixes appear in the plural as well with a small group of nouns: -ù for masculine and -ì for feminine nouns. -ù only occurs suffixed to monosyllabic words which are marked for plural. The suffix -ì is restricted to that environment as well. It is clearly linked with the infix <i> in definite nouns and -nì in demonstratives.

Furthermore, the default gender is non-feminine, as can be seen from the table. In other words, the feminine gender is singled out as opposed to masculine and plural, which are marked by the suffix -s. This default gender marker formally resembles the suffix -z in demonstratives. Note that in the nominalizers and in relative clause marking too, the feminine gender is singled out as opposed to masculine and plural, which are always marked identically. In other words, feminine is the marked and non-feminine the unmarked gender. The default gender can be called masculine, because gender agreement on verbs is with the third person singular masculine. In Diizi and Nayi too, masculine is the unmarked gender (Beachy 2005; Aklilu 1997).

Looking through the table, there are no morphemes which uniquely express number in nouns, demonstratives, relative clauses and the nominalizer bāāb 'father' / bé 'mother'. For nouns, demonstratives and relatives, there is one morpheme which serves for masculine singular as well as plural (plural irrespective of gender). Thus, one could say that (except for 3rd person) the category of number is irrelevant or that it is reducible to gender. However, by the configuration of morphemes one can distinguish a plural form for most nouns, which has an -u / -i gender marker, and/or no definiteness marker. Plural marking in nouns is not obligatory, i.e. plural marking is only used in contexts where the speaker wants to refer explicitly to more than one referent. The referent of the plural noun may be known ("definite") or unknown ("indefinite"). An unmarked noun can refer to one or more referents depending on the context, i.e. it is transnumeral (Biermann 1982). Definite nouns are also transnumeral.

In glossing, the default (masculine) gender marker -s is glossed M in the majority of cases, which is when it occurs together

with the definiteness marker -ǹ DEF; it is glossed PL when occurring separately, or with the markers -**u** m and -**i** f . In demonstratives, the default (masculine) marker -**z** is glossed M and the feminine marker -**nì** F ; the relative clause marker -**àb** REL is not glossed for gender, while its feminine counterpart -**àbe** is glossed REL.mother.

## 5.2 Definiteness

Definiteness marking co-occurs with a gender marker. Since the two occur together obligatorily, the rest of this thesis speaks mostly of definiteness-gender marking for ease of reference. In nouns, definiteness marking excludes plural marking, and a definite form is interpreted as singular out of context, although the form is in fact transnumeral. The form of the definiteness-gender marking is discussed under section 5.2.1, while its function is discussed in section 5.2.2. The definiteness-gender marking refers anaphorically to nouns and derives adjectives from verbs.

### 5.2.1 Form of definiteness-gender marking

The basic form of the definiteness marker is -ǹ. The terminal vowel of a noun is dropped before the syllabic nasal of the definiteness marker. The definiteness marker is always accompanied by a gender marker, which is a suffix -**s** for masculine and an infix <**i**> for feminine.

(1)  tóóz    'relative'      tóóz-ǹ-s       'the relative (m)'
     t'árà    'injera'        t'ár-ǹ-s       'the injerra (m)'

     tóóz    'relative'      tóó<í>z-ǹ      'the relative (f)'
     ʔyāgī   'grandmother'  ʔyā<í>g-ñ      'the grandmother'

Some (morpho-)phonological processes apply when the definiteness-gender marking is suffixed to a noun. These are repeated here in order to explain the surface forms of nouns with definiteness-gender suffixes. The processes themselves are described in detail in chapter 3.

The (morpho-)phonological processes involved in suffixing definiteness-gender marking are:

*MP 1. Deletion of the terminal vowel preceding the definiteness marker*
*PR 13. Sibilant harmony*
*PR 9. Assimilation of alveolar nasals*
*MP 2. Deletion of internasal sibilants*
*PR 10. Nasal-nasal merging*
*PR 15. Simplification of affricates preceding a syllabic nasal*
*PR 20. Internasal stop reduction*

In case of rapid or careless speech, *PR 20* is overruled by *PR 21. Internasal stop deletion in rapid speech.*

Rules specific to feminine nouns:
*MP 3. Realisation of definiteness marker following ɾ in feminine nouns*
*PR 18. Reduction of vowel to glide and contraction*

The tonal side is captured in *MT 2. Deletion of tone of definiteness marker.*

The examples below serve to illustrate the application of the above rules. Note that the rules are ordered. Assimilation processes take place before the deletion of the element they assimilate to, i.e. sibilant harmony applies before simplification of affricates and assimilation of alveolar nasals applies before internasal stop deletion in rapid speech and before nasal-nasal merging. (2)-(4) are examples of masculine nouns and (5)-(7) of feminine nouns.

(2)    **íntʃù**      [ ʔíɲtʃù ]      'wood'

     [ ʔíntʃ-ǹ-s      - MP 1 Deletion of terminal vowel
                           - MT 2 Deletion of tone of def. marker
     [ ʔíntʃ-ǹ-ʃ      - PR 13 Sibilant harmony
     [ ʔíntʃ-ɲ̀-ʃ      - PR 9 Assimilation of alveolar nasals
     [ ʔíɲ-ɲ̀-ʃ      - MP 2 Deletion of internasal sibilants
     [ ʔíɲ̀-ʃ      - PR 10 Nasal merging

     **íɲ̀ʃ**      [ ʔíɲ̀ʃ ]      'the wood'

(3)  k'árʈʂ'ú        [ k'árʈʂ'ú ]      'wrist or ankle joint'

    [ k'árʈʂ'-ń̩-s      - MP 1 Deletion of terminal vowel
                         - MT 2 Deletion of tone of def. marker
    [ k'árʈʂ'-ń̩-ʂ      - PR 13 Sibilant harmony
    [ k'árʈʂ'-ɳ̩-ʂ      - PR 9 Assimilation of alveolar nasals
    [ k'árʈ-ɳ̩-ʂ       - PR 15 Simplification of affricates

    k'árʈʂ'ńʂ       [ k'árʈ́ɳʂ ]      'the wrist or ankle joint'

(4)  umt'à          [ ʔumt'à ]       'food'

    [ ʔumt'-ǹ̩-s       - MP 1 Deletion of terminal vowel
                         - MT 2 Deletion of tone of def. marker
    [ ʔumᵇ-ǹ̩-s       - PR 20 Internasal stop reduction
    ([ ʔumᵐ̃ᵇ-m̩̀-s     - PR 9 Assimilation of alveolar nasals)
    ([ ʔuᵐᵇ-m̩̀-s      - PR 10 Nasal merging)

    umm̀s          [ ʔumᵇm̩̀s ] ~ [ ʔuᵐᵇm̩̀s ] 'the food'

    In rapid speech:
    [ ʔumt'-ǹ̩-s       - MP 1 Deletion of terminal vowel
                         - MT 2 Deletion of tone of def. marker
    [ ʔum-ǹ̩-s        - PR 21 Internasal stop deletion
    [ ʔum-m̩̀-s        - PR 9 Assimilation of alveolar nasals
    [ ʔum̀-s          - PR 10 Nasal merging

    umm̀s          [ ʔum̀s ]         'the food'

(5)  ʔyants'à        [ ʔʸants'à ]      'bee'

    [ ʔʸa<i>nts'-ǹ̩   - MP 1 Deletion of terminal vowel
                        - MT 2 Deletion of tone of def. marker
    [ ʔʸa<i>n-ǹ̩      - MP 2 Deletion of internasal sibilants
    [ ʔʸa<i>ǹ̩        - PR 10 Nasal merging
    [ ʔʸa<y>ǹ̩        - PR 18 Reduction of vowel to glide
    ([ ʔeyǹ̩ ~ ʔʸeǹ̩    and contraction

    ʔyayǹ [ ʔʸayǹ̩ ] ~ [ ʔeyǹ̩ ] ~ [ ʔʸeǹ̩ ] 'the bee'

(6) **bāārā**       [ **bāārā** ]       'young woman'

    [ **bāār-īn**       - MP 3 Realisation of def.-gender
                     marker following **r** in feminine nouns
                 - MT 2 Deletion of tone of def. marker

    **bāārīn**       [ **bāārīn** ]       'the young woman'

(7) **zūnkù**       [ **zūŋkù** ]       'sheep'

    [ **zū\<i\>ŋk-ǹ**   - MP 1 Deletion of terminal vowel
                 - MT 2 Deletion of tone of def. marker
    [ **zū\<i\>ŋ-ǹ**    - PR 21 Internasal stop deletion
    [ **zū\<i\>ŋ-ŋ̀**    - PR 9 Assimilation of alveolar nasals
    [ **zū\<i\>ŋ̀**      - PR 10 Nasal merging
    [ **zū\<y\>ŋ̀**      - PR 18 Reduction of vowel to glide

    **zūyǹ**       [ **zūyŋ̀** ]       'the sheep (ewe)'

One might wonder whether -**ǹ** DEF can also be analysed as singulative. However, this was not volunteered by any of the language consultants (nobody said: "It means just one," or the like). Moreover, definiteness-gender marking occurs with mass nouns, e.g. **ūk'ǹs** 'the milk', and with nouns which may denote a plural referent, e.g. **yábm̀s** 'the people'.

The definiteness-gender marking is always suffixed to the head noun. It can co-occur with demonstratives (8)-(9) and possessives (10)-(11).

(8) **é-ká**       **fáád-k'à-bààb**  **ín-ʃ**       **yīs-ərá**
    there-LCT      body-IN-father  wood.<u>DEF-M</u>  <u>DIST.M</u>-ACC.CONT

    **k'ōdām-m̀-s**  **yīs**    **há=gīīṣū-kōb-t=á**
    qodama-<u>DEF-M</u>  <u>DIST.M</u>  3MS=pull-take-SS=3MS

    **kēs-ā-m-ə**
    go.out.CAUS-put-IRR-STI

    'that *qodama* pulls out the wood which is there in the body'

(9)    **ás-kɩ̀ ɩ̄y-k'à ūk'ū**    **kɩ̀-ɲ̀ ūk'-ɲ̄-s**    **yīs-əra**
3MS-DAT house-IN milk    exist-DS milk-<u>DEF-M</u>    <u>DIST.M</u>-ACC

**tò    k'aabu-tə**
just    pour-SS

'There was milk in his house; pouring only that milk...'

(10)    **yí = zīīn-ɲ̀-s-kɩ̀**    **báátʃ-ɲ́-s-əra yí-bàtà**
3FS = leopard-<u>DEF-M</u>-<u>DAT</u>[11]    skin-<u>DEF-M</u>-ACC    3FS.POSS-on.LOC

**siip'u-tə**
sew-SS

'she sewed the skin of the leopard on her and...'

(11)    **k'ay-tə**    **ɳ-uus-ɲ̀-s-a**    **ats-ə yí = ge-ɲ̀**
rise-SS    <u>1SG.POSS</u>-bone-<u>DEF-M</u>-ACC    give-STI 3FS = say-DS

'she rose and said: "Give my bone!"'

Definiteness-gender marking does not occur on nouns in generic statements in my corpus.

(12)    **gárgá íntʃù-rà**    **há = gyá-m-ə**
termite  wood-ACC    3MS = chew-IRR-STI

'A termite eats wood.'

(13)    **ééz-kɩ̀**    **tēēmà-ka**    **ūk'ū-ka**
honey-DAT    honey.liquid-COOR    milk-COOR

**ʃīʃk-ɲ̀-s-ə̀b**    **tə-k-ə**
be.tasty-DEF-M-REL    COP-REAL-STI

'Honey and milk are sweet.'

The definiteness-gender marking does not occur with proper nouns like **Gaana** (male person's name) or **Kuki** (place name) in my sample. But it occurs on names which are used to denote a member of a group, see the first line in (14):

---

[11] On the use of the dative for possession see section 9.3.

(14)  **wofʃíʃtà**  **góór-ǹ-s-k'arà**   **ṣók-ń-s-k'arà faadù**
both.side.LOC   Amhara-<u>DEF-M</u>-INCL   Sheko-<u>DEF-M</u>-INCL body

**gúúrú**  **íʃì = kì-k**   **íʃì = kī-bàstà**  **góórà  dèd-ǹ-s-ee**
only    3PL = exist-REAL   3PL = exist-WHILE  Amhara child-DEF-M-STI

**há-bààb-kǹ**    **faad-ǹ-s-a**    **há = see-tə**
3MS.POSS-father-DAT   body-DEF-M-ACC   3MS = see.NV-SS

'...both, the Amhara as well as the Sheko, were just naked. While they were (like this), as for the Amhara boy, he saw his fathers body and ...'

Synchronically, definiteness-gender marking is not ordered neatly, but involves a different order for feminine nouns, with the infix <i> preceding the definiteness marker -ǹ. For masculine nouns, the definiteness marker is followed by the gender marker.

Although it is outside the scope of this thesis to work out the diachronical developments which led to the present situation of definiteness-gender marking in Sheko, a few comparative notes on definiteness and gender marking in Diizi and Nayi are given below.

Definiteness in Diizi is related to verbal subject clitics (Beachy 2005:58, but cf. section 15.3.1 for the use of subject clitics in Sheko in comparable clauses) as well as to demonstrative suffixes (2005:60). Interestingly, an element -s frequently follows these demonstrative suffixes -a PROX and -e DIST. Beachy (2005:67f) has analysed -s as an accusative case marker alongside -n, but perhaps an alternative analysis is possible, with -n as the accusative case marker (regular, cf. Sheko -ra, Gf. -na, Nayi -na) and -s as a demonstrative or other morpheme indicating definiteness (The distribution of -s in Diizi bears resemblance to the distal demonstrative yīs in Sheko). Markers for feminine gender in Diizi include -n ~ -ni ~ -ɛni for nouns (Beachy 2005:62).

For Nayi, Aklilu (1997:603f) gives the definiteness suffixes -s for masculine and -ṇ for feminine nouns. While the feminine definiteness suffix -ṇ is accompanied by the gender infix <i>, the masculine definiteness suffix -s lacks a corresponding gender affix. Finally, the Nayi proximal demonstratives are

comparable to those in Sheko: **haa-s** 'this/these M', **haa-yin** 'this/those F', while the distal demonstratives are **nea-s** 'that/those M' and **ne-yin** 'that/those F' (Aklilu 1997:606).

As to the origin of the definiteness marker -**ǹ** in Sheko, a demonstrative would be a logical source. Could it have been a distal feminine, which is suggested here on the basis of the Nayi distal? If so, was the default gender feminine in earlier times? (Another clue to the possibility of a switch in default gender is discussed in section 5.3.8.) In any case, this overview clearly hints at a demonstrative origin for the present-day Sheko morphemes -**s** M and -**ǹ** DEF.

On the other side of the Sheko area, Benchnon has masculine/ feminine/ plural marking which is **ù**/ **èn**/ **ènd** in verb-final paradigms, which are ultimately derived from the distal demonstratives **ùɕ, èn, ènd** respectively (Rapold 2006:588).

### 5.2.2    Definiteness on nouns and anaphoric reference

The two major functions of the definiteness-gender marking are to refer anaphorically to referents of noun phrases, and to derive adjectives from a group of verbs denoting adjectival concepts. In addition, it occurs suffixed to a few other verb stems.

The main function of the definiteness marker is anaphoric reference to a previously mentioned entity. Thus, in examples (15) and (16) below, the first mention of a participant or entity is without, the subsequent with the definiteness marking. The anaphoric reference can also be associative (17)-(18).

(15)  só      ōtì      hás-tà          kì-b-tà
      up.there cow      PROX.M-LOC      exist-REL-LOC

      ṇ=sāw-fín-á-m-ə               há=ge-ǹ       ō<y>t-ǹ
      1SG=arrive.NV-descend-put-IRR-STI  3MS=say-DS    cow<F>-DEF

      datà    íʃ=sàk-ǹ
      near.LOC 3PL=arrive-DS

      'he said: "Up there where there is a cow I will arrive and descend."
      They arrived near the cow; ...'

(16)  ṇ-zègù　　　　　bōy-tə　　　　ṇ-eez　　　　　kōb-tə
    1SG.POSS-ox　　　drive-SS　　　1SG.POSS-honey　take-SS

    ṇ=tág-ḿ-bààb (...)　yīs　　n=kōb-tág-ǹ　há-zègù
    1SG=go-IRR-father　　DIST.M　1SG=take-go-DS　3MS.POSS-ox

    bāāʃ-tə　　　　ṇ-zèg-ǹ-s-a　　　　　bāāʃ-tə
    slaughter-SS　　1SG.POSS-ox-<u>DEF-M</u>-ACC　slaughter-SS

    ṇ-eez-ǹ-s-a　　　　　　dyāās-tə
    1SG.POSS-honey-<u>DEF-M</u>-ACC　immerse-SS

    '...having to go I drive my cow and take my honey; (for Badi, he is my 'father'.) This I bring with me; he slaughters his ox and slaughters my ox and immerses my honey and...'

(17)  há=ṣub-ʃi-ǹ　　　há-baatʃ-n-s-əra
    3MS=die-excrete-DS　3MS.POSS-skin-<u>DEF-M</u>-ACC

    yí=baaʃ-tə
    3FS=slaughter-SS

    '...he died; she skinned his skin and...'

(18)  ṃ-burʒ-yààb-ka　　　daan　k'áy-tə ḿ=yēē-t=ḿ
    1SG.POSS-burzha-man-WITH together rise-SS　1PL=come.NV-SS=1PL

    īy-k'à　ʔyārdū-tə　　yowk'à　　gīz-ū-s
    house-IN enter-SS　　INTJ　　　time(Amh)-<u>DEF-M</u>

    tʃ'òr-ǹtà
    finish-COND

    'together with my assistant we will rise, come and enter the house and well, when the time is finished,...' (Context: a specific period of four days in a certain ritual during which the leader and his assistant don't leave the house.)

However, the use of the definiteness marking for anaphoric reference is basically pragmatic. While the second reference to an entity is often by a definite noun phrase, subsequent references may be unmarked for definiteness. In example (19), several parts of a story are put next to each other. The cock and the rat have been mentioned before. In the first line, the rat is referred to by a definite noun phrase. In the second line, the rat is referred to twice by an unmarked noun phrase. In the last line, the rat is again referred to by a definite noun phrase.

(19) íʃɪ=kōōb-m̄-s-ka     uutɪ̀-s-ka     t'āāgī-bàb
3PL=cock-DEF-M-COOR    <u>rat</u>.DEF-M-COOR    two-father

kɪ̀-tə    (…)     há=ʔuutɪ̀-əra     maad-ɲ̀
exist-SS         3MS=<u>rat</u>-ACC      lie-DS

há=ʔuutɪ̀     há=gàma    tə-k-ə      ge-tə (…)
3MS=<u>rat</u>       3MS=true    COP-REAL-STI   say-SS

há=mútʃà       sàw-tə        há=ʔuutɪ̀-s-əra
3MS=bird.of.prey    arrive.NV-SS    3MS=<u>rat</u>.DEF-M-ACC

kaw-ɲ̀-s-ka     dàn-sù-tə …
fat-DEF-M-WITH   be.together-CAUS-SS

'the cock and the rat were left together (…) he deceived the rat; the rat thought: "It is true," (…) a bird of prey arrived and (seizing) the rat with the fat…'

Definiteness-gender marking is often absent with body parts and locatives (20), perhaps because these are quickly taken for granted or accomodated associatively. Sometimes a demonstrative is used rather than definiteness-gender marking (21), although both can occur together. For the use of distal demonstratives in reference, see section 7.1.2.

(20) kyāān-s      ás-kɪ̀   gə́rɪ-ra   ʔyáná-kɪ̀     bōw-k'à
dog.DEF-M    3MS-DAT <u>head</u>-ACC pot-DAT     <u>belly</u>-IN

tóórá       há=wùskù-tə há=bààs-ɲ̀   kááy
downward    3MS=insert-SS   3MS=want-DS   be.not

'the dog entered his head down in the pot and searched (but) it wasn't there.'

(21) túrù-kɪ̀      bōw-k'à     karà   tʃʾēʃ-t-ɲ̀
land-DAT     belly-IN     leaf    stick?-PASS-DS

kara   yīs     bàtà    yéngí      ān-t'-ɲ̀
leaf    <u>DIST.M</u>   on.LOC   firewood    put-PASS-DS

'… in the ground (hole) leaves will be placed, on the leaves firewood will be put,…'

Definiteness does not figure in immediate situation use, as illustrated in (22) and (23).

(22) ʃāʃā    na-ŋ̀    há=kì-ǹ    na-ŋ̀    ats-ə
shawl    1SG-DAT    3MS=exist-DS    1SG-DAT    give-STI

'Give me my shawl' (Lit: there is a shawl to me (I have a shawl), give it.)

(23) háárá    na-ŋ̀    ats
knife    1SG-DAT    give

'Give me the knife' (Context: woman directs a child to give her the knife which lies outside her reach.)

### 5.2.3    Definiteness-gender marking on adjectives and verbs

Definiteness-gender marking derives adjectives from verbs, as illustrated in (24) with the verb ʃik' 'become short'. These adjectives have a number of characteristics which set them apart from nouns. Adjectives are therefore discussed separately in section 7.2.

(24)    a.    dādū    ʃīk'-ǹ-s
child    be.short-DEF-M

'a/the short child'

    b.    dā<y>g-ǹ    ʃīk'-n
child<F>-DEF    be.short.F-DEF

'a/the short girl'

Additionally, there are a few other occurrences where definiteness-gender marking is attested on the verb. This happens with the verbs gé 'say' and ákár 'resemble'. After presenting the examples, the role of the definiteness-gender marking on verbs is discussed.

The construction with gé 'say' is likely used for the introduction of a topic. Example (25) is found at the beginning of a description of badgers. Compare the first clause with the final clause of the description (26). Example (27) introduces a certain tree whose bark was used to make sleeping mats and bags from.

(25)   **utʂà**    **gè-t'-n̄-s**      **kì-tə**   **īsn̄-ōrā**      **kēēs-tə**
       badger   say-PASS-<u>DEF-M</u>   exist-SS   beehive-ACC      go.out-SS

       'There is what is called a badger, and it climbs beehives and...'

(26)   **yīs**      **tə-k**    **utʂà**     **ge-t'-àb**
       DIST.M    COP-REAL badger   say-PASS-REL

       'This is it, the badger.'

(27)   **tēngì**   **gè-t'-n̄-s**      **íntʃù**   **ky=ă-k-ə**
       tengi     say-PASS-<u>DEF-M</u>     wood    exist=3MS-REAL-STI

       **tēngì-ra**       **íʃ=k'yar-tə**   **íʃì=ʃēēmā**    **gōntʃì**
       tengi-ACC      3PL=beat-SS     3PL=cloth       SIMIL

       **sàskù-tə**
       arrive.CAUS-SS

       'There is a tree called *tengi*. They pounded the *tengi* and produced something like cloth...'

The second environment in which definiteness-gender marking occurs on a verb is in constructions with the verb **ákár** 'resemble, be similar', although one time on the verb **ákár** itself (28) and the other time on the auxiliary verb **k'é** 'be left, remain' (29).

(28)   **kārkà-kà** **yír-be**      **sūrù**   **akar-n̄-s**      **kì-n̄**
       forest-IN     what-mother   Suru    resemble-<u>DEF-M</u>   exist-DS

       **íʃì=tee**       **bēk'n̄-ka tʂ'ad-tə**      **íʃì=zììp'm̀-k**
       3PL=go.NV     spear-WITHpierce-SS      3PL=chase.away-REAL

       'whatever resembled a Me'en in the forest, they went and pierced it with a spear and chased it away.'

(29)   **kēēs-ār=á-k'é-n̄-s**        **akar-k-ə**
       go.out-NEG=3MS-remain-<u>DEF-M</u>   resemble-REAL-STI

       'It seems it will not come up.'

Definiteness-gender marking is typically nominal inflection, and its occurrence on verb stems is unexpected. The adjectives in (24) as well as the usage in the examples with the verbs **gé** 'say' and **ákár** 'resemble' suggest that we have to do with relative clauses here.

Synchronically, the Sheko relative clause marker is -**ə̀b** ~ -**àb**, and relative clauses marked by -**ə̀b** cannot suffix definiteness-gender marking. Moreover, adjectives have a more limited distribution than relative clauses, since adjectives can only follow the noun they modify whereas relative clauses occur on both sides of the head noun (cf. section 7.2.1). Nevertheless, a relative clause marker may be combined with definiteness-gender marking on adjectives, but it is suffixed after the definiteness-gender marking (30).

(30)  **də̄d-n̄-s**　　　**ʃīk'-n̄-s-ə̀b**　　　　**hààz**　**ʒéénʃ**
　　　 child-DEF-M　　be.short-DEF-M-REL　　PROX.M　well

　　　 **há = kààs-kì-k**
　　　 3MS = play-exist-REAL

　　　 'This short boy plays well.'

Thus, there are arguments against the analysis of adjectives as relative clauses. Sporadically, however, relative clauses without overt marker occur, and especially in the Guraferda variant zero-marked relative clauses are common. Therefore an analysis of adjectives as a different (older?) type of relative clause may be justified.

Turning to other Omotic languages, Beachy (2005:128ff) analyzes adjectives in Diizi as relative constructions as well. Interestingly, in Dime, adjectives and relative clauses are marked for gender whereas nouns are not, and they have a special plural marker which does not occur with nouns: masculine -**ub**, feminine -**ind** (< 'mother'), plural -**id** (Mulugeta 2008:81;154). The masculine and feminine markers resemble the relative clause markers in Sheko, which are -**ə̀b** REL and -**ə̀be** REL.mother respectively.

The definiteness-gender marking is not the only nominal element in Sheko that occurs in verbal forms. The nominalizer **bāāb** 'father' (feminine **bé** 'mother') forms verb complements and relative clauses. In contrast to the definiteness-gender marking it does not attach directly to the verb stem but to an Irrealis verb form (see section 11.4.6).

## 5.3    Gender

Gender is distinguished morphologically in nouns, adjectives, demonstratives and relative clauses, as well as in third person pronouns, third person possessor prefixes on nouns and third person subject coindexing clitics on verbs. In terms of address (vocatives), a tonological distinction is made.

Leaving the gender distinction in the third person aside until section 5.3.9, the gender system in Sheko distinguishes feminine from 'default' or non-feminine, since marking for masculine is used for plural as well. The default gender morpheme is **-s.** Feminine gender morphemes are characterized by a vowel **ì**, namely <**ì**> in nouns and adjectives, and **-nì** in demonstratives; and masculine gender is characterized by **-u** in plural nouns. In relative clauses, **-àbe** is used for feminine gender; the last part **be** is probably derived from **bây** 'mother'. The default gender can also be called masculine (as opposed to feminine, and given 3ms agreement on verbs).

In nouns, gender is expressed obligatorily when the noun is made definite. Like in most Omotic languages, gender is generally semantically motivated: gender is assigned according to the inherent gender of animate entities. That is, words like 'ox' and 'cow' have default (masculine) and feminine gender respectively. Most inanimate nouns have the default gender. A small group of inanimate nouns is feminine. Feminine gender agreement is also used to express smallness of the referent.

### 5.3.1    Default gender

There are several reasons to consider 'masculine' as the default gender in Sheko. These are listed below, with examples.

1. Most inanimate nouns have masculine gender
The majority of the nouns in the lexicon has masculine gender since they show masculine gender agreement. Only a small minority of nouns is feminine. A list of feminine nouns is found in section 5.3.3.

2. Verbal nouns have masculine gender agreement

Nouns which are cognate with verbs (31) have masculine agreement.

(31)  **kāāsù**          **ʒaaʒ=á-k-ə**
      playing           be.good=<u>3MS</u>-REAL-STI
      'The game is good'

      cf. **kaas** 'play'

3. A reference to states of affair is with masculine gender

(32)  **yī-s**      **tə-k**
      DIST-<u>M</u>    COP-REAL

      'That's it.' (Said e.g. when someone performs an action correctly during training.)

(33)  **ás-kǹ**      **wuʂku**          **na-ŋ̀**    **há=ʔìntsù-k-ə**
      3MS-DAT untying                1SG-DAT  3MS=be.heavy-REAL-STI

      'It is difficult for me to explain.' Lit: its untying is heavy for me. (Context: refers to the words/meaning of a fable.)

(34)  **dād- n̄-s**       **há=dùf-t'-àb**  **ás-a**    **há=yèf-sù-k-ə**
      child-DEF-M        3MS=hit-PASS-REL 3MS-ACC  <u>3MS</u>=cry-CAUS-REAL-STI

      'The beating of the child made him cry.'

4. Impersonal constructions

Impersonal constructions always are with masculine gender, irrespective of the gender of the subject in the embedded clause.

(35)  **ń=təg-ǹtà**      **há=ʒaaʒ-k-ə**
      1PL=go-COND        <u>3MS</u>=be.good-REAL-STI

      'It is good if we go.'

(36)  **yí=yèg-àb**      **(t=á)**          **há=ʒaaʒ-k-ə**
      3FS=come-REL       COP=<u>3MS</u>       <u>3MS</u>=be.good-REAL-STI

      'That she came is good.'

Weather verbs have an overt lexical subject with masculine gender and cannot be used to determine the default gender (37)-(38).

(37)   **íírú**    **k'yar=á-k**
       rain      beat=<u>3MS</u>-REAL

       'It rained.' (Lit: the rain beat.)

(38)   **gob**    **kàtʃā**    **saats'=á-k-ə**
       welkin   yet      lighten=<u>3MS</u>-REAL-STI

       'It has already become light'

Likewise, the following causative 'experiencer verbs' are used mostly without subject causer nouns (39)-(40), but these subject nouns are optionally expressed, as in (41), and have masculine gender. For a discussion of experiencer verbs see section 12.4.

(39)   **nata-ra**        **wòsk'=á-k-ə**
       1SG-ACC          be.tired.CAUS=<u>3MS</u>-REAL-STI

       'I am tired.'

(40)   **nata**    **há=kàʒ-ǹ-s-kì-k-ə**
       1SG     <u>3MS</u>=be.glad-MIDD-CAUS-exist-REAL

       'I am glad'

(41)   **kááʒà**        **nata**    **há=kàʒ-ǹ-s-kì-k-ə**
       <u>gladness</u>       1SG     <u>3MS</u>=be.glad-MIDD-CAUS-exist-REAL-STI

       'I am glad'

5. Subject clauses are masculine even if their subject is feminine

A subject clause, as exemplified in (42), is a headless relative clauses. Even if the subject of such a clause is feminine, the clause still triggers masculine agreement on the verb (43)-(42).

(42)   **nata**    **ṇ=yə̀g-àb**    **āngā-bààb**    **bàʒà**
       1SG      1SG=come-REL    much-father    work

     **há=bàʒù-ʃù-m-ə**
     <u>3MS</u>=work-CAUS-IRR-STI

     'My coming could create a lot of work.'

(43)  yí = yə̀g-àb      baʒà    há = bàʒù-ʃ-k-ə
      3FS = come-REL    work    <u>3MS</u> = work-CAUS-REAL-STI

      'Her coming/that she came created work'

6. Ambi-gender words are treated as masculine when the sex of the referent is unknown or irrelevant.

(44)  dādū    yèg = á-k-ə
      child    come = <u>3MS</u>-REAL-STI

      'A child came.'

If the referent should be identified as feminine, the verbal subject clitic has feminine agreement:

(45)  dādū    yèg = í-k-ə
      child    come = <u>3FS</u>-REAL-STI

      'A girl came.'

The above are all reasons to analyse masculine as the default gender in Sheko.

### 5.3.2    Gender semantics

Feminine gender is associated with diminutive, as in (46b).

(46)  a.    kāntà    ʃèn = á-k
           basket    bad = 3MS-REAL

           'the basket is bad'

      b.    kāntà    ʃèn = í-k
           basket    bad = <u>3FS</u>-REAL

           'the little basket is bad'

Masculine gender is neutral, i.e. it is not associated with bigness. However, masculinity is. In the compound in (47), **bāābū** 'male, man' refers to big size.

(47)  **tyārbū bàòbù**  'largest-sized drum'

The noun **ōtì** with feminine gender denotes 'cow', whereas with masculine gender it denotes 'cattle' (48).

(48)  a.  **ō\<y\>t-r̀**          b.  **ōt-r̀-s**

       COW\<F\>-DEF          COW-DEF-M

       'the cow'          'the cattle'

*gender switch for a trickster*

The example below comes from a trickster story, in which the cock, the main character, gets rid of several of his helpers in order to take the plunder of their trip for himself. Throughout the story the cock is referred to by ordinary masculine agreement, as shown in the first clause. In the final trick, he persuades the rat to stay on the front yard with a piece of fat on his head; and then a bird of prey seizes the fat and the rat. When he plots the trick to get rid of the rat, the cock is referred to by feminine agreement. The storyteller could not explain why he switched the gender.

(49)  **há=kōōb-m̄-s**          **k'ay-tə ...**          **yí=k'ay-tə**          **yīn**

     3MS=cock-DEF-M          rise-SS          3FS=rise-SS          DIST.F

     **m̄=báá∫**          **ń=gya=ń**          **sām-bàb**          **kòb-tə**

     1PL=slaughter          1PL=chew=1PL          remain.IRR-father          take-SS

     **ń=ʔín-á-m-ə**          **yí=ge-t=í**          **maad-r̀**

     1PL=go-put-IRR-STI          3FS=say-SS=3FS          deceive-DS

     'the cock rose and... she rose and saying "Let's slaughter this one, let's eat it and we will take the remaining ones and go," she deceived (the rat);...'

### 5.3.3    Terminal vowel, gender and lexical gender

The final vowel of nouns is labelled terminal vowel. The term suggests that these vowels are not or were not part of the root. Indications for a special status of the terminal vowel include: 1) only a subset of the vowel qualities appear in this position; 2) there is variation in realisation of the terminal vowel; 3) the vowel is deleted in certain conditions; 4) the vowel is linked to functions such as gender marking; 5) it is impossible to reconstruct the terminal vowel (Hayward 2001).

Not all Omotic languages have nouns with terminal vowels. The well-known case of Benchnon shows a language in which almost all nouns are monosyllabic instead of having a

disyllabic shape with a terminal vowel. It is often suggested that Benchnon lost its terminal vowel and compensated for it by extra tonal contrasts (Breeze 1990; Wedekind 1985b).

With respect to the issue of terminal vowels, Bender (2000:215) has noticed that Majoid languages too have a large proportion of nouns ending in a consonant rather than a terminal vowel. Rapold (2006:202) remarks that this is an areal feature linking Benchnon and Majoid. Bender (2007:737) also names Oyda, Basketo, Ganjule and Dime as having part of the lexicon without terminal vowels. Mulugeta (2008:41) divides nouns in Dime into nouns with and without a terminal vowel. Some Dime nouns allow variation in the terminal vowel without a change of meaning. For Sheko, I estimate the number of nouns ending in a consonant around ten percent. The preferred structure for nouns in Sheko is disyllabic. I have not noticed doubt of speakers about the presence or absence of terminal vowels in isolation. In a few cases, there is some variation in the terminal vowel.

(50)  wúrts'ú        ~ wúrt'sá      'tadpole'
      bā.ū (>bōw)    ~ bā.ā (Gf.)    'belly, stomach'
      húmtʃà         ~ húmtʃì        'midrib of ensete leaf'
      súmà           ~ súmù          'name' (< Amh)
      góbsà          ~ góbsù         'grain sp.' (<Amh)
      bāzī           ~ bāzū          'monkey (Sykes' monkey?)'

Furthermore, borrowings usually acquire an extra vowel at the end. This vowel is often **-i**, but the motivation for it is not known.

(51)  mèngīstì       'government'    <mängïst (Amh)
      mabtì          'right'         < mäbt (Amh)
      kòmpùtērì      'computer'      < (English/Amh)
      astadaderu     'administrator'° < astädadär +? -u DEF
                                     (Amh)

In contrast to Sheko, more than half of the nouns in Diizi occurs without terminal vowel, but informants may pronounce or not pronounce a terminal vowel at different times, according to Beachy (2005:55-56).

The terminal vowel of nouns in Sheko is either **i**, **a** or **u** or **ņ** (syllabic nasal).

(52)    **kūkī**   'tree sp.'
        **ukà**    'hat'
        **kúkú**  'plant sp.'
        **tūkǹ**   'hole'

It has been suggested that the terminal vowel bears a relation to gender. Aklilu (1988:51) stated that feminine nouns end in **i**, and masculine nouns in **u** or a consonant. This generalisation is indeed useful for kinship terms and other lexical gender pairs. An overview of lexical gender pairs and some kinship terms is given in (53)-(56) below. All feminine counterparts have a terminal vowel **i**, or final glide **y**, except **baara** 'young woman'. For masculine nouns, the majority end in -**u**, but some end in **a**. Besides, the pattern -**u** for masculine and -**i** for feminine lexical gender pairs is attested in Nayi as well, according to Aklilu (1994a:602).

(53)

| | M | | F |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **bāābà** 'father' | | **bāỳ, bēy, bāy** 'mother' |
| | **bāabū** 'male' | | **bây** 'woman, female' |
| | **náánú** 'elder brother' | | **níní** 'elder sister' |
| | **nyākū** 'young man' | | **bāārā** 'young woman' |
| | **nāṣā** 'husband' | | **bāyǹ** 'wife' |
| | **bātʃā** 'paternal uncle' | | **ʔyāmī** 'paternal aunt' |
| | **kōmtū** 'king' | | **gēbe** 'queen'[12] |
| | **zēgù** 'ox' | | **ōtì** 'cow' |
| | **kōobū** 'cock' | | **kútʃì** 'chicken' Gf. **kōybm̄** |

Some words do not form pairs, but have inherent gender as well, such as **ūkā** 'maternal uncle' (cf. maternal aunt: **bây** 'mother').

(54)    **k'ēmtì**  'co-wife'
        **kóótʃì**  'mother-in-law'
        **kāmdì**  'cow which has borne a calf often'

---

[12] Judging from the tone, this word is a compound with **be** 'mother' as the second part. According to one consultant, the basis for the derivation is **gibti** 'housewife°'.

Other kinship terms are ambivalent for gender. The referent can be masculine or feminine. These nouns have default masculine gender agreement. Note that only some words have a terminal vowel **u**. **uzì** 'firstborn' even has a terminal vowel **i**.

(55)  **báádù**　　'younger sibling'
　　　 **dādū**　　　'child'
　　　 **tʃʼāārù**　　'twin'
　　　 **ākā**　　　 'grandparent' cf. **āygn̄** 'the grandmother'
　　　 **gōōmā**　　'age mate'
　　　 **zyāāmà**　　'in-law'
　　　 **tóóz**　　　'relative'
　　　 **uzì**　　　 'firstborn'

A gender distinction of animals can be indicated by placing **bāābū** 'man, male' or **bây** 'woman, female' after the noun. (For the change in tone, see section 9.1.)

(56)　a.　　**kyānū bààbù**　　'male dog'
　　　　　　 **zīīnà bààbù**　　 'male leopard'

　　　b.　　**kyānū bay**　　　'female dog'
　　　　　　 **zīīnà bay**　　　 'female leopard'

When other feminine nouns outside the kinship terms or inherent gender pairs are taken into consideration, the generalisation that feminine nouns end in **i** does not hold. Example (58) illustrates the other nouns which trigger feminine agreement.[13]

(57)　**ʔyantsʼà**　　'bee'
　　　**də̄wā**　　　'deer'
　　　**tīītù**　　　 'vulture' (female character in stories)
　　　**bārkāỳ**　　 'grivet' (female character in stories)
　　　**ʂūūn**　　　 'life'
　　　**túún**　　　 'spring'

---

[13] The feminine words in this section are all the underived feminine words in my data set.

Even though the majority of feminine nouns has a terminal vowel **i**, as shown in (53) and (55), the reverse does not hold: many inanimate nouns with a terminal vowel **i** have not feminine gender but masculine gender (as is evident from verb agreement). A few examples are given in (59).

(58)   **tīītī**     'back'
   **gə́rì**     'head'
   **útsì**     'fly'
   **tártì**     'butterfly'
   **kátʃí**     'yam'
   **fúrfí**     'storm, hurricane'
   **gēēnī**     'gourd with long neck'

As the following table shows, masculine and feminine words have similar terminal vowels and can both end in a consonant. Only underived feminine words ending in a syllabic nasal have not been attested.

|  | M |  | F |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| -u | **gōgū** | 'tortoise' | **tīītù** | 'vulture' |
| -i | **ʃə́tʼì** | 'maize' | **nííní** | 'sister' |
| -a | **kūūrà** | 'donkey' | **ʔyantsʼà** | 'bee' |
| -C | **tʼúúm** | 'mountain' | **túún** | 'spring' |
| -n̩ | **sekn̩** | 'bird sp.' |  |  |

Table 3. Terminal vowels for both genders

Some words have inherent feminine definiteness-gender marking, i.e. even when asking for isolated words in elicitation the definiteness-gender marking is not shed.

(59)   **ʃóyʃn̩**     'bird sp.'
   **kōybm̩**     'eland'
   **dyāypʼm̩**     'tree sp.'
   **bāārìn**     'star'
   **káym̩**     'sun (disc)'

Outside the domain of terminal vowels, **-i** is generally associated with grammatical feminine gender in noun morphology and **-u** with masculine (in some plural nouns), as is shown in section 5.4.1.

### 5.3.4 Gender in terms of address

A group of twelve kinship terms has a special tone pattern when used as term of address. The tone pattern differs for male and female relatives. Usually, these 'vocatives' are accompagnied by a first person possessor suffix. In this special environment, the possessor suffix carries the tone of the vocative rather than its own tone. Normally, the vocative is further followed by the indirect stance marker **-o**, although it is not obligatory (see section 10.2 on stance).

The common vocative tone pattern for male relatives is 4.1, as shown in example (61). The pattern for female relatives is 1.3, see example (62). Only **nííní** 'elder sister' pairs with 'elder brother' and gets a 4.1 melody. The noun **zyāāmà** 'in-law' gets a pattern all of its own. In addition, a good friend can be called with the form found in (64), which patterns with female relatives.

| (60) | **ūkā** | 'maternal uncle' | **úkǹ-o** | 'oh my uncle' |
|------|---------|------------------|-----------|---------------|
|      | **ākā** | 'grandfather'    | **ákǹ-o** | 'oh my grandfather' |
|      | **bātʃā** | 'paternal uncle' | **bátʃǹ-o** | 'oh my uncle' |
|      | **náánú** | 'elder brother' | **nánǹ-o** | 'oh my brother' |
|      | **nííní** | 'elder sister'  | **nínǹ-o** | 'oh my sister' |
|      | **bāābà** | 'father'        | **bábm̀-o** | 'oh my father' |

| (61) | **ʔyāmī** | 'paternal aunt' | **ʔyàmm̄-o** | 'oh my aunt' |
|------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
|      | **báỳ** | 'mother'        | **bàȳ-o**   | 'oh mother' |
|      | **ʔyāgī** | 'grandmother'   | **ʔyàgn̄-o** | 'oh my grandmother' |
|      | **k'emtì** | 'co-wife'      | **k'èmtā-o** | 'oh co-wife' |

| (62) | **zyāāmà** | 'in-law' | **zyāmā-o** | 'oh in-law' |
|------|-----------|----------|-------------|-------------|

| (63) | **yááb** | 'person, man' | **yàbm̄-o** | 'oh my friend' |
|------|----------|---------------|-------------|----------------|

Apart from the above terms of address, there are two vocative pronouns: **ṇna** 'you (m)' and **ṇnya** 'you (f)', which are described in section 6.1.1 on pronouns. Other kinship terms, animals or other nouns have no special tone melody and keep their normal pattern. The indirect stance marker **-o** is normally suffixed.

(64)  āāp'ū    'nephew'           āāp'm̄-o  'oh my nephew'
      gḗbe     'queen'             gḗben-o  'oh my queen'
      yááb     'person, man'       yááb-o   'oh man'
      ōtì      'cow'               ōtì-o    'oh cow'

Nouns modified by definiteness-gender marking prefix the possessor affix.

(65)  báádù 'younger sibling'

      m̩-baad-ń-s-o
      1SG.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M-STI.ADDR

      'oh my sibling'

In addressing people by their name or title, one of the stance suffixes, **-o** 'indirect' or **-a** 'direct', is frequently added after nouns and proper names. On nouns it is **-o** (67)-(68). On proper names **-o** is common but sometimes **-a** is used (69). There is no gender distinction.

(66)  n̩-kòmt-o              hāāy   n̩=ás-ka     ííd-ń-bàb
      1SG.POSS-king-STI.ADDR  water  1SG=3MS-WITH  fetch-IRR-father

      n̩-dàtà              háák'àstà   kááy-ə      yí=ge-k-ə
      1SG.POSS-near.LOC   now         be.not-STI  3FS=say-REAL-STI

      'She said: "Oh my lord, right now I haven't something with which I can fetch water." '

(67)  fyáánú-o         gúúrú  íʃ=ge-tə    íʃì=ʔòṣkù-k
      frog-STI.ADDR    only   3PL=say-SS  3PL=call-REAL

      'They only called saying 'Hey frog!".'

(68)  dānīyer-a    p'èt'rōs-a    yēg-ít
      Daniel-STD   Pexros-STD    come-PL.ADDR

      'Hey Daniel! Hey Peter! Come!'

If someone calls for his/ her mother, when the first call does not lead to a reaction the second call is often without **-o**. This is less polite and the calling child may be impatient for a reaction.

(69)  m̩-bàȳ-o          ...          bàȳ
1SG.POSS-mother.VOC-STI.ADDR          mother.VOC
'Oh my mother... mother!'


### 5.3.5    Gender in nouns and adjectives

Gender is marked morphologically when a noun is made definite and when an adjective is derived from a verb by definiteness-gender marking. Definiteness-gender marking consists of the definiteness marker **-n̩** and a gender affix. The terminal vowel of a noun is dropped before the syllabic nasal of the definiteness marker. Masculine (default) gender is indiated by a suffix **-s** and feminine gender by an infix **<i>**. Some examples of nouns are given in (71). Details of the processes involved in definiteness-gender marking can be found in section 5.2.1.

(70)  *noun*          *definite masc.*          *definite fem.*
**dādū** 'child'       **dād-n̄-s** 'the boy'       **dā<y>g-n̄** 'the girl'
**sāzā** 'beetle'       **sāz-n̄-s** 'the beetle'       **sā<y>z-n̄** 'the beetle'
**fyáánú** 'frog'       **fyáán-s** 'the frog'       **fyá<y>ń** 'the frog'

Adjectives are derived from verbs by suffixing the gender-definiteness marker to the verb stem (section 7.2.1). Feminine gender can be derived in exactly the same way as with nouns.

(71)  *verb*          *adjective (m)*          *adjective (f)*
**ʒááʒ** 'be good'       **ʒááʒ-n̩-s** 'good'       **ʒá<y>ʒ-n̩** 'good'
**sub** 'be red'       **sūb-m̩-s** 'red'       **sū<y>b-m̄** 'red'
**ʃiʃk** 'be sweet'       **ʃīʃk-n̩-s** 'sweet'       **ʃīʃk-n̩** 'sweet'

In addition, a small group of nouns suffixes a gender marker when the noun refers to a plural referent. This group consists of nouns ending in a consonant. Masculine is indicated by the suffix **-ù** (73) and feminine by the suffix **-i** (74), followed by the default gender marker **-s**. Note that there is no morpheme which indicates plurality per se. If the noun ends in a terminal vowel, only the default gender marker **-s** is suffixed (75). The great majority of nouns ends in a terminal vowel, but there are some nouns which end in a consonant.

(72)  ááb      'fruit'                  ááb-ù-s      'fruits'
      yááb     'man, person'            yááb-ù-s     'men'
      ʂóóʐ     'snake'                  ʂóóʐ-ù-ʂ     'snakes'

(73)  túún     'spring'                 túún-ì-s     'springs'
      ʂūūn     'life'                   ʂūūn-ì-s     'lifes'

(74)  bāārā    'young woman' (f)        bāārā-s      'women'
      nyākū    'young man' (m)          nyākū-s      'young men'
      báádù    'younger sibling' (m)    báádù-s      'siblings'
      kátʃí    'yam' (m)                kátʃí-s      'yams'
      uutǹ     'rat' (m)                uutǹ-s       'rats'
                                        (def. sg. formally identical)

### 5.3.6    Gender in demonstratives

In demonstratives, default gender is marked by **-z** (for masculine and plural referents) and feminine gender is marked by **-nì** (for feminine referents).

(75)  hàà-z    'this, these M'          yī-z     'that, those M'
      hàà-nì   'this, F'                yī-nì    'that F'

Here are two sentential examples:

(76)  gōōsū        hàà-z      wùt=á-k-ə
      calabash     PROX-M     fall=3MS-REAL-STI
      'This calabash has fallen.'

(77)  bây      é-k-ī-nī          ītī      tə
      woman    there-LCT-DIST-F  who      COP[Q]
      'Who is that woman over there?'

### 5.3.7    Gender in relative clauses

Relative clauses are marked by the relative clause marker **-əb** ~ **-àb** when the referent of the clause is masculine (79) or plural (80). In relative clauses with a feminine referent, the marking is **əbe** ~ **àbe** (81). Because of the tone 2 on the final syllable, it is assumed that **be** derives from 'mother'.

(78) ş**óóẓ** **nata** **tə-k-ə** **há-ge-b** **sàm̀**
snake 1SG COP-REAL-STI 3MS-say-<u>REL</u> remain:DS

'The snake who said "It's me" remained behind;…'

(79) **akǹ** **sàm-àb** **fyāānū-s-kǹ** **ʒéénʃ** **kī-ít-ə**
here remain-<u>REL</u> frog-PL-DAT well exist-PL.ADDR-STI

**ge-tə…**
say-SS

'(she) said "stay well!" to the frogs who remained there and…'

(80) **gōnà** **íʃ-ka** **dààn-tə** **há=ʔày-ə̀be**
yesterday 3FS-WITH be.together-SS 3MS=dance-<u>REL</u>.mother

**bààrǹ-əra** **ha=see-kì**
maiden.F.DEF-ACC 2SG=see.NV-exist.[Q]

'Do you see the girl with whom he danced yesterday?'

Relativised adjectives are marked identically:

(81) **ʃād-n̄-s-ə̀b-əra** **na-ŋ̀** **ats-ə**
be.long-DEF-M-<u>REL</u>-ACC 1SG-DAT give-STI
'Give me the long one(s) (m/pl)!'

(82) **túún** **hàà-nì** **ʒéèn-be**
spring PROX-F be.good.F.DEF-<u>REL</u>.mother
"This spring is a good one (f)!'

### 5.3.8 A gender mismatch in compounds

**bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' are frequently used as second element of compounds. Among others, they form 'possessor of' nouns (section 5.5.5). The 'mismatch' between masculine (default) and feminine gender appears when constructions with **bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' as second element are made definite. When **bāāb** 'father' is made definite, the compound becomes ungrammatical; instead, **bé** 'mother' plus masculine definiteness-gender marking is used. Thus in (84) below the odd one out is the masculine definite form in (b).

(83) a. **ēkī** **bààb** b. **ēkī** **bey-ǹ-s**
    money father money <u>mother</u>-DEF-M
    'rich man' 'the rich <u>man</u>'

|  | c. | **ēkī** | **be** | d. | **ēkī** | **bey-ǹ** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | money | mother |  | money | mother.F-DEF |
|  |  | 'rich woman' | | | 'the rich woman' | |

Below, two sentential examples are given. Sentence (85) illustrates definiteness with feminine gender, sentence (86) with masculine gender. Evidently, the meaning of **bé** 'mother' is sufficiently bleached in this context to allow masculine gender agreement.

(84) **íntʃù** **hà-nì** **tīīrà** **bey-ǹ** **tə-k-ə**
wood PROX-F shadow mother.<u>F-DEF</u> COP-REAL-STI

'This tree here is shadow-giving.'

(85) **āftù** **bey-ǹ-s** **kōm̄-s-əra** **há = gasku-k-ə**
dinking <u>mother-DEF-M</u> chief.DEF-M-ACC 3MS = insult-REAL-STI

'The drunkard insulted the chief.'

The case given above is the only place in the Sheko language where feminine gender (**bé** 'mother') is used with both feminine and masculine nouns. Is it a trace of a historical shift from feminine to masculine as the default gender? Alternatively, the gender mismatch could just be an ideosyncracy in compounding. On the other hand, compounds may keep old morphological possibilities which are lost or regularized elsewhere in the languages, due to their conceptualization as single word constituents. Another possible trace for such a shift is reported for Benchnon, the geographical neighbor of Sheko. In Benchnon, the present-day default gender is masculine, but the plural demonstratives are more similar to the feminine gender than to the masculine (Rapold 2006:389). While it may be imprudent to draw conclusions from such small facts, they may contribute to the discussion about gender in (Proto-)Omotic. The gender situation for Proto-Omotic is not clear, since present-day Omotic languages vary in their treatment of gender. For some languages, gender is reported to be non-grammatical, i.e. only some words display inherent gender based on biological distinctions (Bender et al. 1976:36). Other languages have feminine gender as a default gender, e.g. Maale (Azeb 2001a:45) and Zayse (Hayward

1990b:248), whereas yet others, like Sheko, have masculine gender as default gender.

### 5.3.9    Third person gender distinction

In this section, pronouns and other referential suffixes are discussed in relation to gender only. For the full picture see chapter 6.

The independent subject pronouns are given in (87).

(86)   **nata**   'I'            **náta**   'we'
       **yeta**   'you'          **ítí**    'you (plural)'
       **áz**     'he'           **íʃì**    'they'
       **íʒ**     'she'

From the above list, it is clear that gender is only distinguished in the third person singular. However, it is possible to express gender with a second person singular by using an additional demonstrative (88). Furthermore, the vocative pronouns distinguish gender (89).

(87)   **hà-nì**   **yeta**   **fìkàb-tà**      **yəg-ə**
       PROX-F     2SG       podium-LOC       come-STI
       'You here (female) come to the podium!'

(88)   **ṇna**    'hey you (m)
       **ṇnya**   'hey you (f)'

In possessor prefixes and in subject coindexing clitics on verbs, gender is again only distinguished in the third person singular. The examples below illustrate both. For more information, see section 6.1.1.

(89)   **há-ʃèèmà**      **bàrtʃʼùʃ=á-k-ə**
       3MS.POSS-cloth    wash=3MS-REAL-STI
       'He has washed his clothing.'

(90)   **yí-ʃèèmà**      **bàrtʃʼùʃ=í-k-ə**
       3FS.POSS-cloth    wash=3FS-REAL-STI
       'She has washed her clothing.'

## 5.4   Number

Number is partially marked on nouns. When the default gender marker **-s** occurs without definiteness marker, reference is made to a plural referent. The marker **-s** occurs with gender suffixes **-ù** (m) and **-ì** (f) in some cases. Plural formation excludes definiteness marking. Nouns can also suffix the associative plural marker **-onka**, which occurs mostly with kinship terms.

Demonstratives do not mark number, as the default gender marker serves for masculine singular as well as for plural referents. The same is true for the nominalizer **bāāb** 'father'. Neither do relative clauses mark plurality of the referent. A relative clause with a referent which is masculine or plural is marked with **-əb**, (allomorphs **-àb** ~ **-b**) and a relative clause with a feminine referent is marked by **-əbe** (allomorphs **-àbe** ~ **-be**). This is illustrated in (92)-(94). Thus, relative clause marking does not distinguish number.

(91)   **n̩-noogù-ra**        **t'ùùs-əb**      **yaab   tə-n̩**
       1SG.POSS-word-ACC    know-REL       man     COP-DS

       'it is a man who knows my issues…'

(92)   **sāāyà   mààk-àbe**   **dèyg-n̩**      **yə̀g = í-k-ə**
       fable    tell-REL.mother   child.F-DEF    come = 3FS-REAL-STI

       'The girl who told a story has come.'

(93)   **màndār-k'à**   **kāās-kì-b**      **dàws   s̩ókú-ka**
       village(Amh)-IN   play-exist-REL    children Sheko-WITH

       **íʃì = nòn-kì-k-ə**
       3PL = talk-exist-REAL-STI

       'The children who play in the village speak Sheko.'

Adjectives can indicate plurality of referents by reduplication.

Furthermore, 1PL, 2PL and 3PL persons are distinguished in the paradigms of pronouns, verbal subject clitics and possessor affixes on nouns.

Indication of plurality of a referent is pragmatic in nouns and adjectives, i.e. plural marking is only used in contexts where the speaker wants to refer explicitly to more than one referent. An unmarked noun or adjective can refer to one or more referents depending on the context.

### 5.4.1 Number and gender in nouns

The relation between gender and number is discussed immediately above as well as in section 5.1. To reiterate what has been said so far, the 'singular' definite form as well as the unmarked form are in fact transnumeral, i.e. these forms can refer to one or more referents (Biermann 1982).

Example (95) gives some nouns referring to single entities. Evidence for transnumerality is given in examples (96)-(97) and (98), where it is clear from the context that there are several stones involved, since they are piled, and many feathers. The examples show that unmarked as well as definite nouns can refer to more than one referent.

(94)  yí=tòs-àb        tòsà     náánú-ka
      3FS=storytell-REL story    elder.brother-COOR

      báádù-ka          èʃǹtà   há=màèkù-k-ə
      younger.brother-COOR  MOTIVE  3MS=tell-REAL-STI

      'The story that she told tells about an elder and a younger brother.'

(95)  ʃēʔī-ra       haaku-tə     yéb-m̀-s       ʔyan-n̩-s-k'à
      stone-ACC     pick-SS      man-DEF-M     pot-DEF-M-IN

      goom-tə
      pile-SS

      'she picked stones and stacked them in the man's pot...'

(96)  ʃēʔ-n̄-ʃ       báákù-tà-bàb          yīs      dufu-tə
      stone-DEF-M   firestones-LOC-father  DIST.M   hit-SS

      ás-a          gyèw-bàr-ǹ
      3MS-ACC       chew-throw.away-DS

      '... those stones above the fire struck and finished him off;...'

(97)  **íʒ**     **háánháánùbe**     **bìy-əra**     **yaafu-tə**
     3FS     bird.of.prey.mother     <u>feather</u>-ACC     find-SS

     **p'ú́c'a**     **kòy-tə**  **…**     **háánháánùbe**
     many.ELAT     bring-SS     bird.of.prey.mother

     **bìy-ǹ-s-a**     **ás-kǹ**  **àts-ǹ**
     <u>feather</u>-DEF-M-ACC     3MS-DAT  give-DS

     'she found feathers of a *haanhaanube* bird and brought a lot and (…)
     and gave the bird's feathers to him;…'

The word **ōtì** 'cow' can also refer to 'cattle' and **yááb** 'man, person' likewise can refer to 'men' or 'people'.

(98)  **ǹ-òtì-ra**     **há=wùnk'-ùt'-ùb**     **èʃǹtà**
     1PL.POSS-<u>cow</u>-ACC  3MS=steal-PASS-REL     MOTIVE

     **há=ts'yasť'u-k-ə**
     3MS=tie.PASS-REAL-STI

     'He was imprisoned because of his stealing our cattle.'

(99)  **yááb**     **màndār**     **kaarì**     **íʃì=k'ōr-t'-ā-m-ə**
     <u>man</u>     village(Amh)     towards  3PL=beg-PASS-put-IRR-STI

     'People/men from the neighborhood will be asked.'

Plurality of referents can be indicated in the following way:

To form a plural, the default gender marker for nouns **-s** is suffixed to the noun (due to sibilant harmony rules it may change to **-ʃ** or **-ṣ**). If there is no definiteness marker, the noun refers to a plural referent. Thus, definiteness marking and plural marking exclude each other. N.B. If the noun ends in a syllabic nasal, the distinction between a definite masculine and a plural form disappears.

(100)  *unmarked*       *plural*       *definite*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ʔyants'à** | 'bee' (f) | **ʔyants'à-s** | 'bees' | **ʔyayì** | 'the bee' |
| **kóbtʃà** | 'roof beam' | **kóbtʃà-ʃ** | 'roofbeams' | **kóbtʃìʃ** | 'the roofbeam' |
| **gōydù** | 'guereza' | **gōydù-s** | 'guerezas' | **gōyd-ǹ-s** | 'the guereza' |
| **kōṣī̄** | 'field' | **kōṣī̄-ṣ** | 'fields, the field' | | |
| **gúʃǹ** | 'porcupine' | **gúʃǹ-ʃ** | 'porcupines, the porcupine' | | |

In addition, a small group of nouns ending in a consonant takes a gender suffix when the noun refers to a plural referent. Masculine (default) is indicated by the suffix **-ù** and feminine by the suffix **-i** (102), followed by the default gender marker **-s**.

(101) *unmarked*      *plural*        *definite*

   **tóóz** 'relative'   **tóóz-ù-s** 'relatives'   **tóózɪ̀s** 'the relative'

   **bây** 'mother'     **báy-ì-s** 'mothers'     **báyɪ̀** 'the mother'

Morphologically, Sheko makes a three-way distinction, where logically there are four possibilities (singular indefinite and definite as well as plural indefinite and definite referents). The glosses in (101) and (102) reflect only the first intuitive translation. In context, however, different translations may be possible, since definiteness and number are not obligatorily marked. This is illustrated for definiteness in section 5.2.2 (see example (19)) and for number in this section (see examples (96)-(98) above). Thus, the unmarked form covers all four logically possible referents, the form marked for definiteness covers all definite referents and the third form covers all plural referents.

Mass nouns can form a plural like other nouns. In the case of mass nouns, reference is made to a quantity of X or a number of containers full of X.

(102) **ūk'ū** 'milk'      **ūk'ū-s** 'some litres/tins of milk'

   **tākā** 'mead'     **tākā-s** 'some litres/bottles of mead'

   **yéngí** 'firewood'   **yéngí-s** 'some bundles of firewood'

The noun 'child' has an irregular plural **dāws ~ dōōs** 'children', next to a regular plural form **dadu-s**. 'child' has also slightly irregular definite forms: **dād-n̄-s ~ dēd-n̄-s** 'the boy' and **dāygn̄ ~ dēgn̄** 'the girl'.

Plurality is not indicated on the noun when a quantifier follows the noun.

(103) **dādū   p'útʃá   ņ̩=nyà̀s-ǹ̩**
child    many    1SG=give.birth-DS
'I have given birth to many children;…'

The other Majoid languages Diizi and Nayi have some plural markers with a **k** formative, unlike Sheko. Diizi has an optional plural marker **-(a)ke** as well as a marker **k'aŋkaz** (Beachy 2005:60f). In Nayi, there is a plural marker **-kis**, which is suffixed to nouns and adjectives when the referent is plural (105). Furthermore, **-kis** is part of pronouns with plural referents (106), (Aklilu 1994a:602-607).

(104) a.   **dòdò**   'boy'     **dòdù-kis**   'boys'
           **yä:b**   'person'  **yä:b-kis**   'persons'

      b.   **got'n-is-kis**
           white-DEF-PL
           'the whites (m)'
           cf. **got'n** 'become white'

(105) **nà**    'I'        **nákis**    'we'
      **yeta**  'you'      **ítíkis**   'you (pl)'
      **isi**   'he'       **ʔuʃkuʃ**   'they'
      **iʃi**   'she'

### 5.4.2   Associative plural

There is an associative plural suffix **-onka**. An epenthetic glide **w** is inserted if the suffix follows a terminal vowel. Some speakers have a variant **-(n)onko**. The suffix is mainly used with kinship terms.

The last syllable **-ka** of the associative plural marker **-onka** is formally similar to the coordinator **-ka** 'and'. It may be dropped when (dative) case marking is suffixed.

(106) **íʃ-àkù-won-kǹ**              **gātsī̄-kì-b**
3PL.POSS-grandfather-ASS-DAT   help-exist-REL

**náán-onka**          **tə-k-ə**
ELDER.BROTHER-ASS    COP-REAL-STI
'Those who help their grandparents are the elder brothers.'

Semantically, **-onka** can denote plurality, i.e. two or more of the entity, but also 'acquaintance' i.e. the entity and those associated with it (108)-(109). The associative plural can also be attached to the question word **ītī** 'who' (110).

(107)  **m̥-bayd-n̥-onka-ra**　　　　　　　**n̥-see-k-ə**
　　　　1SG.POSS-younger.sibling.F-DEF-<u>ASS</u>-ACC　　1SG-see.NV-REAL-STI
　　　　'I saw my little sisters.'
　　　　'I saw my little sister(s) and those associated with her.'

(108)  **m̥-bàyn̥-onko**　**yí-datà**　　　**tee-feeʃ-tə**
　　　　1SG.POSS-wife-ASS　3FS.POSS-near.LOC　go.NV-spend.day-SS
　　　　'My wife and her friends spent the day with her and…'
　　　　'My wifes…'

(109)  **p'et'ros-onka**　**ītī-wonka**　　**kááy=íʃī-k-ə**
　　　　Pexros-ASS　　　<u>who</u>-ASS　　be.not=3PL-REAL-STI
　　　　'Peter and his companions, who else, they were not present.'

Younger people seem to be more liberal in their use of **-onka**; it may be suffixed to nouns that do not refer to human beings (e.g. **géék'ùwonka** 'goats'). This was not accepted by elder language consultants. Nevertheless, one youngster said even **wuk'yanos-onka** 'oceans' spontaneously when talking about names of countries, rivers and oceans on a globe (< Amh **wuk'yanos** 'ocean').

According to some speakers, **-s** and **-onka** can be combined after some nouns as shown in the last line of (111). However, the language consultants did not agree on what difference in meaning it could give, neither for which words the combination is possible.

(110)  **báádù**　　　　'younger sibling'
　　　　**báád-onka**　　'younger siblings'
　　　　**báádù-s**　　　'younger siblings'
　　　　**báádù-s-onka** 'younger siblings'

### 5.4.3    Adjectives and plurality

Adjectives can indicate plurality by reduplication. Either the initial CV or the stem is reduplicated (112). Furthermore, adjectives can add the relative clause marker -**ə̀b** and then either follow the pattern of relative clauses or reduplicate for plural reference (113).

(111)              masculine           feminine

    SG    **sūb-m̄-s**          **sū&lt;y&gt;b-m̄**
            be.red-DEF-M       be.red&lt;F&gt;-DEF

            'red, red one'       'red, red one'

    PL    **sū-sūb-m̄-s**      **sū-sūyb-m̄**
            PLUR-be.red-DEF-M   PLUR-be.red.F-DEF

            'red, red ones'     'red, red ones'

            ~ **sūb-sūb-m̄-s**    ~ **sūyb-sūyb-m̄**

(112) **í-ʔíík-ń-s-ə̀b**        **yaab**  **yīs**   **tə**
      PLUR-be.old-DEF-M-REL   man   DIST.M  COP

      **oti-ra**       **k'iits'u-an-ki-b**
      cow-ACC     tie.cattle-put-exist-REL

      'It's those old people who tying them were keeping cattle.'

Reduplication is also used with other word categories, denoting pluractionality (see section 3.3). Here is an example of verb reduplication:

(113) **dìmbērì**     **sàskù-tə**    **íntʃù**   **dàrk'ùs-dàrk'ùs-tə**
      boundary(Amh)  arrive.CAUS-SS  wood   PLUR-chop.off.CAUS-SS

      **às-tà**       **kaarì**  **íntʃù**  **bùtù-tə**
      PROX.M-LOC   toward  wood   throw-SS

      '…making a boundary, they chopped branches into pieces and threw the wood towards it…'

One day I asked a language informant how you could know whether someone meant a single or multiple referents when uttering (115). He said: 'By looking, of course.' Reduplication is not frequent and is probably only used when it is judged important in a certain context.

(114) ʃād-ñ-s-ə̀b-əra        na-ɽ̩    ats-ə
       be.long-DEF-M-REL-ACC    1SG-DAT give-STI
       'Give me the long one(s)'

### 5.4.4     Number and person

Regarding number in pronouns, possessor affixes and subject clitics, it is noteworthy that the difference between first person singular and first person plural is purely tonal. The full independent pronouns are given here for convenience. For the affixes and clitics, see section 6.1.1.

(115)  **nata**   'I'          **náta**  'we'
       **yeta**  'you'       **ítí**   'you plural'
       **áz**    'he'         **íʃì**   'they'
       **íʒ**    'she'

Additionally, there is a plural addressee marker **-ít**, which is clearly related to the second person plural morpheme. It occurs on imperatives:

(116)  a.    **dúf**           b.    **dúf-ít**
          hit                        hit-PL.ADDR
          'Hit!'                     'Hit (pl)!'

## 5.5   Noun derivation and compounding

### 5.5.1     Verbal nominal

A verbal nominal form can be derived from all verbs by a final vowel **-a** and a characteristic 4.1 tone pattern.

(117)  **fín**     'descend'        **fínà**    'to descend'
       **kees**   'ascend'         **kéésà**  'to ascend'
       **tə́g**    'go'            **tə́gà**   'to go'
       **duf**    'hit'           **dúfà**   'to hit'
       **óótʃʼ**  'ask'          **óótʃʼà** 'to ask'
       **bángár**'return'      **bángárà** 'to return'
       **fin-s**  'lower' (caus)    **fínsà**  'to lower'

The verbal nominal is used mostly to emphasize the activity denoted by the verb. It is provisionally glossed INF for infinitive, but its status awaits further research. Examples (119)-(122) all have a cognate object construction with the verbal nominal. Note that some verbs have a cognate noun as well, e.g. óşkú 'call'. These cognate nouns are discussed in section 5.5.2 below.

(118) óşkà    ṇ=òşk-ǹ       há=nata-ra    òy-k-ə
     call.INF  1SG=call-DS   3MS-1SG-ACC  deny-REAL-STI

'I rang and rang but it refused me' (Context: the phone was out of order.)

(119) īsī-ə̄rā       ha=kààf-m̀tă  k'éét'à        gúúrú
     beehive-ACC  2SG=build-COND  swallow.INF   only

     t=á       k'ēēt'ū-tə      há=tʃ'ōr-ʃ-ā-ṃ
     COP=3MS   swallow-SS      3MS=finish-CAUS-put-IRR

'if you build beehives (in a forest where a badger lives), he will only eat and finish.' (Lit:…only eating it is that he eats and finishes.)

(120) tə́gà    ṇ=téé-m       há=ge-ǹ
     go.INF  1SG =go.NV-IRR  3MS=say-DS

' "I will go," he said;…' (Context: although warned not to go, a boy wants to go.)

(121) nat-nâ       bóózà  ṃ=bòòs-kì-k-ə
     1SG-or.Q     walk.INF  1SG=walk-exist-REAL-STI

'Me? I am just walking/taking a stroll.' (Context: response to the question 'Where are you going to?')

Example (123) has a nominal with an object. However, its tone implies it is a noun rather than a verbal nominal like the ones illustrated in this section. There is partial overlap between verbal nominals and cognate nouns, since some cognate nouns ending in **a** have a 4.1 tone pattern as well, (as illustrated in section 5.5.2 immediately below).

(122) kútʃì   búutşá-rā       út-ə́r=í-kì-k-ə
     chicken  plucking-ACC    like-NEG=3FS-exist-REAL-STI

'She doesn't like the plucking of a chicken.' / '…to pluck a chicken' ?

### 5.5.2 Cognate verbs and nouns

Nouns which have cognate verbs may end in any of the attested terminal vowels, **a**, **i**, **u**, and syllabic nasal. They have one of the following tone patterns: 4.1, 4.4, 3.1, 3.3 or 2.1, and thus look like other 'ordinary' nouns, with the exception that pattern 1.3 is not attested so far. From the data available it is not possible to say which way the derivation goes. It is also not possible to predict the tone of the verb from the noun or the tone of the noun from the tone of the verb, although for H verbs, the corresponding noun does only rarely have 3.1 or 2.1 patterns.

Example (124) lists nouns with a terminal vowel **a**, example (125) those with **i**, example (126) those with **u** and example (127) those with a syllabic nasal.

(123) *noun*                       *verb*

| noun | | verb | |
|------|------|------|------|
| gábà | 'gossip' | gab | 'gossip' |
| kéwà | 'shout' | kyaw | 'shout' |
| k'ófà | 'value' | k'of | 'guess, estimate' |
| údgà | 'darkness' | udg | 'darken (of night)' |
| gáskà | 'insult' | gásk | 'insult' |
| kááʒà | 'joy' | kááʒ | 'be happy' |
| kóbtʃà | 'roof beam' | kóbtʃ | 'make roofbeams' |
| ʂáánà | 'baldness' | ʂán | 'become bald' |
| ʂúʔà | 'rest, chapter' | ʂúʔ | 'rest' |
| árà | 'brains, thought' | ár | 'think' |
| íríʃà | 'ululation' | íríʃ | 'ululate' |
| | | | |
| búúʈʂá | 'plucking' | búúʈʂ | 'pluck (a chicken)' |
| dúúfá | 'blow' | dúf | 'hit' |
| káámá | 'flame' | káám | 'be lit' |
| k'íʂá | 'drink' | k'íʂ | 'drink' |
| nííná | 'kiss' | nín | 'kiss' |
| óótʃá | 'question' | óótʃ | 'ask' |
| órá | 'wet dung' | ór | 'urinate' |
| ʃúúfá | 'smell' | ʃúúf | 'smell (of flowers)' |
| ʂúúmá | 'thirst' | ʂúm | 'be thirsty' |
| wóóts'á | 'bite' | wóóts' | 'bite' |
| áásá | 'standing' | ááʂ | 'stand' |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bāārā | 'young woman' | bārm̄ | 'become adult (f)' |
| bōtā | 'mortar' | bōtn̄ | 'pound' |
| k'ēdā | 'oath' | k'ed | 'swear°' |
| ʃāārà | 'song' | ʃaar | 'sing' |
| tōsā | 'fable' | tos | 'storytell' |
| āynā | 'desire, wish' | āyn̄ | 'ponder, worry' |
| | | | |
| oorà | 'snare' | oor | 'set a snare°' |

(124)  *noun*                              *verb*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʈʂ'át'ì | 'top ring on grass roof' | ʈʂ'ád | 'pin, nail' |
| fáádí | 'number' | faad | 'count' |
| náás̩í | 'honor, praise' | naas̩ | 'thank, honor' |
| bórí | 'curse' | bór | 'curse (revocable)' |
| ʃáání | 'judgment' | ʃaan | 'judge°' |
| | | | |
| k'ūdì | 'stop' | k'ud | 'cover' |
| | | | |
| gēēnī | 'gourd sp.' | geen | 'pour with cup' |
| t'ūūsī | 'knowledge' | t'uus | 'know' |
| zūgī | 'infertile' | zūgn̄ | 'become infertile' |
| māādī | 'lie, deceit' | mád | 'deceive' |
| ūtī | 'love' | út | 'love' |
| | | | |
| ayì | 'dance' | ay | 'dance' |

(125)  *noun*                              *verb*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bégù | 'payment' | beg | 'pay' |
| fáádù | 'hunger' | fādūs | 'make hungy' |
| gútù | 'strangling' | gūtn̄ | 'strangle' |
| nóógù | 'matter, word' | noŋ | 'talk' |
| | | | |
| kárbú | 'strength' | karb | 'be strong' |
| hárkú | 'taboo' | hark | 'respect a taboo' |
| ʈʂ'údú | 'saliva' | tʃud | 'spit' |
| ós̩kú | 'call' | os̩k | 'call' |
| íntsú | 'heavyness' | ints | 'be heavy' |
| óórú | 'urine' | ór | 'urinate' |
| s̩ús̩kú | 'weed' | s̩us̩k | 'weed°' |
| s̩ónk'ú | 'lie' | s̩onk' | 'lie°' |

| gātsù | 'start' | gad | 'start' |
| gēēṭṣù | 'laughter' | geeṭṣ' | 'laugh' |
| kāāsù | 'game' | kaas | 'play' |
| tūūṭṣù | 'knot' | tuuṭṣ | 'knot' |
| ts'āfù | 'writing' | ts'af | 'write' (<Amh) |

| bēēzū | 'sprout' | bez | 'sprout, grow' |
| nāārū | 'wind' | nārbm̄ | 'blow' |
| nyākū | 'young man' | nyākn̄ | 'become adult (m)' |
| ṣūbū | 'death' | ṣúb | 'die' |
| tāāʃū | 'skirt of grass' | taaʃ | 'wear a *taashu°*' |
| wūnk'ū | 'theft' | wunk' | 'steal' |
| īnsū | 'pregnancy' | ins | 'be pregnant°' |

| daabù | 'creation' | daab | 'create' |
| diik'ù | 'ointment' | diik' | 'anoint, paint' |
| dookù | 'roasting | dook | 'roast (uncooked)' |
| gaap'ù | 'roasting' | gap' | 'roast with stones' |
| koosù | 'divination' | koos | 'divinate' |
| yiiʃù | 'pulling' | yiiʃ | 'pull out' |
| ziitù | 'cross' | ziit | 'hang, crucify' |
| p'eep'ù | 'prayer' | p'éép' | 'pray' |

(126) *noun*     *verb*

| gíbm̀ | 'struggle' | gibm | 'struggle°' |
| kúysǹ | 'drizzle' | kuysn | 'drizzle°' |
| tʃ'ə́bm̀ | 'stake, post' | tʃ'ə́bm̄ | 'plant a post' |
| ṭṣ'ádǹ | 'war' | ṭṣ'ādn̄ | 'fight' |
| | | (ṭṣ'ád | 'pierce') |

| ʒáp'm̀ | 'lamp' | ʒap'm | 'shine' |
| ʃáádń | 'length' | ʃád | 'be long' |
| ṣúfm̀ | 'smell' | ṣúúf | 'give off smell' |
| ʔyázń | 'ability' | ʔyáz | 'be able' |

| dōrǹ | 'race' | door | 'run' |
| ṣōrǹ | 'fear' | ʃor | 'be afraid' |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| kō̧s̱n̄ | 'farmland' | koos̱ | 'farm, till' |
| sīp'm̄ | 'awl' | siip' | 'sew' |
| ʔyarkɪ̀ | 'sweat' | ʔyārkn̄ | 'sweat' |

Some nouns are built on the passive stem (128), some others on the causative stem (129).

(127)
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| furt'à | 'order' | furt' | 'obey' [14] |
| kít'n̄ | 'life' | ki | 'exist, live' |
| mánt'á | 'braid' | mán | 'braid hair' |
| umt'à | 'food' | úm | 'eat' |

(128)
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| atnsì | 'exercise' | ātn̄ | 'get used to' |
| góygńsì | 'decoration' | gōygn̄ | 'decorate' |
| k'ábús.ì | 'order' | k'ābūs | 'make obey, order' |
| t'ép'sú | 'load' | t'ép' | 'carry' |
| āysū | 'gestation' | ày | 'be covered' |

Here are a few example sentences with some of the listed nouns:

(129)  ń-kòòsù              yīs
      1PL.POSS-<u>divination</u>        DIST.M

      'This is our divination, these are our traditional practices.'

(130)  wūnk'-n̄-s-əra  há=gòtɪ̀-s-k-ə
      <u>theft</u>-DEF-M-ACC   3MS-be.far.MIDD-CAUS-REAL-STI

      'He condemned the theft.'

(131)  bāārā          batà   óótʃá  na-ŋ̀   kì=á-k-ə
      young.woman    on.LOC  <u>question</u> 1SG-DAT  exist=3MS-REAL-STI

      'I have a question about young women.'

### 5.5.3    Compound nouns

Most compounds involve nouns. The second part of the compound undergoes the same tonal alternation as a head preceded by its modifier (section 9.1).

---

[14] cf. **fuur** 'trade'. Conceptually equal to Amh. **gäzza** 'buy' **tägäzza** 'obey'.

The examples (133) and (134) illustrate compounds of which both elements are known. The words in (134) are compounds whose parts are not neatly separated anymore. Long vowels have become short and the terminal vowel of the first word has been dropped.

(132)  **bōw kuʈʂu**    'hand palm' ( **bōw** 'belly' & **kúʈʂú** 'hand')
     **bōw àʂkù**    'liver' (**bōw** 'belly' & **āʂkū** 'meat' )
     **yārbm̄ suku**    'vein' (**yārbm̄** 'blood' & **súkú** 'rope' )
     **gāātʃū kàfà**    'bird sp.' (**gāātʃū** 'teff' & **kafà** 'bird')
     **ʂūbū bambù**    'grave' (**ʂūbū** 'death' & **bambù** 'pit')
     **tyārbū bààbù**  'largest-sized drum' (**tyārbū** 'drum' &
                                **bāābū** 'male person' )
     **ts'yāāts'ù bèngì** 'hot season' (**ts'yāāts'ù** 'sun' &
                                **bēngī** 'year')
     **íírú bèngì**    'rainy season' (**íírú** 'rain' & **bēngī** 'year')

(133)  **kumusù**    'nape of neck' (**kum** 'neck' & **úúsù** 'bone')
                         also **kum zira** (**zira** 'bottompart')
     **baʒyaab**    'neighbor' (**baʒà** 'work' & **yááb** 'person')
     **gék'uku**    'plant sp.' (**géék'ù** 'goat' & **kúkú**
                         'plant sp.')
     **būdày**    'squash' (**būdà** 'pumpkin' & **haay** 'ear')
     **báydeʃà**    'tree sp.' (**báy** 'mother' & **deeʃà** 'nut tree')

Example (135) illustrates compounds of which one or both parts are unknown elements.

(134)  **kaas aab**    'pupil' (? & **ááb** 'eye' )
                         also **ááb ts'āy-n̄-be** eye be.black.F-DEF-mother
     **gúgń kàrà**    'plant sp.' (? & **karà** 'leaf' )
     **tyārbū tingi**    'middle-sized drum' (**tyārbū** 'drum' & ?)
     **tyārbū tepà**    'drum indicating the rythm' ('drum' & ?)

     **írǹʔiʂà**    'tree sp.' (? & ?)
     **k'árǹkaʃà**    'plant sp.' (? & ?)
     **bírkaʃà**    'tree sp.' (? & ?)

Compound nouns can be distinguished from possessive noun phrases, such as **kúʈʂú k'ùmù** 'elbow (knee of the arm)', since possessive noun phrases can be paraphrased by the 'possessor

ascension construction', with a dative case marker (136), (section 9.3); compound nouns cannot (137). Additionally, compound nouns consist of maximally two members, whereas possessive noun phrases may involve more than two members. Moreover, compounds are often semantically opaque (e.g. the meaning of the compound is more specific than its parts would suggest).

(135) **kúʈʂú-kǹ**      **k'ūmū**
      hand-DAT      knee
      'elbow'

(136) **\*bōw-kǹ**      **kúʈʂú**
      belly-DAT      hand
      'hand palm'

### 5.5.4      Compounds with dādū 'child'

Compounds with **dādū** 'child' are nouns indicating members of a group.

(137) **ʃāārà dàdù**      'choir member' (**ʃāārà** 'song')
      **ŋ-tuurù dàdù**  'fellow villager (**ŋ-tuurù** 'my-land')
      **ʂókú dàdù**    'Sheko (person)'
      **yááb dàdù**    'human being' (**yááb** 'man, person')

### 5.5.5      Compounds with bāāb 'father' and bé 'mother'

**bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' are used in compounds and function frequently as nominalizer. **-bààb** 'father' has an allomorph **-bàb** and **-be** 'mother' has an allomorph **-bay ~ -bey**. These nouns nominalize a wide range of words, even case-marked NPs, and they form Irrealis relative clauses and verb complements. Interesting is the gender mismatch when the compounds are made definite. Nominalizations (at least relative clauses and verb complements) cannot be made definite. It is not clear whether adverbs, quantifiers and other modifiers can take the definiteness-gender marking. For the present, they are included under nominalizations.

Sheko is not the only Omotic language showing the grammaticalization of the terms for 'father' and 'mother'. For

instance, the cognate forms of Sheko **baab / bé** show a similar behavior in the Omotic languages Dime and Bench. In Dime, agentive nominals are derived by **-bab** (with a H tone). The word for 'father' in Dime is **bábe** (Mulugeta 2008:58). In Benchnon, the geographical neighbor language of Sheko, **-bày** occurs in names of plants and animals, **bāb** and **bày** are used with the semantics of 'owner', and nouns and adjectives can be bases for a nominalisation process that suffixes **.u-bāb**, **u.bày** (Rapold 2006:213ff).

*Compounds*
**bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' form 'possessor of' nouns, denoting a person or entity characterized by what is mentioned in the first part of the compound (Elders 2006). 'Possessor of' nouns can be used to express ownership. Some examples are given in (139)-(141). Since there are many 'possessor of' nouns, and formation of these nouns appears to be productive, **bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' can also be viewed as derivational nouns.

(138)  **āftù bààb**      'drunkard'       **āftù**      'drunkenness'
       **íítʃì bààb**     'sorcerer'       **íítʃì**     'sorcery'
       **gágì bààb**      'enemy'          **gágì**      'revenge'
       **koosù bààb**     'trad. leader'   **koosù**     'divination'
       **wūnk'ū bààb**    'thief'          **wūnk'ū**    'theft'
       **ēkī bààb**       'rich man'       **ēkī**       'domestic animals,
                                           money'

(139)  **íntʃù    bààb    dàtà    ṇ=téé-tə    ṇ=ás-a**
       wood     father   near.LOC 1SG=go.NV-SS   1SG=3MS-ACC

       **óótʃ-á-m-ə**
       ask-put-IRR-STI

       'I'll go to the owner of the wood and ask him.'

(140)  **yī-nì    úʃń    be    tə-k-ə**
       DIST-F    flower  mother COP-REAL-STI

       'This one has flowers.' (Lit: this is a mother of flower.)

Furthermore, many plant and animal names are compounds with **-bé ~ -báy** as the second element. In most cases, the first

half does not occur without **-bé**, therefore the names are written as a whole.

(141)  **kúʃm̀be**          'ant, sp. (tiny)'
      **háánháánùbe** 'bird of prey, sp.'
      **sántàbe**          'bird, sp.'
      **tʃʼíntʃʼúbe**      'fly, sp.'
      **wōpʼm̀be**        'chameleon'
      **ʃibe**             'water taro'
      **ʒúngúbey**        'plant sp. (with blue flowers)'
      **írkùbe**           'yam sp.'
      **óngúbay**         'yam sp.'

*Gender mismatch*

Noun phrases with **bāāb** 'father' or **bé** 'mother' as second element can be pluralized. Just like other nouns, the masculine (default) takes the suffixes **-ù-s** -m-PL and the feminine the suffixes **-ì-s** -f-PL.

(142)  a.  **ēkī      bààb-ù-s**
          money    father-<u>m-PL</u>
          'rich men'

     b.  **ēkī      be-ì-s**
          money    mother-<u>f-PL</u>
          'rich women'

However, when masculine (default gender) noun phrases with **-bààb** are made definite, they take the feminine **bé** instead of **bāāb** but still add the masculine marker **-s** after the definiteness marker. Gender is evidently not straightforward in this type of definite noun phrases. Thus, in (144) below the odd one out is the masculine definite form in (b).

(143)  a.  **ēkī      bààb**          b.  **ēkī      bey-ǹ-s**
          money    father              money    <u>mother</u>-DEF-M
          'rich man'                         'the rich <u>man</u>'

     c.  **ēkī      be**             d.  **ēkī      bey-ǹ**
          money    mother              money    mother.F-DEF
          'rich woman'                       'the rich woman'

Sentence (145) illustrates 'the odd one out'. Evidently, the meaning of **bé** 'mother' is sufficiently bleached in this construction to allow non-feminine gender agreement. This phenomenon is discussed at length in section 5.3.8.

(144)  **āftù    bey-ǹ-s        t=á      gar-kì-kǹ**
       drinking <u>mother-DEF-M</u>   COP=3MS  sing.drunkenly-exist-KNOWN
       'It's the drunkard who is singing.'

### 5.5.6    Nominalizations with bāāb 'father' and bé 'mother'

**bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' as nominalizers are attested following adverbs (146), time adverbials (147)-(148), quantifiers (148), numerals (149), manner ideophones (150), and question words (151).

(145)  **kōrù-bààb-īs         kob**
       empty-father-DIST.M    take
       'Take this empty one.'

(146)  **gōnà-bey-ra          ∫ey-bàr-kì=à**
       yesterday-mother-ACC   forget-throw.away-exist=2sg.Q
       'Did you forget yesterdays' ?'

(147)  **únà-bàb-kǹ           gə́rì-tà          āngā-bàb**
       long.ago-father-DAT   head-LOC          much-father

       **yaab    kāy-ǹ-s      íʃì=ʔaman-k-ə**
       man     god-DEF-M    3PL=believe(Amh)-REAL-STI
       'Many more people than before believed in God.'

(148)  **ás-kǹ    ťāāgǹ-bàb     yír-tə**
       3MS-DAT  two-<u>father</u>    what-COP[Q]
       'What is the second one?'

(149)  **dàfa-bààb**
       slowly-father
       'a slow, careful one'

(150) **yírà-bààb**
what-father
'what type, which one'

Only **-be** is acceptable after question words in negative sentences (152). This might be due to the semantics of the feminine gender, which can be used as a diminutive. The use of the feminine/diminutive form emphasizes that even the least of what might be expected did not take place.

(151) **yír-be-ra      āts-ār＝á-kì-k**
what-mother-ACC give-NEG＝3MS-exist-REAL
'He didn't give anything whatsoever.'

Intensifying ideophones and forms derived from adjectival verbs cannot enter this nominalization (153). The forms derived from adjectival verbs are already nominalized by the definiteness-gender marking and function as adjective. The particle **to** 'only' also cannot enter this nominalization.

(152) **\*óʃʃoʃ-bààb**
IDEO[look.intently]-father

**\*ts'aans-bààb,          \*ts'áwà-bààb**
be.black-DEF-M-father      be.black.INF-father

Furthermore, **bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' function as nominalizers of case-marked NPs, such as for example (154)-(156). In (157), the word **yīstà** 'at that' without **-bààb** would be interpreted as referring to time (158) instead of location; the nominalization makes it possible to function as modifier of **íìʃ** 'the tree'.

(153) **yàtī̄-kī̀-bààb  ééz      fòòt-ǹ**
fox-DAT-father   honey   become-DS
'the one of the fox had become honey;…'

(154) ʃēʔ-ń-ʃ          báákù-tà-bàb        yīs      dufu-tə
stone-DEF-M      firestones-LOC-father   DIST.M   hit-SS

ás-a          gyèw-bàr-ǹ
3MS-ACC      chew-throw.away-DS

'… those stones above the fire struck and finished him off;…'

(155) baʒà-k'à-bààb-a        síís-árá        kì-tə
work-IN-father          listen-NEG     exist-SS

'not having heard what had happened at work,…'

(156) yīs-tà-bààb      íǹʃ-ŋ̀          ááb-ara
DIST.M-LOC-father  wood.DEF.M-DAT   fruit-ACC

há=ʔum-t=á        kùʃù-k-ə
3MS=eat-SS=3MS     be.ill-REAL-STI

'He ate berries of that tree and became ill.'

(157) yī-s-tà        íǹʃ-ŋ̀          ááb-ara
DIST.M-LOC     wood.DEF.M-DAT   fruit-ACC

há=ʔum-t=á        kùʃù-k-ə
3MS=eat-SS=3MS     be.ill-REAL-STI

'Then he ate berries of the tree and became ill.'

In addition, **bāāb** 'father' and **bɛ́** 'mother' form verb complements of Irrealis clauses (159) as well as relative clauses (160)-(161). The semantics of the Irrealis can give a strong sense of obligation, as in (162).

(158) há-dēygń          támár-ń-bààb-ara      út-árá
3MS.POSS-child.F-DEF   learn(Amh)-IRR-father-ACC like-NEG

há=kì-k-ə
3MS=exist-REAL-STI

'He doesn't want his daughter to study.'

(159) hāāy-əra     áz-k'à  ŋ̩=wōg-ūs-m̄-bàb      ʔyaana
water-ACC    3MS-IN  1SG=sit-CAUS-IRR-father  pot

'a pot in which I can store water'

(160) **dāws   yīs-əra        k'áám-ḿ-bààb kááy**
children DIST.M-ACC        raise-IRR-father   be.not

'There is no one who will raise up the children.'

(161) **hāāy-k'à        ha=zut-ǹtà          ʃē?ī     batà**
water-IN        2SG=trample-COND        stone   on.LOC

**zút-árá        ha=k'é-ḿ-bààb-ee**
trample-NEG    2SG=remain-IRR-father-STI

'If you step in the water, you must not step on the stone anymore'
(Context: warning to use the right way to enter a magical house.)

# 6   Pronouns

Chapter 6 describes the personal pronouns and other pronominal forms found in Sheko, with the inclusion of pronouns of the Guraferda variant. Furthermore, this chapter treats reflexivity.

## 6.1   Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns distinguish number and gender. Gender is differentiated only in the third person singular. A logophoric pronoun has not been found. Hayward (2009:92) comments that South Omotic languages differ from North Omotic languages in not having such a pronoun.

### 6.1.1   Pronominal forms of Sheko

The first column of the table below illustrates the personal pronouns. All pronouns clearly have a basic form to which case markers can be added, as is evidenced by columns two (accusative -əra), three (instrumental -ka) and four (dative -kɪ̀). For comparison, the last columns show the clitics used as person markers on verbs and the possessive prefixes on nouns, which are formally identical.

|      | S    | DO        | Instr    | IO      | subj. cl. | poss. pr. |
|------|------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| 1sg  | nata | nata-ra   | nata-ka  | na-ɽ̀   | ɳ̩=       | ɳ̩-       |
| 2sg  | yeta | yeta-ra   | yeta-ka  | ye-kɪ̀  | ha=       | ha-       |
| 3ms  | áz   | ás-əra ~ ás-a | ás-ka | ás-kɪ̀  | há=       | há-       |
| 3fs  | íʒ   | íʃ-əra    | íʃ-ka    | íʃ-kɪ̀  | yí=       | yí-       |
| 1pl  | náta | náta-ra   | náta-ka  | ná-ɽ̀   | ń=        | ń-        |
| 2pl  | ítí  | ítí-ra    | ítí-ka   | ítí-kɪ̀ | ítí=      | ítí-      |
| 3pl  | íʃì  | íʃì-ra    | íʃì-ka   | íʃì-kɪ̀ | íʃì=      | íʃì-      |

Table 1. Pronominals

Remarks on the table: first, the difference between 1sg and 1pl is purely tonal, as is the distinction between 2sg and 3ms in the clitic and possessive prefix.

Secondly, the sibilant in the third person pronouns is voiceless in non-nominative cases. The voicelessness could be explained as a result of a regular devoicing process preceding a voiceless stop in case of the dative -**kɳ̀** and instrumental -**ka** (see section 3.1). However, devoicing between two vowels in the accusative is inexplicable. Therefore, a non-nominative form **ás / íʃ** may be posited next to the form for the nominative.

Thirdly, the last syllable **ta** of the first person pronouns and the second person singular is omitted when the dative case is suffixed. I have no explanation why -**ta** is omitted with the dative case -**kɳ̀** and not with the accusative case -**əra**. A possible factor is that the accusative case marking is not obligatory (section 9.2.2), whereas the dative marking is obligatorily present. Bender (2000: 146; 200) already remarked that -**ta** in 1sg/pl and 2sg is possibly an old copula. The tone pattern supports this analysis because disyllabic nouns never end in tone 2. The other pronouns have tone patterns also found with nouns, whereas the pronouns with -**ta** do not fit.

Furthermore, the forms for 2pl and 3pl are also used as honorifics. Example (1) was uttered by an informant to a **kōmtū** traditional leader.

(1)  **yīs-əra**       **ít = see-bàstà**        **kaarì**  **sáántà (...)**
     DIST.M-ACC       2PL = see.NV-WHILE        toward    front.LOC

     **túúrù-ra**      **hāy-s-m̄-bààb**          **ítí**    **gōntʃì**
     land-ACC         hear-CAUS-IRR-father      2PL       SIMIL

     **fōōt-n̄-bààb**        **ky = â**
     become-IRR-father      exist = 3MS.Q

     'When you (polite) consider this, will there be someone like you (polite) in the future, who will ... govern the land?'

In texts, shorter forms of pronouns have been observed, without final vowel and lacking case markers. In (2) and (3), the pronouns are syntactically objects, but they are not suffixed with the accusative markers. In (4), the pronouns are in a coordinate construction and subject.

(2)    **há=k'ay-tə**    **hàyn**    **yet**    **ṇ=gyā-m-ə**    **na-ɽ̀**
       3MS=rise-SS    IDEO    2SG    1SG=eat-IRR-STI    1SG-DAT

     **ats-ə**    **há=ge-ǹ**
     give-STI   3MS=say-DS

     'he rose and said: "Grr, I will eat you. Give (it) to me,"...'

(3)    **nat**    **dāwā**    **ge**    **bútà**    **nat**    **zìfm̀-tə**
       1SG    deer    say    outside    1SG    chase-SS

     'calling me a deer you chased me outside...'

(4)    **yet-ka**    **nat-ka**    **t'āāgn̄-àb**    **tò**
       2SG-COOR    1SG-COOR    two-REL    just

     **sam-a**
     remain-IMPLC?

     'just the two of us are left...'

No investigation has been done on the differences between normal and shortened forms. These forms could be short just because of elision in connected speech, or they could constitute a separate set with its own distribution and semantics.

In addition to the pronouns given in table 1, two vocatives are attested (5), which are distinguished for gender. They can be used e.g. to call a person over a distance or, if not at a distance, to call a friend.

(5)    a.    **ṇ-na**
            1-VOC.M
            'hey you (m)'

    b.    **ṇ-nya**
            1-VOC.F
            'hey you (f)'

Vocatives consisting of names or titles are optionally marked by the form of the stance suffix. Moreover, a small group of kinship terms has a special vocative tone pattern. The vocative is discussed in section 5.3.4.

### 6.1.2 Guraferda pronouns

Some pronouns in the Guraferda variant are markedly different from the pronouns in table 1. These pronouns may be of interest for historical-comparative research and are therefore presented here. (Tone marking is only partly indicated, i.e. absence of tone marks means that the tone is not known in this section.)

| (6) | | Nom. | Accusative | Dative | subj. clitic |
|-----|-----|------|------------|--------|-------------|
| | 1sg | yin | yinan(a) (yinn) | yi?ŋ | ŋ= |
| | 2sg | yeta | yetana | yetn | a = |
| | 3ms | ás | ásána | áskn | á= |
| | 3fs | íʃ | íʃána | íʃkn | í= |
| | 1pl | yín | yínán(a) (yínn) | yí?n | ń= |
| | 2pl | ítí | ítína | ítík'n | ít(ì)= |
| | 3pl | í。nì | í。nìna | ínik'n | ín(ì)= |

The first person pronoun forms in the Guraferda variant resemble the Diizi pronouns **yìnu** (1sg), **ínú** (1pl) as given in (Beachy 2005:53), rather than those in Sheko. In addition, the Guraferda 3pl form **íni** resembles neither the Sheko nor the Diizi 3pl form, which is **íʃì** for both languages[15].

The accusative marker in Guraferda Sheko is -**ana** (7a). For first person, shorter forms are attested, probably because of haplology (7b). Note the plural marker on the Imperative, which is -**nt**, as opposed to Sheko -**ít**.

(7)  a.  **ás-ána í。nì=k'yan-ase**
3MS-ACC 3PL=beat-DECL
'They hit him'

   b.  **yín-án ʃey-aʃa        k'é-nt**
1PL-ACC forget-NEG        remain-PL.ADDR
'Don't forget us!'

---

[15] The Diizi set of verbal person suffixes contains an **n** element for most persons, e.g. 3pl -**níʃo** (and allomorphs), but it is at present not clear whether / how to relate these forms. The Guraferda 3pl form **ini** may also possibly relate to a feminine demonstrative, as the origin of other third person pronouns is often related to demonstratives (e.g. Bender (2000:4)).

The dative case marker is **-kn** or **-k'n**. The glottal element is preserved in the first person, while the 2sg person apparently only preserved the **-n** (8).

(8)  **yet-n   n=ts'af-aka**          **yeta**   **yi?n**
     2SG-DAT  1SG=write(Amh)-COND     2SG      <u>1SG:DAT</u>

   **a=ts'af-en-ky-a**
   2SG=write-put-exist-Q

   'If I write you, will you write me?'

### 6.1.3    Enlivening quotative construction

In some texts, there is a sudden switch to first person, for example in (9) where the dog, which is disguised as a sheep, is first referred to by 3ms **há=** (second line) and subsequently by 1sg **=ṇ** (third line). This use of the first person is to dramatize or enliven part of a text. The presence of the verb **ge** 'say' points towards an analysis as quotative construction.[16] **ge** 'say' is also present in example (10)-(11).

(9)  **yí=zūnkù**     **te-k-e**        **ge-t=í**       **bòy-kòb-tə**
     3FS=sheep        COP-REAL-STI     say-SS=3FS       drive-take-SS

   **kōōkī̄-tà**        **sāw-b-tà**          **há=wúwúwúw**
   road-LOC          arrive.NV-REL-LOC    3MS=IDEO

   **ge-tə**   **íʃ-èra**   **wóóts'=ń**   **ge-ṇ̀**
   say-SS    3FS-ACC    bite=<u>1SG</u>     say-DS

   'she drove (the dog), saying: "It is a sheep," and when she reached the road, he barked and wanted to bite her;…'

---

[16] A normal quotative clause is different. Cf. **yeta-ra ṇ=wóóts'-á-m-ə há=ge-ṇ̀** (2SG-ACC 1SG=bite-put-IRR-STI 3MS=say-DS) 'he said: "I will bite you." ' or **ṇ=wóóts'-ə há=ge-ṇ̀** (1SG=bite-STI 3MS=say-DS) 'he said: "Let me bite." '

(10) k'òrk'ōrò    kì-ǹtà    k'òrk'ōrò
corrugated.iron  exist-COND    corrugated.iron

ha＝kōb-téé-tə    ha＝ʔíǹʃ    bàtà   dìnga
2SG＝take-go.NV-SS    2SG＝wood.DEF.M on.LOC  round

mìsmārì    ʔán-t＝a    k'yár-á-m
nail    put-SS＝2SG    beat-put-IRR

há＝kēēs-n̄    gé-k-bààstá    há＝ʔás-kǹ    ʃíʃk-ǹ-ʃ
3MS＝go.out-<u>1SG</u>? say-exist?-WHILE   3MS＝3MS-DAT   claw-DEF-M

āāt-ārā    k'é＝n    gé-m-ɔ́
hold-NEG    remain＝<u>1SG</u>    say-IRR-STI.CONT

há＝fãyt'ū-t＝á    bángár-á-ṃ
3MS＝be.weak-SS＝3MS    return-put-IRR

'If there are corrugated iron sheets, you bring them and nail them round on the tree. While he (the badger) thinks he can ascend, his claws say 'I can't hold' - he will be defeated and will return.'

(11) kōōk-n̄-s    tʃór-ń-k'é＝n    ge-ǹ   fáádu
road-DEF-M    finish-NEG2-remain＝<u>1SG</u>  say-DS  hunger

íʃì-ra   fàdù-s-ǹ
3PL-ACC  be.hungry-CAUS-DS

'the road was endless and they got hungry;...' (Lit: the road said 'I am not ending'; hunger hungered them.)

## 6.2   Possessive pronouns

The last column in table 1 above shows the possessive affixes. These are commonly prefixed. They refer to the possessor.

(12) yí-naanu-ra    dùùf＝í-k-ə
<u>3FS.POSS</u>-elder.brother-ACC  hit＝3FS-REAL-STI

'She hit her brother.'

Suffixation of the first person pronoun possessive takes place in vocative expressions (13).

(13) báb-m̀-o
father-<u>1SG.POSS</u>-STI.ADDR

'Oh my father'

Body parts and some other nouns usually do not prefix a possessive pronominal. Instead, a dative personal pronoun is used to denote the possessor. The difference between constructions with a possessive prefix and a personal pronoun is discussed in section 9.3.

(14)  **na-ŋ̀**      **āʂū**      **ʃan=á-k-ə**
    1SG-DAT  leg  break=3MS-REAL-STI
    'My leg is broken.'

There is no independent possessive pronoun form, but to express 'mine', 'yours' etc. the nominalizer **bāāb** 'father' / **bé** 'mother' is used after the dative pronoun.

(15)  **kòmpùtērì**      **ye-kǹ-bààb**      **tə̀**
    computer  2SG-DAT-father  COP.Q
    'Is the computer yours?'

(16)  **yī-nì**      **na-ŋ̀-bey**
    DIST-F  1SG-DAT-mother
    'That one (f) is mine.'

## 6.3    Reflexivity and 'oneself'

To express reflexivity Sheko makes use of a personal pronoun. The pronoun is often accompagnied by an intensifying noun phrase with **gə́rì** 'head' and the appropriate possessive prefix. **gə́rì** 'head' is not a reflexive pronoun itself. Evidence for this is the obligatory occurrence of an accusative personal pronoun, next to the intensifying **gə́rì** 'head' in examples (17) and (18).

(17)  **ha-gə̀rì**      **yəta-ra**      **ha=k'ùts'ù-k-ə**
    2SG.POSS-head  <u>2SG-ACC</u>  2SG=cut-REAL-STI
    'You cut yourself.'

(18)  **bāābà**  **há-gerì**      **íʃ-kǹ**  **gyābtà**      **yīs-tà**
    father  3MS.POSS-head  3FS-DAT  front.yard  DIST.M-LOC

    **ás-a**  **gùtù-t=á**      **ʂub-m̀**
    3MS-ACC  hang-SS=3MS  die-DS
    '...the father hung himself there on her front yard and died,...'

gə́rì 'head' is not necessary to express reflexivity, but without it a sentence may be ambiguous between a reflexive and non-reflexive reading. Sentence (19) can signify that the subject hangs himself or that he hangs somebody or something else.

(19)  há = ʔás-a        gùtù-k-ə
      3MS = 3MS-ACC      hang-REAL-STI
      'he hung himself'  / 'he hung him/it'

A possessive reflexive is illustrated in (20):

(20)  t'ùrēʃà          um-tə  íʃì-kɨ̀  gə́rì-k'à-bààb  òtì     um-tə
      dowry(Amh)       eat-SS  3PL-DAT  head-IN-father  cow     eat-SS
      '... and ate the dowry and ate their own cow and ...'

The noun gə́rì 'head', modified by the appropriate possessive prefix, occurs in non-reflexive contexts as well. Examples are given in (21)-(24).

(21)  nata   ṇ-gərì-k'erà            ṇ = òs̠k-ɨ̀tà     énà
      1SG    1SG.POSS-head-INCL      1SG = call-COND   later.today

      há = yēē-k'yán-á-m-ə
      3MS = come.NV-beat-put-IRR-STI
      'Even as I myself called, it would rain the same day.'

(22)  íʃì-gərì         íʃ = bàʒù-sàsk-àb             tə-ɨ̀
      3PL.POSS-head    3PL = work-go.out.CAUS-REL     COP-DS
      'it was what they made and produced themselves...'

(23)  umt'à  yí = kàtsù      sàsk-ɨ̀tà        yí-gərì          tò
      food   3FS = cook        arrive.CAUS-COND  3FS.POSS-head    just

      um-tə  ás-kɨ̀  tò     am-peeʃ-tə        àts-ɨ̀
      eat-SS  3MS-DAT just   put-spend.day-SS  give-DS
      '... when she cooked food and brought it out she only ate herself and gave only to him (the father).'

(24)  **ha-gerì**        **arà-k'a**      **hààs-tà**
      2SG.POSS-head     thought-IN      PROX.M-LOC

      **ņ̩=hāāy-ā-m-ə**              **ha=ge-ǹtà**
      1SG=spend.night-put-IRR-STI   2SG=say-COND

      'if you think by yourself "I'll spend the night here", …'

The 'intensifying' **gə́rì** 'head' is also used in contexts with a reciprocal reading. The verb is marked by the middle for reciprocity (see section 12.3.3).

(25)  **ánk'à**        **íʃì-gerì**       **íʃ=ʈʂ'àdǹ-kì-k-ə**
      each.other      3PL.POSS-head     3PL=fight.MIDD-exist-REAL-STI

      'They fought among themselves', 'they themselves fought each other.'

(26)  **ítí-gərì**        **ítí=t'ùs-ùs-ǹ-kì**
      2PL.POSS-head      2PL=know-CAUS-MIDD-exist[Q]

      'Do you know each other?', 'Did you introduce yourselves to each other?'

# 7 Nominal and verbal modifiers

This chapter describes modifiers of nouns and verbs, namely demonstratives, adjectives, numerals, quantifiers and adverbs. Relative clauses are subsumed under complex clauses in section 11.4.

## 7.1 Demonstratives

This section treats basic, locational and directional demonstratives and the manner deictic together. The basic distinction is between proximal ('this', 'here') and distal ('that', 'there'), which are neutral with respect to elevation. In addition, elevation plays a role ('up there', 'downwards', etc.). The elevational deictics are adverbial but may semantically modify the noun. The manner deictic is adverbial as well. Furthermore, the non-deictic use of the basic demonstratives in temporal clauses and in anaphoric/ cataphoric referencing is exemplified.

### 7.1.1 Basic demonstratives

The basic distinction for locational deictics is between proximal hàà 'this' and distal yī 'that'. The demonstatives are inflected for gender. There is one form -z for the default gender (M), which refers to maculine as well as plural referents; the feminine form is -nì.

(1)           PROX   DIST

   M   hààz  yīz

   F   hààni  yīnì

The demonstratives occur as free pronominal forms, but also as suffixes. If they are suffixed, the initial consonant is dropped (2). Impressionistically, suffixation is found mostly with the more grammaticalised (non-spatial) uses of the demonstratives, see section 7.1.2 immediately below. If not deictic spatial, the proximal occurs in some subordinate verb forms, and the distal is important in anaphoric/ cataphoric reference and indefinite specific reference.

(2)     -ààz ∼ -ààs ∼ -às               -àànì

        -īz ∼ -īs                       -īnì

The next examples show the proximal and distal demonstrative forms used independently (3)-(6) as well as modifying nouns (7)-(9).

(3)     yī-z      yír-tə           há=ge-ǹtà …
        DIST-M    what-COP         3MS=say-COND
        'What this says is that...'

(4)     yī-nì     ʃīk'n̄-be
        DIST-F    be.short.F.DEF-REL.mother
        'This is a short one (f).'

(5)     há=nata       gask-òb        hààs    sə́g-ə
        3MS=1SG        insult-REL     PROX.M  see-STI
        'Let who insulted me look at that.'

(6)     hàà-nì-o
        PROX-F-STI.ADDR
        'What about this one?' (Context: commentary of a player on his good shot in a game of marbles.)

(7)     gōōsū  hàà-z   wut=á-k-ə
        calabash PROX-M  fall=3MS-REAL-STI
        'This calabash has fallen.'

(8)     túún   hà-nì   ʒéyʒ-ǹ-be              hàày    tə-k-ə
        spring  PROX-F  good.F-DEF-REL.mother   water   COP-REAL-STI
        'This spring is (gives) good water.'

(9)  **yīs-kɪ̀**　　**ādī-k'à**　　**é-ká**
　　　 DIST.M-DAT　　 footprint-IN　　 there-LCT

　　　**faad-k'à-bààb iɪ̀-ʃ**　　**yīs-ərá**　　**k'ōdām-m̀-s**
　　　 body-IN-father wood.DEF-M　　 DIST.M-ACC.CONT? qodama-DEF-M

　　　**yīs**　　**há=gīīʂū-kōb-t=á**　　**kē-s-ā-m-ə**
　　　 DIST.M　 3MS=pull-take-SS=3MS　 go.out-CAUS-put-IRR-STI

　　　'After that, the *qodama* ointment pulls this wood which is there in
　　　the body and takes it out.'

When two items are set off against each other with respect to
proximity, often the locational demonstrative **é-ká** 'over there'
is used with a distal suffix instead of only the basic distal
demonstrative **yīz** (10)-(11).

(10)  **hà-z**　**kōōbū tə-k**　**é-k-ī-z**　　**kútʃì**　**te-k-ə**
　　　 PROX-M　 cock　 COP-REAL <u>there-LCT</u>-DIST-M　 chicken COP-REAL-STI

　　　'This is a cock. Those there are hens.'

(11)  **dēygn̄ hàà-nì ...**　　**dēygn̄ é-k-i-nì ...**
　　　 girl　 PROX-F　　　　 girl　 <u>there-LCT</u>-DIST-F

　　　'this girl... that girl over there...'

A demonstrative used deictically may be accompagnied by a
gesture such as pointing with a hand, or pursed lips and head
slightly lifted in the pointing direction.

### 7.1.2　Non-deictic use of basic demonstratives

First the uses of the proximal are described and then the uses of
the distal.

The proximal occurs in the following verb form: following a
relative clause marked by **-(à)b**, the masculine proximal
demonstrative **-ààs** and the general locative case marker **-tà** are
suffixed. This form is used in stories to describe a setting or
background for the main storyline events. It is frequently
translated as 'while' or 'when'. Therefore, the whole
of **-(à)b-ààs-tà** REL-PROX.M-LOC is glossed WHILE for ease of
understanding and to avoid clumsy glossing. **-bààstà** WHILE has
an allomorph **-bàstà** with a short vowel.

(12) **íʒ   yòk'a  ōrā-tà      yí = tee-kootu-kī-bààstà**
3FS   INTJ   garden-LOC   3FS = go.NV-wait-exist-<u>WHILE</u>

**há = zūyǹ-əra       bààʃ-gyò-tə**
3MS = sheep.F.DEF-ACC   slaughter-chew-SS

'while she went and was waiting in the garden, he slaughtered and ate the ewe and ...'

(13) **yí = k'aab-k-bààstà     áz    sàw-tə**
3FS = pour-exist?-<u>WHILE</u>   3MS   arrive.NV-SS

'while she poured, he arrived and...'

(14) **há = ʔáz-k'à    āngā   zérkń  hàày-tə**
3MS = 3MS-IN    much   day   spend.night-SS

**há = kī-bàstà   yí = bārkāy   bààz-ʔum-tee-kì-t = í**
3MS = exist-<u>WHILE</u>  3FS = monkey  search-eat-go.NV-exist-SS = 3FS

**hàs-tà       sàk-ǹ**
PROX.M-LOC   arrive-DS

'when he had spent a long time in it (a pit), a monkey foraging for food reached the place...'

A few instances have been noticed where the distal suffix **-īs** is used instead of the proximal.

(15) **sagǹ   ʔyats'n    há = sāw-àbààstà      ás-kǹ   tááʒí**
nine    moon     3MS = arrive.NV-REL.WHILE   3MS-DAT  beer

**íʃì = k'íʂ-k-ə̀b-īs-tà        sar = á-k     íʃì = géé-m-ə**
3PL = drink-exist?-REL-<u>DIST.M</u>-LOC   be.hot = 3MS-REAL  3PL = say-IRR-STI

'While the ninth month arrives, when they drink its beer, they say: "It is hot." '

NB. The locative case **-tà** may also be suffixed directly to a relative clause, without intervening demonstrative. I analyse **-tà** in the context of 'while'-clauses as the locative case marker (and **-ààs** as demonstrative) analoguous to other temporal adverbial clauses which employ relative clauses followed by locational noun phrases, as treated in section 11.5.1.

As for the distal demonstrative, in the time frame it denotes a sequence, i.e. that a certain event or state is over and a new one begins.

(16) yī-s-t=á      yówk'a      ééz-ǹ-s-əra    kéta
<u>DIST-M</u>-LOC=3MS  INTJ       honey-DEF-M-ACC  all

k'ēēt'-bār-ā-m̀
swallow-throw.away-put-IRR

'and then, well, he eats up all the honey'

Furthermore, the distal is used to refer anaphorically. The anaphoric reference can be associative (17). The distal can also refer to the previous in general (18).

(17) íntʃù    ky=ă-k-ə      ...     íǹʃ       yīs
wood    exist=3MS-REAL-STI     wood.DEF.M   <u>DIST.M</u>

íʃì=sāskū-t=íʃì    tēngì  íʃ=k'yar-àb-īs
3PL=arrive.CAUS-SS=3PL  tree.sp  3PL=beat-REL-<u>DIST.M</u>

ás-ka       íʃì=kāf-tū-t=íʃì    dèb-t'-àb
3MS-WITH    3PL=cover-PASS-SS=3PL  bury-PASS-REL

'There is a tree… They brought this tree and the *tengi* (bark) which they beat (was) what they were covered in and buried.'

(18) ʃə́t'ì    kōʂ-t-n̄-bàb        baakà āʂ-t-n̄-bàb
maize    farm-PASS-IRR-father    taro   plant-PASS-IRR-father

kátʃí   yān-t'-n̄-bààb      yīs-ər=á    səg-ǹtà-ee
yam    plant.yam-PASS-IRR-father  <u>DIST.M</u>-ACC=3MS  see-COND-STI

'…maize must be cultivated, taro must be planted, yam must be planted. Regarding this,…'

The distal can refer to indefinite specifics (19) and generics (20).

(19) mīzē     gè-t'-àb-yīs        náŋ  mākā
best.man(Amh)  say-PASS-REL-<u>DIST.M</u>    1PL-DAT  best.man

tə-k-ə
COP-REAL-STI

'The one called *mize* is for us *maka*.' (Context: talking about best men and mediators in marriage customs.)

(20) gōmfā yīs    háák'ástà    há=gàngù-kì-k-ə
     gomfa DIST.M now          3MS=fly-exist-REAL-STI

'this *gomfa* bird is flying around now.' (Context: reference to the species, not to a specific bird.)

In addition, the distal is used in first-mentions, i.e. it refers cataphorically. The following examples come from the beginnings of two texts.

(21) háák'ástà      m̩=māāk-n̄-bààb-īs    únà    hàs-kǹ
     now           1SG=tell-IRR-father-DIST.M long.ago PROX.M-DAT

     gātsù  márfí kááy  kī-b-tà        hààkīm
     start  needle lack  exist-REL-LOC  doctor

     t'ūūs-t-ērē        kī-b-tà        há=gōmfā-ka
     know-PASS-NEG.STI  exist-REL-LOC  3MS=gomfa-WITH

     yàp-tù-kì-b       k'ōdāmà  ge-t'u-b-īs
     find-PASS-exist-REL qodama  say-PASS-REL-DIST.M

     áás-ʔáás-t=á     é-tù-t=á          há=yááb
     PLUR-how-COP=3MS  do.NV-PASS-SS=3MS  3MS=man

     fày-kìy            yí=ge-b-īs-əra        yí=bádìgì
     be.healthy-exist[Q] 3FS=say-REL-DIST.M-ACC 3FS=Badign

     ootʃ'-n̩       m̩=māāk-ā-m-ə         kì-b-īs
     ask-DS.1SG    1SG=tell-put-IRR-STI  exist-REL-DIST.M

'What I will tell now, "long ago when there were no injections, when a doctor was not known, how did this which is called *qodama* which is found by a *gomfa* bird heal people?" Badign asked; I will tell that.'

(22) yòhānīs       wòngèlì       ás-kǹ   ʂúʔà  k'oy
     Yohanis       gospel(Amh)   3MS-DAT rest  one

     fyáádí kādū  bātà-bààb-īs       n̩=māāk-ā-m
     number three on.LOC-father-DIST.M 1SG=tell-put-IRR

'I will talk about the gospel of John, chapter 1 verse 3.'

This use of the distal in Sheko could be related to a marker **-is** in Benchnon, which is glossed TOPIC, the role of which remains unexplained (see e.g. Rapold (2006:512) example 130, and Appendix 1, text 1).

Since the functions of **yīs** are diverse, there are some examples where two demonstratives occur in the same clause. In example (23), the first **yīs** modifies the noun **kōōṣ̄ī** 'farm, field' and the second is suffixed to the whole clause. In example (24), the proximal and distal are even used together.

(23)  kōōṣ̄ī   yīs        há=kōṣ-t-ùb-īs-ee                 tūrētà-kǹ
      farm     DIST.M     3MS=farm-PASS-REL-DIST.M-STI     Tureta-DAT

      há=kōṣ-t-ā-m-ə
      3MS=farm-PASS-put-IRR-STI

      'As for those fields which were farmed, for Tureta would be farmed.'


(24)  hàz        yī-s       kétā      sàm=á-k
      PROX.M     DIST-M     all       remain=3MS-REAL

      'All this is gone.' (Context: Sentence is said after describing the use of *ṣaad*, a well where cows used to drink mineral water. The well was ritually cleaned every year, but has fallen into disuse.)

The distal shares the function of anaphoric reference with the definiteness-gender marking (see section 5.2.2). While the definiteness-gender marking occurs on (head) nouns, the referring distal occurs on NPs and relative clauses.

### 7.1.3    Locational demonstratives

The locational demonstratives are given in (25). Of the four locational demonstratives, **só** 'up there' is morphologically simple. For **akǹ** 'here' it is not clear whether it is one simple word or whether the dative case **-kǹ** is part of the word. **wó-** 'down there' occurs with **-ká** and the locative case marker **-tà**. **é-** 'there' occurs only with **-ká** in my data. The suffix **-ká** is restricted to these locational demonstratives. It is glossed LCT for 'locative suffix'.

(25)  **akǹ**     'here'
      **é-ká**    'there'
      **wó-ká**   'down there'
      **só**      'up there'

The locational demonstratives may occur independently or modifying a head noun. The following examples show the independent use.

(26)  **āts**      **akǹ**
      give      here
      'Give here!'

(27)  **akǹ**      **hàà-z-tà**          **yəg**
      here      PROX-M-LOC          come
      'Come here!'

(28)  **káʃú**  **é-ká**              **bar-ə**
      garbage there-LCT          throw.away-STI
      'Throw the garbage over there.'

(29)  **yeta**    **fín-tə**          **ha = ʔé-k-īs-tà**          **sak-ə**
      2SG      descend-SS          2SG = there-LCT-DIST.M-LOC  arrive-STI
      'you go down and arrive over there.'

(30)  **yí = tēē-bààstà wó-ká**          **órá-tà**          **téé-kī-ǹ**
      3FS = go.NV-WHILE down.there-LCT   garden-LOC          go.NV-exist-DS
      'While she went, (he said:) "go and be down there in the garden; …" '

(31)  **wó-tà**          **há = yāf-t-ā-m-ə**
      down.there-LOC    3MS = find-PASS-put-IRR-STI
      'It will be found down there.'

(32)  **nyāās-t = a**      **āng-ūs-t = a**          **só**      **ki-ee**
      give.birth-SS = 2SG? be.big-CAUS-SS = 2SG      up.there exist-STI
      '…settle up there, giving birth and increasing.' (Context: the Sheko live in the hills rather than in the lowlands.)

The examples (33)-(35) illustrate the locational demonstratives **éká** and **akǹ** modifying a noun. In this function, they prototypically follow the noun and carry a basic demonstrative suffix. (In)visibility does not play a role in the use of the locational demonstratives.

(33)   **kóóká**   **é-k-īs**       **dōnʒī-ka**       **bóytà-ka**
      valley   there-LCT-DIST.M   Donzhi-COOR     Boyta-COOR

      **kyākà**  **tə-k-ə**
      border   COP-REAL-STI

      'That river over there (located at the lowest point of the valley) is the border between Donzhi and Boyta.' (Context: Donji and Boyta are two qebeles, small administrative areas, near Sheko-town.)

(34)   **bây**    **é-k-ī-nì**       **ītī-tə**
      woman  there-LCT-DIST-F   who-COP.[Q]

      'Who is that woman over there?'

(35)   **īy**     **akɲ̀-ààs-tà**
      house  here-PROX.M-LOC

      'this house over here'

The combination **éká akɲ̀** 'hither and thither' occurs in literal (36) and figurative sense (37).

(36)   **um-m̀-s-a**    **íʃ̀꞊é-k-ákɲ̀**       **ùkūrì**
      food-DEF-M-ACC  3PL꞊there-LCT-here    equal(Amh)

      **bèskù-kī-bàstá**
      divide-exist-WHILE.CNTD

      'while they were dividing the food equally here and there...'

(37)   **é-ká**       **àkɲ̀**   **gè-t'-àb**
      there-LCT    here   say-PASS-REL

      **út-ár꞊íʃ-kì-k-ə**
      like-NEG꞊3PL-exist-REAL-STI

      'they don't like to gossip/ mutter'

The elevational demonstratives **só** 'up there' and **wó-** 'down there' do not occur following a noun but only preceding it (38)-(39).

(38)   **íʃ̀**     **wó-ká**    **hāāy**  **geeza-tà**    **sàk-ǹ**
      3PL     down.there-LCT  water  middle?-LOC   arrive-DS

      'they arrived down there at the middle of the lake...'

(39)  só      íntʃù-k'a      há=sàmù-k-ə
      up.there wood-IN        3MS=remain-REAL-STI

    'It is left behind up there in the trees.'

Next to its use in the spatial domain, **wótà** is used to refer to a non-specific time in the future. Other forms, e.g. **wóká**, cannot be used for time reference.

(40)  wó-tà          n=ye-kɪ̀       māāk-ā-m-ə
      down.there-LOC  1SG=2SG-DAT    tell-put-IRR-STI

    'I will tell you someday.'

The locational demonstratives are supplemented by directional adverbs (41). Some sentential examples are provided for each of them.

(41)  wó-    'down there'      tóórá  'downward'
      só     'up there'        ábsì   'upward'
      (é-ká  'there' )         kaarì  'toward'

(42)  … két=a  kóbtʃú-bār-n̄              há=wó-ká
      all=2SG  make.roofbeam-throw.away-DS  3MS=<u>down.there</u>-LCT

    ábsì    kēēs-téé-tə    há-fátà       há=sāk-n̄    èʃɪ̀ntà
    <u>upward</u>  go.out-go.NV-SS  3MS.POSS-on.LOC  3MS=arrive-PURP  MOTIVE

    há=ʔás-ārā   gāydū-s-n̄    há=sām-ā-ṃ
    3MS=3MS-ACC   problem-CAUS-DS  3MS=remain-put-IRR

    '...you make all the roofbeams; it will cause him problems to climb from down upwards and reach on it (a beehive); he will remain.'

(43)  kyān-s      tóórá        áz-k'à  tiit-ɪ̀
      dog.DEF-M   <u>downward</u>    3MS-IN  look-DS

    'The dog looked down into it...'

(44)  íntʃù  kaarì  fyááyń     yí=kī-m      yí=ge-tə
      wood   <u>toward</u>  frog.F.DEF  3FS=exist-IRR  3FS=say-SS

    yí=bààs-kī-bààstà    fyááyń      kááy
    3FS=want-exist-WHILE   frog.F.DEF   be.not

    '...while she searched saying 'the little frog will be in the tree' the little frog was not there.'

(45)　**támú-kǹ**　　　**kaarì**　**t'āāgǹ**　**tamu-kǹ**　　　**kaarì**　**dādū**
　　　ten-DAT　　　　<u>toward</u>　two　ten-DAT　　　　<u>toward</u>　child

　　　**fyadi**　**íʃì = t'uus-k-īs**　　　**kááy-ə**
　　　count　3PL = know-exist?-DIST.M　be.not-STI

　　　'towards ten, twenty they didn't know a childs' age (number) anymore.'

(46)　**…úʃtà**　　　　**túúrù**　**batà**　**kaarì**　**bāās-kì-bààstà**
　　　down.LOC　　　land　　on.LOC　<u>toward</u>　search-exist-WHILE

　　　'while he searched the ground'

Furthermore, there are two locational nouns which point out the level of elevation (47). In **wóʃì** the base **wó-** is followed by an unknown element **ʃì** (cf. **wó-ká** 'down there'). **hayk'à** is made up of two elements, the last of which is the inessive case marker **-k'à**.

(47)　**wóʃì**　'down'
　　　**hayk'à**　'up'

(48)　**dīmts'ī-kǹ**　　**hayk'à-ka**　　**wóʃì-ka**
　　　sound-DAT　　　<u>up.IN</u>-COOR　　<u>low</u>-COOR

　　　'the up and down of sound (i.e. tone)'

(49)　**íӡ**　　**hayk'à**　　　**íntʃù-kǹ**　　**gə́rī-k'à**
　　　3FS　<u>up.IN</u>　　　　wood-DAT　　head-IN

　　　**kèès-tə …**　　**yí = kī-bààstà**　**kafà**　**hayk'à ás-kǹ**
　　　go.out-SS　　　3FS = exist-WHILE　bird　<u>up.IN</u>

　　　**buʈṣà-ka-kī-b**　　　　**íʃ-əra**　**k'yaaf = á-k**
　　　3MS-DAT nest-WITH?-exist-REL　3FS-ACC　kick = 3MS-REAL

　　　'She climbed up to the top of the tree and (…) while she was there a bird which had its nest up there kicked her.'

For completeness, three nouns denoting location with respect to elevational information are given in (50).

(50)　**sáákù**　'ravine, downward slope'
　　　**gérá**　'hill, upward slope'
　　　**óón**　'plain, more or less even location'

### 7.1.4 Manner deictic

The manner deictic is **yē(ē)** 'like this/ that'. Its vowel may be long or short.

(51) **t'ūūs-ār = a-kì-b-ìʃntà**        **ha = nata-ra**    **yē**
     know-NEG = 2SG-exist-REL-MOTIVE    2SG = 1SG-ACC   <u>like.this</u>

     **gee-k-ə**
     say-REAL-STI

     'You spoke to me like this because you don't know.'

The form of the manner deictic may be based on the distal (**yī**-), and/ or the verb **eg** 'to do', more specificially the non-velar stem **ee**-. This suggestion is based on the way in which Wolaitta expresses 'like that': a distal followed by a converb form of the verb **ʔoot**- 'do' or the verb **han**- 'happen, be(come)' (Azeb Amha p.c.), as illustrated in (52)-(53).

(52) **yaá-t-ádá**      **wottá**
     there-do-CNV     put:2SG.IMP

     'set (it) like this'

(53) **yaá-n-ádá**      **ʔútta**
     there-happen-CNV sit:2SG.IMP

     'sit like this'

The use of the manner deictic in Sheko is further illustrated in example (54)-(56). The first two examples show the adverbial use of **yēē**; the third example shows that **yēē** can also be used to quantify a noun.

(54) **éés-kì-àstà**           **kōōs-tə**     **umt'à** **gāār-m̄-bààb**
     honey-DAT-3MS.COP?      divine-SS     food    ripen-IRR-father

     **ń-kōōs-tə**    **umt'à** **múr-ń-bààb**      **ń = kōōs-tə**
     1PL-divine-SS     food    ripen(tuber)-IRR-father    1PL = divine-SS

     **yē**     **ta = ń**     **ń = kìy-k**
     <u>like.this</u>  COP = 1PL    1PL = exist-REAL

     'we were divinating for honey and we were divinating for grains to ripen and for tubers to ripen, like this we lived.'

(55)  **kār-k'ā**　　　**há = téé-ki-k-bààstà**　**ás-kǹ**　**gə́rì**
　　　forest-IN　　　3MS = go-exist-REAL-WHILE　3MS-DAT　head

　　　**yēē**　**yēē**　**gé-te**　**há = ʔán-t = á**　　　**ás-kǹ**　**haay**
　　　like.this　like.this　say-SS　3MS = put-SS = 3MS　　　3MS-DAT　ear

　　　**k'oy**　**tóórá**　　　**túr-k'à**　**ás-kǹ**　**haay**　**k'oy**
　　　one　　downward　　　land-IN　3MS-DAT　ear　　one

　　　**ábsì**　**sā-k'à**　**yēē**　**t = á**　　**án-ki-t = á**　　**īn-ā-m**
　　　upward　sky-IN　　like.this　COP = 3MS　put-exist-SS = 3MS　go-put-IRR

　　　'while he goes through the forest, he puts his head like this[17], with one ear downward to the ground and one ear upward to the sky, putting (his head) like this he goes.'

(56)  **yēē**　**éts'ń**　**yí = sàw-tə**　**yí = gààr-k-ə**
　　　like.this　moon　　3FS = arrive.NV-SS　3FS = bear.fruit-REAL-STI

　　　**íʃ = gee-m-ə**
　　　3PL = say-IRR-STI

　　　'they would say: "she reached so many months and has become ripe." '

The manner demonstrative can be used to resume a discourse after a diversion, as in (57)-(58).

(57)  **yēē**　**kì-ǹ**　**yí-bey-ka**　　　**yí-bààb-ka**
　　　like.this　exist-ds　3FS.POSS-mother-COOR　　3FS.POSS-father-COOR

　　　**bóysú**　**um-m̀tà**
　　　dowry　　eat-COND

　　　'it being like that, if her mother and father accept (eat) the dowry,...'

(58)  **yēē**　**kì-a-a**　　**ʒaba**　**burʒi**　**wó-ká**
　　　like.this　exist-IMPLC-STD　Zheba　Burzh　down.there-LCT

　　　**sàm = a**　　　**koynəb**　**yèè-k**　　　**egità**
　　　remain = 3MS?　Koynəb　come.NV-REAL　Egita

　　　'Thus it was. The Jeba Burzh stayed down there; Koynəb came, to Egita.'

The form **yə́ə́stà** is often used just before the culmination of a story. It probably consists of **yēē** 'like this' with an elative,

---

[17] The storyteller held his head sidewards, realised it could not be recorded and added an explanation of **yēē yēē** in words.

extra high tone, and an 'emphasizing part' containing the copula element **-ta** (see section 15.5.1). Here are two examples:

(59)  **yё́ё́-sta**                    **bààs-feeʃ-t = íʃì**
      like.this.ELAT-3MS.COP?       want-spend.day-SS = 3PL

      **báy-ì-s-ǹ-ka**              **bāāb-ū-s-ǹ-ka**          **bēētǹtà**
      mother-f-PL-DAT-COOR         father-m-PL-DAT-COOR       middle

      **yí-dàd-ǹ-s-əra**           **fyayn-a**        **yaafu-tə**
      3FS.POSS-child-DEF-M-ACC    frog.F.DEF-ACC    find-SS

      '...they searched all day like this and among the females and the males they found her friend the little frog...'

(60)  **dòòr-tə**        **dòòr-tə**        **yё́ё́-stà**
      run-SS            run-SS            like.this.ELAT-3MS.COP?

      **dòr-s-ùs-ǹ-tabeeʃ-tə**                    **íʃì = sáák'ù-k'à**
      run-CAUS-CAUS-MIDD-go.spend.day-SS         3PL = ravine-IN

      **wutu-tə**        **íʃ = ṣub-k-ə**
      fall-SS          3PL = die-REAL-STI

      'ran and ran and kept on chasing each other like this and they fell into a ravine and died.'

N.B. Sheko has also a similative case marker **gōntʃì**, which is discussed in section 9.2.7.

(61)  **háák'àstà**       **hà-z**    **gōntʃì**   **té-rée**
      now               PROX-M     SIMIL       COP-NEG.STI

      'Now it is not like this.'


## 7.2  Adjectives

Adjectives are derived from verbs, or sometimes from another base, by definiteness-gender marking, as shown in (62).

(62)  **k'oʒ**   'be strong'

      a.    **k'ōʒ-ǹ-ʃ**
            be.strong-DEF-M

            'strong (M), the strong one'

b.　　**k'ō\<y\>ʒ-m̀**
be.strong<sub><F>-DEF</sub>
'strong (F), the strong one'

The analysis of derivation by definiteness-gender marking may be unexpected, but is supported by the masculine-feminine alternations, which are the same as for nouns. Note that the verb is not derived from the adjective by an inchoative suffix, but the verb is unmarked for any derivation and the adjective is morphologically complex. Section 7.2.1 describes adjectives as a lexical category. For more discussion and a possible analysis of adjectives as a type of relative clauses, see section 5.2.3.

Most adjectives have a corresponding verb, which denotes a state or change of state (63). The derivation is partly idiosyncratic in the sense that the tonal pattern of the adjective (44, 41, 33 or 31) is not predictable from the lexical tone of the verb, although pattern 44 always occurs on adjectives derived from a H verb stem with only one exception. For a full list of adjectives and verbs with their tonal patterns, see section 4.7.

(63)　**íík'**　'be old　　　**ííkńs** (4.4)　'old'
　　　**ʒááʒ**　'be good'　　**ʒééǹʃ** (4.1)　'good'
　　　**kór**　'be dry'　　　**kōrm̀s** (3.1)　'dry'

　　　**sub**　'be red'　　　**sūbm̄s** (3.3)　'red'
　　　**k'oʒ**　'be strong, hard'　**k'ōʒǹʃ** (3.1)　'strong'

The adjective **'yáátm̀s** 'big' has no corresponding verb (cf. **āngūt'** 'increase, be big'. Two adjectives correspond to an adverb:

(64)　**kóta**　'little, few'　　　　　　**kótm̀s** 'little'
　　　**k'árá**　'freshly (nearly ripe maize),　**k'árńs** 'new'
　　　　　newly'

The derivation of **k'oys-m̀-s** 'other, different, special' is probably from **k'oy** 'one' plus causative **-s**.

(65)  **k'oys-ǹ-s-ə̀b**   **yírsì-k'à**   **úʃtà**
      other-DEF-M-REL   artefact-IN   down.LOC

    **ān-t'ū-t=á**   **há=bōs-t-ā-m**
    put-PASS-SS=3MS   3MS=filter-PASS-put-IRR

    '...it will be put in another jug on the ground and it will be filtered.'

The adjective can be suffixed by the relative clause marker -**ə̀b** (~-**àb**), or **ə̀be** (~-**àbe**) for feminine as illustrated in (66). For details on -**ə̀b** see section 11.4.

(66)  a.  **k'ōʒ-ǹ-ʃ-ə̀b**
       be.strong-DEF-M-<u>REL</u>

       'strong (M), the strong one'

    b.  **k'ō<y>ʒ-ǹ-be**
       be.strong<F>-DEF-<u>REL</u>.<u>mother</u>

       'strong (F), the strong one'

The grammatical rules concerning adjectives and greater distributional possibilities of the adjectives in (66) as against simple adjectives are outlined in section 7.2.1. Section 7.2.2 offers a list of adjectives, with comments on the semantics of adjectives, following Dixon (2004).

### 7.2.1  Adjectives as a lexical category

Aklilu (1988:66) stated: 'Sheko adjectives do not stand alone. They are derived form verbs of becoming by the suffixation of the definite marker **ɲ** and the gender marker... .' While adjectives can stand on their own and function as head of a noun phrase, most adjectives do have a corresponding verb. Since adjectives are derived with gender-definiteness marking which typically occurs with nouns, the question arises whether they are not simply nouns. Although on the surface nouns and adjectives may look similar, adjectives are distinguished from nouns by at least two criteria:

  1.  Adjectives are morphologically definite, and always overtly marked for gender, since they are derived by definiteness-gender marking. Nouns, although having inherent gender, are not obligatorily marked by an overt gender marker. In other words, nouns can occur

without the definiteness-gender marking and adjectives cannot.

2. Adjectives and nouns differ in they way they indicate plurality. Nouns take the suffix **-s** to indicate plurality (section 5.4.1). Adjectives reduplicate the initial CV of the stem or the complete stem. The reduplicated part is glossed PLUR (following section 3.3 on reduplication). Example (67) illustrates this for the adjectives derived from the verb **sub** 'become red' and from the adverb **kóta** 'little, few'.

(67)

|  |  | masculine | feminine |
|---|---|---|---|
| | SG | **sūb-m̄-s**<br>be.red-DEF-M | **sū\<y\>b-m̄**<br>be.red\<F\>-DEF |
| | PL | **sū-sūb-m̄-s**<br>PLUR-be.red-DEF-M | **sū-sūyb-m̄**<br>PLUR-be.red.F-DEF |
| | | ~ **sūb-sūb-m̄-s** | ~ **sūyb-sūyb-m̄** |
| | SG | **kót-ǹ-s**<br>little-DEF-M | **kó\<y\>t-ǹ**<br>little\<F\>-DEF |
| | PL | **kó-kót-ǹ-s**<br>PLUR-little-DEF-M | **kó-kóyt-ǹ**<br>PLUR-little.F-DEF |
| | | ~ **kót-kót-ǹ-s** | ~ **kóyt-kóyt-ǹ** |

A third difference is that adjectives may be suffixed by **-ə̀b**, which marks relative clauses.

Adjectives can be used attributively, modifying a noun in a noun phrase (68). When used attributively, they occur following the noun. They cannot precede the head noun. Adjectives can also be used predicatively, or more precise, they function as the copula complement of a copula sentence. Sentence (69a) shows a noun in copula complement position and (b) an adjective.

(68)  **geyk'-n**         **sūyb-m̄**        **syaaf=í**
      goat.F-DEF       red.F-DEF       bear.young=3FS[Q]

   'Has the red goat borne young?'

(69) a. **dād-n̄-s** **hàà-z** **àstàmār-ǹ-s**
child-DEF-M       PROX.m  teacher(Amh)-DEF-M

      **(tə-k-ə)**
      COP-REAL-STI

      'This guy is the teacher.'

    b. **dād-n̄-s** **hààz** **ʃīk-n̄-s** **(tə-k-ə)**
child-DEF-M    PROX.M  be.short-DEF-M  COP-REAL-STI

      'This guy is short.'

(70) **umt'à** **k'ár-ń-s** **tə ...**
food     freshly-DEF-M    COP

     'is it raw food which...'

The predicate of an intransitive sentence is a verb form and therefore the adjective is excluded in this function.

(71) **ás-kǹ** **ááb** **ʃiʃk = á-k-ə**
3MS-DAT  fruit     be.sweet = 3MS-REAL-STI

     'Its fruit is/ was sweet.'

An adjective can function as the head of an NP. In this function, it can be modified by e.g. possessive pronouns, numerals, and relative clauses, just like any noun. This is indicated in (72). The adjective can be modified by an intensifying ideophone as well (73). Note that the ideophone occurs before the adjective. Ideophones modifying verbs likewise occur before the verb.

(72) **ǹ-k'àr-ǹ-s-a** **na-ŋ** **ats-ə**
1SG.POSS-new-DEF-M-ACC  1SG-DAT  give-STI

     'Give me my new one(s)!'

(73) **doddo** **sūb-m̄-s**
IDEO  be.red-DEF-M

     'very bright red'

As previously noted in Aklilu (1988:67), adjectives can be modified by the relative clause marker/ complementizer **-ə̀b** (~**àb**), or **-ə̀be** (~**àbe**) for feminine. Impressionistically, these

relativised forms are more frequent than the simple adjective as described above.

(74)    **dād-n̄-s**    **há-bààb**    **ʃīk'-n̄-s-ə̀b-əra**    **ń=gōōmā**
       child-DEF-M    3MS.POSS-father    be.short-<u>DEF-M-REL</u>-ACC    1PL=equal

       **tə-k-ə**      **há=ge**      **há=gè-t'ù-k-ə**
       COP-REAL-STI     3MS=say      3MS=say-PASS-REAL-STI

       ' "The child says to his short father: 'We are *gooma*.' " it is said.' (Proverb. People are *gooma* when born within three months from each other. They can insult each other without consequences and are seen as equals.)

(75)    **báy**    **k'oys-ǹ-be**    **há=bòysù-kòb-yə̀g-ǹ**
       wife    other.<u>F-DEF-REL</u>.mother    3MS=wed-take-come-DS

       '…and he wedded another wife and brought her;…'

Plurality of referents is usually not indicated for modified adjectives (76), similar to relative clauses which only distinguish third person singular feminine from the rest. However, it is possible to use reduplication, exactly like indicated in (67) above for simple adjectives. An example is given in (77). Aklilu (1988:67) has some relativised adjectives with the plural marking **(-u)-s**, which is used for nouns, but my informants rejected any such forms.

(76)    **ʃád-ń-s-ə̀b-əra**    **na-ŋ̀**    **ats-ə**
       be.long-DEF-M-REL-ACC    1SG-DAT  give-STI

       'Give me the long one(s)!'

(77)    **umt'à**    **kā-kāāt-n̄-s-ə̀b-kǹ**    **z̧ar-ǹ**      **sàm-àb**
       food    <u>PLUR</u>-be.ripe-DEF-M-REL-DAT spill-NMLZ?    remain-REL

       **às-əra**     **ás-k'à**  **z̧ar-s-ə**    **há=ge-ǹ**
       PROX.M-ACC    3MS-IN  spill-CAUS-STI    3MS=say-DS

       "Drop these left-overs of cooked food which remain in it," said he;…'

In contrast to simple adjectives, which only follow the head noun, the 'relativised adjectives' can both precede (78) and follow (79)-(80) the head noun, like relatives.

(78) ʃād-ń-s-ə̀b    sàày   íʃì-ra   há=wòsk'ù-k-ə
be.long-DEF-M-REL fable  3PL-ACC  3MS=be.tired.CAUS-REAL-STI

'The long story tired them.'

(79) túúrú  kōr-ǹ-s-ə̀b    bità   há-k'aḿ-s
land   be.dry-DEF-M-REL  on.LOC  3MS.POSS-slave.DEF-M

há=tuun-kì-b-tana
3MS=lead-exist-REL-RESUL

'He leads his servant through the desert land and...' (from a song)

(80) há-gərì     tʃ'āārū    ʔyáát-ǹ-s-ə̀b   tə-k-ə
3MS.POSS-head  medicine   big-DEF-M-REL  COP-REAL-STI

'he himself is a big medicine.' (Context: refers to the *gomfa* bird from which a medicine is extracted.)

Here are examples of relativised adjectives functioning as head and as copula complement respectively:

(81) íʃì=k'ay-t=á       kót-ǹ-s-ə̀b     tàftù-t=á
3PL=rise-SS=3MS     little-DEF-M-REL  pat-SS=3MS

'they awoke and the small one patted (the beehive) and…

(82) túún   hàà-nì  ʒééǹ-be
spring  prox-F  be.good.F.DEF-REL.mother

'This spring is a good one!

For parameter of comparison, I have only (relative) verbs in my examples, and some relativised adjectives. Compare (83a) and (b) as well as (84) and (85) with each other. It is not clear from my data whether 'simple' adjectives (i.e. without -ə̀b) are ungrammatical in this context.

(83) a.  gurma gaana-kǹ      ʃád-ń-s-ə̀b       tə-k-ə
     Gurma Gaana-DAT      be.long-DEF-M-REL COP-REAL-STI

   b.  gurma gaana-kǹ      ʃad-àb       tə-k-ə
     Gurma Gaana-DAT      be.long-REL   COP-REAL-STI

     'Gurma is longer than Gaana.'

(84)  **kéta-bààb-kǹ gə́r-tà      ʃad-àb          nata**
      all-father-DAT  head-LOC    be.long-REL     1SG

      **tə-k-ə**
      COP-REAL-STI

      'I am the longest of all. (Who is longer than everyone is I.)'

(85)  **mēēr-ǹ-s-ə̀b      áz      tə-k-ə**
      be.fat-DEF-M-REL   3MS     COP-REAL-STI

      'He is the fattest.' (Lit: the one who is fat is he.)

### 7.2.2    Semantic notes on adjectives

The group of adjectives in my corpus consists of some 40 members. As the Sheko group of adjectives is medium-sized, we expect next to the core semantic types of DIMENSION, AGE, VALUE and COLOR, also the types PHYSICAL PROPERTY, HUMAN PROPENSITY and SPEED. The types AGE, VALUE and COLOR are small groups, DIMENSION is a somewhat larger group with six members (adjectives are in masculine form here):

(86)  AGE         **ííkńs**      'old'[18]
      VALUE       **ʒééɲʃ**      'good' ~ **ʒáʒɴ̀ʃ**
                  **ʃēēɴ̀ʃ**      'bad'
      COLOR       **gōōtɴ̀s**     'white'
                  **ts'āāns**    'black'
                  **sūbɱ̄s**      'red'
                  **tʃ'írɲ́ʃ**    'green, unripe, raw'
      DIMENSION   **háʂkńs**     'wide'
                  **ts'úbɱ́s**    'narrow'
                  **ʔyáátɴ̀s**    'big'
                  **kótɴ̀s**      'little'
                  **ʃáádńs**     'tall' ~ **ʃādn̄s**
                  **ʃǐk'n̄s**     'short'

The largest group is formed by PHYSICAL PROPERTY and HUMAN PROPENSITY, see (87). Other notions in these categories tend to be expressed with verbal forms.

---

[18] **kótɴ̀s** 'little' come closest to the antonym 'young' with respect to age (of human beings). **k'árɴ́s** 'fresh, raw, new' was also mentioned as antonym.

(87)  k'éétʃ'n̄ʂ          'cold'
      sārkn̄s            'hot'
      k'ōʒǹʃ            'strong, hard, rigid'
      wók'ńs            'weak, flexible'
      kārbm̀s           'strong, sound'
      fāyt'ǹs           'weak, frail'
      ʂōʂkǹʂ            'light'
      īǹs              'heavy'
      mēērǹs           'fat'
      ʃāpkǹs           'thin'
      ʃīʃkǹs           'tasty'
      kyātǹs           'sour, stingy'
      k'āʒk'ǹʃ          'sour'
      k'árńs           'fresh, raw, new'
      kāātsn̄s          'ripe (ready to eat)'
      gāārǹs           'ripe (grain), slender (people)'
      múrǹs            'ripe (tubers)'
      kōrǹs            'dry'
      ʃōōtǹs           'sharply pointed'
      t'yābm̀s          'grown together'
      dākǹs            'dirty'
      wūrm̀s           'turbid'
      fāykn̄s           'alive, healed'
      māʃkǹʃ           'patient, courageous'
      t'ēfm̀s           'plump'

The formation of adjectives by adding the definite-gender marking to the verb stem is hardly productive other than with the adjectives listed here. There might be some more HUMAN PROPENSITY verbs of which speakers accept the adjective derivation. Therefore, it seems justified to speak of a semi-closed class of adjectives.

There are no adjectives for SPEED. Concepts for SPEED are expressed through an adverb or ideophone.

As for the relative order of adjectives, this is not relevant for Sheko, because people hardly ever use two adjectives in the same phrase. In recorded texts, even the use of one adjective is rare. In elicitation, people are hard pressed to produce sentences with two adjectives (let alone more); and some

informants cannot or will not give judgements on sentences with many adjectives either. (The only three sequences for which my elicitation data give a hint are AGE < PHYSICAL PROPERTY, COLOR < AGE and DIMENSION < AGE, as in **yááb íík'ńs ʃāpkǹs** 'a slim old man' or **ōtǐ sūybm̄ íík'ń** 'an old red cow'.)

To summarize, we can say that adjectives in Sheko are a semi-closed class, derived by the definiteness-gender marking which otherwise mainly occurs with nouns. Lexically, there are no separate adjective roots. That the derived forms are different from nouns is shown by e.g. the different strategy for indicating plurality. The place of attributively used adjectives is after the head noun, in contrast to relative clauses which occur at either side of the head noun. Adjectives can also function as head of an NP. Furthermore, adjectives are frequently suffixed by the relative marker/ nominalizer -**ə̀b** (-**ə̀be**). This extended form takes on the characteristics of relative clauses and can occur both before and after the head noun.

To give a characterization of adjectives, Dixon (2004) has set up two parameters. The primary division is between verb-like adjectives, which can function as intransitive predicate and take some or all of the processes applicable to intransitive verbs on the one hand, and non-verb-like adjectives, which can function as copula complement on the other hand. Furthermore, there is a distinction between noun-like adjectives, which take some or all of the processes applicable to nouns when they function within the NP, and non-noun-like adjectives, which do not take any of these processes (Dixon 2004:14-15).

Adjectives in Sheko are derived from verbs, may take the same relative clause marker/ nominalizer as relative verb forms and are modified by ideophones in the same way as verbs. The corresponding verb can function as intransitive predicate, but the derived adjective functions as copula complement. Since the derivation of adjectives in Sheko is by means of the definiteness-gender marking, they are noun-like. They can function as head of an NP, but do not take the same plural formation as nouns. The noun-like-ness can account for the use

as copula complement as well. Thus, Sheko adjectives are both verb-like and noun-like.

## 7.3 Numerals

Numerals are distinguished from quantifiers like **kéta** 'all' (section 7.4) by their position vis-à-vis case marking: given the fact that case markers attach to the right end of the noun phrase, numerals can be said to be 'inside' the NP and quantifiers 'outside' the NP, as shown in (88a,b).

(88)  a.    **kyānū  kāddū-ra**       **há = wuʂ-k-ə**
             dog     three-ACC      3MS = kill-REAL-STI
             'he killed three dogs'

      b.    **kyānū-ra**      **kéta**    **há = wuʂ-k-ə**
             dog-ACC      all     3MS = kill-REAL-STI
             'he killed all dogs'

A numeral undergoes a tone change when it is modified by another numeral (shown in the first section below). A numeral can be made definite as well (89), and have a possessive prefix, as shown in (90), although in specific contexts only. In these respects, numerals resemble nouns. Numerals are however unlike nouns in that their basic function is to modify (quantify) a head noun.

(89)    **ás-kǹ  t'āāg-ǹ-s  dādū   wutu-t = á   há = ʃan-ǹtà**
        3MS-DAT  two-DEF-M  child    fall-SS = 3MS   3MS = break-COND
        'Its second: if a child falls and breaks something,…' (Context: talking about the uses of a medicine called *qodama*.)

The numeral **k'oy** 'one' occurs with a possessive prefix in the following context:

(90)    **ha-k'ὸy**      **ha = tɔ́g-á**
        2SG.POSS-one    2SG = go-put[Q]
        'Do you go on your own/ alone?'

### 7.3.1 Cardinal numbers

Sheko has a decimal numerical system. The cardinal numbers are the following:

(91)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | k'oy | 6 | yākū |
| 2 | t'āāgñ | 7 | tūbsū |
| 3 | kādū | 8 | zeed |
| 4 | kūbm̄ | 9 | sagǹ |
| 5 | úʈṣú | 10 | támú |
| | | 100 | bāārà (k'oy bààrà) |

The word for 1000, ʃí, is borrowed from Amharic.

From twenty onwards, tens, hundreds and thousands are preceded by a modifier and undergo tone changes following the rule for nouns preceded by a modifier (see section 9.1). Tone 4 changes to tone 2 and tone 3 changes to tone 1.

(92)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | t'āāgñ tamu | 100 | k'oy bààrà |
| 30 | kādū tamu | 300 | kādū bààrà |
| 50 | úʈṣú tamu | 500 | úʈṣú bààrà |
| 90 | sagǹ tamu | 900 | sagǹ bààrà |
| | | 1000 | k'oy ʃi |

When adding units to a decimal, in careful speech the conjunction -ka 'and' is suffixed to both elements, although the last one, suffixed to the single unit, is optional. In quick counting both -ka's are dropped, as shown in example (93). In longer composite numbers -ka 'and' is used after hundreds and tens, and optionally after thousands. After the last number -ka is always optional, as illustrated in (94).

(93)

| | |
|---|---|
| 11 | támú(-ka) k'oy(-ka) |
| 12 | támú(-ka) t'āāgñ(-ka) |
| 15 | támú(-ka) úʈṣú(-ka) |
| 21 | t'āāgñ tamu(-ka) k'oy(-ka) |
| 95 | sagǹ tamu(-ka) úʈṣú(-ka) |

(94)

| | |
|---|---|
| 654 | yākū bààrà-ka úʈṣú tamu-ka kūbm̄(-ka) |
| 839 | zeed bààrà-ka kādū tamu-ka sagǹ(-ka) |
| 830 | zeed bààrà-ka kādū tamu(-ka) |

> 7125 tūbsū ʃi(-ka) k'oy bààrà-ka  t'āāgn̄ tamu-ka
> úʈʂú(-ka)
> 7120 tūbsū ʃi(-ka) k'oy bààrà-ka  t'āāgn̄ tamu(-ka)

### 7.3.2 'Ordinal' numbers

Sheko has no morphological means to derive ordinal numbers, but makes use of other constructions, such as possessive constructions and nominalization.

Ordinal numbers are frequently preceded by a possessive noun phrase (the dative case in Sheko also marks possession, see section 9.3). This noun phrase refers to the set to which the referent of the cardinal expression belongs. The noun phrase often consists only of an anaphoric expression, while the set is not described explicitly.

(95) **yīs    ás-kǹ  k'oy**
DIST.M   3MS-DAT one

'This is the (its) first.' (Context: explaining ways to prevent a badger from taking honey.)

(96) **ás-kǹ  támú  ʔyats'n sāw-bààstà    taaf=á-k-ə**
3MS-DAT ten    moon   arrive.NV-WHILE   be.cold=3MS-REAL-STI

**íʃì=géé-m-ə**
3PL=say-IRR-STI

'when the tenth month arrives, they say: "It has cooled down." '

(97) **fāykn̄ noog-ǹ-s    ʂúʔá  t'āāgǹ tamu  ás-kǹ**
life   word-DEF-M   rest   two    ten    3MS-DAT

**fyáádí k'oy-tà ky-ààb-a    ṇ=ʔítí-kǹ    māāk-ā-m-ə**
number one-LOC exist-REL-ACC 1SG=2PL-DAT  tell-put-IRR-STI

'I will tell you what is in the gospel (of John), chapter twenty, its first verse.'

The numeral itself can have definiteness-gender marking (98), or be nominalized by **bāāb** 'father' (99). Furthermore, **bāāb** 'father' is attested to nominalize the numeral plus locative case marker (100). This latter manner is reminiscent of the way Benchnon forms cardinal numerals, namely by a verbless,

headless relative clause in which the numeral has locative case (Rapold 2006:415).

(98)   **yīs**    **ás-kǹ**  **k'oy**  **tə-k-ə**      **ás-kǹ**  **t'āāg-ǹ-s**
       DIST.M  3MS-DAT one   COP-REAL-STI    3MS-DAT two-<u>DEF-M</u>

       **dādū**   **wutu-t = á**   **há = ʃan-ǹtà**
       child     fall-SS = 3MS   3MS = break-COND

       'This was its first. Its second: if a child falls and breaks something,…' (Context: talking about the uses of a medicine called *qodama*.)

(99)   **ūtī-ka**       **yí = ʔyatʃu-tee-k-àb**  **ás-kǹ**
       love-WITH     3FS = hide-go.NV-exist?-REL 3MS-DAT

       **t'āāgǹ-bàb**    **út-ír = í-kì-t = í**
       two-<u>father</u>    love-NEG = 3FS-exist-SS = 3FS

       **yí = gīddī-ka**     **gìʂ-tù-tee-k-àb**
       3FS = duty(Amh)-WITH   pull-PASS-go.NV-exist-REL

       'One who goes into hiding out of love; second, one who does not love but goes being kidnapped by force,…' (Context: enumerating the ways a girl could get married.)

(100)  **ás-kǹ**  **kādū-tà-bààb /**      **kādū-tà-bààb**  **dàdù**
       3MS-DAT three-<u>LOC-father</u>     three-<u>LOC-father</u>  child

       'its third one'/ 'third child'

Compare **kādū-tà-bààb** 'third' in (100) with the non-numeral expressions in (101) and (102), which also contain a locative (or inessive) case.

(101)  **úʃtà-bàb**     **bèrgù-k'à**
       down.<u>LOC-father</u>  year-IN

       'last year'

(102)  **ādī-k'à-bàb**  /  **tʃórń-tà-bàbdàdù**  **ṇ = òʂkù-k-ə**
       footprint-<u>IN-father</u>  end-<u>LOC-father</u> child    1SG = call-REAL-STI

       'I call the next / last child.'

In one example in my corpus, the numeral is followed immediately by the relative clause marker.

(103) **yet-ka**      **nat-ka**      **t'aagn-ab**      **to**
2SG-COOR      1SG-COOR      two-REL      just

        **sàm-a**
        remain-IMPLC?

        'just the two of us are left…'

Finally, **t'āāgì** in example (104) and **támú-ka t'āāgì-ka** in example (105) contain no marking to signal that the number is ordinal.

(104) **t'āāgì**  **ás-ka**         **hà=daan-t=à**
two      3MS-WITH      2SG=be.together-SS=2SG

        **ha=nòn-kì-ǹ**      **ŋ=yaaf-ǹtà**    **báánà**  **ha-batà**
        2SG=talk-exist-DS      1SG=find-COND   matter   2SG.POSS-on.LOC

        **sāā-m-ə**
        arrive.NV-IRR-STI

        'if I find you talking with him a second time, you'll be in problem.'

(105) **háák'àstà**     **k'oy**    **t'āāgì**  **gè-t'ù-tə**        **támú-ka**
now         one     two    say-PASS-SS      <u>ten-COOR</u>

        **t'āāgì-ka**      **ets'n**    **bēngī**  **há=fàdù-t'ù-kì-k-ə**
        <u>two-COOR</u>      moon    year    3MS=count-PASS-exist-REAL-STI

        'now, "one, two,…" being said, twelve months is being counted a year.'

To express an approximation, **kaarì** 'until' follows the numeral.

(106) **t'āāgì**  **tamu-kǹ**      **kaarì**  **dādū**  **fyadi**
two     ten-DAT       <u>until</u>    child   number

        **íʃì=t'uus-k-īs**       **kááy-ə**
        3PL=know-exist-DIST.M   be.not-STI

        'towards twenty, they didn't know the age of a child.'

### 7.3.3      Uses of the numeral 'one'

The numeral one functions as an indefinite pronoun roughly meaning 'a certain'. **k'oy** 'one' as indefinite pronoun follows the noun it modifies (107)-(108). Sentence (109) is from the beginning of a story and (110) start a new cycle in other

stories, introducing a new participant. **k'oy** as a number, i.e. attributive, usually precedes the head noun (111).

(107) **íʃì = kóókɲ́**      **sàw-t = íʃì**      **īy**      **k'oy**      **yaaf-ɲ̀**
    3PL = place      arrive.NV-SS = 3PL  house   <u>one</u>    find-DS

      '… they reached a place and found a house; …'

(108) **ás-kɲ̀**   **haay**   **k'oy**   **tóórá**      **túr-k'à**   **ás-kɲ̀**
    3MS-DAT  ear    one    downward    land-IN   3MS-DAT

    **haay**   **k'oy**   **ábsì**   **sā-k'à**   **yēē**      **t = á**
    ear    one    upward  sky-IN   like.this  COP = 3MS

    **án-ki-t = á**      **īn-ā-m**
    put-exist-SS = 3MS  go-put-IRR

    'one ear down to the ground and one/ the other ear up to the sky, putting (his head) like this he goes.'

(109) **náánú**      **k'oy-ka**      **báádù**      **k'oy-ka**
    elder.brother  one-COOR    younger.sibling  one-COOR

    **íʃì = daan-t**      **...**
    3PL = be.together-SS

    'An elder and a younger brother were living together…'

(110) **yááb**   **k'oy**   **yə̀g-ɲ̀**
    man    one    come-DS

    'a certain man came;…'

(111) **k'oy**   **ʔyaana**      **ʂub = á-k-ə**
    one    pot      die = 3MS-REAL-STI

    'One pot broke.' (Lit: …died.)

**k'oy** can be nominalized by **bāāb** 'father'/ **bé** 'mother', as in (112). It refers to an indefinite, specific participant; compare **k'o-bààb** in (113), which refers back to someone (indefinite) who asked for milk, with **yááb** 'man, someone' in (114).

(112) **k'oy    bààrà  zùnkù-kɴ̀      bastn-tà        k'o-bey**
one      hundred sheep-DAT         middle-LOC      one-mother

**kááy-ɴ̀tà**
be.not-COND

'if one among a hundred sheep is lost,…' (NB. use of feminine gender here may be related to smallness ('lamb') gender ('ewe') or possibly to endearment.)

(113) **súk'ú   ás-kɴ̀         kum-kà  an-t=á       wóntʃí**
rope     3MS-DAT          neck-IN  put-SS=3MS     grass

**an-t=á         k'o-bààb-kɴ̀   há=ʔāts-ā-m**
put-SS=3MS       one-father-DAT  3MS=give-put-IRR

'… and would put a handle around its neck and put grass (around it) and give it to that person.' (Context: describes the way a Sheko gave away milk in a gourd; grass could signal that the milk is of good quality.)

(114) **yááb-kɴ̀        há=ʔāts-ā-m**
man-DAT          3MS=give-put-IRR

'he will give it to somebody.'

The expression **k'obààb … k'obààb** stands for 'the one… the other' or 'one… another'. (The form is **k'oy-bààb** in (115).) According to one informant, it is possible to contract **k'obaab** to **k'oob**, but in my corpus I have no examples.

(115) **bàlàbātɘ̀       k'oy-bààb-ka   k'oy-bààb-ka**
trad.leader(Amh) one-father-COOR  one-father-COOR

**há=tʂ'àdɴ̀-kɘ̀-k**
3MS=fight.MIDD-exist-REAL

'…one traditional leader would fight with another.'

(116) **k'obààb        ūk'-ɴ̄-s        kòb-m̀ k'obààb**
one.father       milk-DEF-M      take-DS one.father

**ééz-ɴ̀-s        kòb-m̀**
honey-DEF-M     take-DS

'one took the milk, the other took the honey; …'

(117)  k'o-bààb     ás-kǹ ááb     baru-k-ə     ge-tə
      <u>one-father</u>     3MS-DAT eye     be.blind-REAL-STI say-SS

      há=kóókń-tà woog-ǹ     k'o-bààb     kār-k'à
      3MS=road-LOC   sit-DS      <u>one-father</u>     forest-IN

      ʔyatʃ-ǹ
      hide-DS

      'the one sat down on the road pretending he was blind, the other hid in the forest;…'

Finally, **k'oy k'oy** literally 'one one' can quantify NPs, as in (118). It is not clear whether **k'oy k'oy** can also be adverbial. In (119), **nóógù** 'word, language' may be understood.

(118)  yááb     k'oy     k'oy     to     yə̀g-ǹ
      man     one     one     just     come-DS

      'Only some people came;…'

(119)  k'oy     k'oy     ṇ=siis-kì-k-ə
      one     one     1SG=hear-exist-REAL-STI

      'I hear/ understand a little.'

## 7.4    Quantifiers

Sheko has the following quantifiers:

(120)  kétā            'all'
      p'útʃá          'many, much'
      āngā           'much'
      k'oy k'oy    'some, several, a little bit' (**k'oy** 'one' )
      gúúrú          'only'
      to              'only' (glossed just)
      kóta           'a little, few'

Some quantifiers have the same meaning but a different distribution. For instance, **p'útʃá** quantifies entities, whereas **āngā** quantifies events. Accordingly, **p'útʃá** modifies the NP **kúʃḿbe** 'ant(s)' in (121) and **āngā** modifies the relativized verb in (122).

(121)   **toora**   **kì-b-kì**     **éd-k'à**       **kúʃŃbe**
      hole     exist-REL-DAT    mouth-IN     ant.mother

      **p'útʃ'á**  **n=see-k-ə**
      <u>many</u>    1SG=see.NV-REAL-STI

      'I saw many ants at the holes opening.'

(122)   **āngā**   **m̩=bàʒ-àb**   **ìʃìtà**   **nata**
      <u>much</u>    1SG=work-REL    MOTIVE  1SG

      **há=wosk'u-k-ə**
      3MS=be.tired.CAUS-REAL-STI

      'I feel tired from working much.'

The difference between **to** 'just' (123)-(124) and **gúúrú** 'only' (125)-(126) is not so clear. However, **to** differs from the other quantifiers in that it cannot be nominalized. It may be a particle rather than a true quantifier.

(123)   **fyáánú bay-ka**     **bààbù-ka**   **to**    **kì-ǹ**
      frog    mother-COOR   father-COOR   <u>just</u>   exist-DS

      'there were just a father and a mother frog;…'

(124)   **umt'à**  **yí=kàtsù-sàsk-ǹtà**     **yí-gərì**    **to**    **um-tə**
      food    3FS=cook-arrive.CAUS-COND  3FS.POSS-head  <u>just</u>    eat-SS

      'when she cooked food, she only ate herself…'

(125)   **fērā**    **án-áŋ-kì-b-ìʃìtà**       **t'ép'à**  **gúúrú**
      horn    put-NEG.1SG-exist-REL-MOTIVE   carry.INF <u>only</u>

      **n̩=t'ep'u-kì-ǹ**
      1SG=carry-exist-DS

      'because I have not put horns, I only carry loads;…'

(126)   **háák'àstà**     **màndērì-k'à**   **íʃì=kāās-kì-b**   **dàws**
      now        village(Amh)-IN   3PL=play-exist-REL  children

      **kéta**  **góórà-ka**     **gúúrú**  **íʃì=nòn-kì-k-ə**
      all     Amhara-WITH   <u>only</u>   3PL=talk-exist-REAL-STI

      'Now all the children who play in the neighborhood talk only in Amharic.'

Here are illustative sentences for the other quantifiers. **kétā** 'all' is exemplified in (127)-(129). Its opposite 'no one' can be expressed by **k'oy** 'one' plus a negated verb (130).

(127)  **ōtì**      **kétā**      **há = ʃàr-t'ù-k-ə**
       cattle     all      3MS = snatch-PASS-REAL-STI

       'All the cattle were raided.'

(128)  **há-mèèd-às-tà**               **kétā**     **gyānū**
       3MS.POSS-plain(Amh)-PROX.M-LOC     all       coffee

       **àʂ-t = á-k-ə**
       plant-PASS = 3MS-REAL-STI

       'On all its field coffee has been planted.' (Context: refers to an area around a well which was in the past inundated for part of the year.)

(129)  **ṇ-dàdù-ka**            **ṇ-ʔààp'ù-ka**          **kétā**
       1SG.POSS-child-COOR         1SG.POSS-nephew-COOR     all

       **ń-turù-k'à**     **há = kì-ǹtà**
       1PL.POSS-land-IN     3MS = exist-COND

       'if all my children and sister's children are in our land,…'

(130)  a.     **k'óy**    **k'erà**    **tēē-r = á-k'y-á-m-ə**
           one.ELAT INCL       go.NV-NEG = 3MS-remain-put-IRR-STI

           'Not even one will go.'

       b.     **k'oy**    **yaab**    **yēē-r = á-k'y-á-m-ə**
           one      man     come.NV-NEG = 3MS-remain-put-IRR-STI

           'Nobody will come.' (*'A man will not come'.)

**k'oy k'oy** literally 'one one' can quantify NPs, as in (131). It is not clear whether **k'oy k'oy** can also be adverbial. In (132), **nóógù** 'word, language' may be understood.

(131)  **yááb**   **k'oy**   **k'oy**   **to**     **yòg-ǹ**
       man     one     one     just    come-DS

       'Only some people came;…'

(132)  **k'oy**    **k'oy**    **ṇ = siis-kì-k-ə**
       one      one      1SG = hear-exist-REAL-STI

       'I hear/ understand a little'

**kóta** 'a little, few'

(133) gé=ņ ņ=kóta or-ə há=ge-ǹ
say=1SG 1SG=little cry.animal-STI 3MS=say-DS

' "Hey, let me bray a little," he (the donkey) said;…'

(134) kóta āts-ēr=a-k'y-â
little give-NEG=2SG-remain-put.Q

'Won't you give a little?'

Quantifiers are not within the NP. This can be seen in
(135)-(136), where the quantifiers **kétā** 'all' and **gúúrú** 'only'
occur after the case marking.

(135) náta-ra kétā wúṣú-bārū-tə
1PL-ACC all kill-throw.away-SS

'he will finish us all off…'

(136) ņ-naanu-woŋ-ɽ̀-ka ņ-nini-woŋ-ɽ̀-ka
1SG.POSS-elder.brother-ASS-DAT-COOR 1SG.POSS-elder.sister-ASS-DAT-COOR

gúúrú íʃì=begu-k-ə
only 3PL=pay-REAL-STI

'They paid only to my elder brothers and sisters.'

Furthermore, all quantifiers (except **to** 'only') can be
nominalized by **bāāb** 'father'/ **bé** 'mother'. This is illustrated for
some quantifiers below.

(137) kétā-bààb fòòtù-kì-b noogù ás-ka
all-father become-exist-REL thing 3MS-WITH

t=á fòòtù-kì-k
COP=3MS become-exist-REAL

'all things which exist, exist through him.'

(138) **yīs-kɲ̀**      **ādī-k'à**      **únà-bàb-kɲ̀**
DIST.M-DAT      footprint-IN      long.ago-father-DAT

      **gə́rì-tà**      **āngā-bààb**      **yaab**   **kāy-ɲ̀-s**
      head-LOC      <u>much</u>-father      man    god-DEF-M

      **íʃì = ʔaman-k-ə**
      3PL = believe(Amh)-REAL-STI

      'after that, many more people than before believed in God.'

(139) **p'útʃ'á-bààb**     **na-ɨ̀ŋ**    **há = ʃèèn-k-ə**
      <u>many</u>-father      1SG-DAT   3MS = be.bad-REAL-STI

      'I didn't like the one having many (members)' (Context: comparing two choirs.)

## 7.5    Adverbs

In this section, adverbs of time and manner are presented. In general, adverbs modify a verb or verb phrase.

Sheko adverbs share some properties with ideophones: both modify verbs and some of each occur with the verb **gé** 'say'. For the sake of semantic coherence, adverbs relating to distance and elevation are discussed in section 7.1.3 on demonstratives. Adverbs relating to time are presented together with some nouns and nominal expressions referring to time.

### 7.5.1     Time adverbs

Time adverbs relative to the moment of speech include the following:

(140) **háák'àstà**      'now' (< **haak'a** 'so then' + **-àstà** 3MS.LOC?)
      **kàtʃā**         'yet, already'

      **má**          'earlier today'
      **gōnà**        'yesterday'
      **úndérkɲ̀**     'day before yesterday' (**-kɲ̀** dative?)
      **únà**         'in the past, long ago'

| | |
|---|---|
| **énà** | 'later today' |
| **byārī** | 'tomorrow' |
| **ʃīmà** | 'day after tomorrow' |
| **ʃírá** | 'two days after tomorrow' |
| **ʃínʃìn** | 'in the future' |

A week is referred to by the compound form **tūbsūhàykì** (from **tūbsū** 'seven' and **haay** 'to spend the night') or by **gābā** 'market'. Other time expressions refer to the time of day:

(141)   
| | |
|---|---|
| **gōōtà** | 'midnight' |
| **ʒúmátà** | 'before dawn' |
| **sáátńtà** | 'morning' |
| **z̧aakì** | 'noon, afternoon' |
| **gyāāmū** | 'evening' |

Here are some time adverbs nominalized with **bāāb** 'father':

(142)    **únà-bààb-kì**          **gə́rì-tà**
           long.ago-father-DAT     head-LOC

           'more than before' ('above the past one')

(143)    **sáátńtà-bààb-era**     **tʃ'or-ʃ-t=â**
           morning-father-ACC     be.finished-CAUS-PASS-3MS.Q

           'Is the one of the morning finished?'

Time adverbs can occur in combination with demonstratives (144)-(145). It is not clear whether the adverbs of time are modified by demonstratives, or whether the use of demonstratives here must be linked to the way Sheko forms 'ordinal' expressions (146), cf. section 7.3.2 on 'ordinal' numbers.

(144)    **bārkày-o**      **yəg=ń**        **ń=énà**       **hàs-ərà**
           monkey-STI.ADDR   come=1PL     1PL=later.today   PROX.M-INCL

           **na-ŋ**   **īy-tà**       **tə́g-ə**
           1SG-DAT   house-LOC    go-STI

           'Hey monkey, come, let's go to my house today (immediately).'

(145) **háák'ástà**    **m̩-māāk-n̄-bààb-īs**    **únà**    **hàs-kǹ**
now    1SG-tell-IRR-father-DIST.M    long.ago PROX.M-DAT

      **gātsù**  **márfí**  **kááy**  **kī-b-tà**
start    needle  be.not  exist-REL-LOC

      'What I will tell (is what happened) long ago in the beginning when there were no injections,…'

(146) **áskǹ**    **byārn̄-bààb-tà**
3MS-DAT  tomorrow-father-LOC

      'the next morning…'

There are two nouns for 'day' in the language: **bókń** 'day' (glossed time), and **zīrkū ~ zērkn̄** 'day'. The use of **bókń** and **zīrkū** in stories gives the impression that **zīrkū** is used for a specific day or time (147)-(148), while **bókń** is used for a non-specific day or period of time without a particular duration (149).

(147) **yí=byáású**    **bàày-ǹ**    **k'ay-tə**    **yí=zērkn̄**
3FS=crocodile    wife.F-DEF    rise-SS    3FS=day

      **k'oy (…)**    **ge-ǹ**
one    say-DS

      'The crocodile's wife rose and one day she said: … '

(148) **zērkn̄**  **k'oy**  **oot'i**  **bààb**  **ééná**  **bààb**  **dàdù-kǹ**
day    one    Ooxi    father    wealth    father    child-DAT

      **há=màǎk-ǹ**    **há=dēg-n̄-əra**    **gììṣù-kòb-tə**
3MS=tell-DS    3MS=child.F-DEF-ACC    pull-take-SS

      'On a certain day, the father of Ooxi told the rich man's son; he abducted the girl and…'

(149) **boori**  **bey-ka**    **boori**  **bààb-ka**    **k'oy**  **bokn̩**
Boori  mother-COOR    Boori  father-COOR    one  time

      **gābā-k'à**    **íʃì=tee-k-ə**
market-IN    3PL=go.NV-REAL-STI

      'The father and mother of Boori went to market one day.'

The position of **k'oy** 'one' correlates with the semantics of **zīrkū** and **bókń**: **zīrkū** is typically followed by the modifier, (five

occurences against one), while **bókń** is preceded by the modifier (unfortunately just a single occurrence). Recall that **k'oy** 'one' yields a specific reading when it follows a head noun, cf. **yááb k'oy yə̀gì** 'a certain man came' vs. **k'oy yaab yə̀gì** 'a man came' (section 7.3.3). Furthermore, **bókń** is used for a long period in example (150) and it is used in **néfabokn** 'always' (153).

(150) yí=kòyg-ì̀     wúʃa    bokṇ    íʃì=ʔúm-kì-bàastà
3FS=bring-DS      IDEO     time    3PL=eat-exist-WHILE

'she brought it; while they ate it for a long time,…'

The following examples support the above explanation.

(151) má          hàmūs         zīrkī̄/ *bókń  tə-k-ə
earlier.today  Thursday(Amh)  day     time   COP-REAL-STI

'Today is Thursday.'

(152) gōnà        rōb          zīrkī̄/ bókń  tə-k-ə
yesterday    Wednesday    day    time   COP-REAL-STI

'Yesterday was Wednesday/ a Wednesday.' (?)

**néfa** 'always' usually occurs in combination with **bókń** 'time' (153). Asking for the opposite, I obtained the form **k'oy bokn-àstà** one time-3MS.COP? 'a single day'; in combination with negation the meaning becomes 'not a single day, never' (154).

(153) **néf-bokn**    **ástà**         ṇ=təg-ə̀b      **tìmhīrt ìy**
always-time   3MS.COP?       1SG=go-REL    lesson   house

**háák'àstà**    **ísà-ka**        tə-k-ə
now           close.INF-WITH   COP-REAL-STI

'The school I always went to is now closed.'

(154) **k'oy**   **bokn-àstà**        yēē-rā
one       time-PROX.M.LOC   come.NV-NEG

'(she) didn't come a single day'

### 7.5.2     Manner adverbs
Manner adverbs are listed in (155) and (156). The manner adverbs listed in (156) have a 1.2 tone pattern, which is not

found with nouns, numerals or other modifiers, except some ideophones, cf. (157).

(155) syàttā 'quietly'
     nèʃā 'firmly'
     moyi 'quickly° (time, speed)'
     zōōtà 'crookedly'
     níkí 'right, correct' (< Amh. lïkk)

(156) òòza 'balancing, in equilibrium'
     dàtʃa 'right, correct'
     dìnga 'round, in a circle'
     gàma 'truly, thruthfully'
     kòòha 'quietly (slipping off from a gathering)'
     ʂòtta 'at a great distance'
     ʒàga 'straightly'

(157) zùngàra 'turn halfway' (with gé 'say')

A few manner adverbs are illustrated in sentential context.

(158) īsī̄n-s-ārā      néʃʃā      t=a
     beehive.DEF-M-ACC    firmly.ELAT    COP=2SG

     ha=ts'yááts'-ń-bààb    tə-k-ə
     2SG=tie-IRR-father        COP-REAL-STI

     'you have to tie the beehive very firmly.'

(159) ha-gàtʃì-ra      nèʃā    gé-tə    tór
     2SG.POSS-stick-ACC    firmly    say-SS    stick.into.ground

     'plant your stick firmly in the ground!'

(160) ha=yòwk'a    hayk'à    fāākà-k'à    ʃēʔī-n-s-ara
     2SG=INTJ      up.IN    beehive.half-IN    stone-DEF-M-ACC

     òòza      án-tə
     balancing    put-SS

     'well, you put the stone balancing on the upper half of the beehive and, well, you come down;…'

(161) k'òrk'ōrò    ha=kōb-téé-tə       ha=ʔíǹʃ      bàtà
corrugated.iron   2SG=take-go.NV-SS     2SG=wood.DEF.M on.LOC

      dìnga  mìsmārì      án-t=a     k'yár-á-m̩
      <u>round</u>   nail        put-SS=2SG  beat-put-IRR

      'you take the corrugated iron sheets and nail them round on the tree.'

(162) íʃì-kǹ bastà īsn̄-əra      ʒàga sosku-tə
      3PL-DAT middle beehive-ACC  <u>straight</u> sleep.CAUS-SS

      'he laid down the beehive straightly between them and…'

Adverbs can be nominalized by **bāāb** 'father'/ **bé** 'mother', as is evident from (163) (cf. (162) above) and (164)-(165).

(163) ʒàga-bààb      sòskù-tə
      straight-father   sleep.CAUS-SS

      'he laid down the straight one'

(164) gàma-bààb-a ná-ǹ   maak-ə
      truly-father-ACC 1PL-DAT tell-STI

      'Tell us the truth.'

(165) gàma   ha=mààkù
      truly    2SG=tell[Q]

      'Did you tell it truthfully?'/ 'really?'

# 8 Ideophones and interjections

This chapter describes ideophones, which are divided into intensifying and predicative ideophones; and interjections, grouped into expressive, conative and phatic interjections as well as greetings.

## 8.1 Ideophones

Ideophones are marked words that vividly depict sensory events (Dingemanse 2009). They are marked among others by special phonotactics and morphological structure. They may have a different syntactic status in different languages, but have in common that they "evoke sensory perceptions" or feelings in a more direct, expressive way than a paraphrase would.

The list of ideophones in Sheko that I compiled is just the tip of the iceberg. Unfortunately, the tone of ideophones is unknown in most cases. Following Amha (2001), ideophones in Sheko can be divided into two groups, based on the constructions in which they occur: the first group consists of "intensifying ideophones" which have a strong collocation with an adjective or verb (or verbs). The second group, called "predicate ideophones", consists of ideophones which occur with the verb **gé** 'say' to form a predicate.

Before describing the syntactic properties of each group, some recurring (morpho-)phonological structures are discussed.

### 8.1.1 Prosodical and morphological markedness

In contrast to other vocabulary in Sheko, ideophones contain a lot of geminated consonants. Futhermore, consonants may be lengthened a great deal to add intensity (1). In the example sentences the ideophones are glossed IDEO, while the free translation indicates the meaning.

(1)    a.    **dód::o sub-m-s**
                IDEO    be.red-DEF-M
                'very red'

> b.     as     git::gita     wòsk'=á-k-ə
>         3MS     IDEO        be.tired.CAUS = 3MS-REAL-STI
>         'He is very tired'

In addition, there are several patterns of reduplication. These are listed below. They occur with intensifying as well as with predicative ideophones (with **gé** 'say').

1. Ideophones that reduplicate the whole.

(2)     **gawagawa**     'be damp, becoming dry' (with **gé** 'say')
        **ʒik'nʒik'n**     'very green/blue'
        **wiiniswiinis**     'be soft and smooth (hair that is easily combed)'
        **burguʃburguʃ**     'be slippery, refuse to break in pieces (e.g. of taro)' (with **gé** 'say')

2. Ideophones that reduplicate the whole but drop an **a**. The last consonant of the first syllable is often lengthened as indicated in example (1) above.

(3)     **gitgita**     'very tired'
        **bírbira**     'quick (running)'
        **fetʃʼfetʃʼa**     'very tender (meat)'
        **irk'ʔirk'a**     'be damp, becoming wet' (with **gé** 'say')
        **zerp'zerp'a**     'rough (hair that is difficult to comb)'

3. Ideophones consisting of one syllable which may be repeated quite often, see (4). Some ideophones consist of two syllables, but they typically repeat the first syllable often (5), unlike the ideophones under point 2. The (perceived) word boundaries in the examples below may be due to the CV-structure (closed syllables).

(4)     **kakaka**     'become red-hot on the fire'
        **papapa**     'rippling water'
        **duʂ duʂ duʂ**     'running/walking of a heavy animal'

(5)     **kub kub kuba**     'fall, bounce (of something heavy)'
        **kor kor kora**     'fall, bounce (of something light)'

So far, the only ideophone that reduplicates the last syllable is **bek'p'ak'p'ak'** 'very white'.

4. Ideophones with an alternating vowel.

(6)  **dirk'adark'a**  'breaking into pieces, crumbling easily
       (of injera),patched/scatterd (of color)'
    **kindərkondər** 'contaminate, fall sick' (with **gé** 'say')
    **zendazanda**  'stretching to the utmost (muscles)'

5. The fifth process of reduplication is also found with other word categories, see section 3.3.2. The initial CV is reduplicated.

(7)  **ʃō-ʃonkū**     **gé-tə**   **ts'af-ə**
     PLUR-IDEO        say-SS     write-STI

    'Write quickly.'

(8)  **dà-dàfa**      **gé-ə**
     PLUR-IDEO        say-STI

    'slowly/carefully!'

### 8.1.2     Intensifying ideophones

This group of ideophones is characterised by a strong collocation to an adjective or verb. For instance, color ideophones intensify an adjective (9) or verb (10) denoting color. The color ideophones are listed here:

(9)  *ideophone*            *adjective*
    **bek'p'ak(p'ak')**    **gōōts'ñs**     'white'
    **ziizi**              **ts'āāns**      'black'
    **doddo**              **sūbm̄s**       'red'
    **ʒik'nʒik'n**         **tʃ'írñʃ**      'green'

Syntactically, an ideophone modifying an adjective occurs preceding the adjective.

(10)  nata   ziizi   ts'aan-s        ņ-dàws            bek'p'ak'p'ak'
      1SG    IDEO    be.black.DEF-M   1SG.POSS-children IDEO

goot-n-s
be.white-DEF-M

'I am very black, my children very white' (Riddle. Answer: Amharic coffeepot and cups.)

Some variation in color ideophones has been found. For 'white' as e.g. a new sheet of paper, **bek'a** is also attested:

(11)  bek'a          há=gààtǹ-k-ə
      IDEO           3MS=be.white-REAL-STI

'It is very white.'

In Guraferda, the ideophones for 'white' and 'black' are **buk'abuk'a** and **ziiziya** respectively, and for 'red' it is **ʃooʃooʔa**, as is illustrated by the following riddle:

(12)  kār-k'à        ņ=ʃooʃooʔa        subu-kì-tə
      forest-IN      1SG=IDEO          become.red-exist-SS

úm-t-sen-kis                    ots'u
eat-PASS-NEG.1SG-exist.DEM.M    serti(Amh)

'I am very red in the forest and I am a *serti* plant that is not eaten.' (Answer: a huge plant which resembles *eemu* (another type of *serti* plant) and has bright red fruits which are inedible.)

Other intensifying ideophones always occur in collocation with a verb. They precede the verb (Sheko is strictly verb-final). Here is a list of ideophones and verbs:

(13)　*ideophone*　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*verb*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| oʃoʃ | 'look intently' | tíít | 'look, stare' |
| sírsíra | 'listen intently' | ays | 'listen' |
| gitgita | 'be very tired' | wosk' | 'tire' |
| fetʃ'fetʃ'a | 'be very tender (of meat)' | ʂúb | 'be tender' |
| faakfaaka | 'be very light, shine brightly as at noon' | ʒapm | 'shine' |
| ʃippa | 'be very dark (at night)' | udg | 'be dark' |
| keka | 'be very ill' | kuʃ | 'be ill' |
| k'ap'p'a | 'hold firmly' | kob | 'take' |
| k'ats'a | 'catch a cold' (with úúʃú 'common cold') | aat | 'hold' |

Some ideophones likewise denoting intensity are apparently not restricted to one verb, but may occur with a set of verbs and in this respect look more like normal adverbs.

(14)　*ideophone*　　　　　　　*verbs*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʃiip'a | 'refuse strongly' | oy | 'deny, refuse' |
| | 'flatly refuse' | tááf | 'cool down' |
| ʒiifa | 'be very crazy' | tʃ'óy | 'be crazy' |
| | 'be very painful' | yamz | 'be painful' |
| | 'be very satisfied' | ts'ēskn̄ | 'be satisfied' |
| | 'tire very much' (also with gitgita) | wosk' | 'tire' |
| wuʃa | 'be very talkative' | noŋ | 'talk' |
| | 'stay for a long time' | haay | 'spend the night' |

Intensifying ideophones cannot be nominalized by bāāb 'father'/ bé 'mother'.

(15)　**\*ziizi-bààb, \*sirrsira-bààb, \*k'appa-bààb, \*ʒiifa-bààb**

The ideophones listed in (16) are like intensifying ideophones in being collocated with a verb and occurring without gé 'say'. However, they share some properties with predicative ideophones. Semantically, they are manner ideophones and they can (more or less easily) be nominalized (17). Note in particular the tonal minimal pair of ideophones **ts'àrts'àrra**

'pour with a thin straight flow of liquid' vs. **ts'árts'árra** 'scream hysterically'.

(16) **k'ááb** 'pour' **ts'àrts'àrra** 'pour with a thin
     straight flow'

       **kyaw** 'shout, bark' **ts'árts'árra** 'scream
     hysterically'

       **door** 'run' **birbira** 'run quickly (light)'

       **sár** 'to be hot' **bukbukbuk** 'be ablaze (of fire)'

       **sár** 'to be hot' **tʃiiʒtʃiiʒa** 'be hot and stingy
     (e.g. your tongue)'

       **tʃit'** 'stretch' **zendzanda** 'stretch to the
     utmost (muscles)'

       **mook'** 'break off' **dirk'adark'a** 'crumble easily (of
     sorghum injera)'

(17) **ts'árrts'árra-bààb,** **dirk'adark'a-bààb**
     IDEO-father         IDEO-father

       'One who screams hysterically, one which crumbles easily'

### 8.1.3 Predicative ideophones

Ideophones which occur with **gé** 'to say' occur as predicate, as shown in examples (18)-(20). The verb carries inflection like any other verb. The examples show that in this way the ideophones are well integrated into the clause structure of Sheko. Semantically, predicative ideophones denote manner and the ideophone, not the verb, carries the meaning of the predicate. (In contrast, intensifying ideophones can be described as 'more of V', where the verb carries most of the meaning. )

(18) **ʂāād-k'à**  **n=kòb-tee-b-tà**  **yí=kindərkondər**
     mineral.well-IN  1SG=take-go.NV-REL-LOC  3FS=IDEO

       **ge-t=í**  **yí=wutu-ʂub-m̀**  **m=bààʃ-k**
     say-SS=3FS  3FS=fall-die-DS  1SG=slaughter-REAL

       'When I brought her (a cow) to the water, she got contaminated/fell ill and died; I slaughtered her.' (line from a well-known story)

(19) ás-kǹ           éd-k'à           yí=bàr-ǹ      twèètwèè
     3MS-DAT          mouth-IN         3FS=throw-DS   IDEO

     ás-kǹ  fōōrī-k'à       há=gé-bààstà
     3MS-DAT throat-IN     3MS=say-WHILE

     '... she threw [the hot pebble] in his mouth, and while it said
     *tweetwee* in his throat (while his throat burned)...'

(20) ʔyāb-m̀-s      kōʃkōʃ há=ge-ǹ     fáádù íʃ-əra
     grass-DEF-M    IDEO    3MS=say-DS   hunger 3FS-ACC

     há=fààd-ùs-əb-əʃǹtà      hĩĩ   yí=ge-ǹ
     3MS=be.hungry-CAUS-REL-MOTIVE  IDEO  3FS=say-DS

     'The grass said 'koshkosh' (the wind rustled through the grass); and
     because she (a calf) was hungry she mooed...'

The construction with **gé** 'say' can also be used to adverbialize properties (21). In addition, some 'say'-items lack the typical vividness and have no special phonetic properties displayed in ideophones. In these cases, it is difficult to draw the line between adverbs and ideophones. For example, **dafa** and **fook'** in examples (22)-(23) would not be good candidates for ideophones, except for the occurrence of **gé** 'say'. **gābbā gé** 'to bow down' (24), is not very expressive either, but it does still have a geminated consonant. Some ideophones may be in the process of 'normalization', i.e. their shape adjusts to that of common vocabulary. To put it another way, they are more descriptive and less evocative. Furthermore, in example (25), the usual reduplication is not present. Especially in the case of reduplication, a speaker can choose how expressive he wants to be by varying the number of reduplications.

(21) ʃīk'ū         gə-tə  k'iits'
     shortly       say-SS  tie.cattle

     'tie close up, tether with a short line'

(22) dàfa   gé
     IDEO   say

     'Be careful! Slowly!'

(23) **fóók' há=na-ŋ ge-k-ə**
IDEO     3MS=1SG-DAT     say-REAL-STI

'I suddenly remembered it.' (Lit: It said *fook'* to me.)

(24) **yí=tīītù gābbā ge-t=í hāāy k'íṣ-kì-bààstà**
3FS=vulture   IDEO     say-SS=3FS   water     drink-exist-WHILE

'while Vulture, bowing down, was drinking water,…'

(25) **há=ʃēʔī-n-ʃ-əra āāt'ū-k-bààstà há=ʃēʔ-ñ-ʃ**
3MS=stone-DEF-M-ACC     hold-exist-WHILE   3MS=stone-DEF-M

**bùrgùʃ gé-t=á yòwk'a ás-əra k'yár-ǹ**
IDEO     say-SS=3MS     INTJ     3MS-ACC beat-DS

'When he clutches the stone, the stone slips and well, hits him…'

Some ideophones occur with and without **gé** 'to say' (26). In (27), the last line of a well-known children's song contains a verbless clause, which is the culmination of the song. In (28), the verb **gé** 'to say' is left out; the verb **t'er** 'roll, roll over' matches semantically with the ideophone.

(26) **ʃōnkū yəg ~ ʃōnkū gé-tə yəg**
quickly   come         quickly   say-SS   come

'come quickly!'

(27) **wóybí tèèr-ǹt-oo kōʃkōʃkōʃ kúʃú-k'à**
Bako     swell-COND-STI.ADDR     IDEO     tree.sp-IN

'What if the Bako river floods? [moving through the leaves] in the *kushu* tree.'

(28) **íʃì=sáákù-k'à t'èrk-ùs-bār-ùb-tà**
3PL=ravine-IN     move.forward-CAUS-throw.away-REL-LOC

**yí=yàtī-bey kùb kùb kùbà t'èr-ǹ**
3FS=fox-mother   IDEO   IDEO   IDEO   roll-DS

'when they threw them down the slope, the mother of the fox rolled down with heavy thuds;…'

also possible: **kùb kùb kùba getə t'èrǹ**

The list below records other members of the group of ideophones occuring regularly with **gé** 'to say'.

(29)  naap'naap'a gé      'carefully, nimbly (stepping)'
      irk'ʔirk'a gé        'be damp (getting wet)'
      gawagawa gé          'be damp (getting dry)'
      burguʃburguʃ gé     'be slippery, slimy, hard to grip;
                           refuse to break in pieces (e.g. of taro)'
      konguʂkonguʂ gé     'hopscotch'
      k'ink'in gé          'be lukewarm, not cold, not hot'
      iʂuʂ gé              'be warmed up'
      burra gé             'tumble head over heel'
      gont'a gé            'be blunt (of knife)'
      tʃii (gé)            'be silent'
      taaa gé/ fer         'sound (of horn)' (cf. fer 'blow')
      tabʃa gé            'be thin (of drinks)'
      yiiʃa gé            'be bent down'
      berera gé            'orange colored'
      buʂuʂ gé            'beige/sand colored'
      duʂ duʂ duʂ gé     'walk/run heavily'
      kor kor kora gé/ t'er 'roll down (bouncing) lightly'
                           (cf. t'er 'roll over')

## 8.2    Interjections

Ameka (1992, 2006) classifies interjections into three groups. "Expressive interjections" reflect the mental state and emotions of the speaker. "Conative interjectons" are used to request something from the hearer. It can be a request for attention, a verbal response, or an action. "Phatic interjections" support the process of communication. One can think of muttering assenting noises to encourage a speaker to continue telling; as well as formulaic utterances in greetings and leave-taking which establish contact, although the latter may be morphologically complex and have inflecting forms, in contrast to prototypical interjections.

### 8.2.1    List of interjections

This section includes some of the more common interjections in Sheko. Class membership is not absolute, i.e. an interjection may belong to more than one category. Some expressive interjections are listed in (30). The last two are terms of address used as interjectional phrases.

(30)   **waah**  conveys pain
        **yíía**   conveys distress (see (31) below)
        **o**      conveys surprise, be taken aback
        **ata**    conveys surprise, disbelief
        **bəəʔa** conveys rejection (tongue may be protruded)
        **ày**     conveys anger
        **wòtōo** conveys astonishment or bewilderment
                  also **(wo)wowóow**
        **yēro/ kāyo**   lit. 'oh god!', functions more like 'really'
        **m̩bààbo**      lit. 'oh my father', conveys sympathy or understanding of the situation, but can also be used (ironically?) for the reverse. Gf. **bábm̀ bábm̀**

(31)   **yíía**    **n̩=gee-tə**    **nata**  **tʃíí-stà**    **ky=á**
        INTJ    1SG=say-SS    1SG   IDEO-3MS.COP?  exist=3MS?

        **há=kēēs-à**
        3MS=go.out-put.Q

        'Voicing my sadness, me staying quiet - would it appear?'

The following interjections are classified as conative:

(32)   **haʔ**   command to take/hold something
        **wàʔ**   warning not to do something (for children)
        **yáee**  asks for attention (at start of conversation)
        **batʼ**   'go out of my way' cf. **báátʼ** 'turn away'

Also, verb forms of **síís** 'to listen' are used expressively or conatively. The imperative **síís** 'listen!' used at the end of an utterance, i.e. 'mark my words', conveys that the speaker considers important what he just said; and also asks for acceptance of the interlocutor. An interrogative form is used to demand attention, typically as a tag at the end of a sentence:

(33)   **màndērì-k'à**  **ha=ki-ə**    **siis=à**
        village-IN      2SG=exist-STI  listen=2SG.Q

        'You should stay in the neighborhood. Do you hear/understand?'

Furthermore, calls for animals are included under conative ideophones (tone not indicated):

(34)  **bitbitbit**     call for chicken
       **kutʃkutʃkutʃ**  call to chase away chicken (Gf.) [19]
       **rrru /rururu**  call for a cat
       **ru k'yaas**    call to chase away a cat (**k'yaas** 'to leave')
       **kiskis**       call to chase away goats
       **sst ~ ust**    incentive for a dog to be on the alert

The items in (35) belong to the group of phatic interjections.

(35)  **woy**      response to a call (same as in Amharic),
                  also possible: **hàáh**
       **àhee**     'yes' (Gf. **yee**)
       **àʔáà**     'no'
       **ha… ha…**  conveys consent, understanding, attention
                  (especially used a lot during storytelling; also
                  expected from children after **iya**-imperatives,
                  section 10.2.2)
       **noor**     'be welcome, join us', said when a newcomer
                  approaches a group of people (<Amh.)
       **hánts'e**  said when someone sneezes
       **gé**       Imperative of 'say', introduces a request (see
                  (36) below)
       **bate**     (Gf.) introduces polite request
       **yok'a**    'well', used as filler phrase, or may signal
                  conclusion
       **hàáh**     conveys that the speaker did not understand,
                  request to repeat. Also used to respond to **yáee**
                  when at a distance.
       **yee**      conveys that the speaker has been understood
                  (especially common at the end of a
                  conversation at a distance) 'OK, fine, I heard
                  you' (Gf. 'yes')

---

[19] In the Guraferda variant: **koobu** 'cock', **koybm** 'chicken'. In the Sheko variant **kutʃi** has become the word denoting 'chicken'. In Sheko the conative calls for chicken are less used.

(36)  gé=n          ye-kì̀ kum-k'à̀        k'ȭrk-n̄-t=n
      say=1SG        2SG-DAT neck-IN       wind-MIDD-SS=1SG

      n=gáámtà      sak-ə
      1SG=far.side.LOC arrive-STI

      'Say, let me curl around your neck and reach the other shore.'

Finally, there is a special call to signal that **ótʃí** 'mushrooms' have been found in the forest. People will try to locate the place where the call came from and go there with a basket to get a share.

(37)  **ótʃí kúkúú kúkúú**

## 8.2.2    Greetings

Example (38) lists some possibilities to start greeting someone. The greetings in (b) and (c) can be modified for person, to address a plural addressee or to continue greeting by asking about third persons.

(38)                *question*              *answer*

    a.  **ʒáʒ-tə̀**               **ʒáʒá**
        good-COP.Q              good

        'Is it well?'

    b.  **ʒáʒ=a-kì̀**             **ʒáʒá**
        good=2SG-exist[Q]       good

        'Are you well?'

    c.  **ha=karbu-kì̀**          **ņ=karbu-k-ə**
        2SG=be.strong-exist[Q]   1SG=be.strong-REAL-STI

        'Are you strong?'        'I am strong.'

    d.  **fāykn̄-tə̀**             **fāykn̄  ņ=kì̀-k-ə**
        life-COP.Q              life    1SG=exist-REAL-STI

        'Is it life/healthy?'    'I am alive/ healthy.'

The following greeting and its answer is probably a calque from Amharic **ïndet näw? - alläñ.**

(39)  **áás-tə**　　　　　　　**n̩=kya**
　　　how-COP[Q]　　　　　1SG=exist.?
　　　'How is it?'　　　　　'I am there.'

Here are greetings which refer to the time of day:

(40)　a.　　**ʒáʒá　hàày=à**
　　　　　　good　spend.night=2SG.Q
　　　　　　'did you spend the night well?' (greeting in the morning)

　　　b.　　**ʒáʒ=a　　　　feeʃ**
　　　　　　good=2SG　　spend.day[Q]
　　　　　　'did you spend the day well?' (greeting in the afternoon)

Leave-taking expressions are illustrated in (41). The return answer can be **ʒáʒá**, **ʒéénʃə** or **àmīn**.

(41)　a.　　**ʒáʒ　　kī-ee**
　　　　　　good　　exist-STI
　　　　　　'stay well'

　　　b.　　**ʒáʒá　fééʃ　　/　　ʒáʒá　hāāy**
　　　　　　good　spend.day　　　good　spend.night
　　　　　　'have a nice day' / 'goodnight'

　　　c.　　**ʒáʒá　tə́g-ə**
　　　　　　good　go-STI
　　　　　　'Have a nice visit/ go in peace.'

　　　d.　　**ʒáʒá　bángár-ə**
　　　　　　good　return-STI
　　　　　　'return well'

# 9 The noun phrase

Chapter 9 discusses three topics with regard to the noun phrase. First, word order in the noun phrase is treated. The unmarked order appears to be head - modifier, as opposed to the order modifier - head, in which the head is tonally marked. Secondly, case marking is treated. Lastly, possessive constructions are treated comparing their syntactic and semantic properties.

## 9.1 Noun phrase and word order

Sheko predominantly follows an SOV typology, as described in section 10.9. The language is verb-final, main clauses follow dependent clauses and most affixes are suffixal. But at the level of the noun phrase, the language partly deviates from this pattern.

Of the various modifiers, some occur in a fixed position in relation to the head noun, while others may both precede or follow the head noun. Possessor affixes always precede the head noun, except in a few terms of address. Numerals and relative clauses occur on either side of the head noun, as well as demonstratives, although the preferred place for demonstratives is following the head noun. Adjectives must follow the head noun, unless they are marked by the relative clause marker. If a noun is used as a modifier, it precedes the head noun, e.g. in noun-noun compounds.

|  | preceding head | following head |
|---|---|---|
| adjective | no | yes |
| demonstrative | few | yes |
| numeral | yes | yes |
| relative clause | yes | yes |
| 'relativised' adjective | yes | yes |
| possessive | yes | few |
| modifying noun | yes | no |

Table 1. Position of modifiers

When the head noun is followed by a modifier, there are no tonal or other changes in the construction. This is illustrated for numerals (1a), demonstratives (b), and relative clauses (c).

(1)   a.    **há=ʔōtì**     **k'oy**     **sàm̀**

              3MS=cow      <u>one</u>      remain.DS

              'one cow remained;…'

      b.    **ūk'ū**   **hàz**   **ītī-k=ņ**     **daan**   **úm-o**

              milk    <u>PROX.M</u>   who-WITH=1SG   together eat-STI.ADDR

              'Together with whom shall I eat this milk?'

      c.    **umt'à**  **báákù-tà**    **há=ʔan-àb**   **āṣkū**

              food    <u>firestones-LOC</u>   <u>3MS=put-REL</u>   meat

              **tə-k-ə**        **ge-tə**

              COP-REAL-STI   say-SS

              'thinking that the food he had put on the firestone was meat,…'

When a modifier precedes the head noun it is modifying, the tonal pattern on the head noun changes. This modifier can be a possessor prefix, numeral, relative clause, adjective with relative clause marker, or modifying noun. The following table shows the tonal changes in disyllabic nouns for all six tonal patterns. The numbers in brackets indicate the tone level of the two syllables of the noun. Tone 4 is replaced by tone 2 and all other tones are replaced by tone 1. Note that four of the six contrastive patterns are neutralized by this replacement.

| noun in isolation | | pre-modified noun | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **wúrá** (44) | 'fly whisk' | **há-wura** (22) | 'his fly whisk' |
| **dúmà** (41) | 'amulet' | **há-dumà** (21) | 'his amulet' |
| **gātʃī** (33) | 'stick' | **há-gàtʃì** (11) | 'his stick' |
| **ōtì** (31) | 'cow' | **há-òtì** (11) | 'his cow' |
| **batʃà** (21) | 'bed' | **há-bàtʃà** (11) | 'his bed' |
| **bòbī** (13) | 'sorghum sp.' | **há-bòbì** (11) | 'his sorghum' |

Table 2. Tone on pre-modified nouns

Below, the tonal modification in head nouns is illustrated for numerals, demonstratives, relative clauses and modifying nouns. In example (2a), the numeral **t'āāgī** 'two' precedes the head noun **ʔyáts'ń** 'moon, month', and the tone pattern on the head noun changes. Likewise, in (2b) a relative clause precedes **umt'à** 'food'; in (2c) a demonstrative precedes **koosù** 'traditional

practice, wisdom' and in (2d) the head **dādū** is preceded by a noun.

(2)  a.    **yí = yòw'ka   t'āāgn̄  ʔyats'n-kn̄   ādī-k'à**
           3FS = well    <u>two</u>    moon-DAT     footprint-IN

             **kàṣt' = í-k-ə          gē-t'-n̄**
             cut.straight.PASS = 3FS-REAL-STI   say-PASS-DS

             'well, after two months she is said to be ritually clean' (Lit: '…it is said: "She has been cut" '.)

  b.    **kyāz   úm-kì-b     ùmt'à**
           king    <u>eat-exist-REL</u>   food

             'food which a king eats'

  c.    **kaarì   sáántà    yīs   kòòsù-ra**
           until    front.LOC   <u>DIST.M</u>  divination-ACC

             **ītə    māāk-o**
             who.COP tell-STI.ADDR

             'who will tell this traditional practice in the future?'

  d.    **kōmtū dàdù**
           <u>chief</u>   child

             'son of a/ the chief'

An interesting case in discussing modifiers in Sheko is the adjective. The adjective is formed by adding definiteness-gender marking to an adjectival verb stem (see section 7.2.1). Example (3) illustrates the adjective 'red' derived from the verb **sub** 'be red'. These adjectives can only appear following a head noun; they are not allowed to precede a head noun (4)-(5).

(3)  a.    **sūb-m̄-s**           b.    **sūyb-m̄**
           red-DEF-M               red.F-DEF

           'red (m)'                 'red (f)'

(4)  a.    **ʃēēmā  sūb-m̄-s**
           cloth    red-DEF-M

             'red cloth'

  b.    **\*sūb-m̄-s ʃèèmà**

(5)    a.    **dādū**    **t'ēyf-m̀**        **bádìgì yí = gè-t'ù-k-ə**

              child    little.F-DEF     Badign  3FS = say-PASS-REAL-STI

              'the plump girl is called Badign'

    b.    **\*t'ēyf-m̀ dàdù**        **bádìgì yí = gè-t'ù-k-ə**

Remarkably, the relative clause marker **-əb** ~ **-àb** can be suffixed to the adjective. When this morpheme is present the relativized adjective can appear preceding and following the head noun, just like relative clauses (6).

(6)    a.    **há-dàws-kì**            **gə́rɨ-k'à**       **hāāy**

              3MS.POSS-children-DAT   head-IN     <u>water</u>

              **k'ééts̢-ń-s-əb**     **k'aabu-tə**   **fày-sù-tə**

              <u>be.cold-DEF-M-REL</u>   pour-SS     be.saved-CAUS-SS

              'poured cold water on his children's heads and saved them and...'

    b.    **ás-kì**  **ȝéé-ǹ-ʃ-əb**     **noogù án-ń-bààb-īs**

              3MS-DAT  <u>good-DEF-M-REL</u>   <u>thing</u>  put-IRR-father-DIST.M

              **bàsù-s-kì-b**        **tə-k-ə**

              want-CAUS-exist-REL    COP-REAL-STI

              'It is necessary to arrange good things for him.'

Case markers are suffixed to the rightmost element of the NP:

(7)    **[yáb-m̀-s**     **nata**   **tə-k-ə**        **gè-b]-əra**

          man-DEF-M    1SG    COP-REAL-STI   say-REL-<u>ACC</u>

          **wuş-ùb**    **yīs**

          kill-REL     DIST.M

          'the one who killed [the man who said "It's me"]'

(8)    **haak'àstà**     **[koos-ǹ-s**    **hààs]-əra**

          now         divination-DEF-M  PROX.M-<u>ACC</u>

          **óótʃú-síís-ér = íʃì-kì-k-ə**

          ask-hear-NEG = 3PL-exist-REAL-STI

          'Nowadays they don't ask after [this traditional wisdom].'

(9)  [báákù-tà    àn-t'-àb    yīs]-k'à    hāāy    ān-t'ū-tə
     firestones-LOC  put-PASS-REL  DIST.M-IN  water   put-PASS-SS
     'in [this (thing) which has been put on the firestones] water is put and…'

By virtue of the tonal behaviour of modified NPs, it is possible to formally distinguish between an NP with a modifier (10a)-(11a) and two NPs (10b)-(11b), or decide to which NP a modifier belongs (12a,b). Thus, in (12a) the modifier **íík'ńsə̀b** 'old' modifies **géék'ù** 'goat', whereas in (12b) 'old' modifies **yááb** 'man', which in the example has tone 2 because the modifier precedes it. For completeness, (12c,d) give alternative sentences with a different word order.

(10) a.   **nūūtşù íʃ-ara  wuş-àbe      òyt-ǹ    tə-k-ə**
          hyena   3FS-ACC  kill-REL.mother  cow.F-DEF  COP-REAL-STI
          'It was [the cow which the hyena killed].'

     b.   **nūūtşù íʃ-ara  wuş-àbe      ōyt-ǹ    tə-k-ə**
          hyena   3FS-ACC  kill-REL.mother  cow.F-DEF  COP-REAL-STI
          '[The one which the hyena killed] was [the cow].'

(11) a.   **gūrmā zyàǎmà       datà   ìn=á-k-ə**
          Gurma  in.law        near.LOC go=3MS-REAL-STI
          'He has gone to Gurma's in-law(s)'

     b.   **gūrmā zyāāmà       datà   ìn=á-k-ə**
          Gurma  in.law        near.LOC go=3MS-REAL-STI
          'Gurma has gone to an in-law/ in-laws'

(12) a.   **géék'ù íík'-ń-s-ə̀b      yááb-ka**
          goat    be.old-DEF-M-REL  man-WITH
          **fòsk'ù-t'=á-k-ə**
          skin-PASS=3MS-REAL-STI
          'The old goat was skinned by the man.'

     b.   **géék'ù íík'-ń-s-ə̀b      yaab-ka**
          goat    be.old-DEF-M-REL  man-WITH
          **fòskù-t'=á-k-ə**
          skin-PASS=3MS-REAL-STI
          'The goat was skinned by the old man.'

c.     **íík'-ń-s-ə̀b**     **geek'ù**     **yááb-ka**
be.old-DEF-M-REL  goat          man-WITH

**fòskù-t' = á-k-ə**
skin-PASS = 3MS-REAL-STI

'The old goat was skinned by the man.'

d.     **géék'ù yááb**   **íík'-ń-s-ə̀b-ka**
goat      man     be.old-DEF-M-REL- WITH

**fòskù-t' = á-k-ə**
skin-PASS = 3MS-REAL-STI

'The goat was skinned by the old man.'

From the perspective of the noun phrase, the unmarked order is head - modifier. In contrast, the order modifier - head is marked by a tonal permutation. The unmarked order on NP level is thus contrary to the order on clause level, which is clearly head-final. Sheko could thus be subsumed under type D2 in Heine's classification, i.e. SOV languages with head-initial NP's (Heine 1976). However, as we saw, the order of head and modifiers in the Sheko NP is rather free, and both orders are frequently attested. Therefore, it might not make much sense to classify the NP in Sheko as either head-initial or head-final. In the Omotic family, which is known at large as verb-final, languages differ with respect to flexibility in constituent order on the clause level as well as basic order on the NP level (Dimmendaal (2008); cf. his comments on interaction of constituent order with other subsytems of grammar and its value for language typology).

## 9.2   Case

In Sheko, case is a property of the noun phrase. The case marker attaches to the rightmost constituent of the noun phrase. The case markers of Sheko are enumerated in table 3:

|  | *basic form* | *allomorphs, variants* |
|---|---|---|
| Nominative | - |  |
| Accusative | **-əra** | **-ra**; **-a**; Tepi & Gf. **-ana** |
| Genitive | (tone) |  |
| Dative | **-kɨ̀** | **-ɨ̀** |
| Inessive | **-k'à** | **-kà** |
| Locative | **-tà** |  |
| Instrument/ Coordinative | **-ka** |  |
| Similative | **gōntʃî** | Tepi **gomà** |
| Motive | **èʃɨ̀tà** | **yìʃɨ̀tà**, **-èʃɨ̀tà** |

Table 3. Case markers

The nominative case is unmarked. The case system in Sheko is thus different from (nominative-absolute) marked nominative-systems such as found in some other branches of Omotic. E.g. Wolaitta (Lamberti and Sottile 1997) and Benchnon (Rapold 2006) have a marked nominative system.

There is no segmental genitive case, but in juxtaposition the head noun has a special tone pattern, as all head nouns which are preceded by a modifier (see section 9.1). Other possessive phrases have a dative case. The analysis of **-kɨ̀** as dative in possessive expressions is discussed in section 9.2.3.

Furthermore, the dative patterns with oblique rather than core cases. The dative is marked obligatorily, whereas accusative is not obligatory marked (and nominative unmarked); in addition, dative-marked roles in relative clauses use the resumptive pronoun strategy and cannot use the gap strategy, whereas the gap strategy is preferred for accusative-marked roles (section 11.4.4).

The similative and motive are not proper case markers: they are less clearly suffixal than the case markers and their morphological structure is also different from the other cases. Especially the make-up of **èʃɨ̀tà** is of interest in the view of subordinate clause marking. This is discussed in section 9.2.8, cf. section 11.3 on adverbial clauses.

The next subsections discuss the case markers. In describing their range of use I make informal use of roles, without claiming that these roles are a reality for Sheko speakers.

### 9.2.1 Nominative

The nominative in Sheko is the unmarked form of the noun. It is the form used in isolation, and the form on which the other cases are built by adding a suffix. Syntactically, the nominative is the prototypical subject case. The typical semantic function of the nominative is Actor (Agent-like roles), such as in (13)-(14). Since the language has a passive, Undergoers can also be in the nominative. Furthermore, Experiencers may be in the nominative, although others are accusative. Experiencer verbs are discussed in section 12.4.

(13)  **kōōbū** 'cock'; **kōōb-m̄-s** 'the cock'

    **há=ge-t=á**       **kōōb-m̄-s**       **tīīt-n̄-əra**
    3MS=say-SS=3MS      cock-DEF-M      vulture.F-DEF-ACC

    **zèèr-n̄**
    advise-DS

    'the cock advised the vulture, saying …'

(14)  **údú**     'ensete, false banana'

    **údú**    **ts'òg=á-k-ə**
    ensete    bear.fruit.banana=3MS-REAL-STI

    'The ensete bears fruit.'

### 9.2.2 Accusative

The accusative marker is **-əra ~ -ara** (15a). Around Tepi and in Guraferda the basic form is **-ana**. The first vowel of the accusative marker is dropped following a vowel (15b). The accusative optionally changes to **-a** after **s** (15c) and after the nominalizer -**bààb** 'father'.

(15)  a.   **dēygn̄**      **yí-fyááyń-əra**      **kòb-tə**
         girl.F.DEF      3FS.POSS-frog.F.DEF-<u>ACC</u>      take-SS

         'The girl took the frog and…'

b. **kútʃì-ra** **há=buutʂ'u-k-ə**
   chicken-ACC     3MS=pluck-REAL-STI

   'He plucked a chicken'

c. **yí=ás-a** **gask-ǹ**
   3FS=3MS-ACC   insult-DS

   '…and she insulted him;…'

Accusative marking is not obligatory. It occurs on definite as well as indefinite noun phrases (15a,b above). Impressionistically, accusative marking occurs more frequently with definite noun phrases, but definiteness is not a sufficient condition, see e.g. **ūk'ǹs** 'the milk' without accusative in (16). Other factors such as discourse recoverability may play a role in triggering accusative marking. When the object precedes the subject (OSV order), the object is nearly always marked (17).

(16) **dād-ǹ-s** **ūk'-ǹ-s** **gōōsū-ka** **há=kōb-m̀**
     child-DEF-M  milk-DEF-M  gourd-WITH  3MS=take-DS

     'the boy would take the milk in a gourd;…'

(17) **há=ʂóóʂ-ǹ-ʂ-ara** **yááb-m̀-s** **dufu-t=á**
     3MS=snake-DEF-M-ACC  man-DEF-M  hit-SS=3MS

     **wuʂ-ǹ**
     kill-DS

     'the man hit the snake and killed it;…'

Syntactically, the accusative is the prototypical object case. Semantically, Undergoer roles are typically marked by the accusative, such as the Patient in (17) above. It is possible to have two accusative-marked constituents in one clause, when the verb is causative (18). Experiencers of causative experiencer verbs may be in the accusative case as well (19).

(18) **íʃ-əra** **īy-ǹ-s-əra** **há-dir-su-k-ə**
     3FS-ACC  house-DEF-M-ACC  3MS=sweep-CAUS-REAL-STI

     'He had her sweep the house.'

(19) **nata-ra** **wosk'=a-k-ə**
     1SG-ACC    be.tired.CAUS=3MS-REAL-STI

     'I am tired.' (Lit: It tired me.)

The short form **-(ə)ra** of the inclusive marker **k'ərà** 'also, even' is formally similar to the accusative marker. See section 9.6.2.

### 9.2.3     'Genitive' and dative

In Sheko, there is a large overlap between 'genitive' and dative, in form and also in function, although the core role of the dative is Recipient/ Benefactive. A typical genitive and dative relation are given in (20). This overlap between 'genitive' and dative calls for a closer look at the marking of genitival relations.

(20)  a.  **ás-kǹ**          **āʂū**
          3MS-'GEN'?          leg
          'his leg'

      b.  **kábí    ás-kǹ    ats-ə**
          axe      3MS-DAT  give-STI
          'give the axe to him'

Sheko has various constructions which express a genitival (or associative) relation between two noun phrases in Sheko. First, two NPs can be juxtaposed (21a). The head is marked tonally since it is preceded by a modifier (see section 9.1). Secondly, the marker **-kǹ** can be suffixed to the modifier (i.e. the possessor), as in (21b). This marker is formally identical to the dative case marker **-kǹ**, as in the existential possessive construction in (22).

(21)  a.  **ōtì    baatʃi**
          cow     skin
          'cow hide'

      b.  **ōtì-kǹ  báátʃí**
          cow-DAT  skin
          'skin of a cow, cow hide'

(22)  **gurma-kǹ        gyānū  ky=ǎ-k-ə**
       Gurma-DAT         coffee  exist=3MS-REAL-STI
       'There is coffee to Gurma.' i.e. 'Gurma has coffee.'

These three constructions differ syntactically and semantically. In (21a), the emphasis lies on the whole (here, the possessor), whereas in (21b) the emphasis lies on the part (here, the possessed) and the construction is typically used for inalienable possession. The question rises whether this construction has a 'genuine' genitive marker or contains a possessor which is marked by a dative. The only difference with the dative NP in (22) is that in the latter the subject NP and dative NP can occur in any order in the sentence, while the construction in (21b) has a fixed order NP-**kɨ̀** NP. Note that the construction used with inalienable possession is segmentally marked while the construction used with alienable possession is not. This is the reverse of how inalienable and alienable possession are coded cross-linguistically (Payne 1997:105). The reversal in markedness has been recognized by Claudi and Serzisko (1985:134) for Diizi, and they claimed that Diizi employs 'possessor promotion'. If that is the case, the dative would be a logical choice for the possessor NP.[20]

Apart from the above, constructions like that in (22) are widespread in the world's languages, showing that the dative in general is used to express possession (Heine 1997; Heine and Kuteva 2002:103ff). Furthermore, Rapold (2006:484f) mentions a possible (and possibly older) variant of the dative case **-n̄** in Benchnon, namely **k'n̄**.[21] Hayward and Tsuge (1998) suggest **\*-n** as dative/ benefactive for South Omotic languages. Therefore, it is reasonable to analyse **-kɨ̀** as a dative case marker.

While in Sheko the dative is also used in marking genitival relationships, this is not so in the other Majoid languages. Examples (23) and (24) show for Diizi that **-kn̩** is used in genitival relations with body parts (similar to Sheko), but that there is a marker **-is** for dative (unlike Sheko).

---

[20] For comments on the notions of 'inalienability' and 'possessor promotion' see section 9.3. To make myself clear, I do not claim that the NP NP and NP-**kn** NP constructions in Sheko mark (in)alienability. They emphasize the whole (initial NP) and the part (last NP) respectively. See further section 9.3.

[21] In Sheko, there are traces of **-k'ǹ**, most notably in the Guraferda variant. See section 6.1.2.

(23)  **iti-kŋ**          **gɛli-g  a-wu-ŋ**
      you.PL-GEN          head-IN   3SM-enter-PAST/PRES.Q

      'Do you understand?' (cited from Beachy 2005:72)

(24)  **saagu  dad    yɛsus  yɛt-is        ʃub-ki-go**
      God     child  Jesus  you.S-DAT     die-PERF-3SM

      'God's child, Jesus, has died for (on behalf of) you.' (Beachy 2005:69)

Nayi too has **-kŋ** for (inalienable) genitival constructions and **-iʃ** ~ **-itʃ** for dative (Aklilu 1997:603f). A sibilant is widespread in North Omotic for dative/ benefactive case marking (Hayward and Tsuge 1998:31).

Possessive constructions are further discussed in section 9.3.


### 9.2.4    Dative

The dative marker is **-kǹ**, except for first person pronouns, which suffix **-ǹ̥**.

(25)  a.   **ítí-kǹ**          b.   **ná-ǹ̥**
           2PL-DAT                  1PL-DAT

           'for you (pl)'           'for us'

The core roles marked by the dative are Recipient and Benefactive. Some examples are given below.

(26)  **íʒ      ás-kǹ    ūk'ū    hàày    yí = ʔātsù-bàǹ̀stà**
      3FS      3MS-DAT   milk    water   3FS = give-WHILE

      'while she gave milk to him' (Note: 'milk water' i.e. liquid, not curds.)

(27)  **yír = ṇ        ṇ = ye-kǹ      mīt'ñ-o**
      what = 1SG       1SG = 2SG-DAT   witness-STI.ADDR

      'What could I say in favour of you?'

(28) bēndū íʃĩ-kɲ̀  ʒaʒ-àb      kookn-k'à
Bandu  3PL-DAT be.good-REL   place-IN

íʃ=kī-m-ə
3PL=exist-IRR-STI

'The Bandu live at the place which is convenient for them'

(29) íʃ-àkù-on-kɲ̀           gātsn̄-kì-b
3PL.POSS-grandfather-ASS-DAT   help-exist-REL

'those who help their grandparents'

The dative in (30) is ambiguous between 'tell to me' and 'tell for me, in my stead'.

(30) na-ɲ̀   maak-ə
1SG-DAT  tell-STI

'tell me'/ 'tell for me'

The interlocutor may be referred to by a dative-marked phrase as well as by an accusative marked phrase. Example (31) gives an example of both in the same story. Impressionistically, the accusative is used when the relation is asymmetric and the one talked to is conceptualised as a Patient, as in the last line of (31) where the father warns his daughter.

(31) há=mārtā-kɲ̀        ʒáʒá  ha=kì       há=ge-ɲ̀ …
3MS=Marta-DAT       peace  2SG=exist[Q]   3MS=say-DS

há-dègɲ̀-əra        …    há=gə-ɲ̀
3MS.POSS-child.F.DEF-ACC    3MS=say-DS

'[her friend] said to Marta: "How are you?" (and while they talked, her father saw them together and he got angry and) he said his daughter: ("If I see you a second time with him, you will have a problem!" )'

The dative case also marks the Possessor when possession is expressed with an existential predicate (32) and in possessive constructions emphasizing the part (33). Since some locative and temporal adverbial clauses use body parts, the construction is used frequently (34). See section 9.3 for a discussion on possessive constructions.

(32)  baʒà  na-ŋ̀  kì-ǹtà, …
      work  1SG-DAT  exist-COND

      'If I have work,…' (Lit: if there is work to me.)

(33)  íʃ-kǹ  kum-k'à  gyādū  an-tə
      3FS-DAT  neck-IN  rope  put-SS

      'and put a rope round her neck…'

(34)  há=nàr-t'-àb-kǹ  ādī-k'à
      3MS=dry-PASS-REL-DAT  footprint-IN

      há=kūmṣū-ṣ-tū-tə
      3MS=be.pulverized-CAUS-PASS-SS

      'after it is dried, it is pulverized and…' (Lit: in the footprints of being dried…)

### 9.2.5    Inessive and locative

Cases locating referents in the spatial domain are **-k'à**, glossed IN for inessive, and **-tà**, glossed LOC for locative.

In order to illustrate the semantics of both case markers, they are contrasted first in examples with a stative interpretation (35)-(37). The inessive **-k'à** involves contact and/ or containment in the space denoted by the noun phrase, whereas the more general locative **-tà** does not involve contact or containment. It rather expresses a space in the proximity of and/ or around the denoted place.

(35)  a.    īy-k'à  kì=íʃì-k-ə
            house-IN  exist=3PL-REAL-STI

            'They are in the house' (Context: speaker knows that the referents are inside the house.)

      b.    īy-tà  kì=íʃì-k-ə
            house-LOC  exist=3PL-REAL-STI

            'They are home' (Context: speaker doesn't know the exact location, the referents can be somewhere around the house.)

(36)  a.    íntʃù  t'úúm-kǹ  gə́rì-k'à
            wood  mountain-DAT  head-IN

            'The tree is on top of the mountain.'

b.  **gíbù**   **t'úúm-kɴ̀**   **gə́rɪ̄-tà**
    cloud    mountain-DAT   head-LOC
    'The cloud is above the mountain.'

(37)  a.  **kārbm̄ ɪ̄y-kɴ̀**   **ʃíʃú-k'à**   **(tə-k-ə)**
          fence   house-DAT   side-IN   COP-REAL-STI
          'The fence is around the farm.'

      b.  **yáb-m̀-s**   **tāāmū-kɴ̀**   **ʃíʃ-tà**  **(tə-k-ə)**
          man-DEF-M   fire-DAT   side-LOC COP-REAL-STI
          'The man is near the fire.'

In example (38), **-tà** and **k'à** are on words referring to the same place/ space, i.e. the forest. The first word, **áztà** 'in it', is used with respect to a badger. It is not known where the badger is all the time, he might just frequent the place where the beehive is. The second **kàrkàk'à** 'in the forest' is used with respect to the location of a beehive, which is situated within the forest.

(38)  **utʂà**   **áz-tà**  **ky-aà-b**   **kàrkà-k'a**   **ɪ̄sɪ̄-ə̄rā**
      badger   3MS-LOC exist-REL   forest-IN   beehive-ACC

      **ha=kààf-m̀tǎ**
      2SG=build-COND
      'if you build a beehive in a forest where a badger lives,…'

Secondly, **-k'à** and **-tà** are contrasted with motion predicates. In (39), the case markers create opposite directions of movement in combination with the other elements in the sentence. In (40), the difference is not so big, but the (a) example makes immediately clear that the inside of the house is concerned, whereas in (b) this is less evident.

(39)  a.  **íntʃù-k'à**   **há=yèè-kɪ̀-k-ə**
          wood-IN   3MS=come.NV-exist-REAL-STI
          'He is coming from (from in) the wood.'

      b.  **íntʃù-tà**   **há=yèè-kɪ̀-k-ə**
          wood-LOC   3MS=come.NV-exist-REAL-STI
          'He is coming to the wood.'

(40)  a.  **īy-k'à**            **ʔyàrd = á-k-ə**
          house-<u>IN</u>          enter = 3MS-REAL-STI

          'He entered into the house'

      b.  **īy-tà**             **ʔyàrd = á-k-ə**
          house-<u>LOC</u>         enter = 3MS-REAL-STI

          'He entered the house (the compound?)'

In the following pair of sentences, the directional contrast is lost, but the notions of 'contact/ containment' of **-k'à** IN versus 'vicinity' of **-tà** LOC remain. In (41), person A follows person B, taking the same path. He walks thus literally in the others' footsteps. In (42), a dog looks behind him, i.e. in the direction of his footprints, to a beehive that he caused to fall.

(41)  **ás-kɨ̀  ādī-k'à**          **bangar-tə**
      3MS-DAT  footstep-<u>IN</u>      return-SS

      'he returned after him and…' (Lit: (he) returned in his footsteps.)

(42)  **áz     ādī-tà**          **bangar-tə**       **īsn̄-əra**
      3MS     footstep-<u>LOC</u>     return-SS          beehive-ACC

      **há = tíítú-kì-bààstà**     **īsn̄-kì-bàb**          **ʔyànts'à**
      3MS = watch-exist-WHILE     beehive-exist-father     bee

      **múúrú**        **két-ààst**        **zìp'm̀-yèè-tə**
      all(Amh)        all-3MS.COP?        chase-come.NV-SS

      'While he turned/ looked back and watched the beehive, all the beehive bees came chasing him…'

However, there are also some idiosyncrasies when it comes to motion to or from a place. **gābā** 'market' always suffixes **-k'à**, even in case one merely indicates the event of going to town on market day, without intending to enter the field where the market is held (43). **betakristyan** 'church' is preferably used with **-tà**, even if the event entails entering the church compound and the church (44). Compare also (45).

(43)  **gābā-k'à**        **ha = tə́g-á**
      market-<u>IN</u>       2SG = go-put[Q]

      'Will you go to the market?'

(44)  bērn           bètàkrìstyán     ìy-tà      ń=tə́g-á-m-ə
      tomorrow       church(Amh)      house-<u>LOC</u>  1PL=go-put-IRR-STI

      'Tomorrow we will go to church.'

(45)  gābā-k'à        té-ń-kì-t=í                 bètèkrìstyán
      market-<u>IN</u>      COP-NEG-exist-SS=3FS        church(Amh)

      ìy-tà           yí=tee-k-ə
      house-<u>LOC</u>      3FS=go.NV-REAL-STI

      'She went not to the market but to the church.'

Example (39) illustrated how motion to and from a place were indicated by respectively locative -**tà** and inessive -**k'à**. Since **gābā** 'market' always occurs with -**k'à**, motion 'to' and 'from' are expressed with other means. This is illustrated in (46). When only the case marker is present, direction to the market is understood (a). When a medial verb is employed the referent is in the first clause presented as being at the market and thus logically cannot return to it, so that the second clause must be interpreted as returning from being at the market (b).

(46)  a.   gābā-k'à        bangar=í-k-ə
           market-IN       return=3FS-REAL-STI

           She returned to the market.'

      b.   gābā-k'à        kì-tə    bangar=í-k-ə
           market-IN       exist-SS  return=3FS-REAL-STI

           She returned from the market.'

In order to express 'here', example (47) uses both -**k'à** and **hàs-tà**, meaning something like 'here in the city (as opposed to in the countryside)'. But if one uses 'here' in the sense of 'at this very spot', one can use **hàzk'à**, with the inessive case, as in sentence (48). In contrast, '(up) there' goes well together with the more general locative case -**tà** (49).

(47)  kàtām-k'à       hàs-tà           na-ŋ     gùlbātà
      city(Amh)-<u>IN</u>   PROX.M-<u>LOC</u>      1SG-DAT   strength

      tʃór-árá
      finish-NEG

      'Here in the city my strength doesn't run out.'

(48)  **hàz-k'à-kì-b**         **yerikàn̄-s-əra**      **íʃ-kǹ**     **ats-ə**
      PROX.M-<u>IN</u>-exist-REL    jerrycan.DEF-M-ACC    3FS-DAT    give-STI

      'give her the jerrycan which is here'

(49)  **só**      **ōtì**    **ás-tà**        **kì-b-tà**
      up.there    cow       3MS-<u>LOC</u>       exist-REL-LOC

      **n̩=sāw-fín-á-m-ə**
      1SG=arrive.NV-descend-put-IRR-STI

      'Up there where that cow is I will arrive and descend.'

Furthermore, there are several words denoting locations, which almost always suffix a case marker, to the point where the case marker becomes an inherent part of the word. The following is meant to enumerate such words, while also illustrating part of the Sheko material culture.

Sheko houses are traditionally situated with their door crosswise to the slope, and the dung outlet at the side where the hill slopes down, so that the manure can flow towards the home garden (**ōrātà**), which is situated mainly downwards from the house. The place in front of the house is flat and part of it (**gyābt'à**) is kept free from grass to use as a threshing ground and place for drying coffee and grain. There is an open space with an outside fireplace at the back side of the house (**kándàtà**). In addition, the following words denoting places have the same final syllable **-tà**:

(50)  **gēʃtà**      'lower part of field'
      **édtà**       'upper part of field'
      **gáámtà**     'other side, far side, bank of river'
      **úʃtà**       'on the ground, down'
      **buta**       'outside'

Some of these words are presented in context in the examples (51)-(52).

(51)    **yeta**    **àngùt'=a-k-ə**    **gáámtà**    **kees-ə**
       2SG    grow.PASS=2SG-REAL-STI    far.side.LOC    go.out-STI

       **só**    **kī-ee**
       up.there  exist-STI

       'You are grown up. Go to the other shore and live up there.'

(52)    **ísń-às-tà**    **úʃtà**    **wut=á-k**
       beehive-PROX.M-IN    down.LOC    fall=3MS-REAL

       '... the beehive fell to the ground.'

Likewise, **k'ank'à** 'under, below' and **hayk'à** 'up' do not occur without the inessive case marker **-k'à**.

(53)    **kéta-bàb-kǹ**    **k'ank'à**    **íʃì-ra**  **an-àb**
       all-father-DAT    under.IN    3PL-ACC  put-REL

       'what put(s) them below all others'

(54)    **íʒ**    **hayk'à** **íntʃù-kǹ**    **gə́rī-k'à**    **kèès-tə**
       3FS    up.IN  wood-DAT    head-IN    go.out-SS

       'She climbed up to the top of the tree and ...'

Place names often include a locational case marker as well. (Tone is not indicated.)

(55)    **boyta, durita, gizmareta, komata, samərta**

       **badik'a, bardik'a, faʒak'a, gayziyk'a, ʃaʃak'a**

Other nouns form locational expressions when suffixed by a locational case marker. These nouns are mostly body part nouns. (56) lists locative and temporal expressions based on body part nouns together with two other nouns which function structurally the same, forming a locative expression, although a lexical source is not available.[22]

---

[22] Mulugeta (2008:56) likewise notes that some relational nouns in Dime have no simple counterpart while their last vowel is analysable as a locative case. Cf. also Rapold (2006, section 10.5) for similar words in Benchnon.

(56)  *locational expressions*                    *source*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ādī-k'à | behind, after | ādī | footprints |
| bōw-k'à | in, under | bōw | belly |
| gə́rì-k'à | on top of | gə́rì | head |
| gə́r-tà | above | gə́rì | head |
| ʃíʃ-tà | near, close to | ʃíʃú | side |
| sáán.tà | before, in front of | san | forehead |
| da.tà | close to, near | ?dáán | be together |
| ba.tà | on, about | ? | |

Note that in the case of **gə́rì** 'head', there are two possibilities: **gə́rì-k'à** 'on top of' with the inessive and **gə́r-ìtà** 'above' with the locative case, which correspond to the difference found with stative verbs in denoting contact vs. vicinity. In other instances, such as **batà** 'on' there is no variation and the contact/ vicinity parameter does not seem to play a role. In (57), a board has to be hammered firmly onto a beehive, thus implying contact; nevertheless **-tà** is used.

(57)  **ha = ʔīsn̄-hǹ   éd      batà    mìsmārì-ka   k'yár-á-m̩**
      2SG = beehive-DAT mouth   on.LOC  nail-WITH    beat-put-IRR

      'and hammer it with nails on the opening of the beehive'

The usual way of expressing motion to a person is with **datà**.

(58)  **yí = yááb-ù-s    datà     téé-kì-bàstà**
      3FS = man-m-PL    near.LOC  go.NV-exist-WHILE

      'while she was going to her family, …'

Locational expressions metaphorically function in the temporal domain. A few examples are given in (59) and (60), where the (a) clauses are locational and the (b,c) clauses are temporal. Section 11.5.1 on adverbial clauses provides more information on the use of **-k'à** and **-tà** case in the formation of locational and temporal clauses.

(59)  a.    **úʃtà           woog-ít-ə**
            down.LOC       sit-PL.ADDR-STI

            'sit down on the ground' (said to children)

b. **úʃtà-bààb      sàmìnt**
down.LOC-father   week

'last week'

(60) a. **ás-kǹ  ādī-k'à        bangar-tə**
3MS-DAT footstep-IN      return-SS

'After him he returned and…' (Lit: (he) returned in his footsteps.)

b. **yīs-kǹ         ādī-k'à         tāāmū**
DIST.M-DAT      footprint-IN      fire

**há = ʔùn-t'ù-tə**
3MS = ignite-PASS-SS

'after that, the fire was lit and…'

c. **yīs-tà        yí = tee-t = í**
DIST.M-LOC     3FS = go.NV-SS = 3FS

'then she went and…'

Lastly, noun phrases with the inessive case **-k'à** may be used to refer to places where a specific activity takes place. The speaker of (61) is not literally going into a goat, but going to the place where the goats are herded. Another common expression is **baʒà-k'à** 'at work' (62). The examples referring to **gābā** 'market' above may be connected with this use of the inessive case. Alternatively, the nouns may be used non-literally.

(61) **géék'ù-k'à      ṇ = ʔín-á-m-ə        kì-k-ə**
goat-IN        1SG = go-put-IRR-STI    exist-REAL-STI

'I am on the point of going to the goats.'

(62) **baʒà-k'à        ás-ka        ṇ = kyàm-m̀**
work-IN        3MS-WITH       1SG = meet-DS

'I met him at work;…'

### 9.2.6    Instrument and coordination

The morpheme **-ka** marks Instrumental roles as well as Comitative and coordination. It is glossed WITH as a cover term for Instrumental and Comitative roles and COOR where it occurs in coordination.

The role of Instrument is marked by -**ka**. Here are some examples:

(63) **būtʃ-n̄-s**      **karà-ka**      **há = k'ūd-ūt'-ā-m-ə**
wound-DEF-M      leaf-<u>WITH</u>      3MS = cover-PASS-put-IRR-STI
'The wound is covered with leaves.'

(64) **āʂū-ka**      **há = tee-k-ə**
leg-<u>WITH</u>      3MS = go.NV-REAL-STI
'He went on foot.'

(65) **zēgū-ka**      **yí = kààs-kì-k-ə**
ox-<u>WITH</u>      3FS = play-exist-REAL-STI
'She plays with the oxen.' (Context: commentary of men who saw a woman ploughing.)

(66) **hàs-kà bángár-ee**      **ha-kyàkà-ka**      **kī-ee**
3MS-IN   return-STI      2SG.POSS-border-<u>WITH</u>      exist-STI
'Return from here. Abide by your border'. (Context: idiomatic phrases for a ritual to ward off sickness.)

In passivization, when the object is raised to subject position, the original subject may be expressed in an Instrumental phrase marked by -**ka**, as in (67).

(67) **géék'ù íík-n̄-s-ə̀b**      **yaab-ù-s-ka**
goat   be.old-DEF-M-REL   man-m-PL-WITH

**há = fàkùs-t'ù-k-ə**
3MS = split.CAUS-PASS-REAL-STI

'The goat was dissected by the old men.'

The role of causee may be marked by -**ka**, as in (68). However, the causee may also be marked with accusative case (69).

(68) **aftu   beyǹs**      **dādū-ka**      **kōm̄-s**
drinking mother.DEF.M      child-<u>WITH</u>      chief.DEF-M

**há = gàsk-ùs-k-ə**
3MS = insult-CAUS-REAL-STI

'The drunkard had the chief insulted by a child.'

(69) yí-bààbíʃ-əra  gyānū  há=ʔìts-ùs-k-ə
3FS.POSS-father  3FS-ACC  coffee  3MS=cook-CAUS-REAL-STI
'Her father had her make coffee.'

The sister role of Comitative is also marked by **-ka** (70)-(72). Instrument and Comitative are only marked once, whereas in coordination, the marker usually occurs on all of the coordinated noun phrases (see below).

(70) dēyg- n̄       yí-fyááyń-əra       kòb-tə
child.F-DEF   3FS.POSS-frog.F.DEF-ACC   take-SS

yí-kyāān-s-ka         daan-tə       yí=bangar-k-ə
3FS.POSS-dog.DEF-M-<u>WITH</u>   be.together-SS   3FS=return-REAL-STI
'The girl took her little frog and returned together with her dog.'

(71) ás-ka        ń=daan-kì-ǹtà          náta-ra
3MS-<u>WITH</u>   1PL=be.together-exist-COND   1PL-ACC

kéta    wúʂú-baru-tə
all     kill-throw.away-SS
'If we stay with him, he will finish us all off…'

(72) há=ʔūūtǹ-s-əra       kaw-ǹ-s-ka       dàn-sù-tə
3MS=rat.DEF-M-ACC   fat-DEF-M-<u>WITH</u>   be.together-CAUS-SS

há=bòò-kòb-tə       há=dòòr-ǹ
3MS=carry-take-SS   3M=run-DS
'… he seized the rat together with the fat and flew away;…'

The morpheme **-ka** also coordinates noun phrases. If there are two NPs, usually the coordination is marked on both of them, as in (73)-(75), but not always (76).

(73) tīītù-ka       ūūtǹ-ka       gyābt'a       aaʂ-ǹ
vulture-COOR   rat-COOR   yard   stand-DS
'Vulture and Rat stood still in the front yard;…'

(74) **yīs-ee**      **náánú-ka**      **báádù-ka**
DIST.M-STI      elder.brother-COOR      younger.sibling-COOR

      **íʃ=daan-t=íʃì**      **koynəb-ka**      **ʒababurʒ-ka**
      3PL=be.together-SS=3PL      Koynəb-COOR      Jeba.Burzh-COOR

      'As for that, the elder brother and younger brother were together and they, Koynəb and Jeba Burzh, …'

(75) **íʃì-dàdù-ka**      **íʃì-ka**      **daan-tə**
3PL.POSS-child-COOR      3PL-COOR      be.together-SS

      **kóókŋ́ k'oy-tà**      **dúbà**      **kì=íʃì-k**
      place    one-LOC      gather.NMLZ      exist=3PL-REAL

      '…their children and they being together were gathered in one place.'

(76) **batʃa-ka**      **deebm̀**      **há=sāsk-ā-m**
anger-COOR      beating      3MS=arrive.CAUS-put-IRR

      'It caused irritation and fighting.'

The coordinator may be present (77) or absent (78) on the last of a series of more than two NPs.

(77) **duk'ùʃ-ka**      **bèrbēr-mìt'ì-ka**      **bìsbírì-ka**
garlic-COOR      pepper(Amh)-pepper-COOR      basilicum-COOR

      **ts'artì-ka**      **úgì-ka**      **yīs**      **ān-t'u-t=á**
      rue-COOR      salt-<u>COOR</u>      DIST.M      put-PASS-SS=3MS

      '… garlic and pepper and basilicum and rue and salt, this is added and…'

(78) **íʃì=tīītù-ka**      **kób-m̀-s-ka**      **uutì̀-s**
3PL=vulture-COOR      cock-DEF-M-COOR      rat.DEF-M

      **daan-tə**      **íʃì=yēē-bàstà**
      be.together-SS      3PL-come.NV-WHILE

      'vulture and the cock and the rat were together and while they came…'

Other case marking precedes the coordinator **-ka** (79)-(80). However, there is probably no double marking of Instruments which are coordinated, as in (81).

(79)  báy-ì-s-ǹ-ka        bááb-ù-s-ǹ-ka        bēētǹtà
female-f-PL-DAT-COOR    male-m-PL-DAT-COOR    middle.LOC

yí-fyayn-a        yaafu-tə
3FS.POSS-frog.F.DEF-ACC    find-SS

'in the midst of the females and the males she found her little frog…'

(80)  yí=dòòr-yèè-tə        yí=simoon    p'et'ros-ǹ-ka
3FS=run-come.NV-SS        3FS=Simon    Pextros-DAT-COOR

ás-ka        daan    ky-àb        yēsūs    tàmààrì
3MS-WITH    together exist-REL    Jesus    education

dàd-ǹ-kǹ        yí=mààkù-k-ə
child-DEF[M]-DAT    3FS=tell-REAL-STI

'she came running and she told it to Simon Peter and to the discipel of Jesus who was with him.'

(81)  byāk'ǹ-ka        gyāāsū-ka    ǹ=tʂ'àdǹ-kì-k
spear-COOR        shield-COOR    1PL=fight.MIDD-exist-REAL

'We were fighting with spear and shield.

Another coordinating marker is the inclusive marker **k'ərà** ~ **k'arà** 'also, even'. It also occurs on two coordinated noun phrases (82).

(82)  únà    gatsu    ʂókú-ka        góórà-ka        t'āāgǹ-bàb
long.ago start    Sheko-coor    Amhara-coor    two-father

íʃi=dáán-kì-bàstà    wòfʃíʃtà        góór-ǹ-s-k'arà
3PL=together-exist -WHILE both.side.LOC    Amhara-DEF-M-<u>INCL</u>

ʂók-ǹ-s-k'arà    faadù    gúúrú    íʃi=kì-k
Sheko-DEF-M-<u>INCL</u> body    only    3PL=exist-REAL

'In the beginning, long ago, when the Sheko and Amhara were living together, both, the Amhara as well as the Sheko, were naked.'

In Dime, a formally similar instrumental case marker -**ka** is attested with exactly the same distribution for Instrumental, Comitative and Coordinative (Mulugeta 2008:51). In Maale, the morpheme -**na** marks the same roles (Azeb 2001a:79).

### 9.2.7 Similative

The similative marks the reference point to whose characteristics/ actions those of another referent are likened. Around Sheko town the form **gōntʃì** is used, in the Tepi variety **gomà**. The similative differs from the other cases which are short suffixes, and it might go back to a nominal form (**goma**) plus case marker -tʃi, cf. dative -tʃi in related Omotic languages, such as Nayi (Aklilu 1994a).

(83) **yí-bààb        gōntʃì  té-ré          yí=kì-k-ə**
　　　3FS.POSS-father  like    COP-NEG.STI    3FS=exist-REAL-STI

　　　'She is not like her father.'


(84) **ṇ=téé-t=ṇ            zēgū   gōntʃì        fērā**
　　　1SG=go.NV-SS=1SG       ox     like          horn

　　　**ṃ=bēz-ā-m-ə**
　　　1SG=sprout-put-IRR-STI

　　　'I will go and produce horns like the ox.'


(85) **íhṇ̀          úndí-k'à        ha=ʔíṇ̀ʃ-ara**
　　　wood.DEF.M.DAT   bottom-IN     2SG=wood.DEF.M-ACC

　　　**kóbtʃ'-á-ṃ              īy     kāf-tū-k-ùb          gomà**
　　　make.roofbeam-put-IRR   house   build-PASS-exist?-REL   like

　　　'you can make roofbeams at the trunk of the tree, like in building a house.'[23]


(86) **kyāāz-ǹ-s-o        yeta   gōntʃì  kì-b**
　　　lord-DEF-M-STI.ADDR  2SG    like    exist-REL

　　　**ītī    tə-kn-o**
　　　who    COP-KNOWN-STI.ADDR

　　　'Oh Lord, who is like you?' (from a song)


### 9.2.8 Motive

The 'motive' marker **èʃǹtà** occurs on noun phrases denoting the point of reference of a comparative construction or a motive ('for', 'about'), as well as on adverbial clauses, namely reason clauses and purpose clauses. The 'motive' marker **èʃǹtà** is

---

[23] The speaker speaks the Tepi dialect. **úndí** : Tepi variety. In Sheko use of **úndí** is considered impertinent. **āṣū** 'foot, leg' would be used in this context.

included here, although it is not a canonical case marker, neither in form nor in function. However, part of the form might be related to case markers.

Phonetically, èʃǹtà varies a little bit in pronunciation: ~ (y)ìʃǹtà ~ -yèʃǹtà. The morphological make-up and its occurrence in reason and purpose clauses suggest that èʃǹtà consist of two morphemes. It formally differs from the other case markers. The first element, èʃ(ǹ), does not occur elsewhere in Sheko. However, Benchnon has a Benefactive marker èʃīn, which next to Benefactives marks motives and the point of reference in a comparative construction (Rapold 2006:506). In contrast, the Sheko èʃǹtà does not mark Benefactives, but it does mark motives extensively (i.e. purpose clauses and reason clauses) as well as the point of reference, as is shown below.[24] The second element -tà can be analysed as the locative case marker -tà or perhaps be related to the tə copula (.ta on pronouns). An equally possible analysis is to split up èʃǹtà in -èʃ(ǹ) and the adverbial clause marker -ǹtà (see section 11.3).

Semantically, èʃǹtà, glossed MOTIVE for lack of a better cover term, marks the reference point in a comparative construction (87). In (88) , it marks the reference point in relation to a state of affairs. Furthermore, it is found in the sense of 'about' (89). More abstractly, èʃǹtà marks a motive, as in (90).

(87)　ōtì　　ìʃǹtà　zēgū　há=ʒaaʒ-k-ə
　　　　cow　　MOTIVE　ox　　3MS=good-REAL-STI
　　　　'An ox is better than a cow.'

---

[24] Looking for other possible sources of the first element eʃ(n), one could speculate about ye copulas in some Omotic languages; cf. Zargulla past copula yeʃ 'was' (Azeb 2007) and Aari ye (Hayward 1990:462). Furthermore, Wolaitta employs a noun gissha 'cause' with a dative case marker in reason clauses (Lamberti & Sottile 1997:235).

(88)  néf-bokṇ        ṇ=woog-àb      èʃǹtà   ṇ=tee-t=ṇ
      always-time     1SG=sit-REL    <u>MOTIVE</u>  1SG=go.NV-SS=1SG

      k'oy bokṇ       ṇ=wut-àb       ṇ=wog-àb-kṇ̀ gə́rtï
      one    time     1SG=fall-REL   1SG=sit-REL-DAT head.LOC

      tə-k-ə          tógá    èʃǹ-tà   m̩=mà.àkù-k-ə
      COP-REAL-STI    mud     <u>MOTIVE</u> 1SG=tell-REAL-STI

'It is better to go and fall than to sit all the time. (Lit: from always sitting, my going and falling one time is above my sitting.) I told it with regard to the mud.' (Context: refers to the muddy roads in rainy season.)

(89)  mātk-ār=á-kì-b                 tòsà    tʂ'ádǹ  yìʃǹtà
      tell.PASS-NEG=3MS-exist-REL    story   war     <u>MOTIVE</u>

      tə-k-ə
      COP-REAL-STI

'The story that was not told was about war.'

(90)  túrú   kyàkà  yìʃǹtà  há=tʂ'àdǹ-kì-k
      land   border <u>MOTIVE</u> 3MS=fight.MIDD-exist-REAL

'He would fight because of/ about/ for land borders.'

As mentioned before, the 'motive' marker also occurs on adverbial clauses. First, it occurs in reason clauses, which are marked with the relative clause marker **-ə̀b** (91). Characteristically, the word translated as 'therefore', used for example when reaching a conclusion in discourse, is made up of the distal demonstrative plus **èʃǹtà** (92). Secondly, it marks purpose clauses, which have the purpose marker **-ṇ** (93). Reason and purpose clauses are further exemplified in section 11.5 on adverbial clauses.

(91)  k'ámù-ra       há=útú-kì-b-ìʃǹtà
      slave-ACC      3MS=like-exist-REL-<u>MOTIVE</u>

      há=ūm-s-kì-b-ìʃǹtà              ás-kǹ    bə̄ndū
      3MS=eat-CAUS-exist-REL-<u>MOTIVE</u>  3MS-DAT  Bandu

      ky=ă-k-ə
      exist=3MS-REAL-STI

'he has Bandu because he loves the servants and because he feeds them.'

(92)  yīz-ìʃǹtà      ṣókú-ra        íʃ=ʃe-tə      góórà-ka
      DIST.M-MOTIVE   Sheko-ACC      3PL=forget-SS   Amhara-WITH

      gúrú   íʃì=nòn-kì-k-ə
      only   3PL=talk-exist-REAL-STI

      'Therefore they forget Sheko and talk only in Amharic.'

(93)  yí-bèngì-ra          yí-nàṣà-k
      3FS.POSS-year-ACC      3FS.POSS-husband-WITH

      yí=daan-tə           yí=tʃ'ōr-ʃ-ñ-ìʃǹtà        …
      3FS=be.together-SS    3FS=finish-CAUS-PURP-MOTIVE

      yīs   kòòsù-ra        ītə        māāk-o
      DIST.M   divination-ACC   who:COP     tell-STI.ADDR

      'who will tell this traditional practice … so that she will finish her years together with her husband …?

## 9.3  Possessive constructions

This section compares possessive constructions in detail. For ease of reference the different constructions are labelled 'attributive' in case of juxtaposed nouns or noun phrases, and 'case-marked' or 'ascension' in case of the construction with the dative-marked possessor. Predicative possession is shortly mentioned here for the sake of comparison and semantic coherence; it is treated more extensively in the section on existential clauses.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| NP NP | attributive (juxtaposed) | ōtì baatʃi 'cow hide' |
| NP-DAT NP | case-marked (ascension) | ōtì-kǹ báátʃí 'skin of a cow' |
| existential | predicative (existential) | with ki 'exist' |

## 9.3.1  Attributive possession

In attributive possession, the possessor always precedes the possessum. Both can be expressed in an NP (94)-(95), or the possessor can be expressed anaphorically by a possessor prefix, as is shown in (96). The relation between the possessor and the possessum is not necessarily one of ownership, and one could also call this construction an associative or genitive construction.

(94)    há=mārtà      màts'àf-ǹ-s-a        ʃààr-kòb-t=á
        3MS=Marta      book(Amh)-DEF-M-ACC    rob-take-SS=3MS

        'he snatched away Marta's book and he…'

(95)    há=fáádù      byàrgù       sak-ǹtà
        3MS=hunger      year         arrive-COND

        'if a period of hunger arrives,…'

(96)    há-byàk'ǹ     kès-tə
        3MS.POSS-spear    go.out.CAUS-SS

        'bringing out his spear and…'

The head of the NP is marked tonally, as is every head which is preceded by a modifier. It is of course possible to put more than two NPs together, in which case each modified head undergoes the change in tone. In example (97) the nouns **bāāb** 'father' and **náánú** 'elder brother' are modified.

(97)    dād-ǹ-s       bààb   naanu-ra         oʂk-ít-ə
        child-DEF-M    father   elder.brother-ACC    call-PL.ADDR-STI

        'Call the elder brother of the boys' father.'

Juxtaposed possessive noun phrases may use **bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' as the second element. **bāāb/ bé** form 'possessor of' nouns, which denote an owner or entity characterized by what is mentioned in the first element (see section 5.5.5). Some 'possessor of' nouns are illustrated in (98)-(100). **bāāb** 'father' and **bé** 'mother' also function as nominalizers, see section 5.5.6.

(98)    íntʃù   bààb   dàtà   ṇ=téé-tə      ṇ=ás-a
        wood    father   near.LOC 1SG=go.NV-SS    1SG=3MS-ACC

        óótʃ-á-m-ə
        ask-put-IRR-STI

        'I'll go to the owner of the wood and ask him.'

(99)    yī-nì   úʃǹ   be     te-k-ə
        DIST-F   flower   mother   COP-REAL-STI

        'That one has flowers.' (Lit: that is a mother of flower.)

(100) gáydú bààb  kì-tə
problem father    exist-SS

'being a poor person,…'

### 9.3.2    Predicate possession

In Sheko, the predicate possessive clause best compares with an existential clause. Existentials make use of the verb **kì** 'to be present, exist, live', as in (101).

(101) gyānū  kì=á-k-ə
coffee    exist=3MS-REAL-STI

'There is coffee.'

In a possessive predicate, the possessor NP is in the dative case and the possessum NP occurs as the subject of the predicate 'be present, exist'.

(102) **baʒà**    **yí-nàʂà-k̀n̄**          **kì-ǹtà, …**
work     3FS.POSS-husband-DAT    exist-COND

'If her husband has work,…' (Lit: if there is work to her husband.)

In the predicative possession construction, only the possessum can be the grammatical subject. The subject cannot be marked for definiteness, as shown in example (103). The systematic absence of definiteness marking on the subject constituent is related to the type of construction and its function. Possessive predication typically asserts possession, in contrast to attributive possession which typically presupposes possession (Heine 1997:26).

(103) **ʔ\*gyān-n̄-s**     **m̩-baad-ǹ-s-kǹ**              **kì=á-k**
coffee-DEF-M     1SG.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M-DAT exist=3MS-REAL

int. 'The coffee is to my brother', i.e. 'the coffee belongs to my brother.'

If one wants to present the possessor as the grammatical subject, it is possible to use a copula-construction, with which it is possible to have either the possessor (104) or the possessum (105) as subject. In this equational construction, the subject is easily marked as definite, hence it can refer to

known, topical referents. The copula complement, i.e **gyanu bàƏb** or **mèngistìkɑ̀bàƏb** involves an NP expressing a possessive relation. This type of NP is discussed in section 9.3.1 and 5.5.5.

(104) **m̩-baad-ɑ̀-s**                      **gyānū bàƏb    tə-k-ə**
1SG.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M     coffee  father    COP-REAL-STI
'My brother is a coffee-owner/ owns coffee'

(105) **gyān-ñ-s**      **yīs**    **kéta**    **mèngīstì-kɑ̀-bàƏb**
coffee-DEF-M    DIST.M  all    government-DAT-father

**tə-k-ə** [25]
COP-REAL-STI

'All this coffee belongs to the government' (Lit: … is father of 'to the government'.)

### 9.3.3      The case-marked construction and inalienability

The third construction which is used to express possession consists of the possessor NP with a dative case marker followed by the possessum NP. Body parts most often occur in the case-marked construction, as illustrated in the examples (106)-(109).

(106) **yí-nà̧swà-kɑ̀**          **ááb-a séé-r=í-k'y-á-m**
3FS.POSS-husband-DAT    eye-ACC see.NV-NEG=3FS-remain-put-IRR
'She didn't see her husbands' face.' (Context: talking about old marriage customs.)

(107) **ye-kɑ̀ kúʈ̧ú-k'a**    **kɑ̀-b**    **gēbm̀**
2SG-DAT hand-IN      exist-REL how.much[Q]
'How much (money) do you have in hand?'

(108) **yí=ʂóóʐ̧-kɑ̀**    **kum-m̀-s-əra k'ùts'ù-bàr-ɑ̀**
3FS=snake-DAT     neck-DEF-M-ACC cut-throw.away-DS
'she cut off the neck of the snake'

---

[25] Without **-bàƏb** one gets a Benefactive/Recipient reading:

    **gyān-ñ-s**      **yīs**    **kéta**    **mèngīstì-kɑ̀**    **tə-k-ə**
    coffee-DEF-M    DIST.M  all  government-DAT  COP-REAL-STI
    'All this coffee is for the government' (e.g. to be given as a form of taxes)

(109) ás-kɨ̀     éd-k'à        yí=bàr-ɨ̀     twèètwèè
      3MS-<u>DAT</u> mouth-IN   3FS=throw-DS   IDEO

      ás-kɨ̀     fōōrī-k'à     há=gé-bààstà
      3MS-<u>DAT</u> throat-IN  3MS=say-WHILE

      'she threw it (a hot pebble) in his mouth, and while it said
      'tweetwee' in his throat (while his throat got burned)...'

The case-marked construction is grammatically different from
the predicative possession construction, in that the order
possessor-possessum may not be reversed, as illustrated in
(110b), cf. the grammaticality of the predicative (111b).

(110)  a.    gaana-kɨ̀      āṣū     ʃan=á-k-ə
             Gaana-DAT      leg     be-.broken=3MS-REAL-STI

             'Gaana's leg is broken.'

       b.    *āṣū    gaana-kɨ̀    ʃan=á-k-ə
             leg     Gaana-DAT   be.broken=3MS-REAL-STI

             intended: 'Gaana's leg is broken.' (possible with benefactive
             interpretation ?'a leg has been broken for Gaana' )

(111)  a.    baasà-kɨ̀      ēkī     kì=á-k-ə
             Baasa-DAT      money   exist=3MS-REAL-STI

             'Baasa has money/ cattle.' (Lit: to Baasa there is money.)

       b.    ēkī     baasà-kɨ̀    kì=á-k-ə
             money   Baasa-DAT   exist=3MS-REAL-STI

             'Baasa has money/ cattle.' (Lit: to Baasa there is money.)

There are basically two contexts in which body parts occur in
attributive possessive noun phrases. The first context is where
the body part is alienable, i.e. there is no part-whole relation
between the possessor and the possessum, but a different one,
e.g. a relation of ownership. Thus, the bone in (112) is not part
of the body of the speaker, but it is an animal bone which the
subject had given to the addressee to eat. Another example is
(113), which tells about a tanned cow hide, not about the skin
of a living cow.

(112) ṇ-uus-ǹ-s-a                 ats-ə    yí = ge-ǹ
      1SG.POSS-bone-DEF-M-ACC      give-STI   3FS = say-DS

      ' "Give my bone," she said...'

(113) ōtì      baatʃi   án-ṇ-kì-b                tēngì    bàtà
      cow      skin     put-NEG2-exist-REL        tree.sp  on.LOC

      íʃì = sōk'ū-kì-b-īs
      3PL = sleep-exist-REL-DIST.M

      'those who didn't use a cow hide, what they were sleeping on was
      *tengi*.'

The second context in which an attributive construction is used
is one which places emphasis on the possessor. Example (114)
below makes this very clear: only clause (b) can follow (a) as
an explanation, (c) cannot. It is of course possible to use a
case-marked construction, but then again the semantics change
(115).

(114) a.    wōsā    hàz      ṇ-kuʈʂu-ka        ṇ = ts'àfù-k-ə
            letter   PROX.M   1SG.POSS-hand-WITH   1SG = write-REAL-STI

            'I wrote this letter by my (own) hand.'

      b.    ts'àhāfì-ǹ-s      na-ɍ̀     ts'àf-ār = á-kì-k-ə
            clerk-DEF-M        1SG-DAT   write-NEG = 3MS-exist-REAL-STI

            'The clerk didn't write it for me.'

      c.    *ṇ-kòmpùtèrì-ka        ts'àf-ēn-kì-k-ə
            1SG.POSS-computer-WITH   write-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI

            'I didn't write it on the computer.'

(115) wōsā    hàz      na-ɍ̀     kúʈʂú-ka    ṇ = ts'àfù-k-ə
      letter   PROX.M   1SG-DAT   hand-WITH   1SG = write-REAL-STI

      'I wrote this letter by (my) hand.' (not on the computer)

Another example is given in (116).

(116) íʃ-gayd-n-s             ʔyáát-ǹ-s-əb      há = fòòt-àb-əra
      3PL.POSS-problem-DEF-M   big-DEF-M-REL      3MS = become-REL-ACC

      ṇ-ʔaab-ka            ṇ = see-k-ə
      1SG.POSS-eye-WITH     1SG = see.NV-REAL-STI

      'I saw with my own eyes that their problem is enormous.'

The two possessive constructions are contrasted in examples (117)-(118) as well. In (117), a possessor prefix and the noun for 'head' are used to form the intensifying noun phrase **ha-gərì** 'yourself'. (More examples of 'oneself' are presented in section 6.3.) The idiomatic utterance in (118) is used as a warning for unruly children.

(117) **ha-gərì**      **kóót-ə**
        2SG.POSS-head      watch-STI

        'Watch (it) yourself' / 'Look after it yourself'

(118) **ye-kì**      **gə́rì**    **kóót**
        2SG-DAT      head    watch

        'Watch your head!' (i.e. 'Beware')

In Sheko, as in many other languages, most spatial terms (locational nouns) are related to body parts. Spatial terms (locational noun phrases) occur in the case-marked construction.[26] Examples are given in (119)-(121).

(119) **kyāń-s**      **ás-kì**   **gə́rì-ra**      **ʔyááná-kì**
        dog.DEF-M      3MS-DAT head-ACC      pot-DAT

        **bōw-k'à**      **tóórá**      **há=wùskù-tə**
        belly-IN      downward      3MS=enter-SS

        'The dog entered his head down in the pot and he...'

(120) **téréʃ-ǹ-s-a**      **tāāmū-kì**    **ʃíʃ-tà**   **tóót-ə**
        coffeepot-DEF-M-ACC      fire-DAT    side-LOC erect-STI

        'Put the coffee pot next to the fire'

---

[26] Since spatial terms are often derived from body parts, it is plausible that a language treats both the same, but not necessarily so: Ewe distinguishes the two, treating spatial terms as 'inalienable' and body parts as 'alienable' (see Ameka (1996:810ff) for an explanation).

(121) íʃ = ts'yaats'u-t = íʃì      tʃ'òr-ʃ-àb-kǹ            ādī-k'à
     3PL = tie-SS = 3PL            finish-CAUS-REL-DAT        footprint-IN

     p'ēēt'à          búútsú-tə
     thatch           mow-SS

     'after they finish tying they cut the thatch and…' (Lit: in the footprints to their finishing…)

Likewise, inherent parts of a location may be treated as a body part.

(122) hàāz   kyāān-s      kàtʃa  wó-ká        ʃēʔī-kǹ
     PROX.M   dog.DEF-M      still   up.there-LCT   stone-DAT

     kōp'arà-k'à                      há = bààs-kì-k
     open.space.in.forest.or.stone-IN   3MS = want-exist-REAL

     'Here the dog is still searching over there at the rock's crevices.'

Recapitulating, it appears that the construction with a case-marked possessor is the unmarked way to talk about possessed body parts, whereas the attributive construction with body parts puts emphasis on the possessor or indicates that the body part is alienable.

A similar situation with regard to body parts occurs in the other Majoid languages. For Diizin, a discussion arose in which Alan (1976) claimed that Diizin shows inalienable possession, whereas Claudi and Serzisko (1985) argued that the Diizin possessive constructions involving body part nouns represent the phenomenon of 'possessor promotion'.[27] However, the idea of possessor promotion or possessor ascension has come under attack itself. More precisely, the underlying assumption that an alienable ('normal') construction and an inalienable ('promoted') construction have the same meaning appears not to hold (Chappel and McGregor 1996:7). I have shown for

---

[27] Inalienable constructions are morphologically less marked than alienable constructions cross-linguistically. The 'markedness' of the inalienable construction in Diizin was one of the reasons why Claudi and Serzisko analysed it as possessor promotion (1985:134). However, their analysis of possessor promotion to a locative case is equally not in line with what one usually finds in languages: possessors are commonly "promoted to" a direct object or an indirect object, not to a locative, cf. (1985:141). The Diizin case marker in question is -kŋ. Beachy (2005) gives -kŋ as a genitive, not a locative, and -is as a dative case.

Sheko that the case-marked construction basically centralises the part (here, the possessed), in opposition to a possessive noun phrase, which more or less focuses on the whole (here, the possessor). Since the semantics are different, both constructions are equal and a speaker can describe a situation with regard to the whole or the part by choosing one or the other. In other words, discourse features play a role in the choice between the two constructions. The (in)alienability readings in the Majoid languages arise from the semantics of the constructions.

There are more Omotic languages that have two ways to form 'genitival' relations, one which employs juxtaposition and one which has a case marker. Interestingly, the Maale language (Azeb 2001a:63) has a construction NP-**ko** NP which contrasts with simple juxtaposition exactly in singling out the part.

# 10 Simple clauses

This chapter describes the verbal morphology of affirmative final (main) verb forms in Sheko, as well as copular and verbless sentences. Furthermore, word order of simple clauses is discussed. Non-final verbs such as medial verbs and dependent verbs are discussed in chapter 11. Morphology associated with verb derivation is discussed in chapter 12. Negation is treated in chapter 14. The CV-structure of verb roots is treated in section 2.5.2.

## 10.1 Overview of main verb morphology

The final (main) verb comprises the following elements: a subject clitic, a main verb stem, an expletive vowel -**u** for some verbs, an optional element denoting aspect, a modal marker and a stance marker. An example is given in (1). A main verb form forms a complete sentence by itself.

(1)    **íʃì =**    **bàʒ.ù**          **-k'e**    **-k**    **-ə**
       3PL =    work            -remain -REAL    -STI
       clitic = stem.expletive vowel    -aspect -modal -stance
       'they have worked (and are not longer working)'

Most final verb forms fit the above pattern, but there are three paradigms in which the subject clitic follows the verb stem. These are the Realis, Obvious and Optative.

(2)    **gāār**        **=á**    **-s**     **-ə**
       bear.fruit    = 3MS    -OPT    -STI
       stem           = clitic -modal -stance
       'may it bear fruit'

Starting from the right end, each structural slot is briefly presented here and discussed in detail in its respective section, beginning with stance markers and finishing with subject clitics as in (1).

Stance markers are discussed in section 10.2 below. A stance marker may be attached to the rightmost element of an utterance to indicate how the speaker relates to the utterance.

The direct stance marker **-a** makes an utterance more direct and less polite, while the indirect stance marker **-ə** signals a certain distance between the speaker and the utterance, which is used for e.g. politeness and reported speech.

Modal markers are described in detail in section 10.3. After a short discussion of the system, it is shown that all paradigms can be grouped into three groups on the basis of the tone on the verb stem. Furthermore, the function of each modal marker is discussed. The following markers are presented in detail:

| label | marker | gloss |
|---|---|---|
| Imperative-Jussive | - | - |
| Optative | **-s** | OPT |
| Irrealis | **-m** | IRR |
| Realis | **-k** | REAL |
| Obvious | **-kn** | KNOWN |
| Viewpoint | **-s** | VIEWP |
| Implicative | **-a** | IMPLC |

The interrogative and negative are discussed elsewhere. Chapter 13 resumes the discussion of modal markers and sentence type, expanding on how the sentence types are distinguished, especially the strategy of 'subtractive' morphology for interrogatives.

| label | marker | gloss |
|---|---|---|
| negative | **-ara** | NEG |
| interrogative | **-ø** (sometimes intonation) | Q |

Section 10.4 treats the aspectual slot. There are two verbs denoting aspectual distinctions, such as **ki** 'exist, live', marking Imperfective, **k'é** 'be left, remain' marking Perfective, and a suffix **-a** (possibly from the verb 'put') which is restricted to Irrealis verb forms. These aspectual markers are suffixed to the main verb stem (incl. expletive vowel, if present), as shown with the verb **baʒ** 'work' in examples (3)-(4)).

(3)　**há=bàʒù-k̲ì̲-k-ə**
      3MS=work-<u>exist</u>-REAL-STI
      'he is/ was working'

(4)　**há=bāʒ-ā̲-m-ə**
      3MS=work-put-IRR-STI
      'he will work'

Section 10.5 on verb stems concentrates on verb stem alternation, with reference to other Omotic languages. A small group of verb stems occurs with and without a velar element. This alternation is for the most part morphologically determined, although there are a few places where the velar stem can be associated with a stronger assertion and the non-velar stem with a weaker assertion, or no assertion.

The expletive vowel **-u**, which occurs after some verb stems, is obligatorily present in some forms, generally when a stop follows the verb stem. It copies the tone of the preceding verb stem. Synchronically, it does not have any discernible meaning or function. It is not epenthetic, since it occurs where clusters of consonants are possible. Furthermore, it occurs in stem derivation (chapter 12). It is not glossed separately in this thesis, but it is easily recognizable since there are no stems ending in -.CV .

Lastly, section 10.6 describes the forms of the subject clitic. Its function is described separately in chapter 15, because the placement of the subject clitic is dependent on information structure (salience, focus) and syntax.

## 10.2  Stance

A stance marker is used to indicate how the speaker relates to his utterance, i.e. it signals the presence or absence of distance between the speaker and his utterance, and may thereby convey the attitude of the speaker towards his utterance. Rapold (2006) has used the term mediativity for comparable markers in Benchnon.

In Sheko, there are indirect and direct stance markers. The indirect stance marker is **-ə**, which signals a certain distance between the speaker and the utterance, and makes the utterance less direct. For instance, it may add a layer of politeness, and indicate the reporting of speech. For questions and vocative utterances, the indirect stance marker is **-o**. The direct stance marker is **-ya** ~ **-a**, which signals the absence of distance and makes the utterance more direct and less polite.

The stance markers may be phonetically lengthened. This is generally not indicated in the examples, except for the long form **-ee** of the indirect stance marker **-ə** in some instances (schwa does not occur as a long vowel). Stance markers are glossed STI (stance marker, indirect) or STD (stance marker, direct).

Stance markers are not obligatorily present, but they are common. I have not investigated which pragmatic factors trigger the occurrence of the stance markers in Sheko, but likely they correspond to the factors suggested by Rapold (2008): distance (spatial boundary); addressing a superior or crowd, speaking in an official situation (social boundaries); surprise, reported speech (cognitive boundaries); end of major text unit (textual boundary). The Sheko data suggest that another textual boundary exists, namely topic, i.e. a constituent which mentions what the sentence or paragraph is about. In example (5), a stance marker follows the topical constituent.

(5)  **ń-kòòsù-ee**　　**náta**　**kōynə̄b**　**dàdù**　**tə-k-ə**
　　　1PL.POSS-tradition-STI　1PL　　Koynəb　　child　　COP-REAL-STI
　　　'As for our tradition, we are the children of Koynəb.'

A stance marker appears at the rightmost end of a clause and attaches to all word categories except ideophones. Example (6) below illustrates this with a dependent verb (in a topic clause), a demonstrative and an interjection.

(6)　a.　**yīs-əra**　　　　**há=səg-ǹtà-ə**
　　　　　DIST.M-ACC　　　3MS=see-COND-STI
　　　　　'as regards this,…'

b. **hààz-o**

PROX.M-STI.ADDR

'What about this one?'

c. **ha?-ə**

[presentational]-STI

'here it is, take it'

### 10.2.1 Indirect stance

The indirect stance marker **-ə** ~ **-ee** signals that there is a certain distance between the speaker and the utterance. Example (7) contrasts an Imperative with and without the indirect stance marker. Example (8) illustrates the use of the stance marker in reporting of speech. Included is the reporting of one's own speech (8b).

(7) a. **yəg**

come

'Come!'

b. **yəg-ə**

come-STI

'Come!' (less direct order as in (a), or shouting at a distance)

(8) a. **fín-ə        há=ge-ǹ**

descend-STI    3MS=say-DS

'he said: "Descend!" …'

b. **kááy        (…)    kááy-ə**

be.not                be.not-STI

'It is not there. (…if someone continues searching…) It is not there (as I said).'

In the interrogative, the form of the indirect stance marker is **-o**. The form **-o** is found on vocatives as well (section 5.3.4). Therefore, one can say that the stance marker **-o** is used to signal that there is expectation of (or opportunity for) a verbal response of the addressee.

(9) **kaarì  sáántà      yīs    koosù-ra      ītə**
toward  front.LOC    DIST.M  tradition-ACC  who:COP

**māāk-o**
tell-STI.ADDR

'Who will tell this traditional wisdom in the future?' (Context: polite question to a chief.)

In addition to politeness, the use of **-o** can convey other feelings. When (10) is compared to (11), the first is a simple inquiry, whereas the second is a more desperate question. Compare this to the rhetorical question in (12), which also is marked by an **-o.** In both questions, no answer is expected. It might be that the dramatic effect is caused by using **-o,** which explicitly signals that there is room for a response, while the context makes clear that actually there is no answer.

(10) **yír=n̩       ēg-ā**
what=1SG    do-put[Q]

'What shall I do?' (inquiring)

(11) **yír=n̩       eg-o**
what=1SG    do-STI.ADDR

'What shall I do?' (confusion, helplessness)

(12) **àbēt        kyāāz-n̩-s-o         yeta   gōntʃì**
INTJ(Amh)   lord-DEF-M-STI.ADDR  2SG    SIMIL

**kì-b     ītī   tə-kn-o**
exist-REL who   COP-KNOWN-STI.ADDR

'Oh Lord, who is like you?' (from a church song)

### 10.2.2   Direct stance

In contrast to the indirect stance marker, the second stance marker **-a** signals the absence of distance, i.e. the utterance is made more direct and/or less polite. In my corpus it occurs only with the Viewpoint (13), Implicative (14), Obvious (15), and with the imperative for children (examples (16)-(17) below). The direct stance marker has the form **-ya** in the latter two cases.

(13)  **t'ōōzì-kǹ-bààb**        **tə-s-a**
Xoozi-DAT-father        COP-VIEWP-STD

'It is Xoozi's, if I'm right.'

(14)  **íʃì-ra    yí=k'áám-á-m        ṇ=ge-tə        ṇ=íʃ-əra**
3PL-ACC    3FS=bring.up-put-IRR    1SG=say-SS    1SG=3FS-ACC

**kòy-k'y-a-a**
bring-remain-IMPLC-STD

'Saying "She will raise them," I brought her, (would you believe!)' (Context: Said by a father after he discovers that the stepmother does not raise the children as she should, and does not give them food.)

(15)  **baak-ǹ-s        ṃ=fyààn-kì-kn-ya**
yam-DEF-M        1SG=peel-exist-KNOWN-STD

'But I am peeling the yams!' (Context: father asked teenage daughter to do something for him, but she refused.)

The imperative for children is only used for children and younger siblings, i.e. when the person is younger in age and familiar. It is used in order to persuade them to do something, and to hold their attention. The indirect stance marker **-ya** occurs with the non-final verbs in a clause chain, whereas the last verb of the chain is a normal imperative (16). The children addressed in (17) were expected to say **haa**, an expression of consent and agreement, after every clause.

(16)  **yeta    gáám-tà        kees-téé-t-ya        ábsì    ṣókú**
2SG    shore-LOC        go.out-go.NV-SS-STD    up    Sheko

**footu-t-yà        myāngū        úm-ə**
become-SS-STD    spirit        eat-STI

'Go to the other shore and become Sheko up there and eat a spirit (i.e. become independent by establishing a contact with the spirit world).' (Context: elder brother sends younger brother away.)

(17)  yá-ee                                                      (haa)
      INTJ-STI

      hāāy-k'à        téé-t-ítí-ya                              (-)
      water-IN        go.NV-SS-PL.ADDR-STD

      ítí=siis-kì                                               (haa)
      2PL=listen-exist[Q]

      hāāy-k'à        ítí-kǹ  faad   bártʃ'ús-t-ítí-ya          (haa)
      water-IN        2PL-DAT body   wash-SS-PL.ADDR-STD

      ítí-shèm-m̀-s-ra              bártʃ'ús-t-ítí-ya           (haa)
      2PL.POSS-clothing-DEF-M-ACC   wash-SS-PL.ADDR-STD

      …

      'Listen, go to the water and - are you listening? - wash your bodies
      at the water and wash your clothes…'

## 10.3  Mood

Palmer (2001) notes that many languages combine 'typical
mood' categories like declaratives and interrogatives with
'typical modal system' elements, like possibility and
epistemicity. Realis and irrealis may function in the middle
ground. The distinction between 'mood' and 'modality' (or
'modal systems') is often not maintained. Languages somehow
view these domains as one, perhaps because they all have to do
with the status of a proposition in some way or another (cf.
Palmer 2001:160; Payne 1997:244). The Sheko modal system
as presented below indeed involves about everything from
sentence type to viewpoint marker. The Irrealis includes all
'weaker' modalities such as indicated in English by 'could' and
'should', whereas the opposite notion of strong assertion falls
under Realis. Realis and Irrealis are in complementary
distribution with Interrogative, Imperative-Jussive, Optative,
Viewpoint etc. However, the language does make a distinction
between modal marking and stance, (i.e. the relation between
speaker and utterance, see section 10.2). The table below gives
an overview of all the modal markers.

| | marker | tone on "L" stem | tone on "H" stem | gloss | stance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative sg & Jussive | -∅ | 2 | 4 | - | -ə |
| Imperative pl | -∅ | 3 | 4 | - | -ə |
| Optative | -s | 3 | 4 | OPT | -ə |
| Irrealis | -m | 3 | 4 | IRR | -ə |
| Negative | -ara | 3 | 4 | NEG | -ə |
| Realis | -k | 1 | 2 | REAL | -ə |
| Obvious | -kn | 1 | 2 | KNOWN | -ya |
| Viewpoint | -s | 1 | 2 | VIEWP | -a |
| Implicative | -a | 1 | 2 | IMPLC | -a |
| Interrogative | -∅ (intonation) | varies | varies | Q | -o |

**Table 1. Modal markers.**

Interestingly, there are two paradigms which seem to have zero marking: the Imperative-Jussive and the Interrogative, but the two are different. While the Imperative is formed simply by the verb stem, the formation of the Interrogative employs 'subtractive' morphology. This point is taken up again in chapter 13 on interrogatives.

There are no morphemes which specifically (exclusively) mark declarative or imperative. These are distinguished by the presence or absence of some morphemes, viz. modal markers and subject clitics, and also partly by tone. Likewise, the interrogative distinguishes itself from declarative counterparts partly by a final intonational fall (this phonological clue may be absent) and partly by the absence of modal markers. A reason for the absence of modal markers in these two sentence types could be the following: imperative as well as interrogative are the types of utterance in which modal distinctions are least required. With an interrogative, one asks for information on a constituent or on the modal status of the proposition, instead of giving this information. With an imperative, one also does not evaluate a proposition but one gives a directive for the addressee to follow up. Both types of

utterance are directed at an addressee and a reaction of the addressee is expected.

Of course, there are many differences between imperative/ jussives and interrogatives as well. The interrogative, asking for information, has corresponding 'declaratives' which can provide that information, while the imperative asks for action rather than a verbal response. Furthermore, there are various clues which make the distinction between the sentence types evident in actual speech. These clues are either not obligatorily present, e.g. an aspect marker or indirect stance marker (which varies between -ə and -o), or not restricted to one sentence type, e.g. tonal height and the absence of subject clitics (absent in imperatives as well as negatives).

The next section gives an overview of paradigms from the point of view of tone on the verb stem. In sections 10.3.2 to 10.3.8, all final (main) paradigms except negative and interrogative are discussed and illustrated in turn. Section 10.3.9 demonstrates that the notion of imminence is expressed by a combination of Realis and Irrealis.

### 10.3.1    Overview of paradigms from a tonal point of view

On the basis of the tone of the verb stem, paradigms can be divided into three groups. The terminology that I use to distinguish these three shows the correlation between the categorization and mood. Note however that this correlation is not absolute and the groups are defined purely on the basis of tonal behaviour.

1. The Basic paradigms are the Imperative singular and Jussive. Verb stems classified as "H" have tone 4 and verb stems classified as "L" have tone 2.

2. In Non-Factual paradigms, verb stems classified as "H" have tone 4, while verb stems classified as "L" have tone 3. The Non-Factual paradigms include
   o  Irrealis
   o  negative
   o  Imperative plural
   o  Optative

Furthermore, Irrealis complement clauses and purpose clauses fall into this group.

3. Factual paradigms are paradigms in which "H" stems take tone 2 and "L" stems tone 1. These include
  o Realis
  o Obvious
  o Viewpoint
  o Implicative
In addition, conditional clauses (if-clauses), reason clauses and Realis complement clauses belong to this group.

Medial verbs do not have a mood marker, but the tone of the verb stem shows whether the final (main) verb is Factual or Non-Factual/ Basic. In other words, the height of the tone on a medial verb stem corresponds with the tone height, representing the mood, of the final main verb.

The tone on verb stems in relative clauses has only been investigated cursorily. Tone on verb stems in relative clauses varies in height as well, depending on the context and/or the construction. In example (18), the tone on the stem **fuur** 'trade' is on level 1 (as with Factual paradigms), whereas in example (19) the tone on the stem **k'eets'** 'catch fire' is on level 3 (as with Non-Factual paradigms). Both verb stems belong to lexical tone class "L".

(18)  **túúrù  m̩=fùr-àb-kì̩        ādī-k'à**
      land    1SG=trade-REL-DAT     footprint-IN

      'after I will have bought land,…'

(19)  **tāāmū  ūn-t'ū-t=á           āngā    k'ēēts'ū-bààstà**
      fire    ignite-PASS-SS=3MS    much    catch.fire-WHILE

      'the fire is ignited and while it burns well,…'

### 10.3.2   Imperative-Jussive
The Imperative and Jussive paradigms are complementary. The Imperative is only for the second person and consists of the stem. A stance marker may be added. The Jussive comprises all other persons and is formed by a subject clitic, stem and

optional stance marker. Table 2 below shows the Imperative-Jussive for the two verb classes in Sheko with **síís** 'listen' and **kaas** 'show'.

| | Jussive | Imp. | Jussive | Imp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | "H" | | "L" | |
| 1sg | ṇ-síís<br>'let me listen' | | ṇ-kaas<br>'let me play' | |
| 1pl | ń-síís<br>'let us listen' | | ń-kaas<br>'let us play' | |
| 2sg | | síís<br>'listen!' | | kaas<br>'play!' |
| 2pl | | síís-ít<br>'listen (pl)!' | | kāās-ít<br>'play (pl)!' |
| 3ms | há-síís<br>'let him listen' | | há-kaas<br>'let him play' | |
| 3fs | yí-síís<br>'let her listen' | | yí-kaas<br>'let her play' | |
| 3pl | íʃì-síís<br>'let them listen' | | íʃì-kaas<br>'let them play' | |

Table 2. Imperative-Jussive.

The Imperative singular and the Jussive form the Basic paradigm. Note that the Imperative plural has tone 3 on a L verb stem, therefore the Imperative plural is taken as belonging to the Non-Factual paradigms. It is formed by the verb stem plus the plural addressee marker **-ít**. This is illustrated in (20).

(20)  é-ká          kāās-ít
      there-LCT      play-PL.ADDR
      'play over there!'

In the Jussive, the indirect stance marker **-ə** is commonly present. (Stance markers are discussed in section 10.2.)

(21)  īī-k'à        há=ʔyard-ə
      house-IN      3MS=enter-STI
      'Let him enter the house.'

(22) nā    há=kì      sē-s-ít            ń=sāg-ə
     where  3MS=exist[Q]  see.NV-CAUS-PL.ADDR  1PL=see-STI

'… where is he? Show him, let us see him.'

When a series of commands is expressed in medial clauses, the first verb is a medial verb without a subject clitic. An example is the first verb form in (23).

(23) téé-tə ye-kì básń-tà       ha=fárú-kí-ǹ
     go.NV-SS 2SG-DAT doorstep-LOC  2SG=clear.ground-exist-DS

     múrì   mugara      kì-be          hà-yaaf-ǹtà
     pebble  ?           exist-REL.mother 2SG=find-COND

     yīs-tà        ha=yēē-tə
     DIST.M-LOC    2SG=come-SS

'Go and clear the ground around your doorstep and when you find a smooth(?) pebble then come and…'

In addition, there is a special series of command for addressing children, see section 10.2.2.

### 10.3.3    Irrealis

The Irrealis marker is **-m**. The Irrealis depicts situations as not 'actual', i.e. they are potential (24), hypothetical or counterfactual (25), habitual (26) or generic (27). Some languages also mark questions, imperatives and negatives as irrealis (Palmer 2001:11, Payne 1997:245). However, these sentence types all have their own marking in Sheko.

(24) ʔyááná       m̩=fūūr-ā-m-ə
     pot          1SG=trade-put-IRR-STI

'I will buy a pot.'

(25) dād-n̄-s       má           há=yēē-m-ə
     child-DEF-M    earlier.today  3MS=come.NV-IRR-STI

'The boy would have come today.'

(26)     **támú    kòntārì       há=hāātk-ā-m**
          ten      100.kg(Amh)    3MS=pick.PASS-put-IRR

          'It usually yields ten sacks of 100 kg.' (Lit: ten *kontari* are picked. Context: talking about a plot of coffee in the forest.)

(27)     **gárgá    íntʃù-ra       há=gyá-m-ə**
          termite   wood-ACC      3MS=chew-IRR-STI

          'Termites eat wood.'

Note that past habituals are also marked by Irrealis. Sentence (28) tells about traditional marriage customs.

(28)     **yí=ʔyàr-s-ùb-kɨ̀      gātsù   yí-nàʂà**
          3FS=enter-CAUS-REL-DAT   start    3FS.POSS-husband

          **séé-r=í-k'y-á-m-ə**
          see.NV-NEG=3FS-remain-put-IRR-STI

          'Before she married, she didn't see her husband.'

Furthermore, the Irrealis marker -**m** implies a weak commitment to the truth of the proposition, i.e. the situation cannot be fully asserted. Any modal attitude can be captured by it, such as epistemic (29), deontic (30) and circumstantial/ dispositional modality (31).

(29)     **íntʃù    kārì    fyááyn       yí=kī-m      yí=ge-tə**
          wood    toward   frog.F.DEF     3FS=exist-IRR    3FS=say-SS

          **yí=bààs-kì-bààstà     fyááyn       kááy**
          3FS=want-exist-WHILE    frog.F.DEF      be.not

          'While she searched, saying "the frog will/ could/ might be in the tree", the frog was not there.'

(30)     **dāws-kɨ̀       màtkù-kì-b    hamsu-s     ʒééɲʃ-èb**
          children-DAT    tell.PASS-exist-REL   parable-PL     good-REL

          **há=fōōtū-kī-m-ə**
          3MS=become-exist-IRR-STI

          'Parables told to children should be good.'

(31) mìstērì-ka      ń=daan      nòn-k-ə      íʒ
secret(Amh)-WITH 1PL=together   talk-REAL-STI   3FS

k'at'aro                yí=kabar-tə   k'at'aro      k'oy
appointment(Amh)        3FS=appoint-SS  appointment  one

yí=ʔàts-əb-ka yēē-r=í-k'y-á-m-ə                    (…)
3FS=give-REL-IN   come.NV-NEG=3FS-remain-put-IRR-STI

màtʃ'ērēʃà-k'a yí=yirsì   bàrù-t=í
end(Amh)-IN        3FS=things   throw.away-ss=3FS

gābā-k'à (…)   nata-ka       daan    màkīnì-ka
market-IN         1SG-WITH      together car-IN

ʔyàrdù-tə       yí=yèè-k-ə
enter-ss         3FS=come.NV-REAL-STI

'We talked together in secret. She made an appointment (but) on the first appointment she gave, she <u>wouldn't</u> come. (…) In the end, she abandoned her things and entered a car with me on the market and she came.'

cf.yēē-r=í-kì-k-ə
come.NV-NEG=3FS-exist-REAL-STI

'she didn't come'


### 10.3.4    Optative

The Optative paradigm is defective and only exists for 3rd person. For other persons, Imperative-jussive is used. The Optative consists of a stem followed by a subject clitic, then the Optative marker **-s** and usually a stance marker. Example (32) illustrates a "H" verb stem and example (33) a "L" verb stem. The 3pl form is as a rule contracted to **-íʃ-ə** after the verb stem, as in (34). The **-ʃ** in the 3fs form may be a case of paradigmatic leveling; it is not phonologically conditioned.

(32)  3ms   **síís-á-s-ə**      'may he listen'
      3fs   **síís-í-ʃ-ə**      'may she listen'
      3pl   **síís-íʃì-ʃ-ə**    'may they listen'

(33)  3ms   **kāās-á-s-ə**      'may he play'
      3fs   **kāās-í-ʃ-ə**      'may she play'
      3pl   **kāās-íʃì-ʃ-ə**    'may they play'

(34)  syáák'-árá k'é-yʃ-ə
  give.birth-NEG remain-3PL.OPT-STI
  'may they not give birth'

The Optative is mainly used for blessing and cursing. Here are two more examples featuring the Optative:

(35)  ítí = kòòʂ-ə̀b bēz = á-ʂ-ə   ítí = nyààs-ə̀b
  2PL = farm-REL sprout = 3MS-<u>OPT</u>-STI 2PL = give.birth-REL

  āngūt' = á-ʂ-ə   ņ = ge-tə  ņ = wōōm-m̀
  grow.PASS = 3MS-<u>OPT</u>-STI 1SG = say-SS 1SG = dismiss-DS

  'saying "May what you cultivate be fertile, may what you birthed grow up," I blessed them;...'

(36)  únà-bààb  sām = á-ʂ-ə   íʃì = ge-t = íʃì
  long.ago-father remain = 3MS-<u>OPT</u>-STI 3PL = say-SS = 3PL

  háák'àstà  bāāb há = kì-ǹ  də̄d-n̄-s
  now    father 3MS = exist-DS child-DEF-M

  há-dèyg-ǹ-əra   bōysū úm-kì-b  tə-k-ə
  3MS.POSS-child.F-DEF-ACC dowry eat-exist-REL COP-REAL-STI

  'Saying: "May the past be gone," they now, the father being there, the son is the one who is eating the dowry of his daughter.'

### 10.3.5  Realis

The Realis marker is **-k**. It denotes situations which are 'actual' as opposed to hypothetical, potential etc. In other words, the Realis is used to assert that a state of affairs holds. Thus, the Realis marker, which in itself is unspecified for time, will not be used for future events, since these are not yet realised and cannot be asserted, however probable they may be. Non-future situations can be marked for Realis whether they denote past (37) or present (38) situations.

(37)  gàt'ār-k'à    íʃì = kì-bàstà ʂókú
  countryside(Amh)-IN 3PL = exist-WHILE Sheko

  íʃì = nòn-kì-k
  3PL = talk-exist-<u>REAL</u>

  'While they were in the countryside, they were speaking Sheko.'

(38)   háák'àstà    gōōrā-ka    íʃì=nòŋ-kì-k
        now            Amharic-WITH   3PL=talk-exist-<u>REAL</u>

     'Now they are talking in Amharic.'

When the emphasis lies on the truth value of the predicate or of the utterance, the subject clitic follows the verb stem, as in (39). This point is taken up in chapter 15 on subject clitics.

(39)   ʂókú    nòŋ=ṇ-k-ə
        Sheko   talk=1SG-REAL-STI

     'I do speak Sheko.'

The copula tə- most often takes the Realis marker; it cannot take the Irrealis marker. This is due to the nature of the copula. The function of the copula is to assert that the subject and copula complement are equatable and/or identify the same referent. See further section 10.7.

(40)   ń-kòòsù-ee        náta   kōynēb   dàdù   tə-<u>k</u>-ə
        1PL.POSS-tradition-STI   1PL     Koynəb   child   COP-<u>REAL</u>-STI

     'As for our tradition, we are the children of Koynəb.'

### 10.3.6   Obvious

In several interactive contexts, the suffix **-kn** was encountered. It is used to point out something which is considered obvious, as in the examples (41)-(42).

(41)   yīs     tə-ṇ    ṇ=ye-kǹ       mààkù-kì-<u>kn</u>
        DIST.M   COP-DS   1SG=2SG-DAT   tell-exist-<u>KNOWN</u>

     '(But) that is what I have told you/ That is just what I told you.'

(42)   àbēt         kyāāz-ǹ-s-o       yeta   gōntʃì
        INTJ(Amh)   lord-DEF-M-STI.ADDR   2SG    like

      kì-b    ītī    te-<u>kn</u>-o
      exist-REL  who   COP-<u>KNOWN</u>-STI.ADDR

     'Oh Lord, who is like you?' (from a church song)

It often conveys feelings such as surprise (43) or indignation (44). It can also be used by the speaker to observe that

something is as he expected it to be, e.g. a machine which has been fixed that works properly again (45).

(43) áz      ábsì   yeta-ra        bààs-ìn = á-<u>kn</u>-ya
    3MS     upward  2SG-ACC        want-go = 3MS-<u>KNOWN</u>-STD

'But he just went up searching you!' (Context: said when the addressee, coming down the hill, asked whether we had seen his friend.)

(44) baak-ǹ-s      m̩ = fyààn-kì-<u>kn</u>-yà
    yam-DEF-M     1SG = peel-exist-<u>KNOWN</u>-STD

'But I am peeling the yams!' (Context: father asked teenage daughter to do something for him. Similar situations rendered piqued or obstinate responses ending in -**kn-ya**.)

(45) bàʒ = á-<u>kn</u>
    work = 3MS-<u>KNOWN</u>

'It works.'

The use of -**kn** suggests that a speaker considers his proposition as generally known (or known by the addressee) rather than as new information, hence the gloss 'KNOWN'. The feelings of surprise or indignation probably originate from the mismatch between the expected knowledge of the speech participants and their words or actions which are not along the lines of expectation.

### 10.3.7     Viewpoint

The Viewpoint marker is -**s**. By uttering (46), the speaker says that he thinks, believes or takes the viewpoint that something is a problem. The combination of copula, Viewpoint marker and direct stance marker convey that the speaker perceives something as a problem.

(46) gáydú        tə-<u>s</u>-a
    problem      COP-<u>VIEWP</u>-STD

'It is a problem'

Thus, one does not use **təsa** to state a fact. Rather, the proposition is presented as a judgment or viewpoint of the speaker. One could say that the speaker finds it justified even

though it is not an objectively verifiable fact. The few examples in my corpus are all with the copula. It is always followed by the direct stance marker **-a**.

(47)  **myāng-ń-s**          **tə-s̲-a**
ancestral.spirit-DEF-M       COP-<u>VIEWP</u>-STD

'It is an ancestral spirit' (Context: said by a traditional leader. Belief in ancestral spirits is contested in the context of the story as well as by christianity, to which some of the audience have converted.)

(48)  **...yē   tə    ń=kīs         tə-s̲-a**
like.this  COP    1PL=exist.DIST.M  COP-<u>VIEWP</u>-STD

'… this is how we are/ were.' (Context: said by traditional leader after having told part of the Sheko history.)

The Viewpoint marker could be related to the Optative maker, since it is formally similar. Because of the limited data, this line of thought is not pursued further.

### 10.3.8    Implicative

There is one paradigm which came to my attention only when I could follow interactive conversation better. It ends in a lengthened **-a**. My language consultants, however, could hardly ever repeat a sentence with it. Luckily it is used in some of the transcribed stories. I have analysed it as a modal marker **-a** followed by a direct stance marker **-a**. Discussing these forms was very hard. I can only say that use of this form seems to bear unspoken implications, hence the label Implicative.

(49)  **yòwka ń-kày-ǹ-s**          **yīs-a**
INTJ    1PL.POSS-god-DEF-M        DIST.M-ACC

**ń=kōy-sē-s-ǹ**          **íʃi=sōg-ń-gy-á̲-a**
1PL=bring-see-CAUS-DS      3PL=see-MIDD?-say-<u>IMPLC</u>-STD

'After all, how can they tell us to bring and show our god to let them see it?'

(50)  íʃì-ra    yí=k'áám-á-m            ɳ̩=ge-tə        ɳ̩=íʃ-əra
     3PL-ACC  3FS=bring.up-put-IRR    1SG=say-SS    1SG=3FS-ACC

     kòy-k'y-a̲-a            áás    m̩=bāʒ-o
     bring-remain-<u>IMPL</u>-STD    how    1SG=work-STI.ADDR

     'Saying "She will raise them," I brought her (would you believe!).
     What can I do?' (Context: Said by a father after he discovers that the
     stepmother does not raise the children as she should, and does not
     give them food.)

(51)  wōs        m̩=bāʒ-o            máá=ń-kì-k-ə
     how(Bench)  1SG=work-STI.ADDR    eat.NEG=1PL-exist-REAL-STI

     íʃì=ge-t=íʃì    na-ɳ̩    māāk-m̄-bààb-a
     3PL=say-SS=3PL  1SG-DAT  tell-IRR-father-ACC

     íʃì=ʂòr-a-a
     3PL=fear-IMPLC-STD

     'What can I do? They are afraid to tell me that they haven't eaten.'
     (Context: idem.)

### 10.3.9    Imminence

To express the notion of imminence, Sheko uses a combination
of Realis and Irrealis, as in example (52), where the Irrealis
verb form is followed by **kì** 'be, exist, live' and the Realis
marker **-k**.

(52)  géék'ù-k'à      ɳ̩=ʔīn-ā-m-ə          kì-k
     goat-IN        1SG=go-put-IRR-STI    exist-REAL

     'I am on the point of going to the goats'

The addition of **kìk(ə)** asserts that what is still irreal (marked
by **-m**) and thus not asserted, is actually happening now, giving
a sense of imminence to the utterance. (See Bhat (1999:164) on
how languages tend to express complex notions in terms of
their prominent categories, i.e. as a combination of tenses, or of
aspects or of moods respectively.)

## 10.4  Aspect

In the aspectual slot in final (main) verbs, a restricted set of
auxiliary verbs occurs. The first two auxiliary verbs described
in this section are **ki** 'exist', which indicates Imperfective

aspect, and **k'é** 'be left, remain', indicating Perfective aspect. These occur with several modal markers. Furthermore, the form, meaning and distribution of the suffix **-a** is discussed, which occurs only in Irrealis contexts. In the negative, it combines with **k'é** 'remain'.

Other aspectual distinctions are expressed through serial verb constructions, such as Completive and Durative aspect (section 11.2.1).

### 10.4.1 Imperfective aspect

The verb **ki** 'exist, live, stay' is used as a main verb and as an auxiliary indicating Imperfective aspect. Its use as main verb is illustrated twice in (53).

(53)  **bēndū íʃì-kǹ  ʒaʒ-àb        kòòkǹ-k'à**
      Bəndu   3PL-DAT  be.good-REL    place-IN

      **íʃ=k͟ī-m-ə (…)íʃì-kǹ  gaatsa  kááy   kì-ǹtà**
      3PL=exist-IRR-STI       3PL-DAT  help    be.not  exist-COND

      **k͟ī-r=íʃì-k'y-á-m-ə**
      exist-NEG=3PL-remain-put-IRR-STI

      'The Bandu live at a place which is convenient for them. … If there is no help for them, they won't stay.'

Imperfective aspect is characterized as presenting a state of affairs as 'having internal structure' and being 'temporally unbounded' (cf. Comrie 1976; Bybee 1994; Dahl 1985 a.o.) The use of **ki** as an indicator of Imperfective aspect in Sheko is exemplified below. Its main function is to present a state of affairs denoted by the main verb as ongoing.

(54)  **bēk'ǹ-ka     gyāāsū-ka    ń=t͡ʂ'àdǹ-k͟ì-k**
      spear-COOR    shield-COOR   1PL=fight.MIDD-exist-REAL
      'We were fighting with spear and shield.'

(55)     **gàt'ār-k'à**              **íʃì = kì-bàstà**    **ṣókú**
         countryside(Amh)-IN        3PL = exist-WHILE   S'oku

         **íʃì = nòn-k̲ì̲-k**          **háák'àstà**      **gōōrā-ka**
         3PL = talk-<u>exist</u>-REAL       now              Amharic-WITH

         **íʃì = nòn-k̲ì̲-k**
         3PL = talk-<u>exist</u>-REAL

         'While they lived in the countryside, they were speaking Sheko. Now (living in town) they are talking in Amharic.'

**ki** 'exist' as indicator of Imperfective aspect occurs also with cognition verbs to indicate the state:

(56)     **ṇ = t'ùùs-kì-k-ə**
         1SG = know-<u>exist</u>-REAL-STI

         'I know'

(57)     **nát**     **aru-kì-b-kǹ**         **k'ōys-ñ-s**
         1PL      think-<u>exist</u>-REL-DAT     different-DEF-M

         'it is different from what we think'

(58)     **bāār-īn-ə**       **únà**    **yááb**   **yí = ṣòrù-kì-k-ə**
         maiden-F.DEF-STI   long.ago   man    3FS = be.afraid-<u>exist</u>-REAL-STI

         'A girl, in the past she was afraid of men.'

### 10.4.2     Perfective aspect

Perfective aspect is characterized as presenting as state of affairs as 'a single unanalysable whole' and 'temporally bounded' (cf. Comrie 1976; Dahl 1985; Bybee 1994). In Sheko, the verb **k'é** 'be left, remain' is used to portray a state of affairs as discontinuous, i.e. (one of) its boundaries is important. In the examples below, it indicates that the state of affairs held in the past but does not hold anymore (59), or not yet (60).

(59)     **únà**     **àwrājà**        **k'oy**   **ń = kì-k'e-k-ə**
         long.ago   awraja(Amh)     one     1PL = exist-<u>remain</u>-REAL-STI

         'Long ago we lived in one *awraja* (administrative region which does not exist anymore).'

(60)  yēsùs  há=ṣúb-t=á          há=k'áy-á-m-ə
      Jesus  3MS=die-SS=3MS      3MS=rise-put-IRR-STI

      gè-t'ù-ky-àb   noog-n̄-s        yīz      íʃì-kǹ   árà-k'à
      say-PASS-exist-REL thing-DEF-M   DIST.M   3PL-DAT  thought-IN

      kááy    há=k'e-k-ə
      be.not  3MS=<u>remain</u>-REAL-STI

      'the word saying 'Jesus will die and rise,' was not in their mind yet.'

Aklilu (1988) has analysed **k'é** 'be left, remain' as a remote past marker. Some examples, such as (61), agree with that analysis. However, **k'é** also occurs with future time reference as shown in examples (62)-(63) below.

(61)  yeta   únà           náta-ra         kār-k'à
      2SG    long.ago      1PL-ACC         forest-IN

      ha=bàrù-k'e-k-ə
      2SG=throw.away-<u>remain</u>-REAL-STI

      'Long ago, you have left us in the forest.' (Context: the abandoned children who say this, have now established a prosperous home.)

(62)  īy    yòwk'a        t'ōsk'n̄-ārā      há=<u>k'é</u>-m-ə
      house INTJ          leak-NEG         3MS=<u>remain</u>-IRR-STI

      íírú-ástà        ás-k'à  ʔyārd-ārā     há=k'é-m-ə
      rain-3MS.COP?    3MS-IN  enter-NEG     3MS=<u>remain</u>-IRR-STI

      'Well, the house will not leak. The rain will not enter it' (Context: text about how to build a house. This sentence is said immediately after the part on thatching the roof.)

(63)  tááf-ár=á-k'é-ǹ             k'íṣ-ə
      cool.down-NEG=3MS-<u>remain</u>-DS   drink-STI

      'Drink before it cools down!'

**k'é** 'be left, remain' is only used as an auxiliary verb.[28] The backtranslation of my language consultants into Amharic is **qärra**. In the Amharic dictionary of Leslau (1976) **qärra** is described with "be left, remain, be missing, be absent, absent oneself, stay away, be cancelled (meeting), be omitted, be no

---

[28] In Guraferda, **k'e** is used more frequently than in Sheko and it may occur as main verb.

longer in existence, go out of use, die out (of custom), be called off". The semantic component 'be no longer in existence, remain (behind)' may be pertinent for its use as Perfective and contrasts with Imperfective **ki** 'exist, live'. The semantic component 'remain, continue to be' may be particularly noticeable in the use of **k'e** in prohibitives. Prohibitives or negative imperatives consist of a negative followed by an imperative verb form of **k'é** 'be left, remain'. In order to form a prohibitive, use of **k'é** is mandatory.

(64) **kōb-ārā**        **k'é-ə**
     take-NEG          <u>remain</u>-STI
     'Don't take!'

(65) **na-ɳ̀**        **haay-k'à**      **kēw-ārā**       **k'é-ít**
     1SG-DAT        ear-IN          shout-NEG        <u>remain</u>-PL.ADDR
     'Don't shout in my ear (pl)!'

The two verbs **ki** 'exist' indicating Imperfective and **k'é** 'be left, remain' indicating Perfective aspect are the only two verbs which can occur after a negative verb. As the negative verb itself never suffixes modal or clausal markers, these markers are attached to the auxiliary verb, e.g. the conditional marker (66) or Irrealis marker (66)-(67).

(66) **yénʈʂ'à**        **há=āāt-ārā**      **kì-ǹtà**       **m-árá**
     avoidance        3MS=hold-NEG       <u>exist</u>-COND     eat-NEG

     **há=k'é-m-ə**
     3MS=<u>remain</u>-IRR-STI

     'If he was not avoiding sexual contact, he could not eat (the milk at that time).'

(67) **kááy**   **yí=kī-m-ə**
     be.not   3FS=<u>exist</u>-IRR-STI
     'She is probably not there/ She might be absent.'

### 10.4.3    The suffix -a in Irrealis forms

The suffix **-a** is a marker which occurs preceding the Irrealis marker **-m**, and it can be analysed in several ways. It has no

inherent tone but copies the tone of the preceding verb stem. It is glossed put, since it possibly derives from the verb **án** 'put'.

(68)  **há-bàáb**      **katʃi**   **há=yáán-á-m-ə**
      3MS.POSS-father     yam      3MS=plant.yam-put-IRR-STI

      'He would plant his fathers' yams.' (Context: talking about behavior of young men in a traditional setting.)

The suffix **-a** usually occurs together with the Irrealis marker, but both do occur separately. In questions, the Irrealis marker **-m** is dropped, but the **-a** remains (69b). Furthermore, the Irrealis marker occurs alone in other contexts such as in Irrealis complements (70).

(69)  a.   **ás-ka**        **há=fāy-ā-m-ə**
           3MS-WITH         3MS=heal-put-IRR-STI

           'he will be healed with it'

      b.   **ás-ka**        **há=fāy-ā**
           3MS-WITH         3MS=heal-put[Q]

           'will he be healed with it?'

(70)  **há=tə́g-m-bàáb**
      3MS=go-IRR-father

      'that he will go'

With a small number of verbs, a semantic contrast is found between verb forms with and without the **-a** suffix (71). However, these verbs all have a non-velar stem, and the change in verb stems is concomitant with the presence or absence of the suffix. Given the semantics of both forms, the meaning difference likely derives from the velar : non-velar stem opposition. As section 10.5 demonstrates, velar stems are associated with (stronger) assertion.

(71)  a.   **ń=séé-m-ə**
           1PL=see.NV-IRR-STI

           'we will see' (less likely)

      b.   **ń=ség-a-m-ə**
           1PL=see-put-IRR-STI

           'we will see' (more likely)

Furthermore, in negative verb forms, the suffix **-a** can only be combined with the Perfective marker **k'é** 'remain' and the Irrealis marker -**m**. An example is given in (72).

(72) **há-bààb**    **katʃi**    **yáán-árá**    **há = k'y-á-m-ə**
     3MS.POSS-father   yam    plant.yam-NEG   3MS = remain-put-IRR-STI
     'He will (would) not plant his fathers' yams.'

For contexts like (72) and (73), my language consultants said on various occasions there was no meaning difference between forms with **k'yá** and forms with **k'é** 'be left, remain'. It might be that **k'é** is a shorter form of **k'yá**, but note that in e.g. prohibitives only **k'é** is acceptable and it is not interchangeable with **k'yá**. Also, my language consultants never substituted the one for the other when we went through the process of transcribing a text or when they had to repeat a sentence.

(73)   a.    **yēē-r = í-k'y-á-m-ə**
           come.NV-NEG = 3FS-remain-put-IRR-STI
           'she would not come'

      b.    **yēē-r = í-k'é-m-ə**
           come.NV-NEG = 3FS-remain-IRR-STI
           'she would not come'

As the suffix **-a** does not noticeably add meaning, the first question is whether it is not part of the Irrealis marking itself. This analysis is problematic because it allows the allomorphs -**am** ~ -**m** ~-**a**, and poses the question why the Irrealis -**am** would become -**m** in one environment and -**a** in another. In addition, other modal markers do not have the form -VC, nor do they display such variation.

Since the Imperfective and Perfective markers **ki** and **k'é** are verbal, it is logical to assume a verbal origin for the suffix -**a** as well. There are two candidates. First, the Diizi verb **am** 'to become', which is used in Diizi as a lexical verb (Beachy 2005) as well as in a construction meaning 'to be on the point of, going to do something' according to Tamrat (1988:27f). In Nayi, **am** is used as 'Present/Future' marker (Aklilu 1997:610). In

Sheko, **am** 'become' as a lexical verb is only used in the idiomatic expression in (74); otherwise the root **foot** 'become, happen' is used.

(74)  **yír = a**          **àm**
     what = 2SG          become[Q]

     'What have you become?' i.e. 'are you crazy?'

It is evident that **am** 'become' grammaticalizes in the Majoid languages. A sign of grammaticalization could be the loss of lexical tone of the suffix -a in Sheko. In spite of the problem mentioned above, the verb **am** 'become' could have given rise to the Irrealis marking by **-am** ~ **-m** ~**-a**.

Secondly, the suffix -a could originate in the verb **án** 'put', which is a full lexical verb in Sheko (75), and is furthermore used as a future/ imperfect auxiliary in the Guraferda variant. **án** in Guraferdan Sheko often co-occurs with **ki** 'exist' (76a, d), but not always (b, c); following a vowel, however, its own vowel **a** is dropped rather than the vowel of the preceding verb (c, d). Being used in Guraferda, the verb **án** 'put' is a bit "closer to home" than the Dizoid verb **am** 'become'.

(75)  **yí = kóy-tə**      **yí = tāāmū-k'à**          **an-tə**
     3FS = bring-SS      3FS = fire-IN          <u>put</u>-SS

     'she brought it and she put it on the fire…'

(76)  a.  **byana**          **saaya**  **gants-an-ki**    **dyan-s**
         tomorrow          fable    tell-<u>put</u>-exist    child.DEF-M

         'the child who will tell a story tomorrow'

     b.  **ʒeenʃ  há = faar-an-s-ə**
         good      3MS = become-<u>put</u>-DECL-STI

         'It will become nice.'

     c.  ** m̩ = boru-saku-te-n-s-ə**
         1SG = finish-arrive-go-<u>put</u>-DECL-STI

         'I will move to him.' (Context: a dog leaves a lion to go and live with an elephant.)

     d.  **ín = ye-n-ki-s**
         3PL = come-<u>put</u>-exist-DECL

         'they will come'

In this thesis the last solution is followed, without claiming it is more likely than the other.

As for the negative verb forms, such as in (77), it is possible to take the sequence **k'yá** as a whole, and relate it to the Diizin verb **k'ya** 'leave'. However, this verb has no apparent grammatical function in Diizin or Nayi. In Sheko, **k'yá** 'leave' is not found as a lexical verb (cf. **sam** 'leave behind'). If this suggestion would be followed, polarity becomes an issue in the description of aspect markers: **k'yá** would occur only in negative utterances, while the suffix **-a** would only in non-negative utterances. Since there is no evidence in Sheko itself for this line of thought, it is discarded and **k'yá** is always glossed as **k'y-á** remain-put in this thesis.

(77)  **há-bààb**          **katʃi**    **yáán-árá**       **há=k'y-á-m-ə**
     3MS.POSS-father   yam   plant.yam-NEG   3MS=remain-put-IRR-STI

     'He will (would) not plant his fathers' yams.' (=(72))

## 10.5   Verb stem alternation

### 10.5.1      Stem alternation in Sheko

In some paradigms, the verb root of a number of verbs is obligatorily changed. The change involves a final velar consonant. An example is given in (78) below. For ease of reference, the stems are called velar and non-velar respectively; the non-velar stem is glossed NV. These segmental alternations of the root do not affect the inherent lexical meaning of the verb. Note that only a small subset of verbs have two stems. [29]

(78)  b.    **yèg=íʃì-k-ə**
         come=3PL-REAL-STI

         'they came'

     c.    **íʃì=yēē-tə**
         3PL=come.NV-SS

         'they will come and…'

---

[29] These verbs are listed in (86)-(88) below.

The selection of the velar or non-velar stem is determined mostly by the morphological environment. Factors which play a role in the selection are the TAM paradigm, the position of the verb stem (i.e, whether it occurs as the final or non-final stem in a series), and the structural position of subject clitic. The use of the velar and non-velar stem does not correspond to the tonal division of paradigms. The non-velar stem is used

- before the negative -**ara**
- before the same subject converb -**tə**
- as first member in verb-verb compound stems
- in Realis forms if the subject clitic precedes it
- in Irrealis forms if the Irrealis marker -**m** follows directly

Example (79) illustrates the non-velar stem in negatives.

(79)  a.  **īy-tà**          **sā-ārā**
          house-LOC       arrive.NV-NEG

          'he didn't arrive home'

          cf. **sak** 'arrive, reach'

      b.  **téé-rá**         **k'é**
          go.NV-NEG       remain

          'don't go!'

          cf. **tə́g** 'go'

The two examples below show that the velar stem is employed preceding a different subject marker, whether the final (main) verb has Realis or Irrealis marking or whether the state of affairs is more or less likely to occur (80). In contrast, the non-velar stem is always employed preceding the same subject marker (81).

(80)  a.  **íʃì = təg-ǹ**      **há = íʃì-kǹ**      **àtsù-k**
          3PL = go-DS        3MS = 3PL-DAT       give-REAL

          'they went; he gave it to them.'

      b.  **íʃì = təg-ǹ**      **há = íʃì-kǹ**      **gātsn-ā-m-ə**
          3PL = go-DS        3MS = 3PL-DAT       help-put-IRR-STI

          'they will go; he will help them'

(81)  a.  **éná**      **ha=téé-t=a**       **ha=bángár-â**
          later.today   2SG=go.NV-SS=2SG   2SG=return-put.Q
          'will you go and return today?'

     b.  **ṇ=tee-t=ṇ**        **ṇ=ás-a**       **òṣkù-k**
          1SG=go.NV-SS=1SG     1SG=3MS-ACC     call-REAL
          'I went and called him'

Here are two examples from stories featuring the velar and
non-velar stems of **koyg** 'to bring'.

(82)  **íʃ=kì-ǹ**        **yí=kòyg-ǹ**      **wúʃa**   **bokṇ**
      3PL=exist-DS      3FS=<u>bring</u>-DS     IDEO    time

      **íʃì=ʔúm-kī-bààstà**
      3PL=eat-exist-WHILE

      '…they lived there; she brought (the milk); while they were eating it
      for many days,…'

(83)  **íʒ**      **háánháánùbe**   **bìy-əra**       **yaafu-tə**
      3FS       bird.of.prey.sp    feather-ACC      find-SS

      **p'űtʃ'a**        **kòy-tə**        **yí=sàskù-tə**
      many.ELAT        <u>bring</u>.NV-SS      3FS=arrive.CAUS-SS

      '…she found feathers of a *haanhaanube* bird and brought a lot and
      displayed them and…'

With some moods, however, there is a slight difference in
meaning between verb forms with a velar or non-velar stem.
The two sentences in example (84) have both the Irrealis
marker, but when sentence (b) is uttered, it is less likely to
happen (soon). In this sentence the Irrealis marker immediately
follows the verb stem.

(84)  a.  **ítí-datà**       **ṇ=yēg-ā-m-ə**
          2PL.POSS-near.LOC 1SG=come-put-IRR-STI
          'I will visit you'

     b.  **ítí-datà**       **ṇ=yēē-m-ə**
          2PL.POSS-near.LOC 1SG=come.NV-IRR-STI
          'I will visit you'

With the Realis marker (85), the non-velar stem is obligatorily used when the subject clitic precedes it, whereas the velar stem must be used when the subject clitic follows it. The latter form can be used for polarity focus on the verb/ predicate. Thus, it seems that there is a slight preference for the velar stem to be used in states of affair which are more asserted.

(85)  a.    **ń=see-k-ə**
            1PL-see.NV-REAL-STI

            'we saw it'

      b.    **səg=ń-k-ə**
            see=1PL-REAL-STI

            'we saw it, we *did* see it'

The following verbs have alternating stems[30]:

(86)  *velar stem*     *non-velar stem*
      **sak**          **sā**          'arrive'
      **koyg**         **kōy**         'bring'
      **eg**           **ēē**          'do'
      **yəg**          **yēē**         'come'
      **sə́g**          **séé**         'see'
      **tə́g**          **téé**         'go'

A velar **-k** also appears in the following derived adjectives:

(87)  **sár**   'become hot'  **sārkn̄s**   'hot'
      **fay**   'be saved'    **fāykn̄s**   'healed, well'
      **máʃ**   'be brave'    **māʃkǹs**   'courageous'

The following list contains all verb stems in my corpus which end in CC with the last consonant being a velar. A non-velar stem is not recorded for them, but because of the last consonant (some of) these verb stems might be frozen velar stems.

---

[30] The verb **kob** 'take' probably also has a non-velar stem too, which is **koo**, but it is attested sporadically in Irrealis verb forms only, not in other verb forms. Example: **há-fòòt-ǹtà fōōt-ə̄rā há=kì-ǹtà k'arà ɳ=kōō-m-ə** 3MS=happen-COND happen-NEG 3MS=exist-COND INCL 1SG=take.NV-IRR-STI 'Whether it happens or not, I will accept it.'

(88)  udg      'become night'
      yádk     'stir'
      tuʃk     'collide'
      ʂóóp'k'   'yawn'
      dark'    'be cut into pieces'
      hark     'respect a taboo'
      kírk'    'bend'
      k'árk    'wrap around'
      ork'     'peel'
      p'urk'   'be uprooted'
      ʃérk'    'bring maize into the house'
      t'erk    'shove, push forward'
      besk     'divide'
      dyask    'relocate goods'
      físk     'spatter'
      fosk'    'skin'
      gásk     'insult'
      kásk     'be cheerful'
      k'éʃk    'stab with a finger/ knuckles'
      oʂk      'call'
      ʃiʃk     'be tasty'
      wusk     'enter'
      wuʂk     'untie'
      bonk'    'burn (intr.)'
      dónk'    'dip into'
      gink'    'doze, nod off'
      núnk'    'suck'
      ʃonk'    'lie'
      ʂónk     'mince, crunch'
      wunk'    'steal'
      yánk'    'be angry'

Finally, the verb 'to go' has a suppletive stem **in**. The stems **in** and **təg** can be used interchangeably in most cases.

(89)  Basic         **in**
      Non-Factual   **téé**
      Factual       **təg**

### 10.5.2    Velar alternation in other Omotic languages

The velar alternation in Sheko resembles the situation in Benchnon, although there are differences as well. A comparison on this point between the two languages can contribute to the research of the velar stems in Omotic.

In Sheko, the velar stem occurs in the Basic paradigm (Imperative singular and Jussive) as well as Factual paradigms such as Realis. The non-velar stem occurs among others in the negative paradigm. The division of paradigms into three groups, Basic, Factual and Non-Factual, is based on tone. All Factual paradigms are <u>underlined</u> and all Non-Factual paradigms in *italic*. If the form does not differ from the Basic stem, it is in normal font.

(90)    Sheko verb classes and stems

|  | L | | H | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basic | kaas | sak | síís | sə́g |
| Non-Factual | *kāās* | *sā* | *síís* | *séé* |
| Factual | <u>kààs</u> | <u>sàk</u> | <u>siis</u> | <u>səg</u> |
|  | 'play' | 'arrive' | 'listen' | 'see' |

In Benchnon, the Basic stem is mainly used in Imperative singular. (If a form does not differ from the Basic stem, it is unmarked.) The velar stem is called Factual stem and occurs among others in the Perfective and on the story line in clause chains, but also in Imperfective compound paradigms (they are <u>underlined</u> in verb class 2 and 4). The other derived stem is called Non-Factual and occurs mainly in negatives and the Future (the *italic* stems in class 3 and 4). The division into three groups of paradigms in Benchnon is based on the segmental-tonal alternations.

(91)    Benchnon verb classes and stems[31]

|  | 1 | 2 | 2a | 3 | 4 | 4a |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basic | kìt | háys | dúb | sōt | hām | sīp |
| Non-Factual | kìt | háys | dúb | *sót* | *hám* | *síp* |
| Factual | kìt | <u>háys-k</u> | <u>dúg</u> | sōt | <u>hānk'</u> | <u>sīk</u> |

---

[31] Data taken from Rapold (2006: 265ff). **kìt** 'draw water'; **háys** 'plait'; **dúb** 'tread, dance'; **sōt** 'suspend'; **hām** 'go'; **sīp** 'sew'. I have left out two additional small classes with exceptions to class 3 and 4 for the sake of clarity.

An important difference is that Benchnon has a large class of verbs (class 1), which has just one unchanging stem. Also, tone changes take place only in two classes (3,4), in the Non-Factual stem. In contrast, Sheko has tone changes across the board, in the Non-Factual as well as the Factual stem. (This is why the division in groups of paradigms is based purely on tone in Sheko, but on segmental-tonal alternations in Benchnon.)

The two languages are similar in that Non-Factual (if present) has a higher tone than Factual. Furthermore, in both languages the segmentally more complex stems have a final velar consonant, i.e the velar is added.

Irregular stem-final velars have been reported for several Omotic languages. Hayward (1996) proposed that the ideosyncratic velars are traces of an old perfective marker. Azeb (2001:100) states for Maale that the velar 'seems to be a relic of a once productive derivational morpheme', linked to (the degree of involvement in) causation. Rapold (2006: 274-282), writing on Benchnon, suggests a 'very close link between middle verb semantics and the distribution of the velar stem extension', but leaves open 'whether it is a Perfective marker restricted to middle verbs or rather a derivation marker (…) for middles' (281-282).

In Sheko, the causative can be built on a velar stem, as in (92) on the stem **sak** 'arrive, reach' (metathesis applies). However, not all causatives are built on the velar stem: **se-s** 'show' is built on the non-velar stem **séé** 'see' (velar stem **sə́g**). No decisive arguments can be given for an analysis of the velar as a derivational marker or a perfective (inflectional) marker.

(92)  **há=sàk-ǹ**      **íʃì=má**         **íʃì=fùr-t'-àb-a**
      3MS=arrive-DS    3PL=earlier.today   3PL=trade-PASS-REL-ACC

      **sàsk-ǹ**
      arrive.CAUS-DS

      'He arrived; they brought out what they had just bought,…'

### 10.6  Subject clitics

The subject clitics are given in (93) below, with for each person a proclitic and enclitic form. The only difference between these is that the proclitic forms have an initial (albeit weak) consonant where enclitics have an initial vowel. Thus, the observation is reinforced that in Sheko, word-initially CV is obligatory[32] (cf. section 2.5.1).

(93)  1sg  ŋ̩=    =ŋ̩     1pl  ń=    =ń
      2sg  ha=   =a      2pl  ítʃí=  =ítʃí
      3ms  há=   =á      3pl  íʃí=   =íʃí
      3fs  yí=   =í

The subject clitics are co-referent with the subject of the clause. The subject clitic can co-occur with a subject noun phrase (94) or pronoun (95) (rare). A subject clitic is sufficient in itself without explicitly mentioned subject. E.g. example (96) is a complete sentence.

(94)  **yí=bārkāy-ǹ**          **k'ay-tə**
      3FS=monkey.F-DEF         rise-SS

      '…the monkey rose and…'

(95)  **ha=yeta**     **yòwk'a**     **fín-yēg-ń**         **há=ʔáz**
      2SG=2SG         INTJ          descend-come-DS       3MS=3MS

      **kēēs-téé-t=á**
      go.out-come.NV-SS=3MS

      '… and well, you come down; he climbs up and he…'

(96)  **ʃə́t'ì-ra**     **yí=gààm-àtsù-k-ə**
      maize-ACC        3FS=roast.ripe-give-REAL-STI

      'She roasted maize and gave it.'

The subject clitic may cliticize to any constituent in relation to information structure. This topic is discussed at length in chapter 15, along with other observations on subject clitics. The label 'clitic' is chosen because the element cannot be uttered on its own, but is dependent on another element for its

---

[32] Following chapter 2, glottal stop is not written word-initially. Hence, **ítʃí=** stands for [ʔítʃí=]. Initial syllabic nasals allow variation [ ʔŋ̩ ] ∼ [ ŋ̩ ].

pronunciation; and it appears at both edges of the verb word and many other types of words. Its position is not determined by syntax but by (syntactic-)pragmatic considerations. No theoretical claims are intended by the use of the term clitic.

## 10.7 Copula

The copula verb in Sheko is **tə**. As a final verb, it occurs with modal markers belonging to the Factual paradigms, such as the Realis (97), Obvious (98) and Viewpoint (99) modal markers, as well as with negation (100). It cannot occur with the modal markers from the Non-Factual paradigms. This is obviously due to the nature of the copula. The copula is used for equation or identification, and it asserts that the subject and copula complement are equatable and/or identify the same referent.

(97) a.      **ha-naanu**      **gēbērì**      **tə**
            2SG.POSS-elder.brother      farmer(Amh)      COP[Q]
            'Is/ was your brother a farmer?'

       b.      **ṇ-naanu**      **kōmtū tə-k-ə**
            1SG.POSS-elder.brother      chief      COP-REAL-STI
            'My brother is/ was a chief.'

(98) **yīs**      **tə-kn**
     DIST.M      COP-KNOWN
     'This is it (obviously)'

(99) **gáydú**      **tə-s̱=a**
     problem      COP-VIEWP-STD
     'It is a problem (according to me)'

(100) **háák'àstà**      **ha-datà**      **kì-b-ee**
      now      2SG.POSS-near.LOC exist-REL-STI

       **ha-nàs̱à**      **té-rée**
       2SG.POSS-husband COP-NEG.STI
       'The one which is with you now, it is not your husband.'

Example (101) illustrates that the copula cannot be followed by the Irrealis marker. If one wants to express an equation with

Irrealis reference, one uses the verb **foot** 'to become, to happen', as in (102).

(101) **\*ha-nini**          **gēbe**    **tə-m-ə**
      2SG.POSS-elder.sister          queen    COP-IRR-STI

      (intended 'Your sister will/ could be a queen')

(102) **yeta**    **kyāz**    **ha＝fōōt-ā-m-ə**
      2SG      king      3MS＝become-put-IRR-STI

      'You will/ could be (become) king.'

Here are examples of the copula as a medial verb.

(103) **ş̌óóz̧**    **tə-t＝á**          **há＝téé-kì-bààstà**
      snake    COP-SS＝3MS      3MS＝go.NV-exist-WHILE

      'There was a snake and while he went along,...' (Lit. 'It was a snake... Context: first sentence of a fable.)

(104) **íʃì＝bàʒù-sàsk-àb**      **tə-ǹ**    **k'oys-ǹ-s**
      3PL＝work-arrive.CAUS-REL    COP-DS    other-DEF-M

      **íʃì＝óóf-ḿ-bààb**        **kááy**
      3PL＝dress-IRR-father      be.not

      'it is what they made; there was nothing else which they could wear'

The copula is not obligatorily present.

(105) **yīz**    **bádìgǹ ìy**
      DIST.M    Badign   house

      'This (is) Badign's house.'

(106) **maayà ge-t'-àb**      **ts'ēts'ì-ka**      **bàʒ-t'ù-kì-b**
      maaya  say-PASS-REL      grass.sp-WITH      work-PASS-exist-REL

      'The (thing) called *maaya* (was) something made of grass' (Context: a cape used as a raincoat)

The stance marker may attach to the predicate nominal, as in (107)-(108). The stance marker can attach to all utterance final elements (see section 10.2).

(107)  **t'yáárà-ə**
gourd.half-STI

'(It is) a gourd half.' (Context: answer to the question 'What is it?'. Formerly, men drunk from a type of gourd cups, while the women used clay cups.)

(108)  **ņ̩-sumà      bádìgǹ-ə**
1SG.POSS-name    Badign-STI

'My name (is) Badign.' (Context: The interlocutor didn't understand properly; the speaker repeats her name.)

The same-subject marker is formally identical to the copula. However, they are very different structurally, at least synchronically: the copula can be considered a verb and occurs where verb stems occur, whereas the same-subject marker always occupies a slot following the verb stem (109). The two morphemes can follow each other (110).

(109)  **há=sàw-tə    kéta    kòb-tə**
3MS=arrive.NV-SS  all    take-SS

'he arrived and took everything and…'

(110)  **kútʃì  bay    tə-tə    yí-nàs̩à      kòòbù-ra**
chicken  mother  COP-SS  3FS.POSS-husband cock

**gasku-tə**
insult-SS

'There was (Lit: It was) a hen and she insulted her husband the cock and…' (Context: first stentence of a story.)

The copula is also used in cleft constructions (111)-(113). The following verb is not relativised. Cleft constructions are discussed in section 15.5.1.

(111)  **yááb  t=á      kūʃ-ā-m-ə      wōbā**
man    COP=3MS  be.sick-put-IRR-STI  malaria(Amh)

**há-gərì      kūʃ-ērēe**
3MS.POSS-head  be.sick-NEG.STI

'A PERSON becomes sick. Malaria itself doesn't become sick.' (Context: The Sheko of the researcher was corrected.)

(112) a.    **áás = ṇ**      **ṇ = ēg-o**
         how = 1SG      1SG = do-STI.ADDR
         'what shall I do?'

      b.    **áás-t = ṇ**      **ṇ = ēg-o**
         how-COP = 1SG    1SG = do-STI.ADDR
         'what shall I do?'

(113)   **ōtì**    **k'íṣ-kì-b-īs**        **hāāy**   **tə**    **há = ge-t'ù**
       cow    drink-exist-REL-DIST.M    water   COP    3MS = say-PASS.Q
       'Is this what the cows drink called WATER?' (Context: talking about water containing minerals called *ṣaad*)

## 10.8   Existential

This section briefly touches upon existential, locative and possessive predication. The existential verb in Sheko is **ki** 'exist, live, be'. It functions as main verb (114) and as Imperfective aspect marker (see section 10.4.1). Existential clauses assert the presence of something and can be used to introduce referents (101). Existential main clauses often have 3ms agreement, also for plural referents, as in (116) and (117).

(114)   **haz-k'a**      **yí = kì-k'e-k-ə**
       PROX.M-IN     3FS = exist-remain-REAL-STI
       'She has been here.'/ 'She lived here.'

(115)   **gyānū**   **kì = á-k-ə**
       coffee     exist = 3MS-REAL-STI
       'There is coffee.'

(116)   **sīnì**        **kūbm̄**   **kì = á-k-ə**
       cup(Amh)    four     exist = 3MS-REAL-STI
       'There's four cups.'

(117)   **dādū**   **t'āāgì**   **íʃ-kì**    **kì = á-k-ə**
       child    two     3FS-DAT   exist = 3MS-REAL-STI
       'She has two children.' (Lit: there's two children to her.)

Locative and Possessive predication appears to be modeled on existential predication. A locative clause also uses the verb **ki**

'exist' and contains a noun phrase marked by the inessive case marker **-k'à** (for 'containment') or the locative case marker **-tà** (for a more general location).

(118)  a.  **kūrfī**　　　**boʈʂà-k'à**　　**kì̠=á-k-ə**
　　　　　key(Amh)　　mud.shelf-IN　　exist=3MS-REAL-STI
　　　　　'The key is on the shelf.'

　　　b.  **k'ááʈʂ'ù**　　　**ēēd-kì̠ básń-tà**　　　**kì̠=á-k**
　　　　　army.ant　　　door-DAT doorstep-LOC　　exist=3MS-REAL
　　　　　'There are ants near the door.'

　　　c.  **gōydù　kār-k'à**　　　**há=kì̠y-ǹ**
　　　　　guereza　forest-IN　　　3MS=exist-DS

　　　　　**n̠=see-k-ə**
　　　　　1SG=see.NV-REAL-STI

　　　　　'I saw a guereza monkey in the forest.' (Lit: there was a guereza in the forest; I saw it.)

In possessive predication, the possessor NP is in the dative case and the possessum NP occurs as the subject of the predicate. In the predicative possession construction, only the possessum can be the grammatical subject. It is possible to change the order of possessor and possessum, but this does not affect the grammatical marking (119)-(120).

(119)  **gyānū íʃi-kì̠**　　　　**kì̠=á-k-ə**
　　　　coffee　3PL-DAT　　　　exist=3MS-REAL-STI
　　　　'They have coffee.' (Lit: there is coffee to them.)

(120)  **m̠-baad-ǹ-s-kì̠**　　　　　　　**gyānū　p'útʃ'á　kì̠=á-k**
　　　　1SG.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M-DAT coffee　many　exist=3MS-REAL
　　　　'My brother has a lot of coffee.'

Interestingly, the subject cannot be marked for definiteness, as shown in example (103). Asymmetry in definiteness between possessor and possessum is to be expected (cf. Heine 1997:30).

(121)  ?***gyān-ī̠-s**　　　**m̠-baad-ǹ-s-kì̠**　　　　　　　**kì̠=á-k**
　　　　coffee-DEF-M　　1SG.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M-DAT exist=3MS-REAL
　　　　int. 'The coffee is to my brother', i.e. 'the coffee belongs to my brother.'

The systematic absence of definiteness marking on the subject constituent in possssive predication is related to the type of construction and its function. Possessive predication typically asserts possession, whereas in attributive possession the possession is typically presupposed (Heine 1997:26). Thus, in possessive predication the possessum is presented as existing in relation to a referent (the possessor). Likewise, existential predication characteristically introduces a referent and is not normally used to predicate about a given or known referent. Inessive and locative case are treated in section 9.2.5. Possession is further treated in section 9.3.

## 10.9   Verb phrase and word order

Sheko is strictly verb-final in dependent as well as in main clauses. Regarding clauses with full NPs, the dominant word order is SOV (122), but OSV is possible too (123). Word order varies for Direct and Indirect Object (124)-(125), as well as for the place of oblique constituents (126).

(122)   **bārkāy-m̀**       **tāām-m̄-s**       **kòb-tə**
       monkey.F-DEF      fire-DEF-M       take-SS
       'the monkey took the fire and…'

(123)   **há=şóóẓ-ń-s-ara**       **yáb-m̀-s**       **dufu-t=á**
       3MS=snake-DEF-M-ACC      man-DEF-M       hit-SS=3MS

       **wuş-m̀**
       kill-DS
       'the man hit the snake and killed it;…'

(124)   **yí=fārā-n-s-əra**       **ás-km̀**   **àtsù-tə**
       3FS=horse-DEF-M-ACC      3MS-DAT   give-SS
       'she gave the horse to him and…'

(125)   **ás-km̀**   **fāāfā-ka**       **áámà-ka**       **k'áʃù**       **àts-m̀**
       3MS-DAT   papaya-COOR      yam.sp-COOR     hanging.fruit?    give-DS
       'and gave him papaya and *aama* yams and tree-fruits,…'

(126)  íʃ-kɲ̀    báátʃí-ra        kyānū batà   sìɩ̀p'ù-tə
       3FS-DAT skin-ACC        dog   on.LOC sew-SS

       íʃ-kɲ̀    kum-k'à          gyādū an-tə
       3FS-DAT neck-IN          rope  put-SS

       'sewed her skin on the dog and put a rope around her neck and…'

In the few instances that a constituent follows the verb, it is best analysed as an afterthought, as it is preceded by a pause. In (127), the afterthought clarifies to which place the first Sheko chief Koynəb came. This place was already mentioned in the preceding discourse.

(127)  … koynəb       yèè-k |        egità
       Koynəb        come-REAL      Egita

       '… and Koynəb came, to Egita.'

Other typological traits common to verb-final languages are: dependent clauses preceding main clauses (128), and the use of suffixes rather than prefixes. Sheko confirms to this picture, although there is one set of prefixes as well (possessive prefixes).

(128)  íʃ=ʂub-ɲ̀tà      ēkī     há=sàskù-àtsù-kì-k-ə
       3PL=die-COND     money   3MS=arrive.CAUS-give-exist-REAL-STI

       'If they die, he donates money.'

Word order in the NP is variable; the unmarked order appears to be head-initial. See section 9.1 for examples and discussion.

# 11 Complex clauses

This chapter discusses medial verbs and switch-reference in Sheko, as well as serial verb constructions, subordinated clauses and conjunctions.

## 11.1 Medial verbs

### 11.1.1 Formal and syntactical properties

Medial verbs form clause chains in which one or more medial verbs precede a final (main) verb. Formally, medial verbs consist of a stem and a switch-reference marker at the minimum (1); a subject clitic may be present as well (2). Examples with aspect markers are sparse - only **ki** 'exist' in my sample - and describe a state rather an ongoing activity (3), i.e. **ki** 'exist' does not denote Imperfective aspect here, but is the last verb of a verb-verb sequence.

(1)  **<u>um-tə</u> bārkā̀y-ka     gúúrú daan <u>feeʃ-tə</u>**
     <u>eat-SS</u>  monkey-WITH   only   together <u>spend.day-SS</u>
     'ate and spent all the day with the monkey and…'

(2)  **há=tee-tə**
     3MS=go.NV-SS
     'he went and…'

(3)  **bāāyā bámbú-k'à     wutu-<u>kì</u>-tə     há=nata-ra**
     lion  pit-IN         fall-<u>exist</u>-SS   3MS=1SG-ACC

     **bútà  gīīʂū-kēs-ə          ge-t=á      k'òr-ǹ**
     outside pull-go.out.CAUS-STI   say-SS=3MS   beg-DS
     'Having fallen in a pit, Lion begged saying "Pull me out"…'

Syntactically, medial verbs are dependent on final verbs; this type of clause combination is regarded as co-subordination (cf. Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:454, following Olson 1981). The term 'medial verb' is preferred here above 'converb', since the latter is defined as subordinated in cross-linguistic typological work (Givón 1990; Haspelmath 1995:20-27), although in Omotic    studies    the    term    'converb'    is    used    for

dependent-but-not-subordinated verb forms as well (e.g. Azeb and Dimmendaal 2006).

The medial verb depends on the final verb for modal (and aspect) marking. However, the tonal height on the medial verb stem indicates whether the final verb belongs to one of the Factual paradigms or not, cf. section 10.3.1. Here is an example:

(4)  a.  **gābā-k'à**   **ṇ=téé-t=ṇ**   **bángár-á-m-ə**
      market-IN    1SG=go.NV-SS=1SG   return-put-IRR-STI
      'I will go to the market and return.'

     b.  **gābā-k'à**   **ṇ=tee-t=ṇ**   **bangar-k-ə**
      market-IN    1SG=go.NV-SS=1SG   return-REAL-STI
      'I went to the market and returned.'

### 11.1.2   Switch-reference markers

The two switch-reference markers of Sheko are **-tə** for same-subject (SS) continuation and **-ǹ** for different subject (DS) continuation. Subject switches account for most of the occurrences. An example is given below.

(5)  **sīīp'**   **sīīp'**   **sīīp'**       **yí=ge-ǹ**
     sew     sew     sew       3FS=say-DS

     **yí=sìīp'ù-tʃ'òr-ʃù-tə**   **yí=tāām-ń-s-a**      **àts-ǹ**
     3FS=sew-finish-CAUS-SS   3FS=fire-DEF-M-ACC      give-DS

     **bārkāy-ǹ**   **tāām-ń-s**   **kòb-tə**
     monkey.F-DEF   fire-DEF-M   take-SS

     ' "Sew, sew, sew," she (monkey 1) said; she (monkey 2) finished sewing and she (monkey 2) gave her the fire; the monkey (monkey 1) took the fire and…'

Another factor influencing the choice of switch-reference marker is the presence of a textual boundary, which is signaled by using the DS-marker. (The boundary is marked here by the symbol §.) Questioned about the occurrence of the DS-marker in example (6), a language consultant remarked that the first line served as a title.

(6)    **bārkāy-ka**    **zīīnà-ka**    **t'āāgn̄-bàb**    **íʃì=kì-n̲**   **§**
      monkey-COOR    leopard-COOR    two-father      3PL=exist-DS

     **íʃ=daan-tə**    **íʃ=kī-bààstà**    **yí=bārkāy-n̄**   **k'ay-t=í**
     3PL=together-SS   3PL=exist-WHILE   3FS=monkey-DEF   rise-SS=3FS

     'A monkey and a leopard were both there § while they lived together, the monkey rose and…'

Furthermore, in example (7) a new scene starts, beginning with the setting clause **íʃìsàwbààstà** 'when they reached it'. The different subject marker occurs preceding the setting clause, although the subject does not immediately switch.

(7)    **íʃì=tee-tə**    **íʃì=wókà**    **hāāy**    **gèèzà-tà**
      3PL=go.NV-SS    3PL=down.there   water    edge?-LOC

     **sàk-n̲**   **§**     **íʃì=sāw-bààstà**    **há=byāāsū**    **hāāy**
     arrive-DS        3PL=arrive.NV-WHILE   3MS=crocodile   water

     **bàtà**    **sòk'-n̲**
     on.LOC    sleep-DS

     '… and they went and they reached the shore of the lake § when they reached it, the crocodile lay on the water;…'

As an aside, the switch-reference markers are easily combined with passive marking in Sheko, as shown in examples (8)-(10). Thus Sheko, like Benchnon, constitutes a counter-example for the tendency noted in Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:290), that voice oppositions do not often co-occur with a switch-reference system. Typically, the Sheko examples describe a state of affairs or process in which the Agent is not important.

(8)    **kāmdì yīs**    **wó-ka**      **bútà**    **yīs-tà**
      old.cow DIST.M   down.there-LCT   outside   DIST.M-LOC

     **bāʃ-tū-tə**        **…**      **bōnk'-ūs-tū-tə**
     slaughter-PASS-SS        burn-CAUS-PASS-SS

     'this old cow is slaughtered down there, there outside… and grilled… '

(9) fùs=í-k-ə      gē-t'-ǹ      yòwk'a yīs-tà
fulfill.time=3FS-REAL-STI   say-PASS-DS     INTJ    DIST.M-LOC

     yááb-kǹ    k'āpt'ū-ʔāst-ǹ    yīs-kaarì      úm-t'-árá
     man-DAT     cut.PASS-give.PASS-DS   DIST.M-until    eat-PASS-NEG

' "She fulfilled the time," it is said; well, then (a hair from her tail) is cut for somebody (the chief) and given; until then (her milk) is not eaten.'

(10) kara   yīs    bàtà    yéngí      ān-t'-ǹ
     leave   DIST.M   on.LOC   firewood      put-PASS-DS

     yéngí      yīs    bàtà    gōm-m̄-s-əra
     firewood    DIST.M   on.LOC   gomfa-DEF-M-ACC

     būẕ-t'ū-t=á      há=ʔān-t'-ā-m-ə
     pluck-PASS-SS=3MS    3MS=put-PASS-put-IRR-STI

'…on the leaves firewood will be put; on the firewood, the plucked *gomfa* bird will be put.'

## 11.2   Serial verb constructions

This section discusses verb-verb sequences, by which I mean sequences of verb stems, of which the first stem does not carry switch reference marking. Here is an example:

(11) há=ʔyāb-m̀-s-əra      gyàʔù-ts'yàsǹ-tə
     3MS=grass-DEF-M-ACC    chew-be.replete.MIDD-SS

     'he ate his fill of the grass and…' (Lit: he chew the grass and was replete.)

These verb-verb sequences have characteristics of serial verb constructions (Aikhenvald 2006): they act together as a single predicate without any overt marker of coordination, subordination or other dependency relation, they share TAM values and arguments, they present things as a single state of affairs, and furthermore, the verbs which are components of the sequence can stand on their own. The transitivity values of the verbs may be different. The subject clitic occurs maximally once [33] (reflecting the status of the event as a single unit

---

[33] This is actually difficult to ascertain as in most SVCs there is no intervening material at all between the verbs, but see examples (13)-(15).

described in one clause). Therefore, I will call verb-verb sequences serial verb constructions.[34]

One might argue that sequences of medial verb also conform to some of the characteristics of serial verb constructions, such as sharing of TAM values and arguments. However, medial verbs are not monoclausal, each medial clause may have its own subject clitic, and the switch-reference markers overtly mark the clause as a medial (cosubordinate) clause. Medial clauses present events as occurring one after another. In contrast, serial verb constructions can be called monoclausal, and they present actions as constituting a single event.

Serial verb constructions can roughly be divided into two. The first group consists of a serial verb construction in which the second (last) verb comes from a restricted set of verbs and adds aspectual values to the first verb (verbs), which carries the lexical meaning. The second group consists of a serial verb construction in which both verbs have equal status and the sequence has no idiosyncratic or opaque meaning. In some cases, the first verb expresses manner, while the second verb is (often) a verb of motion.

Verb-verb compounds cannot be distinguished from serial verbs on formal grounds. However, the meaning of a compound is not immediately clear from the meaning of the individual verbs, as e.g. in (12): 'trade' + 'throw away' = sell; cf. its opposite **fuur-kob** 'trade-take' which means 'buy'. (**bar** 'throw away' does not denote Completive aspect here.)

(12)  **ōyt-ǹ**          **ha = fùùr-bàrù-kì**
       cow.F-DEF         2SG = trade-throw.away-exist[Q]
       'are you selling the cow?'

In almost all serial verb constructions, the verbs immediately follow each other; only rarely does an argument separate the

---

[34] An alternative solution would be to allow medial clauses with zero marking, which denote 'same subject, overlap' (complementary to medial verbs marked by -**tə** 'same subject, sequential') and obligatory absence of the subject clitic in the clause following the 'same subject, overlap'. This is done for Diizi (Beachy 2005:117). Another solution could be sought in positing some form of 'complex predication'.

verbs. Intervening arguments may only occur with the second group of serial verbs (non-aspectual). The intervening arguments in examples (13)-(15) are marked by locative or other pheripheral cases.

(13) ás-əra k'irk'u báákù-tà     an-tə  há = ʔan-àb-tà
     3MS-ACC <u>twist</u> firestones-LOC   <u>put-SS</u> 3MS = put-REL-LOC

     'he tied him up above the fireplace and when he had put him there,…'

(14) íʃì = tee    bēk'n̄-ka   tʂ'ad-tə íʃì = zììp'm̀-k-ə
     3PL = <u>go</u>.NV  spear-WITH  <u>pierce-SS</u> 3PL = chase.away-REAL-STI

     '…they came spearing (him) and chased (him) away.'

(15) nat    dāwā ge    bútà zììfm̀-tə     géék'ù-ra
     1SG    deer  <u>say</u>   outside <u>chase-SS</u>     goat-ACC

     īy-k'à       an-kì-b
     house-IN     put-exist-REL

     'the one who calling me deer chased me outside and put the goat inside the house…'

### 11.2.1  Aspectual serial verb constructions

This section discusses the following verbs occurring as the second member of a serial verb construction:

(16) *verb:*                    *aspect:*
     **bar**   'throw away'         Completive
     **ʃí**    'defecate'           Irreversibility (?)
     **fééʃ**  'spend the day'      Prolonged progressive
     **tə́bééʃ** < **tə́g-fééʃ**   Prolonged progressive
     **yəg**   'come'               Direction towards the
                                     deictic centre
     **tə́g**   'go'                 Direction away from the
                                     deictic centre

The verbs mentioned here are structurally different from the auxiliary verbs **ki** 'exist' and **k'é** 'be left, remain' which denote Imperfective and Perfective aspect. For instance, they do not occur after negated verb stems.

The verb **bar** 'throw away, abandon' is used as a main verb (17) and as an indicator of Completive aspect in serial verb constructions (18)-(21).

(17)  a.    **káʃú**    **é-ká**        **bar**
             dirt    over.there-LCT    throw.away
             'Throw the garbage away over there!'

      b.    **ʃīft**    **bar-ə**
             shift    throw.away-STI
             'Let go of the shift key.' (Context: computer training.)

(18)    **n̩=t'ès-bàrù-k-ə**
        1SG=bake-<u>throw.away</u>-REAL-STI
        'I finished baking (the injera)'

(19)    **um-bàr=à**
        eat-<u>throw.away</u>=2SG.Q
        'Have you finished eating?'

(20)    **yí=ʂóóẓ-kì**    **kum-m̀-s-əra**        **k'ùts'ù-bàr-ǹ**
        3FS=snake-DAT   neck-DEF-M-ACC        cut-<u>throw.away</u>-DS
        'she cut off the neck of the snake...'

(21)    **yīs-t=á**        **yówk'a**     **ééz-ǹ-s-əra**    **kéta**
        DIST.M-LOC=3MS  INTJ      honey-DEF-M-ACC  all
        **k'ēēt'-bār-ā-m̩**
        swallow-<u>throw.away</u>-put-IRR
        'and then, well, he eats up all the honey.'

The verb **ʃí** 'defecate' is used twice in my sample of stories. It possibly indicates irreversibility. Alternatively, it could be a marker of temporality which is only accidentally formally identical to the verb.[35]

---

[35] Cf. the Wolaitta different subject converb marker **ʃin(i)**, which is also used as adversative (Azeb Amha p.c.), and Zayse **ʃin** on past state predications (Hayward 1990:282).

(22)  **há=ṣub-ʃi-ǹ**
      3MS=die-<u>defecate</u>-DS
      '…he died (irreversible)'

(23)  **…fyáyń          kees-tə          kaay-ʃi-ǹ**
      frog.F.DEF      go.out-SS      be.not-<u>defecate</u>-DS
      '…the little frog went out and was not there;…'

Furthermore, the verb **fééʃ** 'spend the day' is used to indicate that an event occurs over a longer period of time (24). The time of day is not important when this verb is used as aspectual verb. In (25), the emphasis is on the fact that the participants keep sleeping, so **fééʃ** is used even though it is night. The verb **haay** 'spend the night' is not used in this way, although as a main verb it is used for 'spend the night' as well as 'stay' (26).

(24)  **k'oy      kōb-yēē-tə          kà-kày          há-bàtà**
      one      take-come.NV-SS      PLUR-again      3MS.POSS-on.LOC

      **án-tə    yīs-tà          há=dyāskū-fééʃ-t=á**
      put-SS    DIST.M-LOC      3MS=relocate-<u>spend.day</u>-SS=3MS

      '…bring another (honeycomb) and again put (it) on the other and then he keeps moving (them) and…'

(25)  **íʃì=sòk'ù-feeʃ-tə          íʃì=k'áy-kì-bààstà**
      3PL=sleep-<u>spend.day</u>-SS    3PL=rise-exist-WHILE

      'they spent the time sleeping and while they were waking up,…'

(26)  a.    **ʒáʒá    haay-ə**
            good    spend.night-STI
            'Sleep well!'

      b.    **má              úʈṣú      ṇ=hàày-k**
            earlier.today    five      1SG-spend.night-REAL
            'I have stayed for five days now.'

The complex form **tə́bééʃ** 'keep doing', a prolonged progressive, is found a number of times in the sample of stories. It often occurs when the story reaches a head towards the end of the tale. It is a combination of the verbs **tə́g** 'go' and **fééʃ** 'spend the day'.

(27)　…yě̃ě̃-stà　　　　　dòr-s-ùs-ǹ-təbeeʃ-tə
like.this.ELAT-3MS.COP?　run-CAUS-CAUS-MIDD-go.spend.day-SS

íʃì = sáák'ù-k'à　　　wutu-tə　　íʃ = ṣub-k-ə
3PL = ravine-IN　　　　fall-SS　　　3PL = die-REAL-STI

'…they kept on chasing each other far away and they fell into a ravine and died.'

In addition, the verbs **yeg** 'come' and **tə́g** 'go' are used to indicate direction with respect to the speaker or the deictic centre.

(28)　**bākāʃà**　　　**na-ŋ̀**　**kob-yeg-ə**
stool　　　　　　1SG-DAT　take-come-STI

'Bring the stool for me!' ( = movement towards speaker)

(29)　**bārt'ī-kǹ**　　**kob-tə́g-ə**
Barxi-DAT　　　take-go-STI

'Bring it to Barxi' ( = movement away from speaker)

(30)　**há = gīīṣ-kōb-ín-á-m**
3MS = kidnap-take-go-put-IRR

'he will kidnap-bring (her)' (Context: in marriage, the pair usually goes into hiding, unless the man's home is far away from the village of the girl.)

It is not clear how exactly a deictic centre is construed in stories. This is an interesting topic for further research on discourse. In a few cases, 'going away' or 'leaving the scene' is referred to by **yəg** 'come', as in example (31).

(31)　…**yí-baad-ǹ-s**　　　**kòb-tə ūk'-ī-s-a**　　**wùṣk-kòb-tə**
3FS.POSS-sibling-DEF-M　take-SS　milk-DEF-M-ACC　untie-take-SS

**yí = k'yààz-yèg-ǹ**
3FS = leave-come-DS

'…took her brother, unknotted and took the milk, and she left,…'

If a serial verb construction contains more than two verbs, the third (last) verb is most often an aspectual verb. In the majority of cases, that verb is **ki** 'exist' indicating Imperfective (continuous) aspect (32). Perfective **k'é** 'remain' is also attested;

otherwise it is one of the aspectual verbs mentioned here, such as **bar** 'throw away' (33) or **ín** 'go' in example (30) above.

(32)  **íʃì = wóógú-kāās-kì-bààstà**
3PL = sit-play-<u>exist</u>-WHILE
'while they were sitting playing'

(33)  **yáb-m̀-s-əra**    **gootʃ-wuşu-bàr-ǹ**
man-DEF-M-ACC    bite(snake)-kill-<u>throw.away</u>-DS
'he bit the man to death'

### 11.2.2    Other serial verb constructions

Next to the serial verb constructions whose second member contributes an aspectual value or direction, there are serial verb constructions whose members contribute equally to the semantics of the construction. The two serialised verbs can describe sequential events, as in (34)-(36).

(34)  **yīs-tà**    **há = myású-kōy-t = á**    **há = kāāf-ā-m-ə**
DIST.M-LOC   3MS = <u>hew-bring</u>.NV-SS = 3MS    3MS = build-put-IRR-STI
'…then he will hew and bring (the wood) and build.'

(35)  **umtʼà**  **yí = kàtsù-sàsk-ǹtà**    **yí-gerì**    **to**
food    3FS = <u>cook-arrive</u>.CAUS-COND    3FS.POSS-head    just

**um-tə**
eat-SS
'when she cooked food and brought it out, only she herself ate and…'

(36)  **yí-ʃèèmà**    **tsʼyááts'ú-kōb-tə**    **yí = kááy-tə**
3FS.POSS-clothing   <u>tie-take</u>-SS    3FS = be.not-SS
'…ties and takes her clothes and she diappears and…'

Some frequent compounds are given in (37) and (38). In example (37) two near-synonyms refer to a single event. In (38), the standard way of asking a person who returns home is illustrated. Both are more or less fixed combinations.

(37) tíít-sə́g-ə
watch-see-STI
'look!'

(38) mìzān-k'à      tee-bangar=à
Mizan-IN      go.NV-return=2SG.Q
'Have you (gone and) returned from Mizan?'

Furthermore, serialised verbs may be used in describing two simultaneous events (39).

(39) kyāñ-s      tóórá      áz-k'à tiit-ǹ
dog.DEF-M      downward      3MS-IN  watch-DS

íʃi-kāās-kì-b-tà      dēyg-ī      wóógú-séé-kì-ǹ
3PL-play-exist-REL-LOC      child.F-DEF      sit-look.NV-exist-DS
'The dog looked down into it (and) while they played the girl was sitting and looking;…'

In some cases, the first verb of the compound denotes manner; it indicates the way in which the activity referred to by the second verb is taking place. The order of the verbs is more or less fixed in the examples given here (40)-(43).

(40) fyáánú gōntʃì há=kèwù-k-ə      ge-tə  dòòr-yèè-tə
frog     like     3MS=shout-REAL-STI      say-SS  run-come.NV-SS
'(they) said: 'It sounds like a frog' and came running and..'

(41) ás-kǹ  kabì-tà      bāʔū-yēē-kì-b      ītī-tà̀
3MS-DAT shoulder-LOC      carry-come.NV-exist-REL      who-COP.Q
'who is the one who comes carrying it on his shoulders?'

(42) uutǹ  dòòr-kèès-tə
rat     run-go.out-SS
'The rat came running out (of the hole) and…'

(43) yí=zūnkù  te-k-ə      ge-t=í      bòy-kòb-tə
3FS=sheep     COP-REAL-STI      say-SS=3FS      drive-take-SS
'she said "It is a sheep," and driving it she took it and…'

## 11.3  Overview of subordinated clauses

This chapter describes relative clauses, adverbial clauses and complement clauses. Relative clauses are marked by **-ə̀b**, and may contain a resumptive pronoun. Among adverbial clauses, locational, temporal and reason clauses are based on relative clauses. Purpose clauses are marked by the suffix **-n̄**. Conditional clauses and other adverbial clauses are marked by **-ǹtà**. Reason and purpose clauses are further marked by **èʃǹtà**; this marker also marks the reference point in a comparative construction and the reference point in relation to a state of affairs (see section 9.2.8). Thus, all adverbial clauses end in **-ǹtà**, except for locational and temporal clauses.

| clause type | morphological marking |
|---|---|
| relative | **-ə̀b** |
| location, time | **-ə̀b** + locational phrase |
| reason | **-ə̀b èʃǹtà** |
| purpose | **-n̄ èʃǹtà** |
| conditional | **-ǹtà** |
| complement | **-ə̀b/ -ǹtà** |

Furthermore, complement clauses are either marked as relative clauses by **-ə̀b**, or as adverbial clauses by **-ǹtà** if the complement clause contains a wh-word.

## 11.4  Relative clauses

Relative clauses are characterized by the fact that one pivot element plays a role in two clauses. Relativization is characterized as the relation between two states of affairs, in which the dependent state of affairs provides additional information about a participant (or notion) in the main state of affairs; and this modified referent is involved in the dependent situation. The relative clause contains the dependent state of affairs, modifying the head in the matrix clause. The way the relative clause and its head are related to each other forms a relative construction or strategy.

Sheko has pre- and postnominal relative clauses as well as headless and appositional relative clauses. It has two relative constructions, one in which the pivot element is coded by a

resumptive pronoun in the relative clause and one in which the coding in the relative clause is zero (gapping strategy). Interestingly, Sheko allows resumptive pronouns in prenominal relative clauses, which is claimed to be rare cross-linguistically (Keenan 1985:148f). Furthermore, Sheko uses the gapping strategy if the role of the coreferent has the function of subject or object in the relative clause, which is claimed to be uncommon for SOV-languages (Payne 1997:331). Sheko relative clauses can also function as verb complements. Adverbial clauses of location and temporality, as well as reason clauses, are built on the relative clause. Adverbial clauses are discussed in section 11.5.

Morphologically, relative clauses are coded asymmetrically with respect to modal distinctions: in relative clauses marked by **-àb** (and allomorphs), there is no modal marking and the clause is interpreted as referring to a realis state of affairs. In contrast, irrealis relative clauses contain the Irrealis marker **-m** preceding the nominalizer **-bàb** 'father' (and allomorphs).

### 11.4.1   Form of the relative verb

Most relative clauses are marked by **-àb** REL for default gender, which refers to masculine and plural referents (44). This morpheme has the allomorphs **-àb** ~ **-b**. In the Sheko town variety, the vowel is dropped when the relative clause marker follows a vowel ((45), but in the Tepi variety, the **-a** remains (46, first line). In addition, the Tepi and Guraferda varieties have zero-marked relative clauses as well (46, second line). Investigation of these clauses is left to future research. Zero-marked relative clauses are found in other Omotic languages as well (e.g. Maale, Amha 2001:160). The relative clause is indicated by square brackets in the examples.

(44)  [àkì̀  sàm-àb]        fyaanu-s-kì̀    ʒéénʃ
      HERE  remain-REL      frog-PL-DAT     well

      kī-ít-ə          ge-tə…
      exist-PL.ADDR-STI  say-SS

      '(she) said 'stay well' to the frogs [who remained there] and…'

(45)  ş́óóẓ  [nata  tə-k-ə  há=ge-<u>b</u>]  sà̀m̀
      snake  1SG  COP-REAL-STI  3MS=say-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">REL</span>  remain:DS

'The snake [who said 'It's me'] remained behind;…'

(46)  [[kāār-n̄-kǹ  ēēd  batà  àn-t'ù-ky-<u>àb</u>]  ʃ̀èy-ǹ-s
      grave-DEF-[M]-DAT  door  on.LOC  put-PASS-exist-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">REL</span>  stone-DEF-M

tèrk-ùs-bàr-t'ù-kì ] = í  yí=see-k-ə
push.front-CAUS-throw.away-PASS-exist[<u>REL</u>]=3FS  3FS=see.NV-REAL-STI

'…she saw [that the stone [which was put on the opening of the grave] had been pushed aside].'

For feminine gender, the marking is **-ə̀be** REL.mother, with identical allomorphy (47)-(48). The second syllable of **-ə̀be** is related to **bây ~ bé** 'mother', which occurs Irrealis relative clauses and in other parts of the grammar as a nominalizer together with **bāāb** 'father'.

(47)  tīītù  [nat  tə-k-ə  ge-<u>be</u>]  sà̀m̀
      vulture  1SG  COP-REAL-STI  say-<u>REL.F</u>  remain:DS

'The vulture [who said "It's me,"] remained behind;…'

(48)  [gōnà  íʃ-ka  dààn-tə  há=ày-<u>ə̀be</u> ]
      yesterday  3FS-WITH  together-SS  3MS=dance-<u>REL.F</u>

bààrǹ-əra  ha=see-kì
maiden.F.DEF-ACC  2SG=see-exist.[Q]

'Do you see the girl [with whom he danced yesterday]?'

The situation in Dime is strikingly similar to the one in Sheko. In Dime, adjectives and relative clauses are marked for gender by **-ub** for masculine and **-ind** for feminine, cf **ind** 'mother' and **bábe** 'father' (Mulugeta 2008:45). See also sections 5.5.5 and 5.5.6 on the use of **bááb** 'father' in compounds and as nominalizer in Sheko.

As mentioned above, Irrealis relative clauses are clauses with a verb form ending in the Irrealis marker **-m** followed by the nominalizer **bāāb** 'father'/ **bé** 'mother' (49)-(50). Apart from the modal difference, they function exactly like clauses in **-ə̀b**, occurring in the same positions. More examples are provided in section 11.4.6 below.

(49)  [tàmār    ìy-tà    tág-m̄-bààb]  kì=â
      education(Amh)  house-LOC    go-IRR-father    exist=3MS.Q
      'Is there [someone who will go to school]?'

(50)  [bērn    t'ár-ǹ-s    kāts-m̄-be]
      tomorrow    injera-DEF-M    cook-IRR-mother
      '[the one (f) who will bake injera tomorrow]'

Usually, the verb stem in Relative clauses is the non-velar stem (for those verbs that have it). A few relative clauses display a velar stem as in (52); in my corpus these examples concern attributive or headless relative clauses and never complement clauses. Besides, the use of velar and non-velar stems appears to be the same as in main clauses (section 10.5.1).

(51)  [mèngīstì      yèè-b]-tà
      government(Amh)    come.NV-REL-LOC
      'when the government came,…' (Lit: at (the time) that the government came…)

(52)  [wurti    fūūr-ā-m    təg-àb]
      vocabulary    trade-put-IRR    go-REL
      '[the one who went to buy language]'

### 11.4.2    Position with regard to the head

Sheko has both prenominal and postnominal relative clauses. Internally headed relative clauses (circumnominal relative clauses) do not occur. Headless and appositional relative clauses are attested. Examples (53)-(55) feature prenominal relative clauses, while examples (56)-(57) feature postnominal relative clauses.

(53)  háák'àstà    [màndērì-k'à  íʃì=kāās-kì-b]
      now      village(Amh)-IN  3PL=play-exist-REL

      dāws  kéta  góórà-ka    gúúrú  íʃì=nòn-kì-k-ə
      children  all  Amhara-WITH    only  3PL=talk-exist-REAL-STI

      'Now, all the children [who are playing in the neighborhood], talk only in Amharic.'

(54)   **[zeed  wòmbèrà    áz-k'à  kì-b]  mèkìnì-ka**
        eight    chair(Amh)     3MS-IN  exist-REL car-with

      **ń=tee-k-ə**
      1PL=go.NV-REAL-STI

      'We went with a car [which had eight seats].'

(55)   **yok'à  [akì̀  sàm-àb]     fyáánú-s-kì̀**
      INTJ     here-DAT remain-REL     frog-PL-DAT

      **ʒééǹʃ  kī-ít-ə        ge-tə**
      well     exist-PL.ADDR-STI  say-SS

      'Well, they said goodbye to the frogs [who remained there] and…'

(56)   **yí=kī-bààstà  kafà  [ayk'à       ás-kì̀**
      3FS=exist-WHILE bird   up.IN        3MS-DAT

      **buʈʂù-ka     kì-b]     íʃ-əra       k'yaaf=á-k**
      nest-with     exist-REL     3FS-ACC     kick=3MS-REAL

      'While she was there, a bird [who had its nest up there] kicked her.'

(57)   **áz    īsī     [hayk'à      zīītū-kì-b]-īs-k'à**
      3MS  beehive  up.IN      hang-exist-REL-DIST.M-IN

      **hayk'à  kèès-tə       tiit=á-k**
      up.IN   go.out-SS watch=3MS-REAL

      'He jumped up at this beehive [which was hanging up there] and watched it.'

More research is needed on which factors are relevant to the choice between pre- or postnominal relative clauses. It is likely that the status of the referent in the discourse plays a role and/or backgrounding of the relative clause.

Sheko also uses headless relative clauses, as in the examples below.

(58)   **baaʃ-tə   [há=baaʃ-əb]-əra      há-gərì**
      slaughter-SS 3MS=slaughter-REL-ACC     3MS.POSS-head

      **woots'u-tə**
      bite-SS

      '…he slaughtered it and tasted himself [what he had slaughtered]…'

(59)    **é-ká**        **[egita**  **ge-t'-ab]-is-ta**        **ḿ-baab**

over.there-LCT    Egita  say-PASS-REL-DIST-LOC    1PL.POSS-father

**ń-ʔaku**            **kees-yee-k'e-k**

1PL.POSS-grandfather      go.out-come.NV-remain-REAL

'From there, from that (place) [called Egita] our fathers and grandfathers came.'

In the preceding examples (58)-(59), the case marker is used only once after the whole relative construction, which strengthens the claim that the relative clause modifies the head and is part of the NP like any ordinary modifier. In examples (60) and (61), however, the case marker is repeated after the head and after the relative clause. This is a reason to think that the structure is different, namely an appositional relative clause.

(60)    **há-burʒ**      **yab-m̀-s-<u>ka</u>**    **[gaazn gè-t'-ùb]-<u>ka</u>**

3MS.POSS-servant  man-DEF-M-<u>WITH</u>  Gaazn  say-PASS-REL-<u>WITH</u>

**daan-tə**        **há=yə̀g-ǹ**

be.together-SS    3MS=come-DS

'…he came together with his servant, with [the one who was called Gaazn]'

(61)    **yí-yirsi**     **bàrù-t=í**     **yí=gābā-<u>k'à</u>**

3FS.POSS-things  abandon-SS=3FS  3FS=market-<u>IN</u>

**[yi=yèg-ə̀b]-<u>k'à</u>**    **ás-<u>k'à</u> nata-ka**     **daan**

3FS=come-REL-<u>IN</u>     3MS-<u>IN</u> 1SG-WITH     together

**mà`àkīnī-ka**    **ʔyàrdù-tə**

car-IN        enter-SS

'…she left her things and at the market, at [where she came], she entered a car at it together with me…'

### 11.4.3    Accessibility hierarchy and relativizing strategies

In order to generalize on the arguments which undergo relativization, Keenan and Comrie (1977) proposed the Accessibility Hierarchy. This hierarchy states which arguments are accessible for relativization. The hierarchy runs from most relativizable to least relativizable: subject > direct object > indirect object > oblique > genitive > object of comparison.

It is an implicational hierarchy, i.e. when a language is able to relativize for instance an Oblique, it will always be able to relativize Subject, Direct Object and Indirect Object as well. A relativizing strategy must apply to a continuous segment of the Accessiblity Hierarchy.

Looking through a corpus of spontaneous Sheko texts, the majority of the relativised heads is subject, followed at a distance by object, oblique and indirect object. This confirms to the greater accessibility of subjects predicted by the hierarchy.

In general, the grammatical function of the relativised argument within the RC is not easily recoverable if the argument is missing in the relative clause. This case-recoverability problem is crucial to the syntactic typology of relative constructions (Givón 1990). The lower the argument in the relative clause is positioned on the Accessibility Hierarchy, the more likely it will be expressed through a personal pronoun.

Sheko uses two relativizing strategies, namely the gap strategy and the pronoun retention strategy. In the gap strategy, the coreferent of the head in the relative clause is zero (i.e. a 'gap'). Use of the gap strategy is said to be uncommon in SOV-languages (Payne 1997:331)[36]. In the pronoun retention strategy, the coreferent is expressed by a resumptive pronoun in the relative clause. This strategy is also known as the anaphoric pronoun strategy. The pronoun is the same as the personal pronoun used in declarative main clauses and it is case-marked according to its role in the relative clause. The gap strategy is mainly used for subjects and objects, while the anaphoric pronoun strategy is preferred for constituents lower on the Hierarchy.

### 11.4.4    Gap strategy and anaphoric pronoun strategy

In Sheko, referents which are subjects in the relative clause almost always use the gap strategy, e.g. (62). However, there are cases in which a subject clitic is present in subject relative

---

[36] Cf. Rapold (2006:752). Benchnon is also SOV and uses the gap strategy as well as the anaphoric pronoun strategy.

clauses. An example is given in (63). In adverbial clauses built on the relative, subject clitics are common.

(62)  **bēndū  [íʃì-kǹ  ʒaʒ-àb]       kòòkǹ-k'à**
     Bəndu   3PL-DAT  be.good-REL     place-IN

     **íʃ=kī-m-ə**
     3PL=exist-IRR-STI

     'The Bəndu live at a place [which is convenient for them].'

(63)  **há=tʃʼóf-àb-yīs      karà-kǹ       bō-k'à  há=gáb-m̀**
     3MS=drip-REL-DIST.M     leaf-DAT      belly-IN  3MS=collect-DS

     'that which drips collects in the leaves;…'

Referents which are objects within the relative clause may (64)-(65) or may not (66)-(67) be referred to with a resumptive pronoun. Impressionistically, the number of resumptive pronouns for objects is very low in texts. Thus, it can be said that for objects the gapping strategy is preferred.

(64)  **íntʃù   gyānū  bo-k'à  há=kááť-á-m**
     wood    coffee  belly-IN  3MS=hoe-put-IRR

     **wōyīm        [nāārū        ás    kyàts-àb]**
     or(Amh)          wind          3MS   fell-REL

     'He will cut a tree in the coffee (forest) or [one which the wind threw down]'

(65)  **[ṇ-nanu          íʃ-əra  fūūr-ār=á-kì-be]**
     1SG.POSS-elder.brother     3FS-ACC  buy-NEG=3MS-exist-REL.mother

     **òtì    ʃāpkǹ-be           tə-k-ə**
     cow    thin.F.DEF-REL.mother     COP-REAL-STI

     'The cow [my brother didn't buy] is thin.'

(66)  **[ūtī-ka       m̀=bàzhù-kì-b]       bàzhà**
     love-WITH      1PL=work-exist-REL     work

     **ʔyáát-ń-s-əb   há=sāsk-ā-m-ə**
     big-DEF-M-REL     3MS=arrive.CAUS-put-IRR-STI

     'He will give good results on work [that we do with love].'

(67) [ṇ̩=íʃ-kɩ̀      mààk-ùb]      tòsà    yīs      tə-k-ə
     1SG=3FS-DAT     tell-REL       story   DIST.M   COP=REAL-STI

     'The story [I told to her] is this.'

For Indirect Objects, probably a resumptive pronoun is preferred, as in (68). For an additional textual example, see (79) below.

(68) [sāāy-ǹ-s        ás-kɩ̀ màtk-àb]       də̀d-ǹ-s
     fable-DEF-M      3MS-DAT tell.PASS-REL   child-DEF-M

     'the boy [to whom the story was told]'

For those referents with an Oblique role in the relative clause, a resumptive pronoun is preferred.

(69) tēngì   íʃ=k'yar-àb-īs          [ás-ka
     tree.sp  3PL=beat-REL-DIST.M      3MS-WITH

     íʃɩ=kàf-t-ùt=íʃɩ        dèb-t'-àb]
     3PL=build-PASS-SS=3PL    bury-PASS-REL

     'this (bark of) tengi tree which they beat (was) [what they would be arrayed with and be buried in].' (one RC marked)

(70) [wurti       ás-tà  fūr-t'-ī-bààb]        gàbà
     vocabulary   3MS-LOC trade-PASS-IRR-father  market

     há=kì-b-má          kááy=á      kì-ǹtà
     3MS=exist-REL-or     be.not=3MS    exist-COND

     'whether or not a market exists [where language can be bought]'

Sentences (71) and (72) were elicited on various occasions with mixed result, i.e. both with and without resumptive pronoun:

(71) [hāāy  (ás-ka)        ha=ʔiir-kì-b ]
     water  3MS-WITH        2SG=fetch-exist-REL

     dʒèrìkàǹ-s-əra        ṇ̩=ʔàrtʃ'-ùs-bàrù-k-ə
     jerrycan.DEF-M-ACC     1SG=crack-CAUS-throw.away-REAL-STI
     'I damaged the jerrycan [with which you fetch water].'

(72) [umt'à  (ás-ka)   yí=kàts-ə̀b]  ʔyaana   ʃàn=á-k-ə
     food    3MS-WITH   3FS=cook-REL  pot       break=3MS-REAL-STI
     'The pot [with which she cooked] is broken.'

If the relationship between the head and its coreferent in the relative clause is genitival, a possessive pronoun is used.

(73) **[íʃî-dàd-n̂-s** **ṣub-àb]** **yaab** **dīīzū** **tə-k-ə**
3PL.POSS-child-DEF-M die-REL man Bench COP-REAL-STI
'The people [whose child died] are Bench.'

(74) **[yí-nàṣà** **ṣub-àbe]**
3FS.POSS-husband die-REL.mother
'widow (one [whose husband died])'

It has been claimed that the pronoun retention strategy is common in postnominal relative clauses but rare in prenominal relative clauses (Keenan 1985:148-49). This is because the preferred order in anaphoric situations is antecedent noun before anaphoric pronoun (Givón 1990:655). In the literature, Mandarin Chinese is commonly cited as the only documented language which does employ this strategy in prenominal clauses, even for higher positions on the Hierarchy. However, Nama (Khoisan) must be added as counter-example (Hagman 1977:125); as well as Shipibo-Konibo (Panoan, spoken in Peru), which even allows this strategy for Agents (Valenzuela 2002:59); resumptive pronouns in prenominal relative clauses are also reported for Benchnon, although not for subjects:

(75) **[tā** **yî** **dèk-n̄-ùç]** **nás-ī** **nèk-àç**
1S.NOM 3ms hitting-R.MIDD-M man-NOM.m up.deic-THIS.M

**hān-k'-î** **yísk-ù.**
go-FS-m be.located.PRES-M
'The man [I hit] is walking over there.' (cited from Rapold (2006:573))

As can be seen from e.g. examples (68) and (70)-(72), Sheko also uses resumptive pronouns in prenominal relative clauses. To illustrate and strengthen the point that resumptive pronouns occur in prenominal clauses as well as in post-nominal or headless ones, the examples below are all taken from texts. In texts, objects (almost) never get a resumptive pronoun, the rare examples with indirect objects do, and obliques (almost) always get a resumptive pronoun. The relative clause may be

prenominal (76)-(78), post-nominal (79) or headless (80).
Example (80) contains an Irrealis clause.

(76)   [uʈʂà   <u>áz-tà</u>     ky-àb]       kàrkà-k'a
       badger   <u>3MS-LOC</u>     exist-REL      forest-IN
       'in a forest [in which a badger lives]'

(77)   [yesus   <u>ás-ka</u>    ts'yèstù-tè-b]     ʃèm-s-ka
       Jesus    <u>3MS-WITH</u>   tie.PASS-go.NV?-REL    clothes.DEF-M-COOR
       'the cloth [in which Jesus was tied] and…'

(78)   [kuuʒ-n-ʃ    <u>ás-ka</u>      yèè-kì-b]
       sickness-DEF-M   <u>3MS-WITH</u>   come.NV-exist-REL

       kòòk-ǹ-s-k'erà
       road-DEF-M-INCL
       'also the way [in which the sickness comes]'

(79)   edisi   ge-t'-às     kuuʒ  [tʃ'āārū    <u>ás-kǹ</u>
       aids    say-PASS-?   sickness medicine   <u>3MS-DAT</u>

       kááy-k-īs]       ky=á-k-ə
       be.not-exist[REL]-DIST.M   exist=3MS-REAL-STI
       'There is a sickness called AIDS [for which there is no medicine].'

(80)   há=gì̀ʂ-kòb-m̀     há=[yáb-m̀-s     <u>ás-ka</u>
       3MS=pull-take-DS     3MS=man-DEF-M    <u>3MS-WITH</u>

       há=fín-ń-bààb]     kááy-ǹ
       3MS=descend-IRR-father   be.not-DS
       'he pulled it away; (the thing) [with which the man could descend]
       was not there;…'

Example (81) below has no resumptive pronoun, although the
coreferent is Instrument in the relative clause.

(81)   súk-ń-s      [īs-ń-s-ārā       ha=ts'yaats'-àb]
       rope-DEF-M    beehive-DEF-M-ACC    2SG=tie-REL

       yīz   ēē-kì-t=á        há=ʔiik'-ǹtà
       DIST.M   do.NV-exist-SS=3MS   3MS=be.old-cond
       'If this rope [with which you tie the beehive] happens to be old,…'

In summary, only the highest position on the Accessibility Hierarchy, that of Subject, cannot be expressed by a resumptive pronoun. In relative clauses in which the coreferent occupies an Object, i.e. second position on the Accessibility Hierarchy, a resumptive pronoun is optional. In relative clauses in which the referent has an Oblique position, a resumptive pronoun is preferred. In those with Genitive coreferents, a resumptive (possessive) pronoun is obligatory. (Benchnon and Chinese display the same tendency, moving down the Hierarchy from optional to more obligatory.) The resumptive pronoun may occur preceding its antecedent.

### 11.4.5    Relative clauses in verb complement position

Relative clauses can also occur in verb complement position. Here the clause does not modify a head with which it is coreferential. The clause expresses a proposition which is taken as a complement by a verb. It is not clear how to distinguish these clauses from the headless relative clauses described before. One solution is to analyse them as normal relative clauses, arguing that verbs can take any relativized clause, whether or not they have a conceivable nominal head. The relativised clauses in (82)-(83) obtain case marking like any Object NP. Another solution is to analyse **-əb** ~ **-àb** as having a nominalizing function next to a relativizing function.

(82)  [áz    kōmtū há = fòòt-àb]-əra    yí = t'ùùs-k-ə
     3MS    king    3MS = become-REL-ACC    3FS = know-REAL-STI

     'She knew [he was a king].'

(83)  [únà        íʃì = ʔàngùt'-əb    k'wànk'wà
     long.ago    3PL = increase-REL    language(Amh)

     íʃ = ʃèy-əb]-əra  na-ɟ̀    āng = á    sìs-tù-kì-k
     3PL = forget-REL-ACC  1SG-DAT  much = 3MS  hear-PASS-exist-REAL[37]

     'I feel very sorry [that they forget the language in which they grew up in the past].' (only one RC marked)

---

[37] The use of **sis-t** hear-PASS for 'feel emotion' comes from Amharic, cf. **yïssämmañal**.

(84) ēkī     wunk'u-t'u-kù-b     ʃēēɲʃ  tə-k-ə
money    steal-PASS-exist?-REL    bad   COP-REAL-STI

'That money is stolen is bad.' (Money being stolen is bad)

### 11.4.6    Irrealis relative clauses

To complete the description of relative clauses in Sheko, some examples are given to illustrate the functional equivalence of Irrealis relative clauses in **-m̄-bàm̀b** -IRR-father and other relative clauses in **-ə̀b** REL. **-bàm̀b** 'father' has an allomorph **-bàb**. Although Irrealis relatives differ formally, they are similar structurally. They occur in the same positions as clauses in **-ə̀b**, namely prenominal (85)-(86), postnominal (87, second line), headless (87)-(88) and they occur as object of a verb as well (89).

(85) sak-àb        bèngì…       [yə̄g-m̄-bàb]  bèngì…
arrive-REL    year        come-IRR-father  year

'last year… next year…'

(86) hàm̀z  tə-k-ə       [yeta-ra       kōb-təg-m̄-bàm̀b]
PROX.M  COP-REAL-STI    2SG-ACC      take-go-IRR-father

kookn
road

'This is it, the road [which will take you (there)].'

(87) íʃì-gərì      íʃì=bàʒù-sàsk-àb     tə-m̀
3PL.POSS-head    3PL=work-arrive.CAUS-REL COP-DS

k'oys-m̀-s    [ás-ka       íʃì=dēb-t'-m̄-bàm̀b]  káḿy
other-DEF-M    3MS-WITH    3PL=bury-PASS-IRR-father  be.not

[íʃì=ʔóóf-m̄-bàm̀b]  káḿy
3PL=dress-IRR-father    be.not

'…it was what they produced themselves; there was no other (thing) [with which they could be buried], there was nothing [they could wear].'

(88)     [hāāy    n̩ = ás-ka      ííd-ń-bààb]     n̩-datà
          water     1SG = 3MS-WITH     fetch-IRR-father     1SG.POSS-near.LOC

          háák'àstà       kááy-ə
          now            be.not-STI

          'right now I haven't something [with which I can fetch water]. '

(89)     nata     [íʃì-bààb      noogù-ra
          1SG       3PL.POSS-father    word-ACC

          íʃì = ʔyáz-ń-bàb]-əra        āngā    m̩ = bààs-kì-k-ə
          3PL = be.able-IRR-father-ACC     much    1SG = want-exist-REAL-STI

          'I want very much [that they can (speak) their father's language].'

Furthermore, Irrealis relative clauses behave the same as Realis clauses with respect to resumptive pronouns.

(90)     [ás-tà   há = kāf-t-n̄-bàb]       tuurù
          <u>3MS-LOC</u>  3MS = build-PASS-IRR-father land

          há = fīkūs-t-ā-m-ə
          3MS = prepare-PASS-put-IRR-STI

          '…the land [on which it will be built] will be prepared.'

An interesting semantic difference was disclosed when I suggested (91) for 'they won't know what the chief will tell'. My language consultants commented that in the situation described by (91) "you are not sure whether the chief is coming to the meeting", and they came up with (92) instead. Thus the Irrealis relative clause is interpreted as not asserting the event of telling, whereas the Realis relative clause is used when the coming about of the event of telling is taken for granted.

(91)     bērn        téé-r = íʃì-kì-ǹtà           [kōm̄-s
          tomorrow     go.NV-NEG = 3PL-exist-COND     chief.DEF-M

          māāk-m̄-bàb]-əra       t'úús-ér-íʃì-k'y-á-m-ə
          tell-IRR-father-ACC       know-NEG = 3PL-remain-put-IRR-STI

          'If they don't go tomorrow, they won't know [whether the chief will tell].'

(92) bērn      téé-r = íʃì-kì-ǹtà      [kōm̄-s
       tomorrow      go.NV-NEG = 3PL-exist-COND      chief.DEF-M

       mààk-àb]-əra    t'úús-ér-íʃì-k'y-á-m-ə
       tell-REL-ACC      know-NEG = 3PL-remain-put-IRR-STI

       'If they don't go tomorrow, they won't know [what the chief will tell].'

## 11.5   Adverbial clauses

### 11.5.1     Locational and temporal clauses

In many languages, relative clauses are used in forming locative and (by extension) temporal expressions. This is not surprising as most locative and temporal phrases are easily rephrased as relative clauses with a head like 'place' or 'time' (such as "the place where…", "the time that…").

Locational and temporal adverbial clauses in Sheko can be formed by simply employing a relative clause and case marking, as shown in (93)-(95).

(93) íʃì = təg-əb-k'à      íʃì = bangar-tə íʃì = yèè-k-ə
       3PL = visit-REL-IN      3PL = return-SS    3PL = come.NV-REAL-STI

       'They came back from where they had gone.'

(94) ṣāād-k'à      n̩ = kòb-tee-b-tà      yi = kinderkonder
       pond-IN      1SG = take-go.NV-REL-LOC    3FS = IDEO

       ge-t = í      yí = wutu-ṣub-m̀      m̩ = baaʃ-k
       say-SS = 3FS      3FS = fall-die-DS      1SG = slaughter-REAL

       'When I took (the cow) to the pond, she fell ill and died; I slaughtered her.' (line from a well-known story)

(95) ʒaaʒ = á-k-ə      há = ge-b-tà    íʃì = tee-tə
       be.good = 3MS-REAL-STI    3MS = say-REL-LOC   3PL = go.NV-SS

       'when he said: "OK", they went and…'

This basic construction can be expanded with other nominal material. Some temporal adverbial clauses add a proximal demonstrative between the relative clause marker and case marker, as the following examples (96)-(97) illustrate. They denote simultaneity of events and/or typically function as

clauses which give the setting for storyline events. (The sequence **-b-ààs-tà** ~ **-b-às-tà** REL-PROX.M-LOC is glossed WHILE wherever the morphological make-up of it is not relevant to the discussion, as in (97). )

(96)  **umt'à-ra**      **sàskù-t-íʃì**
      food-ACC         arrive.CAUS-SS＝3PL

      **bēskū-kì-b-ààs-tà**                    **um̀-s＝íʃì**       **ék-ăkǹ**
      divide-exist-REL-PROX.M-LOC             food.DEF-M＝3PL    there.LCT-here

      **ùkūrì**        **bēskū-kì-b-ààs-tà**          **úʃtà**
      equal(Amh)      divide-exist-REL-PROX.M-LOC    down.LOC

      **túúrù   bàtà   há＝sàmù-k-ə**
      land     on.LOC  3MS＝remain-REAL-STI

      '...while they brought out the food and were dividing it, dividing the food here and there in equal parts, (the last bit) remained on the ground.'

(97)  **íʃì＝ʔúm-kì-bààstà   dād-n̄-s        k'ay-tə**
      3PL＝eat-exist-WHILE   child-DEF-M    rise-SS

      'when they had been eating, the boy rose and…'

The sentences below refer to a location by a locational noun phrase following a noun or demonstrative. The noun or demonstrative is followed by the dative marker **-kǹ** and a locational noun phrase with case marking: **sáántà**, from **san** 'forehead' and locative case **-tà** 'to, near' in (98), and **k'ānk'à** 'under, at the bottom' with inessive **-k'à** 'in, at' in (99). Compare these phrases with the temporal adverbial clauses in (100)-(101).

(98)  **kyānū  íntʃù-kǹ      sáántà      há＝sòk'ù-kì-k-ə**
      dog     wood-DAT      front.LOC   3MS＝sleep-exist-REAL-STI

      'The dog is sleeping in front of the tree.'

(99)  **hààz-kǹ      k'ānk'à      òʃt-àb         óótʃ'á-kǹ**
      PROX.M-DAT    under.IN     ask.PASS-REL   question-DAT

      **bángársì      ats-ít-ə**
      answer        give-PL.ADDR-STI

      'Give answer to the questions which are asked below'

Sequential temporal adverbial clauses are formed with locative phrases too (100)-(101). These clauses contain a relativised verb form (ending in **-əb ~ -àb**) followed by dative case marking and a locational noun phrase. These temporal clauses denote a sequence of events.

(100) íʃ=ts'yááts'ú-t=íʃì     tʃ'òr-ʃ-àb-kǹ     ādī-k'à
     3PL=tie-SS=3PL     finish-CAUS-REL-<u>DAT</u>     <u>footprint-IN</u>

     p'ēēt'à     búútsú-tə
     thatch     mow-SS

     '...after they finish tying it, they cut the thatch and...'

(101) ń=ts'òòk-àb-kǹ     sáántà     yērōtsī ná-ŋ̀
     1PL=pray-REL-<u>DAT</u>     <u>front.LOC</u>     God   1PL-DAT

     há=bās-ūs-kì-b-a     há=t'úús-á-m-ə
     3MS=want-CAUS-exist-REL-ACC     3MS=know-put-IRR-STI

     'God knows what we need before we pray.'

The last two examples of adverbial clauses expressing time contain the locative case marker **-tà** followed by a (locational) noun. The noun **gātsù** 'start' in (102) is related to the verb **gad** 'start, begin'. Especially (103) is an interesting example of how physical location is extended to temporal location. When referring to location, the inessive and locative cases can both be suffixed after **wó-**, but to refer to time only **wó-tà** down.there-LOC is used. Locational nouns are further discussed in section 7.1.3 and case marking in section 9.2.

(102) íʃì-yèè-b-tà     gātsù  únà  yááb  kì-â
     3PL-come.NV-REL-LOC     start  long.ago man  exist-3MS.Q

     'Were there people long ago, before they came?

(103) wó-tà     ādī-k'à     ṇ=yēē-m-ə
     down.there-LOC  footprint-IN     1SG=come.NV-IRR-STI

     'I will come later.' (said when there is no fixed appointment)

Incidentally, comparison clauses in Sheko can be expressed with such locational phrases too (104). The body part noun is **gə́rì** 'head' followed by the locative case marker **-tà**, giving the sense of 'above, greater than'.

(104) **báɨ́n-s**    **hààz**  **na-ŋ̀**  **àts-àb-kɨ̀**    **gɘ́r-tà**
well.DEF-M     PROX.M  1PL-DAT  give-REL-DAT    head-LOC

     **há=kɨ̀-b**    **kɨ̀=â**
     3MS=exist-REL   exist=3MS.Q

     'Is there someone who is greater than the one who gave us this well?'

### 11.5.2    Reason clauses

In Sheko, not only locative and temporal adverbial clauses but also reason clauses are made with help of the relative. Reason clauses add **èʃɨ̀tà** after the relative. Examples are given in (105)-(107). Reason clauses have the element **èʃɨ̀tà** in common with purpose clauses. The morphological make-up of **èʃɨ̀tà** is discussed in section 9.2.8.

(105) **fáádù**  **íʃ-əra**  **há=fàd-ùs-àb**    **èʃɨ̀tà**
hunger  3FS-ACC  3MS=hunger-CAUS-REL    MOTIVE

     **ĩ̃**     **yí=ge-ǹ**
     IDEO   3FS=say-DS

     'because she (=the calf) was hungry she mooed;'

(106) **góórà**  **dàd-ǹ-s**    **há-bààb**    **batà**  **há=k'ùd-àb**
Amhara  child-DEF-M    3MS.POSS-father  on.LOC  3MS=cover-REL

     **èʃɨ̀tà**  **ás-əra**  **há=ʔèèb-ùs-t=á**    **há=wòòm-k**
     MOTIVE  3MS-ACC  3MS=bless-CAUS-SS=3MS    3MS=bless-REAL

     'Because the Amhara boy had covered his father, he blessed him.'

(107) **ʂub=á-k-ə**    **ŋ̀=ge-b-tà**  **ʂūūn-k'à**    **kɨ̀-b**
die=3MS-REAL-STI  1SG=say-REL-LOC  life-IN      exist-REL

     **èʃɨ̀tà**  **ás-kɨ̀**  **ʒééʃ-èb**    **noogù** **án-ɨ́-bààb-īs**
     MOTIVE  3MS-DAT  good-REL    thing  put-IRR-father-DIST.M

     **bàs-ùs-kɨ̀-b**    **tə-k-ə**
     want-CAUS-exist-REL    COP-REAL-STI

     'It is fitting to arrange good things for him, because he is alive while I thought he was dead.'

In (108) a relative clause is used to denote manner. Unfortunately I have just one example. Since manner clauses

are usually subsumed under subordinate clauses, the example has got its place here, at the end of the sections on subordinate clauses using relatives.

(108) **há-bàʒà**     **bàʒù-tʼù-kì-b**    **kóysńs**     **tə-k-ə**
       3MS.POSS-work    work-PASS-exist-REL other.DEF.M    COP-REAL-STI
       'His way of working is different.'

### 11.5.3     Purposive clauses

Purposive clauses are marked by the morpheme **-ṇ** followed by **èʃǹtà**, as is illustrated in (109)-(111). The tone on **-ṇ** is always identical to the preceding one (level 3 or 4). It is not clear whether to view **-ṇ** as purposive clause marker or to attribute a nominalizing function to it, in view of the additional marking by **èʃǹtà**. The latter also marks point of reference (section 9.2.8) and occurs in reason clauses (section 11.5.2 above).

(109) **ń=sē-s-ñ**         **èʃǹtà**   **ń=təg-ə**
       1PL=see.NV-CAUS-PURP    MOTIVE   1PL=go-STI
       'Let's go in order for me to show it.'

(110) **yí-bèngì-ra**        **yí-nàʂà-k**
       3FS.POSS-year-ACC     3FS.POSS-husband-WITH

       **yí=daan-tə**       **yí=tʃʼōr-ʃ-ñ**      **èʃǹtà**
       3FS=be.together-SS    3FS=finish-CAUS-<u>PURP</u>    <u>MOTIVE</u>

       **yí-dàdù-ka**        **yí=daan-tə**      **yí=kī-ñ**
       3FS.POSS-child-WITH    3FS=be.together-SS
                3FS=exists-<u>PURP</u>

       **èʃǹtà**   **yīs**    **gayd-n-s**     **saw-b-tà**    **kaarì**
       <u>MOTIVE</u>    DIST.M   problem-DEF-M   arrive.NV-REL-LOC until

       **sáántà**   **yīs**   **kòòsù-ra**      **ītə**       **māāk-o**
       front.LOC    DIST.M divination-ACC   who:COP    tell-STI.ADDR

       'When this problem occurs, who will tell this practice in the future so that she will finish her years together with her husband and so that she will live together with her children?'

(111)   **há-fàtà**        **há=sāk-n̄**      **èʃǹtà**    **há=ʔás-ārā**
        3MS.POSS-on.LOC    3MS=arrive-<u>PURP</u> <u>MOTIVE</u>    3MS=3MS-ACC

        **gāydū-s-n̄**      **há=sām-ā-m̩**
        problem-CAUS-DS    3MS=remain-put-IRR

        'it causes him problems to get onto it; he will remain (beneath)'

Purpose can also be expressed differently, without any of the above-mentioned marking. In (112) and (113), an Irrealis clause is followed by another verb form. This type of purpose clause is only used when the subject of the purpose clause and matrix clause is the same. This construction is problematic to analyse as it blurs the distinction between final verbs and non-final verbs.

(112)   **há=gaba-k'a**  **fuur-a-m**      **saw-tə**
        3MS=market-IN    trade-put-IRR     arrive.NV-SS

        'he arrived at the market to buy it and…'

(113)   **ás**      **séé-m-t=í**          **yèè-b-tà**       **áz**
        3MS     see.NV-IRR-SS/COP=3FS    come.NV-REL-LOC   3MS

        **ṣub-t=á**      **kì-ǹ**
        die-SS=3MS    exist-DS

        'when she came to watch him, he was dead;…'

The rest of section 11.5 gives an overview of adverbial clauses marked by -ǹtà, most of which are conditional. Next to conditional clauses and concessive clauses, the morpheme -ǹtà also marks clauses with a temporal interpretation and verb complements with a wh-word.

### 11.5.4    Conditional and temporal clauses

For each kind of condition, the protasis or 'if-clause' is marked with -ǹtà. Some examples are given in (114)-(116). An example of a counterfactual condition is given in (117).

(114) íʃì-kɨ̀  gaatsa  kááy  kì-ntà
3PL-DAT  help  be.not  exist-COND

kī-r=íʃì-k'y-á-m-ə
exist-NEG=3PL-remain-put-IRR-STI

'If there is no help for them, they won't stay.'

(115) bāārā  yí=barbm-t=í         yááb  íʃ-əra
maiden  3FS=become.woman-SS=3FS    man  3FS-ACC

bōys-ā-m        yə̀g-ǹtà   nyākū        bútà
give.dowry-put-IRR  come-COND  young.man     outside

bòòz-ǹtà=ee  gyābt'à    sāā-r=í-k'y-á-m
stroll-COND-STI  front.yard  arrive.NV-NEG=3FS-remain-put-IRR

'if a girl became woman and someone came to wed her, if young men walked outside, she didn't come to the front yard.'

(116) k'òrk'ōrò            kì-ǹtà        k'òrk'ōrò
corrugated.iron(Amh)   exist-COND    corrugated.iron(Amh)

ha=kōb-téé-tə
2SG=take-go.NV-SS

'if sheets of corrugated iron are available, you bring the sheets and…'

(117) sààmīnt      t'āāgī̄  ń=hāāy-m̄-bàb
week(Amh)     two    1PL=spend.night-IRR-father

ṇ=t'ùùs-ǹtà  baʒà  kóta   ṇ=kōygē-m̄-kì-b      tàn
1SG=know-COND  work  little  1SG=bring-IRR-exist-REL  RESUL

'If I had known that we would stay two weeks, I would have brought a little bit of work with me.'

Clauses marked with **-ǹtà** may have a temporal rather than a conditional interpretation (118)-(120). This is not surprising as there is some overlap between the two, i.e. it can take some time before the condition is fulfilled. In any case, the situation described in the apodosis normally follows upon and is dependent upon the situation described in the antecedent.

(118) yok'à  íʃì = hàày-t = íʃì     kūbm̄ hàày-tə      zérkń
     INTJ  3PL = spend.night-SS = 3PL four  spend.night-SS  time

t͡ʃʼòr-ʃ-ǹtà      bangar-t = íʃì koynəb-kǹ    ééz
finish-CAUS-COND  return-SS = 3PL  Koynəb-DAT    honey

kòb-tə
take-SS

'well, they spent the night and passed four nights and when they finished the time they returned and brought honey for the Koynəb and …'

(119) ʃē?ī  batà  yí = zut-ǹtà      hāāy batà  zút-árá
     stone  on.LOC  3FS = trample-COND  water on.LOC  trample-NEG

'When she stepped on the stones, she didn't step in the water.'

(120) íntʃù  há = kāt'-ā-m = ɔ́            há = kāt'-ǹtà
     wood  3MS-hoe.PASS-PUT-IRR-STI.CONT    3MS-hoe.PASS-COND

há = fākū-s-tū-tə      há-gōm-t'-ā-m-ə
3MS-split-PASS-SS       3MS-pile-PASS-PUT-IRR-STI

'…wood is cut; when it is cut, it is split and stacked.'

### 11.5.5    Concessive clauses

Concessive clauses also take the morpheme **-ǹtà**, but in addition have the inclusive marker **k'arà** (~ **k'arà** ~ **k'eenà**) 'also, even'. This word usually occurs preceding the verb (121)-(123).

(121) …?yants'à      k'oh = á      há = yòwk'a    sīīs-ǹtà
     bee            noise = 3MS    3MS = INTJ      listen-COND

z̧aak'ǹ k'een = á      kí-ntà        kēēs-tə
noon    INCL = 3MS      exist-COND      go.out-SS
'if he hears the noise of bees, even if it is noon, he climbs up and…'

(122) yír-k'arà      há = fòòt-ǹtà        n̩ = óótʃ-á-m-ə
     what-INCL      3MS = become-COND      1SG = ask-put-IRR-STI

'I will ask whatever it is (even anything).'

(123) há-ʔèkì-<u>k'ərà</u>      há=kàʃkùʃ-t=á     há=kaay-ǹtà
3MS.POSS-money-<u>INCL</u>    3MS=harvest?-SS=3MS   3MS=be.not-COND

        há-dàd-ǹ-s-əra         há=ʔōy-ār=á-kì-k-ə
        3MS.POSS-child-DEF-M-ACC   3MS=refuse-NEG=3MS-exist-REAL-STI

        'Even though his son collected his money and disappeared, he didn't refuse him.'

There may be intervening matering between **k'era** and the verb (124). A reason for this could be that it preferably attaches to a noun. In addition, **k'era** appears following the verb in one or two cases (125).

(124) ʃēʔī-k'erà     <u>ás-k'à</u>  ha=ʃìf-ǹtà
stone-INCL       3MS-IN   2SG=add-COND

        ārtʃ̄ī-ār=á-k'y-á-m-ə
        tear-NEG=3MS-remain-put-IRR-STI

        'Even if you add a stone in it, it will not break.'

(125) ás-kì  āṣū  ʃaṇ-s-əb      há-fòòt-ǹtà        <u>k'ərà</u>
3MS-DAT  leg  break.DEF-M-REL  3MS-become-COND   <u>INCL</u>

        'even though his leg was broken, …'

### 11.5.6    Verb complements

Conditional clause marking (**-ǹtà**) is found on verb complement clauses when the clause contains a wh-word.

(126) gēbm̄-tə       há=kì-ǹtà    t'úús-ár=a-kì
how.much-COP   3MS=exist-COND  know-NEG=2SG-exist[Q]

        'Don't you know how much it is?'

Compare the following pairs of sentences. In the (a)-examples, the complement clause contains a question word and the clause is marked by **-ǹtà** as a conditional clause. In the (b)-examples, the complement clause states a fact, there is no question word and the clause is marked by **-əb** as a relative clause.

(127) a.      nā-tə      íʃ=təg-ǹtà   t'úús-éŋ-kì-k-ə
        where-COP   3PL=go-COND
        know-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI

        'I didn't know where it was they went.'

b.  **bōytà  íʃ = tee-b-əra  t'úús-éŋ-kì-k-ə**
Boyta  3PL = go.NV-REL-ACC
know-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI

'I didn't know that they had gone to Boyta.'

(128) a.  **ītī  tə-ǹtà  səg = ítî**
who  COP-COND  see = 2PL.Q

'Have you seen who it is?'

b.  **ha = kùʃ-àb-a  síís-en-kì-k-ə**
2SG = be.sick-REL-ACC  hear-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI

'I didn't hear that you were ill.'

(129) a.  **bóóz-yaab-ù-s  gēbm̀  íʃ = kì-ntà**
stroll-man-m-PL  how.much  3PL = exist-COND

**t'úús-ár = a-kì**
know-NEG = 2SG-exist[Q]

'Don't you know how many guests there are?'

b.  **bóóz-yáab-ù-s  p'úc'ā  íʃ = fòòt-àb-əra**
stroll-man-m-PL  many.ELAT  3PL = become-REL-ACC

**t'úús-ár-a-kì**
know-NEG = 2SG-exist[Q]

'Don't you know that there are very many guests?'

Finally, a complement position may also be invested by the Irrealis counterpart of a relative clause (130). This complement is functionally equivalent to a pair of two subordinate clauses such as in (131). The latter construction is similar to Amharic (**bihonïm bayhonïm**).

(130)  **bērī  téé-r = íʃì-kì-ntà  kōm̄-s**
tomorrow  go.NV-NEG = 3PL-exist-COND  chief.DEF-M

**māāk-m̄-bàb-əra  t'úús-ár = íʃì-k'y-á-m-ə**
tell-IRR-father-ACC  know-NEG = 3PL-remain-put-IRR-STI

'If they don't go tomorrow, they won't know whether the chief will tell it.' ( = example (91))

(131) **há-fòòt-ǹtà**        **fōōt-ə̄rā**        **há=kì-ǹtà**    **k'arà**
3MS=happen-COND     happen-NEG      3MS=exist-COND   INCL

**ṇ=kōō-m-ə**
1SG=take.NV-IRR-STI

'Whether it happens or not, I will accept it.' (Lit: if it happens, if it does not happen…)

## 11.6 Conjunctions

This section deals with the following conjunctions:

(132) **-ka**     'and'            coordinative
      **-k'arà** 'also, even'    inclusive
      **-ná**     'or'             alternative
      **tana**   'hence, so, then' resultative
      **gín**     'but' (<Amh.)   adversative
      **wōym̀** 'or' (<Amh.)    alternative

### 11.6.1 Coordinative

The coordinative conjunction coordinates noun phrases (133)-(134). **-ka** is suffixed to each coordinate. Next to its coordinating function, **-ka** also marks Instrumental and Comitative roles; see examples (135)-(136) and section 9.2.6. **-ka** does not coordinate clauses, as clauses are typically linked through verbal marking such as present in the switch reference system.

(133) **bārkāy-ka**    **zīīnà-ka**    **t'āāgǹ-bāb**    **ʔíʃì=kì-n**
monkey-COOR    leopard-COOR   two-father     3PL=exist-DS

'A monkey and a leopard lived together,…'

(134) **támú-ka**    **t'āāgì-ka**    **ets'n**    **bēngī**
ten-COOR      two-COOR     moon    year

**há=fàdù-t'ù-kì-k-ə**
3MS=count-PASS-exist-REAL-STI

'A year counts twelve months.'

(135) **nata**    **ààs-tà**    **ṇ-dàdù-ka**    **ṇ=kī-m-ə**
1SG     PROX.M-LOC   1SG.POSS-child-WITH   1SG=exist-IRR-STI

'I will stay here with my children.'

(136) íʃì=tee bēk'n̄-<u>ka</u> tʃ'ad-tə
3PL=go.NV spear-<u>WITH</u> pierce-SS

íʃ=zììp'm̀-k-ə
3PL=chase.away-REAL-STI

'…they came and stabbed him with a spear and chased him away'

The adverb **kayēēstà** 'again' (short form: **kày**) probably consists of the coordinative **ka** followed by a demonstrative and the locative case marker **-tà**.

(137) k'oy kōb-yēē-tə <u>kàyēēstà</u> úʃtà án-tə
one take-come.NV-SS <u>again</u> down.LOC put-SS

<u>kày</u> kēēs-tə <u>kày</u> fááfà k'oy kōb-yēē-tə
<u>again</u> go.out-SS <u>again</u> honeycomb one take-come.NV-SS

'…brings one and again puts it on the ground, and again climbs up and again brings one comb, …'

### 11.6.2 Inclusive

The inclusive conjunction is **-k'ərà ~ k'arà** 'also, even' (Tepi var. **k'eenà**). Some examples are given in (138)-(139). The inclusive conjunction is also found in concessive clauses in combination with conditional marking (140).

(138) dēyg-n̄-k'ərà dād-n̄-s-k'ərà tàmāār ìy-tà
child.F-DEF-INCL child-DEF-M-INCL education(Amh) house-LOC

íʃ=nòn-kì-k-ə
3PL=talk-exist-REAL-STI

'The girls and boys are talking at school.'

(139) íʃì-k'eenà íʃì=dòr-s-ùs-ǹ-t=íʃì tóórá
3PL-INCL 3PL=run-CAUS-CAUS-MID-SS=3PL downward

kāārū-k'à tee-k-ə
grave-IN go.NV-REAL-STI

'They also ran and ran and they went down to the grave.'

(140) **há-ʔèkì-k'ərà** **há=kàʃkùʃ-t=á** **há=kaay-ǹtà**
3MS.POSS-money-INCL  3MS=harvest?-SS=3MS  3MS=be.not-COND

**há-dèd-ǹ-s-əra** **há=ʔōy-ār=á-kì-k-ə**
3MS.POSS-child-DEF-M-ACC  3MS=refuse-NEG=3MS-exist-REAL-STI

'Even though his son collected his money and disappeared, he didn't refuse him.'

The inclusive conjunction has a short form **-əra** which is formally similar to the accusative case marker (see section 9.2.2). Some speakers use this conjunction very liberally, especially, it seems, in church contexts. In (142), it occurs on the adverbial expression **háák'àstà** 'now', twice on **èʃǹtà** and even once on a subject NP, and there is one regular occurrence of the accusative. Most speakers do not think that this liberal use constitutes 'good' Sheko. The occurrence of **-ra** on the subject NP is considered downright wrong by the language consultants (indicated by an asterisk in the example).

(142) **háák'àst-əra (…)** **āyī-én-k'y-á-n**
now-INCL  think.much-NEG.1PL-remain-put-PURP

**ìʃǹt-əra (…)** **yīz** **èʃǹtà-ra** **yērōtsī**
MOTIVE-INCL  DIST.M  MOTIVE-INCL  God

**màngìstì-*ra** **fāyk'ī há=fòòt-àb-īs-əra**
government(Amh)-INCL  life  3MS=become-REL-DIST.M-ACC

**t'úús-ít-ə**
know-PL.ADDR-STI

'Now … in order for us not to worry … Therefore, know that God's kingdom is life!'

### 11.6.3  Alternative

The alternative conjunction is **-ná** 'or'. It is only used in questions (143)-(145). In giving alternatives in a non-interrogative setting, the Amharic conjunction **wōyǹ** may be employed (see section 11.6.5 below).

(143) **ás-kɪ̀ gatsu fyáádí-ka-<u>náa</u> zírkú-ka-<u>náa</u> éts'ń-ka**
3MS-DAT start    number-WITH-<u>or</u>  time-WITH-<u>or</u>    moon-WITH

**íʃì = t'ùs-kì yí = ge-t = í bádìgɪ̀ ootʃu-k-ə**
3PL = know-exist[Q]       3FS = say-SS = 3FS  Badign  ask-REAL-STI

'Badign asked saying "Do they know the start (of the year) by counting or by day or by moon?" '

(144) **ha-bààb-<u>máà</u> emà tɘ̀**
2SG.POSS-father-<u>or</u>      so.and.so      cop.Q

'Is it your father or so-and-so?'

(145) **bátʃà-ka <u>náa</u>**
anger-WITH    <u>or</u>

'In anger?' (i.e. did they part/ did the Sheko leave in anger? Context: reaction of one of the audience listening to the oral history on the split-off between the Diizi and Sheko.)

**ūytī-ka t = íʃì-yèè-k-ə bátʃà-ka tɔ́-rée**
love-WITH    COP = 3PL-come.NV-REAL-STI  anger-WITH  COP-NEG.STI

'It was with love that they came, not with anger.' (Context: answer to the above.)

Note that **-na** also connects clauses:

(146) **ūūtɪ̀ k'yar-tə wuʂ = a-k-náà wúʂ-ár = a-kì**
rat     beat-SS     kill = 2SG-REAL-or  kill-NEG = 2SG-EXIST.Q

'Did you beat and kill the rat or didn't you?' (Line from a well-known *saaya* 'fable'.)

### 11.6.4    Resultative

Sheko has the conjunction **tana**, whose meaning is not directly evident. It might encode 'result', i.e. the situation described by the clause in which **tana** occurs is presented as ensuing from the preceding events. Examples are given in (147)-(149). The first two examples come from texts and the third was offered in elicitation.

(147) nata bàrù-t=á   há=ʔin-n̄  <u>tana</u>
1SG throw.away-SS=3MS 3MS=go-DS  <u>RESUL</u>

n̩=tee-kì-k-ə
1SG=go.NV-exist-REAL-STI

'...he chased me away and went; hence I am going.'

(148) íʃ=karbu-tə   íʃĩ=ʔààtù-kì-k-ə
3PL=be.strong-SS 3PL=hold-exist-REAL-STI

há=k'òʒù-t=á  <u>tana</u> há=yīs-əra ààtù-kì-k
3MS=be.strong-SS=3MS <u>RESUL</u> 3MS=DIST.M-ACC hold-exist-REAL

'Being strong they keep (cattle). He is strong and so he keeps them.'

(149) bádìgn̄   hààs-ta   yí=woogu-t=í
Badign  PROX.M-LOC 3FS=sit-SS=3FS

nòŋ=í-kì-n̄ <u>tana</u> n̩=tə́g-á-m n̩=gè-b-ara
talk=3FS-exist-DS <u>RESUL</u> 1SG=go-put-IRR 1SG=say-REL-ACC

n̩=sàmù-k-ə
1SG=remain-REAL-STI

'Badign sits here and talks, so I refrained from my saying "I will go".'

In other cases, 'result' (in the sense of 'cause') is clearly excluded; but the clause is linked as 'subsequent' or 'consecutive' to the preceding.

(150) há-dàdù-s   t=á   ás-k'à an-t=á
3MS.POSS-child-PL COP=3MS 3MS-IN put-SS=3MS

á=nata-ra  mààd-n̄   tana  nata yááf-árá-kì
3MS=1SG-ACC deceive-DS <u>RESUL</u> 1SG find-NEG-exist[Q]

ge-tə
say-SS

' "It is his children that he put in it, deceiving me; haven't I found it?" she said and…'

(151) kà-kày         há-bàtà        án-tə   yīs-tà
       PLUR-again    3MS.POSS-on.LOC  put-SS  DIST.M-LOC

       há=dyāskū-fééʃ-t=á       kétā  hayk'à īsī-k'à
       3MS=relocate-spend.day-SS=3MS  all     up.IN  beehive-IN

       há=tʃ'or-ǹtà  yīs-t=á     úʃtà    fín-t=á
       3MS=finish-COND  DIST.M-LOC=3MS  down.LOC  descend-SS=3MS

       yīs-tà         tanà  wóógú-t=á   k'ēēt'-ā-m̩
       DIST.M-LOC      RESUL  sit-SS=3MS    swallow-put-IRR

       '…puts it again on the other and then he spends the time relocating them and when all up at the beehive are finished then he climbs down and then he sits down and eats'

(152) …ítí=nyààs-əb      āngūt'=á-s-ə      gé-tə  tana
       2PL=give.birth-REL    grow.PASS-3MS-OPT-STI  say-SS  RESUL

       n̩=tīīts-ǹ    íʃì=ʔín-m̀-bààb    tə-k-ə
       1SG=dismiss-DS  3PL=go-IRR-father    COP-REAL-STI

       '(I bless them) saying: "… may what you birthed grow up," and I dismiss them; they will go.'

In Wolaitta, there is a formally somewhat similar morpheme **-ttenne,** which consists of a **tte** copula and the suffix **-nne** which normally coordinates (pro)nouns. **-ttenne** itself does not coordinate but emphasizes verbal and non-verbal predicates (Azeb 2007c:115).

### 11.6.5    Amharic conjunctions

The two conjunctions which are most often borrowed from Amharic are **gín** < **gïn** 'however, but' and **wōym̀** < **wäym** 'or'. As for the first, Sheko does not have a reversing conjunction (153), therefore the use of **gin** fills a gap. An example is given in (154).

(153) ń=k'ēdā     k'ed-ǹ     n̩=gììʂù-kès-ǹ
       1SG-oath    swear°-DS   1SG=pull-go.out.CAUS-DS

       há=nata-ra  gyá-ń      ge-k-ə
       3MS=1SG-ACC  chew-PURP?  say-REAL-STI

       'we took an oath (that he would not eat me); I pulled him out, (but) he says he is going to eat me.'

(154) ás-ka          t=á             fòòtù-kì-k-ə          yááb
3MS-WITH      COP=3MS        become-exist-REAL-STI    man

arà     gín           k'ōysñs       tə-k-ə
thought  however(Amh)   different      COP-REAL-STI

'It is with him that it happens. But the thoughts of men are different.'

As for the second, **wōym̀** also feels a gap, since the Sheko conjunction **ná** 'or' is mainly used in questions, whereas **wōym̀** is used in statements (155)-(157). Thus, **wōym̀** complements **ná**. Accordingly, the Amharic interrogative **wäys** 'or?' is not attested in my data.

(155) túrà          zirkn  wōym̀       íírú   bèngì-k'à
big.rains        day    or(Amh)     rain   year-IN

dōōnk'ā-ra   íʃì=gād-ā-m-ə
millet-ACC      3PL=start-put-IRR-STI

'they started the millet in the time of big rains or rainy season.' (Lit: year of rain. Context: Traditionally, a Sheko year started by planting millet, which happens around the end of May when the rainy season starts.)

(156) wōym  gwāādà-k'à       yí=ky-ā-m
or(Amh)  back.room(Amh)-IN   3FS=exist-put-IRR

wōym       baʒà-k'à    yí=ky-ā-m
or(Amh)       work-IN       3FS=exist-put-IRR

'Either she would be in a back room or she would be at work.'

(157) ha=ʔĩn-m̃-bàb     ha=ʔéz-á-m̥      wōym
2SG=go-IRR-father    2SG=be.able-put-IRR   or(Amh)

haay          há=ge-ntà    ha=hāāy-ā-m̥
spend.night   3MS=say-COND  2SG=spend.night-put-IRR

'…you can go. Or when he says 'stay for the night', you will stay.'

# 12  Verb derivation

Verb derivation includes the causative, passive and middle. All derivational markers are suffixal. The input for these derivations are verbs, and in some cases also nouns. There are some parallel morphophonological processes in the derivation of causative and passive. These include vowel shortening of the stem, L tone on the verb stem, metathesis with root-final velar consonants, and loss of ejective (glottal) feature in certain environments. Furthermore, reciprocals are derived by suffixing the middle to the causative, which is uncommon in Omotic languages.

In addition, this chapter discusses experiencer verbs, since they show interesting variation between causative and non-causative stems.

## 12.1  Causative

The causative derivation is productive. The formal make-up is discussed in the following section. In some verbs, metathesis takes place. Its syntactic function is to add an argument in the argument structure of a verb; it appears on transitives and intransitives. In some cases, the causative derivation makes a verb from a noun. It can appear more than once, i.e. double causatives are allowed.

### 12.1.1    Formal aspects of the causative

The form of the causative is **-s**, coupled with L tone on the verb stem and vowel shortening (if the root has a long vowel). The causative formation is partially lexically determined. It is unpredictable with which verbs metathesis between the final C of the root and the causative suffix **-s** takes place (1). Furthermore, it is lexically determined whether the expletive vowel[38] **u** is present or absent (2). In the examples below, there is no difference in CV-structure of the root of the verb, but the expletive vowel is suffixed to the root in some cases but not in others.

---

[38] Since the function of this vowel is not clear, and since it is not epenthetic, the term 'expletive vowel' is chosen. See also section 10.1.

(1)  fík      'be ready'           fíkū-s  'make ready'
     tik      'be extinguished'    tisk    'extinguish'

(2)  sír      'be dented'          sīrū-s  'dent'
     sár      'be hot'             sar-s   'heat'
     un       'ignite'             ūnū-s   'cause to ignite'
     fín      'descend'            fin-s   'lower'
     ṣaan     'saw'                ṣānū-s  'cause to saw'
     ṣáán     'peek'               ṣan-s   'cause to peek'

Some rules apply to all causative forms. Long vowels are always shortened, also in open syllables, i.e. when an expletive vowel occurs. Some examples are provided in (3). This rule applies to other derivations as well, see MP6 in section 3.2.3.

(3)  k'ááb    'pour'     k'ab-s   'cause to pour'
     góóm     'pile'     gōmū-s   'cause to pile'
     door     'run'      dor-s    'cause to run'
     teer     'swell'    tērū-s   'cause to swell'

Furthermore, all causative verb stems have L tone, with the exception of those in (4). Causative stems follow the tonal behaviour of L verb roots, except disyllabic stems in the Basic (imperative) paradigm; these have tone level 3 instead of level 2, as illustrated in (4b). Since this form is taken as the citation form, disyllabic causative stems are cited with tone 3.

(4)  a.    fin-s-ə
            descend-CAUS-STI
            'Lower it!'

     b.    bāngār-s-ə
            return-CAUS-STI
            'Give back! / Reply!'

The verbs in (5) have H tone even though their form suggests a causative derivation. The verb bártʃú-ʃ 'wash' has a passive counterpart bārtʃ'ū-t' 'be washed'. The verb dúbdú-s has a middle marked counterpart dūb-m̄ 'gather, come together'. Of the other two verbs, no base or other derived form is present in my corpus.

(5)  bártʃʼú-ʃ        'wash (something, oneself)'
     dúbdú-s         'collect, gather'
     káʃkú-ʃ         'harvest'
     ? dúnkúr-s      'conclude'

The causative suffix displays sibilant harmony, i.e. the sibilant
has the same place of articulation as the sibilants in the verb
root. The harmony is in place only, not in voice, as can be seen
here from the causative stems of **bez** 'sprout', **baʒ** 'work' and
**z̧ar** 'spill (of grain)'.

(6)  kats   'cook'          kātsū-s 'cause to cook'
     iits   'boil'          ītsū-s  'cause to boil'
     bez    'sprout'        bēzū-s  'cause to sprout'

(7)  ʃooy   'spill (of liquid)'   ʃoy-ʃ   'spill (liquid)'
     baʒ    'work'               bāʒū-ʃ  'cause to work'
     óótʃ   'ask'                ōtʃʼū-ʃ 'cause to ask'
     tʃʼór  'be finished'        tʃʼor-ʃ 'finish'

(8)  geʈʂʼ  'laugh'         geʈʂʼu-ʂ 'cause to laugh'
     aʂ     'plant'         aʂu-ʂ   'cause to plant'
     z̧ár    'spill (of grain)'   z̧ar-ʂ  'spill (grain)'

An ejective looses its ejective feature and becomes a voiceless
stop or affricate immediately preceding the causative marker **-s**
(9). (This is MP7 in section 3.2.3.) For stems ending in an
ejective stop other than **pʼ** metathesis and cluster simplification
may apply, or they may have the intervening expletive vowel
**u**; in the latter case the ejective feature is not lost.

(9)  tʼép'   'carry'             [ tʼep-s ]   'load'
     tʼoop'  'be baptised'       [ tʼop-s ]   'baptize'

     cf. tsʼóóts' 'be full'      tsʼot-s      'fill'

As already evidenced by **tsʼot-s** 'fill' in example (10), adjacent
sibilants merge into a single segment. More examples are given
below. In order to show the morphological make-up of the
causative here, a hyphen is inserted (**ke-s** < **kees-s**), although
the root-final and suffixal sibilant are indistinguishable. Note

that other verb roots ending in a sibilant fail to undergo this process (11).

(10) kees 'go out' ke-s 'bring out'
síís 'listen' si-s 'cause to listen
kaats 'be ripe' kat-s 'cook'
k'íʂ 'drink' k'i-ʂ 'give a drink, water'
k'eetsʼ 'be reheated (of yam)' k'et-s 'to reheat (yam)'

(11) baas 'want, search' bāsū-s 'be necessary'
iits 'boil' ītsū-s 'cause to boil'
baʒ 'work' bāʒū-ʃ 'cause to work'

The following verbs undergo metathesis in the causative formation. They all end in a velar consonant. The first two verbs are transitive and also undergo metathesis in the passive formation.

(12) *base* *causative* *passive*
boog 'harvest yam' bosk' botk'
duuk' 'sow (maize)' dusk' dutk'
diik' 'be anointed, painted' disk'
wook' 'be tired' wosk'
sok' 'lie down, be asleep' sosk'
sak 'arrive, reach' sask
tik 'be extinguished' tisk

Finally, note the dropping of the velar of sə́g 'see' in causative formation, and the dropping of -d of ʔyard 'enter' (13). A sentential example for the latter is given in (14).

(13) sə́g 'see' se-s 'show'
ʔyard 'enter' ʔyar-s 'lead into, marry'

(14) …yīs-tà yeta-k'erà bāārā ʔyār-s-ǹ
DIST.M-LOC 2SG-INCL maiden enter-CAUS-DS

ǹ=nàta-k'erà báábù-kǹ ʔyard-ə
1SG=1SG-INCL male-DAT enter-STI

'…then you can marry a girl and let me marry a man'

In some instances, the causative cannot be related to an underived verb stem, but there is a corresponding basic noun. Some examples are presented in (15)-(17). The causative can be seen as verbalizer here. It is not clear how productive this process is.

(15)    **nata-ra**  **gúúrú**    **ṇ-yaaf-à**      **batà**  **bēngī-k'à**
        1SG-ACC   only  1SG.POSS-find-NMLZ     on.LOC  year-IN

    **há = gàydù-s̲-k-ə**             **yí = ge-ǹ**
    3MS = problem-CAUS-REAL-STI    3FS = say-DS

    ' "He only has bothered me on my findings for years," she said;'

    cf. **gáydú** 'problem'

(16)    **úʃń**    **bìʔù-s̲ = í-k-ə**
       flower    feather-CAUS = 3FS-REAL-STI

    'She put the flower in the hair/adorned with a flower.'

    cf. **bīy** < **bīʔī** 'feather'

(17)    **ts'yārū-s**      'to form a beard (of maize)'
                       cf. **ts'yārū** 'beard'
    **hay-s**          'listen, be quiet; govern, manage'
                       cf. **haay** 'ear'; **haay** 'spend the night'[39]

Other verbs show an alternation with the passive (18). Although they clearly have a base form, the base form is not attested. The causative and passive in these pairs form transitive and intransitive verbs respectively.

---

[39] Many Ethiopian languages have a similar derivation; e.g. Amharic **addärä** 'spend the night'; **astädadärä** 'govern'.

(18)    causatives (tr.) alternating with passives (intr.)

| bártʃú-ʃ | 'wash' | bārtʃū-t' | 'be washed' |
| dúbdú-s | 'collect, gather' | dūbdū-t' | 'be collected' |
| gārū-s | 'greet' | ? gārū-t' | 'be greeted' |
| fõrtʃū-ʃ | 'undress' | õrtʃū-t' | 'be undressed' |
| fādū-s | 'cause to be hungry' | fādū-t' | 'be hungry' |
| kūndū-s | 'push' | kūndū-t' | 'be pushed' |
| ʒētʃū-ʃ | 'flower (of maize)' | | (not attested) |
| ābdū-s | 'make a floor' | ābdū-t' | 'be made' |
| | cf. áábdà 'floor of cow dung' | | |
| āngū-s | 'make larger' | āngū-t' | 'be made large, increase' |

A few verbs do not alternate with passives, and an underived base is not known. As CVCC is a possible stem shape, it could be that the sibilant is part of the root.

(19)    tʃ'arʃ      'carve', cf. passive tʃ'arʃu-t' 'be carved'
        ubs       'creep'

### 12.1.2    Double causatives

The causative stem may be formed from intransitive verbs, deriving a transitive verb, as well as from transitive verbs. The causative suffix may be realized twice, as illustrated in examples (20)-(21). Double causatives are also used in some reciprocal constructions (section 12.3.3).

(20)  bar 'boil' (intr.)  bars 'boil'  bārsūs 'cause to boil'
      fín 'descend'  fins 'lower'  fînsūs 'cause to lower'
      ʂor 'be afraid'  ʂorʂ 'frighten'  ʂõrʂūʂ 'cause to frighten'
      sok' 'lie down, sleep'  sosk 'lay down, make sleep'  sōskūs 'cause to lay down, cause to make sleep'
      úm 'eat'  ums 'feed'  ūmsūs 'cause to feed'

(21)  a.    **hāāy-ǹ-s        há=saru-k-ə**
            water-DEF-M       3MS=be.hot-REAL-STI
            'The water is hot.'

      b.    **hāāy    sar-s̱-ít-ə**
            water    be.hot-CAUS-PL.ADDR-STI
            'heat water!'

  c. **íʃ-əra haay-n-s-a  há=sar-su-s-k-ə**
    3FS-ACC water-DEF-M-ACC 3MS=be.hot-<u>CAUS-CAUS</u>-REAL-STI
    'he made her heat the water'

As can be seen from the examples, the causative introduces a new argument (the causer). The causee may be marked by the accusative (22) or instrumental case (23b).

(22) **íʃ-əra īy-ǹ-s-əra  há=dìr-sù-k-ə**
   <u>3FS-ACC</u> house-DEF-M-ACC 3MS=sweep-<u>CAUS</u>-REAL-STI
   'He made her sweep the house.'

(23) a. **aftu beyns  kom-s-əra**
     drinking mother.DEF.M chief.DEF-M-ACC

    **há=gasku-k-ə**
    3MS=insult-REAL-STI
    'The drunkard insulted the chief.'

  b. **aftu beyns  dadu-ka  kom-s-a**
     drinking mother.DEF.M <u>child-WITH</u> chief.DEF-M-ACC

    **há=gàskù-s̱-k-ə**
    3MS=insult-<u>CAUS</u>-REAL-STI
    'The drunkard had the chief insulted by a child.'

## 12.2 Passive

The passive derivation marker is **-t'**. There is a process of metathesis when the passive derivation is suffixed to verb roots with an affricate or velar stop.

### 12.2.1 Formal aspects of the passive

Like in causative formation, in passive formation a long vowel is shortened and all passive verb stems have L tone. They follow the tonal behaviour of L verb roots, except disyllabic stems in the Basic (Imperative) paradigm; these have tone level 3 instead of level 2.

(24) **góóm** 'pile'    **gom-t'** 'be piled'
   **góótʃ** 'bite (of snake) **gōtʃū-t'**'be bitten'

380

The passive-middle marker **-t'** deglottalises and becomes the voiceless plosive **-t** after a voiceless fricative (*MP 8*).

(25)  **k'of**  'estimate'        **k'of-t**  'be estimated'
      **myas**  'hew'             **myas-t** 'be hewn'
      **tooṣ**  'add to water'    **toṣ-t**  'be added to water'
      **byáh**  'open'            **byah-t** 'be opened'

In many verbs with a stem-final velar stop, metathesis takes place (*MP 9*). Further changes are assimilation in voice, i.e. clusters of a voiced velar stop and passive **-t'** become voiceless. Only the second consonant (after metathesis) may be ejective. The presence of the ejective feature is not fully predictable. The following verbs are known to undergo metathesis in passive formation:

(26)  **duuk'**  'sow (maize)'   **dutk'**  'be sown'
      **mook'**  'break off'     **motk**   'be broken off'
      **ẓáák'**  'peel maize'    **ẓatk'**  'be peeled'
      **haak**   'pick'          **hatk**   'be picked'
      **maak**   'tell'          **matk**   'be told'
      **beg**    'pay'           **betk'**  'be paid'
      **bóóg**   'harvest yam'   **botk'**  'be harvested'
      **daag**   'invite'        **datk**   'be invited'

Some sentential examples are given in (27).

(27)  a.  **yáb-m̀-s**      **dàtk=á-k-ə**
          man-DEF-M        invite.PASS=3MS-REAL-STI
          'The man was invited.'

      b.  **ʃə́t'ì**   **dīrga-ka**   **dùtk'=á-k**
          maize      Dirga-WITH      sow.PASS=3MS-REAL
          'The maize was sown by Dirga.'

      a.  **gyān̄-s**        **bètk'=á-k-ə**
          coffee.DEF-M      pay.PASS=3MS-REAL-STI
          'The coffee is paid (for).'

Furthermore, some verbs ending in an affricate simplify the cluster that is created after suffixing the passive-middle **-t'** to a

cluster of homorganic sibilant and stop (as described in *MP 10*).

(28)  bóóʈʂ    'scrape, dig'            boʂt      'be dug'
      búúts    'cut (horizontally)'    bust      'be cut'
      giitʃʼ   'rub'                   giʃt      'be rubbed'
      geeʈʂʼ   'laugh'                 geʂt      'be laughed (at)'
      kʼaaʈʂʼ  'stone'                 kʼàʂt     'be stoned'
      kʼutsʼ   'cut'                   kʼust     'be cut'
      ʃátʃ     'herd'                  ʃaʃt      'be herded'
      tsʼyááts' 'tie'                  ts'yast   'be tied'
      ats      'give                   ast       'be given'
      ííts     'cook (liquid)'         ist       'be cooked', ex. (29)

(29)  gyānū   hàày    áás-t=á         há=ʔist-n-baab
      coffee  water   how-COP=3MS     3MS=cook.liquid.PASS-IRR-father

      te-n     m̩=maaku-ki-k
      COP-DS   1SG=tell-exist-REAL

      'I will be telling how coffee is/has to be prepared.'[40]

Note that not all verbs ending in an affricate follow this pattern of cluster simplification.

(30)  gootʃ    'bite (of snake)'       gotʃu-tʼ              'be bitten'
      kʼapʼtsʼ 'cut (scissors)'        kʼapʼtsʼu-tʼ ~ kapʼ-tʼ 'be cut'
      tsʼuutsʼ 'whistle'               tsʼutsʼu-tʼ           'be whistled'

Verb roots ending in -tʼ mostly merge their last consonant with the passive -tʼ (31). Some verbs assimilate their last consonant and merge (32). But not all verbs do, as illustrated in example (33).

(31)  bootʼ    'smear, rub, paint'     bo-tʼ     'be smeared'
      kááʼ     'hoe, dig'              ka-tʼ     'be hoed, dug'
      kʼeetʼ   'swallow'               kʼe-tʼ    'be swallowed'
      kʼiitʼ   'grind'                 kʼi-tʼ    'be ground '
      matʼ     'ferment'               ma-tʼ     'be fermented'

---

[40] **gyānū hàày** (or simply **gyānū**) is the common Sheko coffee beverage, a hot drink prepared from coffee leaves. In contrast, **sīnì gyànù** (Lit: cup coffee), is the Amharic style coffee from the beans.

(32)  ţṣ'ad   'pierce'          ţṣ'a-t'   'be pierced'

(33)  tʃ'it'   'stretch (muscles)'   tʃ'it'u-t' 'be stretched'
      k'ud    'cover'           k'udu-t'  'be covered'

As was shown for causatives, some verbs drop the last velar consonant in derivation.

(34)  eg     'do'              e-t'     'be done'
      sɔ́g    'see'             se-t'    'be seen, be visible'

(35)  bútà   sē-t'-ə̄r = í-k'y-á-m
      outside  see.NV-PASS-NEG = 3FS-remain-put-IRR
      'She was not seen outside.'

A stem-final glottal stop is deleted before the passive.

(36)  gyaʔ   'chew'            gya-t'   'be chewed'
      baʔ    'carry on the back'  ba-t'    'be carried'
      daʔ    'batter'          da-t'    'be battered'
      ṣuʔ    'rest'            ṣu-t'    'be rested'

(37)  há = t'ùp'ù-ṯ'-àb-kǹ      ādī-k'à       há = dā-ṯ'-ā-m-ə
      3MS = soak-PASS-REL-DAT   footstep-IN   3MS = batter-PASS-put-IRR-STI
      'After it is soaked, it is battered.'

(38)  yeeb-m-s      ṣu-ṯ' = á-k-ə
      mourning-DEF-M   rest-PASS = 3MS-REAL-STI
      'the mourning diminished/came to an end (was rested)'

### 12.2.2   Semantic aspects of the passive

Semantically, the passive centralises the Patient, which becomes subject of the sentence. The original subject is decentralised and can be expressed by an Instrument phrase or left out.

(39)  a.   ṣóóẓ   na-ɳ̀   āṣū-ra  gootʃ = á-k
           snake   1SG-DAT  leg-ACC  bite = 3MS-REAL
           'A snake bit me in the leg.'

  b.  **na-ŋ** **āṣū** **(ṣóóẓ-ka)**  **gòtʃù-t̲ʼ=á-k-ə**
     1SG-DAT leg-ACC snake-WITH  bite-<u>PASS</u>=3MS-REAL-STI
     'My leg was bitten (by a snake).'

In view of the formal identity of passive and reflexive in some Omotic languages, it may be noted that the passive in Sheko does not have a reflexive meaning (40). Reflexivity is discussed in section 6.3.

(40) **woogi** **k'ùst=í-k-ə**
   Woogi  cut.PASS=3FS-REAL-STI
   'Woogi was cut. /*Woogi cut herself'

In some instances, the passive has elements of middle semantics. In (41)-(42), the passive may also have an interpretation of 'potentiality':

(41) **má**    **kōōkn̄** **ʃád-ń-s**
   earlier.today  road  be.far-DEF-M

   **há=sè-t̲ʼù-k-ə**
   3MS=see.NV-<u>PASS</u>-REAL-STI
   'Today far places are visible (one can see far today).'

(42) **ṣūk'-ǹ-s**  **hàz**  **ūm-t̲ʼ-ār=á-kì-k-ə**
   porridge-DEF-M  PROX.M eat-<u>PASS</u>-NEG=3MS-exist-REAL-STI
   'This porridge is not eatable.'

Instead of the Realis form in (42), an Irrealis is used as well (43).

(43) **ṣūk'-ǹ-s**  **ūm-t'-ār=á-k'y-a-m-ə**
   porridge-DEF-M  eat-PASS-NEG=3MS-remain-put-IRR-STI
   'The porridge is not eatable.'

In (44), verb stems with a possibly frozen passive are listed. These are semantically related to middle (body centered, spontaneous process or emotive). However, Sheko has a dedicated middle marker -**ṇ** (section 12.3 below). Another possibility is that -**t** ~ **t'** in these verbs a reflex of the Omotic inchoative marker -**t** ~ **t'**. Two other verb stems in -**t** also fit

into the list. (The final consonant in **gift** 'boast' etc. can be explained by *MP 8,* see (25) above.)

(44)  **fayt'**          'be weak' cf. **fayt'u-s** 'weaken'
      **gift**          'boast'
      **kyabt'**        'become king' cf. **kyabt'u-s** 'make king'
      **k'ūmūt'**       'be moldy (of injera)'
      **ʃārūt'**        'be asleep (of body part)'
      **tʂ'āmūt'**      'be jealous (?)'
      **taft**          'touch'
      **tīknūt'**       'hiccup'
      **aft**           'be intoxicated, drunk'

      **gumt**          'kneel down'
      **? fért**        'put in its place'

## 12.3  Middle

The middle is formally characterized by a syllabic nasal. Syntactically, middle verbs can be transitive or intransitive. Semantically, it ranges from spontaneous processes (45), to self-centeredness (46), and reciprocal (47). The reciprocal is typically built on a causative stem. The Sheko middle is analysed as a reciprocal-middle, rather than a 'middle proper' since it does not occur with body grooming verbs (cf. Tolemariam 2009:150). See section 12.3.2 for a discussion and a list of middle verb stems.

(45)  a.    **gàz=á-k-ə**
            snap = 3MS-REAL-STI
            'He snapped it.'

      b.    **gàz-n̩=á-k-ə**
            snap-<u>MIDD</u> = 3MS-REAL-STI
            'It snapped.'

(46)  a.    **mūzī    n̩=bēsk-ā-m-ə**
            banana   1SG=divide-put-IRR-STI
            'I will divide the banana'

b.     **mūzī   ṇ = bēsk-n̄-ā-m-ə**

banana  1SG = divide-<span style="text-decoration: underline">MIDD</span>-put-IRR-STI

'I will divide the banana for my own benefit'

(47)   a.     **íʃì = yangu-kì-k-ə**

3PL = be.angry-exist-REAL-STI

'they are angry'

       b.     **yàngù-<u>s-n̄</u> = íʃì-k-ə**

be.angry-<span style="text-decoration: underline">CAUS-MIDD</span> = 3PL-REAL-STI

'They were angry with each other.'

### 12.3.1    Formal aspects of the middle

The middle suffix is a syllabic **-ṇ**. The **ṇ** assimilates to the adjacent consonant as described in section 3.1, *PR 9*. There are a few verbs with a stem-final **ṃ** which could also belong to the middle (48). In some cases, a variant form is found with a bilabial stop, which could explain the **ṃ** by assimilation.

(48)   **bārm̄**  'become an adult (f)' ~ **bārbm̄**
       **wúrḿ**  'be turbid' ~ **wúrbḿ**
       **gīrm̄**  'ruminate'
       **gūym̄**  'bow down, worship'
       **tʃʼārm̄**  'be pure'
       **tʼūrm̄**  'frown' cf. **tʼur** 'be folded'

Most middles are L stems. Since they are disyllabic, the imperative singular has tone 3 (just as disyllabic causatives and passives). The following verb stems however are H:

(49)   **níbḿ**        'dew'
       **sútń**        'be sharp, pointy'
       **tsʼárkń**     'spit far'
       **tsʼúbḿ**     'be narrow'
       **tʂʼógń**     'smack, eat noisily'
       **wúrḿ**      'be turbid'

While most middle verbs are intransitive (50)-(51), a few verbs are transitive, such as **zīīpʼm̄** 'chase' and **bōtn̄** 'pound in a mortar'. The Patient/Undergoer of those verbs is in the accusative (52).

(50) **ás-kɨ̀** **iik'a-ka** **dādū** **nyākū** **há=kɨ̀-ɨ̀tà**
3MS-DAT be.old.NMLZ-WITH child young.man 3MS=exist-COND

**há=nyàk-ɨ̀-àb** **íʃi=t'ūūs-ā-m-ə**
3MS=become.adult.man-<u>MIDD</u>-REL 3PL=know-put-IRR-STI

'they would know that he became adult if he was a young man by his age'

(51) **ítí=úm-ɱ̀-bà\`ab** **èʃɨ̀tà** **āyn̄-ārā**
2PL-eat-IRR-father MOTIVE think.much.<u>MIDD</u>-NEG

**k'é-t-ə**
remain-PL.ADDR-STI

'Do not worry about what you will eat'

(52) **ʃə́t'ì-ra** **yí=bōtn̄-kɨ̀-b-tà**
maize-ACC 3FS=pound.<u>MIDD</u>-exist-REL-LOC

'when she was pounding maize'

The middle is argument decreasing in some cases, mostly when the middle is derived from a basic transitive verb (53b). In other cases, it is valency neutral, for instance in middles expressing 'selfcenteredness' (54b).

(53) a. **kaf-ɱ̀-s** **íʃ-əra** **k'yaaf-ɱ̀** **yí=wut-ɨ̀**
bird-DEF-M 3FS-ACC kick-DS 3FS=fall-DS

'the bird kicked her; she fell…'

b. **dāygn̄** **yí=k'yaf-<u>m</u>-ky-a-a**
child.F.DEF 3FS-kick-<u>MIDD</u>-exist-IMPL-STD

'the girl was convulsing…'

(54) a. **ń=təg-ə**
1PL=go-STI

'let's go'

b. **ń=təg-n-ə**
1PL=go-<u>MIDD</u>-STI

'let's go (for ourselves)'

### 12.3.2 Semantics of the middle

In general, there is a large semantic overlap between middle and reflexive/reciprocal. Haspelmath (2003:225) refers to reflexive and middle functions with one semantic map. Kemmer (1993) analyses the middle as having a participant which refers to a single entity (or a high degree of unity between participants), while the participant of a reflexive is conceptualised as split into subparts one of which acts upon the other (or a low degree of unity). On the other hand, the middle and the passive have in common that the Agent is unimportant. Payne (1997) describes the middle as a process which ignores the Agent role. In contrast, the passive is seen as an action with a downplayed Agent.

To illustrate the range of the middle in Sheko, first a list of verbs is presented. Secondly, some functions, such as spontaneous processes and self-centeredness, are discussed using example sentences. Section 12.3.3 discusses reciprocals, which are formed in Sheko by a combination of causative and middle. The middle -ŋ in Sheko is positioned towards the reflexive-reciprocal end of the semantic continuum. It does not cover grooming verbs, which is uncommon for an Ethiopian middle (Tolemariam 2009). The semantic distinction between middle and passive is not wholly clear-cut in Sheko, as is illustrated in (44) above, where some verbs with a frozen passive marker -t' are listed which have middle semantics.

The following alphabetical list contains deponent middle verbs, ie. they do not occur without the middle marker -ŋ. If a cognate noun is known, it is given as well. The list contains among others verbs denoting cognitive processes or speech actions ('reproach', 'be mute'), body actions ('swim', 'slurp'), spontaneous processes ('leak', 'slip'), and properties ('become wide', 'be sharp and pointy'). Some verbs can be seen as inherently reciprocal ('be equal', 'wrestle'). Of course, some verbs could be grouped under several headings, such as 'become adult', which is a spontaneous process and body centered.

(55)    **bārm̄ ~ bārbm̄** 'become adult (of girl)', cf. **bāārā** 'girl'

| | |
|---|---|
| **bōtn̄** | 'grind in mortar', cf. **bōtā** 'mortar' |
| **būrʃn̄** | 'slip' |
| **dāk'n̄** | 'become dirty', cf. **daak'u** 'dirt' |
| **dēfṣn̄** | 'be rotten (of wood)' |
| **dīīk'n̄** | 'be mute, dumb', cf. **dīīk'à** 'mute person' |
| **dīīp'm̄** | 'be equal', cf. **dīīp'î** 'same, equal' |
| **dūbm̄** | 'be spoiled by vermin', cf. **dúbà** 'vermin' |
| **fērm̄** | 'evaporate' (e.g. of morning mist) |
| **fētn̄** | 'be scratched/injured' |
| **fōrkn̄** | 'peel' |
| **gōōts'n̄** | 'be white' |
| **gōtn̄** | 'be distant, far' |
| **gāts'n̄** | 'help' |
| **gībm̄** | 'struggle, wrestle' |
| **gūp'm̄** | 'be turned upside down' |
| **hāṣkn̄** | 'become wide' |
| **kūsn̄** | 'drizzle (rain)' |
| **mīt'n̄** | 'witness' |
| **mūṣk'n̄** | 'swim' |
| **mūzrn̄** | 'melt' |
| **nārm̄** | 'blow (of wind)', cf. **nāārū** 'wind' |
| **níbm̄** | 'dew' |
| **nǐk'n̄** | 'be pulverized' |
| **nyākn̄** | 'become adult (of boy)', cf. **nyākū** 'young man' |
| **sútń** | 'become sharp, pointy' |
| **ʃūrfm̄** | 'gulp, slurp' |
| **ʃūrt'n̄** | 'shrink' |
| **ṣōkn̄** | 'wrap clothes around oneself' |
| **ṣōṣkn̄** | 'become light, easy' |
| **ts'árkń** | 'spit far' |
| **ts'ēsn̄** | 'be satisfied (food)' |
| **ts'úbm̄** | 'become narrow' |
| **ts'yāsn̄** | 'break off with fingertips' |
| **tʃ'əbm̄** | 'plant a post', cf. **tʃ'əbm̀** 'post, stake' |
| **tṣ'ādn̄** | 'fight, war', cf. **ts'at'** 'pierce' |
| **tṣ'ógń** | 'smack, eat noisily' |
| **t'ōsk'n̄** | 'leak' |
| **t'ēp'm̄** | 'become one, grow together' |
| **tōfm̄** | 'do again, repeat' |

| | |
|---|---|
| **tōsn̄** | 'greet', cf. **tóóz** 'relative' |
| **t'yābm̄** | 'become thick' |
| **wúrbm̄** | 'become turbid' |
| **yāzn̄** | 'reproach' |
| **yītn̄** | 'walk happily, gait' |
| **zīíp'm̄** | 'chase away' |
| **zūgn̄** | 'become infertile', cf. **zūgī** 'infertile' |
| **ʒāp'm̄** | 'shine' |
| **ātn̄** | 'become used to' |
| **āyn̄** | 'think much' |
| **ēdn̄** | 'become rotten' |
| **īīgn̄** | 'be gluttonous, selfish' |

Absent in the list are verbs of grooming, such as 'to wash (oneself)', 'to shave', 'to braid one's hair'. In the case of **bártʃ-úʃ** 'to wash' the verb alternates between causative and passive ((18) above). **fyaats'** 'to shave' and **mán** 'to braid' are transitive verbs (56)-(57).

(56)    **ás-kǹ**    **ts'yārū**    **há = fyààts'-kì-k-ə**
      3MS-DAT   beard     3MS = shave-exist-REAL-STI

      'he is shaving his beard'

(57)    **íʃ-kǹ**    **gə́rì-ra**      **màn-t' = á-k-ə**
      3FS-DAT   head-ACC      braid-PASS = 3MS-REAL-STI

      'she got her hair braided, her head is braided'

However, other body-centered middles do occur. See the list in (55) and the example sentence (58) below (with derived middle):

(58)    **san**          **t'ùr-m̀ = á-k-ə**
      forehead     roll.up-<u>MIDD</u> = 3MS-REAL-STI

      'He frowned'

Furthermore, in (59)-(61), the middle is used for spontaneous events, in which there is no control of an Agent over the process.

(59) a. **baakà** **t'yamà** **m̩=mɔ̀ɔ̀k'ù-kì-k-ə**
taro    small.part    1SG=break.off-exist-REAL-STI
'I'm breaking off the small parts from the taro.'

b. **īy** **mòk-ǹ̩=á-k-ə**
house    break.off-<u>MIDD</u>=3MS-REAL-STI
'The house is broken down.'

(60) a. **ʒèrìkāǹ-s-əra** **n̩=hàrtʃù-s-bàrù-k-ə**
jerrycan.DEF-M-ACC    1SG=tear-CAUS-throw.away-REAL-STI
'I wrecked the jerrycan'

b. **hāāy** **ás-ka** **ha=ʔiir-k-ə̀b**
water    3MS-WITH    2SG-fetch-exist-REL

**ʒèrìkànà** **há=hàrtʃ'-ǹ̩-k-ə**
jerrycan    3MS=tear-<u>MIDD</u>-REAL-STI
'The jerrycan with which you fetch water is broken.'

(61) **ʃúrì** **dùb-m̩̀=á-k-ə**
sorghum.sp    maggot-<u>MIDD</u>=3MS-REAL-STI
'the sorghum is spoiled by maggots'

~ also possible with a passive: **dùbùt'ákə**

Furthermore, the middle is used in situations where the subject is affected or involved. Sentence (62) comes from an interview with a traditional leader. He is asked whether there will be someone like him in the future, who will organise work, educate the people and govern the land, in the light of all the disappearing traditional practices. His answer is given in (62). He continues saying that there are no wise people anymore, and that whoever listens to him now is listening voluntarily. I take it to mean that even those who know about the tradition will keep their knowledge to themselves and not follow the tradition.

(62) **kááy-ə** **ítí** **tə** **t'ūūs-n̄-ə**
be.not-STI    2PL    COP    know-<u>MIDD</u>-STI
'There will not be (anybody). It is you who know.' (Context: answer is directed at the researcher and an informant who does not follow traditional practices.)

Creating a context when talking about (63), my language consultants sketched a situation in which the addressee leaves the room and the speaker wants him to stay, but "has no option" because the addressee will not obey, and therefore says (63). However, permission does not seem to play a role in other examples. The utterance in (63) may convey that the event of going will be for the sake of the addressee, thereby suggesting that his going is not 'neutral' but lacks the consent of the speaker. This is compatible with the situation sketched by the language consultants.

(63)  ha=tə́g-ń-ə
      2SG=go-MIDD-STI
      'You can go'

In searching for an explanation of the verb forms in (62) and (63), it turned out that this type of middle marking is productive. Commonly the examples are with Jussive forms, and can be translated in various ways depending on the context. Note that although an autobenefactive reading is possible in some cases, normally autobenefactives are built on transitive verbs (e.g. in Oromo, Tolemariam 2009:97), whereas the Sheko examples are with intransitive verbs. Instead of autobenefactive, the term 'selfcenteredness' may be used in referring to such forms.

(64)  ņ=síís-ń-ə
      1SG=listen-MIDD-STI
      'Let me listen for my sake, I can listen if I must, I will listen anyway'

(65)  íʃì=kāās-ņ̄-ə
      3PL=play-MIDD-STI
      'let them play for themselves/ for their own benefit, they can play etc.'

Here are some examples from discourse:

(66)  hààz-ka  ṇ=k'ùùts'=á  gònt'a  ge-ǹtà
PROX.M-WITH  1SG=cut=3MS[41]  blunt  say-COND

hààz-ka  ṇ=k'ūūts'-n̄-ə  yí=ge-ǹ
PROX.M-WITH  1SG=cut-MIDD-STI  3FS=say-DS

'… "If I cut with this one and it becomes blunt, I'll cut with this one," she said;…'

(67)  gé=n  ye-kǹ  kum-k'à  k'ōrk'-n̄-t=n
say=1SG  2SG-DAT  neck-IN  twist-MIDD-SS=1SG

n=gáámtà  sak-ə
1SG=far.side.LOC  arrive-STI

'Say, let me coil myself around your neck and reach the other shore.' (Context: said by a snake.)

(68)  má-a  mààk-ǹ  ṇ=kōb-t=ṇ
earlier.today=2SG  tell-DS  1SG=take-SS=1SG

yə̄g-n̄-ə
come-MIDD-STI

'Had you told (me) earlier - I would have brought it (for you/myself).' (Context: reaction of Monkey to his antagonist Crocodile who told him that he needs a monkey's heart.)

The middle in (69) is built on the passive. As (70) shows, it is possible to mention the Agent. This example also illustrates that the beneficiary (the one for whom the door was opened) need not be mentioned overtly.

(69)  íʃ-kǹ  òy-ə̀b  èèd-ǹ-s  há=byà-t'-ǹ-k-ə
3FS-DAT  refuse-REL  door-DEF-M  3MS-open-PASS-MIDD-REAL-STI

'The door that refused her was opened (for her).'

(70)  ēēd-ǹ-s  ṃ-baadù-ka
door-DEF-M  1SG.POSS-younger.sibling--WITH

byà-t'-ǹ=á-k-ə
open-PASS-MIDD=3MS-REAL-STI

'The door was opened by my brother (for somebody).'[42]

---

[41] There is no DS marker here although the subject changes.
[42] In eliciting this example, only the possibility of opening for someone else was discussed, but probably a reading 'for my brother' is also possible.

In the two examples above, the middle derivation follows the passive. The reverse order, middle-passive, does occur in the example below. Its semantics are not transparent. However, there are other Omotic languages in which passivization with some verbs entails 'stacked' derivational morphemes (e.g. Benchnon (Rapold 2006:324); Maale (Azeb 2001a:104)).

(71)  **Fītèr**  **kāāsù-kǹ**  **ììk-n̠-t'=á-k-ə**
      Peter   game-DAT   be.old-<u>MIDD-PASS</u>=3MS-REAL-STI

      'Peter has grown too old for games.'

Here are some examples where the middle allows a reciprocal interpretation next to an interpretation of self-centeredness and involvement. It is not clear whether the verbs **besk** 'divide' in (72) and **dyask** 'relocate' in (73) contain a frozen causative or not. Reciprocals are normally built on a causative.

(72)  **…umt'à-ra**  **sàsk=íʃì**  **bēsk-n̠-kì-bààstà**
      food-ACC    arrive.CAUS=3PL  divide-<u>MIDD</u>-exist-WHILE

      '…and brought out food and while they divided it between them…'

(73)  **k'obààb**   **ūk'-n̠-s**    **kòb-m̀ k'obààb**
      one.father   milk-DEF-M    take-DS  one.father

      **ééz-ǹ-s**    **kòb-m̀ íʃì=dyàsk-n̠-tə**    **íʃì=kòb-tə**
      honey-DEF-M   take-DS  3PL=relocate-<u>MIDD</u>-SS   3PL=take-SS

      'one took the milk, the other took the honey; they bartered with each other/for themselves and took it…' (Context: two thieves each want to profit from selling a bad quality product.)

### 12.3.3    Reciprocity[43]

Reciprocity is coded by the middle suffix **-n̠** following a causative suffix **-s**. This is illustrated for intransitives (74b) and transitives (75b), and a transitive which does not occur without the derivational morpheme (76b).

---

[43] This section largely builds on data elicited with the MPI video stimuli for reciprocal contructions by Evans e.a. (2004).

(74)   a.   **yí = tùfkù-k-ə**
           3FS = collide-REAL-STI
           'she bumped (into someone/ something)'

     b.   **íʃì = tùfk-<u>ùs-ǹ</u>-k-ə**
           3PL = collide-<u>CAUS-MIDD</u>-REAL-STI
           'they bumped into each other'

(75)   a.   **kúʈʂú   íʃì = ts'ooku-k-ə**
           hand      3PL = palm.hit-REAL-STI
           'they clapped their hands, they applauded'

     b.   **íʃì = ts'òk'-<u>ùs-ǹ</u>-kì-k-ə**
           3PL = palm.hit-<u>CAUS-MIDD</u>-exist-REAL-STI
           'they are slapping each other'

(76)   a.   **íʃ-əra   íʃì = gàrùs-kì-k-ə**
           3FS-ACC   3PL = greet.CAUS-exist-REAL-STI
           'They greet her.'

     b.   **íʃì = g̀arùs-<u>ǹ</u>-kì-k-ə**
           3PL = greet.<u>CAUS-MIDD</u>-exist-REAL-STI
           'They greet each other.'

In some instances, the causative morpheme appears twice. In (77c), the reciprocal is built on the causative stem **ʔyar-s** 'marry (a wife)'. In (78), the participants not only hit each other, but in doing so give cause for continuing the fight. Interestingly, in (79) the middle itself also occurs twice.

(77)   a.   **há = ʔyàrdù-k**
           3MS = enter-REAL
           'he entered'

     b.   **há = ʔyàr-sù-k**
           3MS = enter-CAUS-REAL
           'he married'

     c.   **ʔyár-s-ús-ǹ**
           enter-<u>CAUS-CAUS-MIDD</u>
           'marriage' (marrying each other)

(78)  íʃì = dūm-s-ūs-ñ̄-ā-m-ə
3PL = fist.hit-<u>CAUS-CAUS-MIDD</u>-put-IRR-STI

'they will (cause each other to) hit each other' (Context: 1. everybody fights with everybody. 2. pairs keep hitting each other.)

(79)  íʃì = dùf-m̀-s-ùs-ǹ-kì-k-ə
3PL = hit-<u>MIDD-CAUS-CAUS-MIDD</u>-exist-REAL-STI

'they are hitting each other (for themselves)' (Context: someone receives a blow and then hits the next person, who in turn hits another person, etc.)

Of course, reciprocity may be expressed analytically as well. While looking at the stimuli, one person remarked after a while that it was also possible to "simply say" (80b) instead of (a)…

(80)  a.  íʃì = tìt-ùs-ǹ-kì-k-ə
3PL = watch-CAUS-MIDD-exist-REAL-STI

'they look at each other' (Context: two persons watch each other.)

b.  íʒ        áz      tiit-ǹ    áz      íʃ      tiit-ǹ
3FS       3MS     look-DS   3MS     3FS     look-DS

'she looks at him, he looks at her'

In addition to the morphological means, the reciprocity may be marked lexically as well by the word **ánk'à**, glossed 'each other'.

(81)  dāws   ánk'-àstà              íʃì = dùf-s-ùs-ǹ-kì-k-ə
children  <u>each.other</u>-3MS.COP?   3PL = hit-CAUS-CAUS-MIDD-exist-REAL-STI

'the children were hitting (all of) each other'

The use of a causative-middle derivation for reciprocity is uncommon in Omotic languages. Tolemariam (2009:172) states that in Kafa, Wolaitta, Koorete and Konta it is the double passive which yields a reciprocal interpretation. He does not mention a combination of causative-middle for reciprocity. One language which perhaps can be analysed as building the reciprocal on the causative is Dime. Although Mulugeta (2008:141) does not break up the reciprocal marker **-sim**, it

may consist of the causative, which is **-(i)s** in Dime, and another derivational marker[44]. An example is given in (82):

(82) **tadese-ká**    **taye-ká**    **gís'-s'im-i-n**

      Tadese-CNJ    Taye-CNJ    kick-REC-PF-3

      'Tadese and Taye kicked each other.' (Mulugeta 2008:145)

Furthermore, Benchnon has a reciprocal-middle marker **n̄**, which derives reciprocals from transitive verbs (excluding a reflexive reading), and reflexives from denominals (excluding a reciprocal reading), as described in Rapold (2006:320f).

### 12.4 Experiencer verbs

This section offers an initial analysis of experiencer verbs in Sheko. Some of these verbs are prototypically causatives, with the experiencer in the accusative. Example (83) shows next to such a causative (**fādūs** 'make hungry') also a non-causative **wook'** 'be tired', which contrasts with the causative **wosk'** in (84). The latter is more frequent. The causative - non-causative opposition has a direct consequence for the experiencer: it is either object (accusative) of a causative verb or subject (nominative) of a non-causative verb.

(83) **há=íʃì-ra**    **fàd-ùs-ǹ**    **íʃì=wook'u-tə**

      3MS=3PL-ACC    be.hungry-CAUS-DS    3PL=be.tired-SS

      'they became hungry and tired and…'

(84) **nata-ra**    **wòsk'=á-k-ə**

      1SG-ACC    be.tired.CAUS=3MS-REAL-STI

      'I am tired' (Lit: It tired me.)

In some instances, a causer noun may be present:

(85) **fáádù**  **nata-ra** **há=fàd-ùs-k-ə**

      hunger  1SG-ACC  3MS=be.hungry-CAUS-REAL-STI

      'Hunger is making me hungry.'

---

[44] Mulugeta (2008:141) lists as other derivational markers -**int'** 'passive' and -**imá** 'inchoative'.

Other examples of causative experiencer verbs are given in (86)-(87).

(86)  íʃ=a   há=yemz-n̄   waʔ   yí=ge-n̄
      3FS-ACC 3MS=hurt-DS  INTJ  3FS=say-DS

      'She got hurt; she said 'stop'…' (Lit: It hurt her…)

(87)  há=māāk-n̄   èʃǹtà   k'arà   ás-a
      3MS=tell-PURP for    INCL   3MS-ACC

      há=fàyt'-ùs-k-ə
      3MS=be.weak-CAUS-REAL-STI

      'He couldn't even speak (It made him weak in order to tell even).'

The verbs in (88) and (89) are causative as well. The experiencer in these sentences has no accusative marker suffixed, but accusative marking is also not obligatory for other objects.

(88)  íʃ     há=kòsǹ-s-k-ə
      3FS    3MS=pant.MIDD-CAUS-REAL-STI

      'She panted, breathed heavily'

(89)  nat    á=ʒì-ʒìn-s-k-ə
      1SG    3MS=PLUR-nod-CAUSE-REAL-STI

      'I am nodding (drowsy)'

There are two examples which do not have causative marking on the verb, but still have an object pronoun. Example (90) shows the transitive verb ʂúm 'make thirsty, long for'; and it and has a separate pronoun for the experiencer, which in this instance happens to be 3ms. Likewise, example (91) features the (intransitive?) verb ʂoʔ 'be cold', and a 3ms subject clitic as well as a 1pl pronoun.

(90)  hāāy-n̄-s      hààz   k'iʂ-kì-b     kéta   kayēēstà
      water-DEF-M   PROX.M drink-exist-REL all    again

      ás    há=ʂúm-á-m-ə
      3MS   3MS=thirst-put-IRR-STI

      'Everybody who drinks this water will again become thirsty.'

(91)  ṣōw    āngā   há=náta      ṣoʔu-k-ə
      cold    much   3MS=1PL      be.cold°-REAL-STI
      'We feel the cold very much.'

Some experiencer verbs can take a passive, as attested in (92)-(93). It is not known to which extent experiencer verbs allow passivization.

(92)  éná           ha=ṣūm-t'-ā-m-ə
      later.today    2SG=thirst-PASS-put-IRR-STI
      'you will be thirsty again.'

(93)  ṇ=ʔyàrkǹ-tù-k-ə
      1SG=perspire-PASS-REAL-STI
      'I perspired.'

      also possible: **nat=á ʔyarkn-s-k-ə** with a causative.

Other verbs which are semantically experiencer verbs behave like normal intransitive verbs. The experiencer is the subject of the verb. Some verbs have a middle derivation -ṇ. A few examples are listed:

(94)  **kuʃ**    'be sick'
      **yánk'**   'be angry'
      **ṣor**    'be afraid'
      **kááʒ**   'be happy' (see example (95))

      **āyñ**    'worry, think a long time'
      **ts'yāsñ** 'be satisfied (food)'

(95)  **k'àmīsì**      **íʃ-kǹ**  **fùr-t'-àb**    **yèʃǹtà āngā**
      dress          3FS-DAT   trade-PASS-REL   for     much
      **yí=kaaʒu-k-ə**
      3FS=be.happy-REAL-STI
      'she was very happy because a dress was bought for her.'

With the verbs **ʒááʒ** 'be good' (also 'nice, convenient, beautiful, OK' etc.) and **ʃeen** 'be bad' (also 'evil, inferior, awful, unpleasant', etc.) the experiencer of the good or bad is in the

dative. Alternatively, the referents can be conceptualised as Recipients of the 'good' or 'bad'.

(96) **na-ɽ** **ʒáázár = á-kì-k** **nata** **íʃì-bààb**
1SG-DAT be.good-NEG = 3MS-exist-REAL 1SG 3PL.POSS-father

**noogù-ra** **íʃì = ʔyáz-ń-bàb-a** **āngā**
word-ACC 3PL = be.able-IRR-father-ACC much

**m̩ = bààs-kì-k-ə**
1SG = want-exist-REAL-STI

'I don't like it. I want very much that they can (speak) their fathers' language.' (Lit. it is not good to me…)

(97) **bə̄ndū** **íʃì-kɽ̀** **ʒaʒ-àb** **kóókń-k'à**
Bəndu 3PL-DAT be.good-REL place-IN

**íʃ = kī-m-ə**
3PL = exist-IRR-STI

'The Bəndu live at a place they like/ a place which is convenient for them.'

The organ associated most with feelings and (lack of) judgement is the stomach, although **ʂóón** 'heart' is also mentioned. In (98), **bōw** 'stomach, belly' is combined with the verb **ʃeen** 'to be bad'. The dative in this example marks the possessor of the stomach. Two further examples of the use of **bōw** 'stomach, belly' are given in the ideomatic expressions in (99)-(100).

(98) **àftù-tə** **yí = tógá-k'à** **sòk'-kì-ɽ̀** **ɽ̀ = səg-ɽ̀**
be.drunk-SS 3FS = mud-IN lie.down-exist-DS 1SG = see-DS

**na-ɽ** **bōw-k'à** **yí = ʃèèn-k-ə**
1SG-DAT belly-IN 3FS = be.bad-REAL-STI

'Seeing a drunken woman lying down in the mud I felt bad.' (Lit: …I saw her; she was bad in my stomach.)

(99) **yááb** **ás-kɽ̀** **bōw** **íʃì = kààf-k-ə**
man 3MS-DAT belly 3PL = cover-REAL-STI

'people deceived him'

(100)  **bōw**    **án-ń-kì-b**
      belly    put-NEG2-exist-REL

      'idiot' (someone without a stomach)

In addition, example (101) features an (old?) idiomatic expression:

(101)  **na-ŋ̀**    **buunì-k'a**    **há = woots'u-k-ə**
      1SG-DAT  body-IN    3MS = bite-REAL-STI

      'I am sorry, sad' (Lit: it bites in my body. **buunì** is said to be an old word for body, cf. **faad** 'body'.)

'Hot' and 'cold' are also used to express feeling. The extent of this use is not known at present. Two examples are given in (102) and (103).

(102)  **m̩-bank'à** [45]    **há = saru-k-ə**
      1SG-on.IN    3MS = be.hot-REAL-STI

      'It is hot on me.' (Context: the eldest brother sends the younger brother away because of his strength.)

(103)  **bádìgì**    **tʃ'āāmā**    **na-ŋ̀**    **ats-ə**
      Badign    shoes    1SG-DAT  give-STI

      **n̩ = ge-k'òr-ǹ̩**    **ʃiip'a**    **yí = taaf-k-ə**
      1SG = say-beg-DS    IDEO    3FS = cool.down-REAL-STI

      'I begged saying "Badign, give me the shoes," but she refused flatly.' (e.g. Badign does not allow herself compassion with the one who begged.)

Finally, a calque from Amharic **tä-sämma** (PASS-hear 'feel') is also employed:

(104)  **íʃ = ʃey-b-əra**    **na-ŋ̀**    **āng = á**    **sìs-tù-kì-k**
      3PL = forget-REL-ACC    1SG-DAT  much = 3MS    hear-PASS-exist-REAL

      'I am very sorry that they forgot it.'

---

[45] variant of **m̩-batà** 1SG.POSS-on

# 13  Interrogatives

Omotic languages display a rich array of interrogative strategies, some of which are typologically rare. [46] They display four major means to distinguish between declaratives and interrogatives. First, change of intonation and a interrogative (or declarative) sentence type marker, such as e.g. in Maale. Some languages have interrogative suffixes or intonation next to other distinctive strategies, for instance Yemsa, Diizi, Dime and Sheko. Secondly, special interrogative paradigms, i.e. the declarative and interrogative have each a distinct set of morphemes co-varying for person, gender and number. This is the case in Benchnon and Ometo languages such as Wolaitta. Yemsa has a special paradigm for future tense. Thirdly, "subtractive morphology" or dropping off of grammatical elements which are obligatorily present in the declarative. The element that is dropped to form the interrogative varies from language to language. In Zayse and Zargulla, the grammatical focus marker -**tte** is dropped. In Dime, the final person agreement marker is dropped; for first and third persons, absence of person agreement signals interrogative, while for second persons a dedicated interrogative marker -**aa** is used. Dime uses rising intonation in interrogatives as well. In Sheko, the modal marker is dropped. Absence of a modal marker is one of three ways to distinguish between interrogatives and their declarative counterparts in Sheko. Finally, Diizi interrogatives have not only question markers attached to the verb, but also employ person agreement prefixes, whereas corresponding declarative clauses use suffixes.

Turning to the details of Sheko interrogative formation, the interrogative in Sheko is characterized by one or more of the following:

- o absence of a modal marker. A modal marker is obligatory in declaratives.

---

[46] The project in which research for this thesis took place aimed at a typological overview of the way Omotic languages deal with the declarative - interrogative distinction, taking up the challenge of Hayward (1995) to investigate unique interrogative phenomena in Omotic. Data from a earlier project on Dime and Zargulla and from the subproject on Sheko fed into the comparative research. The short overview given here is based on a report of the principal investigator of the project, Azeb Amha.

o the indirect stance marker **-o**, which occurs only in vocatives and interrogatives. The indirect stance marker **-ə** occurs in declaratives.

o falling intonation on the last tone bearing unit. While most languages have an intonation with a final rise for interrogatives, Sheko has the reverse.

After discussing each of the points above in three sections, with illustrative graphs in the section on intonation, interrogative pronouns are presented, as well as some alternative ways to render embedded questions.

## 13.1 Absence of a modal marker

Interrogatives have no modal marker. The absence of a modal marker may be the only indication that the utterance is a question (this does not apply to simple negated verb forms and negated copulas, see below). The absence of a modal marker thus distinguishes between declaratives and interrogatives (1a,b). Note that a stance marker may follow as the last element of the verb form, as in (2a,b), (see further section 13.2 below).

(1)  a.  **ņ̩=māāk-ā**
         1SG=tell-put[Q]
         'shall I tell?'

     b.  **ņ̩=māāk-ā-m**
         1SG=tell-put-IRR
         'I will tell'

(2)  a.  **yír=ņ̩        māāk-ā-o**
         what=1SG      tell-put-STI.ADDR
         'What shall I tell?'

     b.  **tōsā    ņ̩=māāk-ā-m-ə**
         story   1SG=tell-put-IRR-STI
         'I will tell a story'

Below, examples are given for polar (yes/no) questions (3)-(4) as well as wh-questions (5), and (6) features a copula as verb. For comparison, matching declaratives are also given.

(3) a. **únà** **ʂókú** **tuurù-k'à** **tʃ'ádǹ** **kì=á**
long.ago S'oku land-IN war exist=3MS[Q]

'In the past, has there been war in Sheko?'

b. **únà** **ʂókú** **tuurù-k'à** **tʃ'ádǹ**
long.ago S'oku land-IN war

**kì=á-k-ə**
exist=3MS-REAL-STI

'In the past, there has been war in Sheko.'

(4) a. **gābā-k'à** **ítí=tə́g-á**
market-IN 2PL=go-put[Q]

'Will you (pl) go to the market?'

b. **tə́g-én-k'y-á-m-ə**
go-NEG.1PL-remain-put-IRR-STI

'We won't go.'

(5) a. **ítí=ge-b** **kày** **nā=á** **há=kì**
2PL=say-REL god where=3MS 3MS=exist[Q]

'What you call god, where is he?'

b. **ítí=ge-b** **kày** **só** **há=kī-m-ə**
2PL=say-REL god up.there 3MS=exist-IRR-STI

'What you call god, he might be up there.'

(6) a. **ye-kǹ** **ʂóón** **kááy** **tə**
2SG-DAT heart be.not COP[Q]

'Where is your courage/common sense?' (Lit: Is your heart not there?)

b. **yír-be** **kááy** **tə-kn**
what-mother be.not COP-KNOWN

'There is nothing.'

The interrogative shares its feature of not having a modal marker with the Imperative-Jussive, even though in interrogatives, the tone on the verb stem distinguishes between Factual and Non-Factual/ Basic. Both sentence types have in common that a reaction of the addressee is expected. Attempting an interpretation of the Sheko data, it is clear that an interrogative asks for information on a constituent or on the

modal status of the proposition, instead of giving this information. An interrogative thus looks for assertion from the addressee. The absence of a modal marker in interrogatives is therefore a meaningful gap. The interrogative has corresponding 'declaratives' which can affirm information. On the other hand, the imperative asks for action of the addressee rather than a verbal response. With an Imperative, one does not evaluate or assert a proposition but one gives a directive for the addressee to follow up.

## 13.2   Stance marking in interrogatives

Next to absence of the modal marker, there is an indirect stance marker -o which occurs only in interrogatives and vocatives, i.e. the types of utterance asking (giving opportunity) for a verbal response of the addressee. The interrogatives displaying the distinctive stance marker are usually Non-factual verb forms, i.e. Irrealis, although an example with a Factual form has also been found (9). (The dinstinction between Factual and Non-factual verb forms is made on the verb stem by a tonal distinction, see section 10.3). The interrogatives which end with the stance marker -o can be polite questions which leave the addressee free in the way he wants to answer (7), or rhetorical questions (8). When -o is suffixed, the falling intonation indicating interrogativeness is not present. In Irrealis verb forms, the suffix -a 'put' is often dropped before the stance marker -o as well.

(7)    **kāārì   saantà yīs   koosù-ra   īte   māāk-o**
       toward   front.loc DIST.M   tradition-ACC   who:COP tell-STI.ADDR
       'Who will tell this traditional wisdom in the future?'

(8)    a.    **kāy-ǹ-s   ḿ-p'eep'-àb-əra   há=síís-o**
             god-DEF-M   1PL.POSS-pray-REL-ACC   3MS=listen-STI.ADDR
             'Will God listen to our prayers?'

       b.    **há=síís-á-m-ə**
             3MS=listen-put-IRR-STI
             'he will listen'

(9)  yí = nííní          yowk'à        m̩-baad-ǹ-s
     3FS = elder.sister  INTJ          1SG.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M

     yír-k' = á          sàmù-kì-o              ge-tə
     what-IN = 3MS       remain-exist-STI.ADDR  say-SS

     yí = téé-kì-bààstà
     3FS = go.NV-exist-WHILE

     'The sister said 'Well, what is my brother stuck up in?' and while she
     went,…'

Note that the stance marker is not compulsory. The choice for a stance marker depends on the attitude of the speaker with respect to his utterance and is pragmatic (see section 10.2). The stance marker may be phonetically lengthened to signal a greater degree of distance (e.g. in showing bewilderment).

(10)  a.   áás = n̩          bāʒ-ā
           what = 1SG       work-put

           'How shall I do it?' (Context: simple inquiry.)

      b.   áás = n̩          bāʒ-ā-o
           what = 1SG       work-put-STI.ADDR

           'How shall I do it?' (Context: may signal uncertainty or
           politeness, or speaker repeats his question.)

-o also functions to question noun phrases. In these cases, the indirect stance marker makes the difference between interrogatives and other sentence types. Compare the NPs in (11) and (12). While the stance marker -o is used to question the noun phrase kūūrǹskǹ ṣóónǹṣ 'the heart of the donkey' in (11), its counterpart -ə in (12) may or may not be present on the nominal predicate goota.

(11)  k'ay-tə kūūr-ǹ-s-kǹ     ṣóón-ǹ-ṣ-o           há = ge-ǹ
      rise-SS donkey-DEF-M-DAT  heart-DEF-M-STI.ADDR  3MS = say-DS
      'he rose and said: "What about the heart of the donkey?"…'

(12)  ń-zàdrà          gootà(-ə)
      1PL.POSS-clan    Goota(-STI)
      'Our clan is Goota.'

### 13.3   Intonational contour in interrogatives

In clauses with a simple negated verb form or negated copula, the last tone bearing unit has a falling tone. In these clauses, the tonal contour is the only indication of the status of the utterance as interrogative. The falling intonation is notated in this chapter by a downward arrow ˋ.[47]

(13)   a.   **māāk-ārā**ˋ
           tell-NEG.Q
           'He didn't tell?'

     b.   **māāk-ārā**
           tell-NEG
           'he didn't tell'

(14)   **fūr-t'-ērēe**ˋ
      trade-PASS-NEG.STI.Q
      'It has not been bought?' (Context: talking about a lack of salt.)

(15)   **ye-km̀   té-ré**ˋ
      2SG-DAT   COP-NEG.STI.Q
      'Is it not yours?'

The falling tone can appear in every other type of question, also those not containing a negative. Examples (16)-(18) illustrate an open question (with a content question word), an interrogative with a complex negated verb form, and one with no verb at all. However, the tonal indication of interrogativeness in these types of questions may disappear in fluent speech, and it always disappears before the stance marker, which is **-o** in interrogatives (19).

(16)   **nā=a**        **tee**ˋ
      where=2SG      go.NV.Q
      'where did you go?'

---

[47] In the other chapters, it is notated through tone 1 and the gloss .Q where tone 1 is distinctive, and the gloss [Q] in all other cases.

(17) **īy-k'à**      **ʔyārd-ār = ítí-k'y-á** ˋ
house-ɪɴ      enter-ɴᴇɢ = 2ᴘʟ-remain-put.ǫ

'Won't you enter the house?'

(18) **nat-ná** ˋ
1ꜱɢ-or

'Me?' (Context: reaction to a call: 'You're addressing me, aren't you?')

(19) **wōskìn**      **ha = yə̄g-ā-o**
when      2ꜱɢ = come-put-ꜱᴛɪ.ᴀᴅᴅʀ

'When will you come?'

Below, three graphs are presented. The first graph illustrates the falling intonation. The graph shows the underlined part of the sentence in (20), uttered by a male speaker. It is clearly visible that the contour on the syllable **k'yá** gets at least as low as the tone 1 on **há-batà** 'on him'.

(20) **gātʃī**   **hààs**   **há-batà**
stick   ᴘʀᴏx.ᴍ   <u>3ᴍꜱ.ᴘᴏꜱꜱ-on.ʟᴏᴄ</u>

     **bār-ār = a-k'y-á** ˋ           **yí = ge-t = í**
     <u>throw.away-ɴᴇɢ = 2ᴍꜱ-remain-put.ǫ</u>     3ꜰꜱ = say-ꜱꜱ = 3ꜰꜱ

     **zèèr-ǹ**
     advise-ᴅꜱ

'she advised him saying: "Won't you throw this stick on him?" '

Graph 1. Interrogatives: falling intonation.
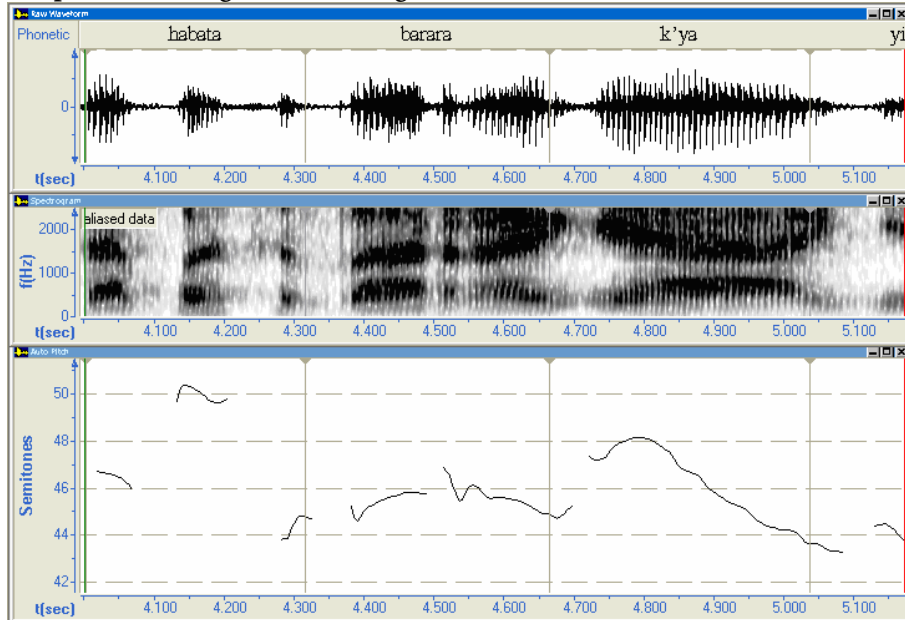


The second graph, with an utterance from another male speaker, also shows a clause with a non-factual (Irrealis) verb form. It is evident that there is no falling contour in the utterance.

(21)   gyāmū          nā = a          úm-á
       evening         where = 2SG     eat-put[Q]

       'Where will you eat in the evening?'

Graph 2. Interrogatives: no falling intonation.
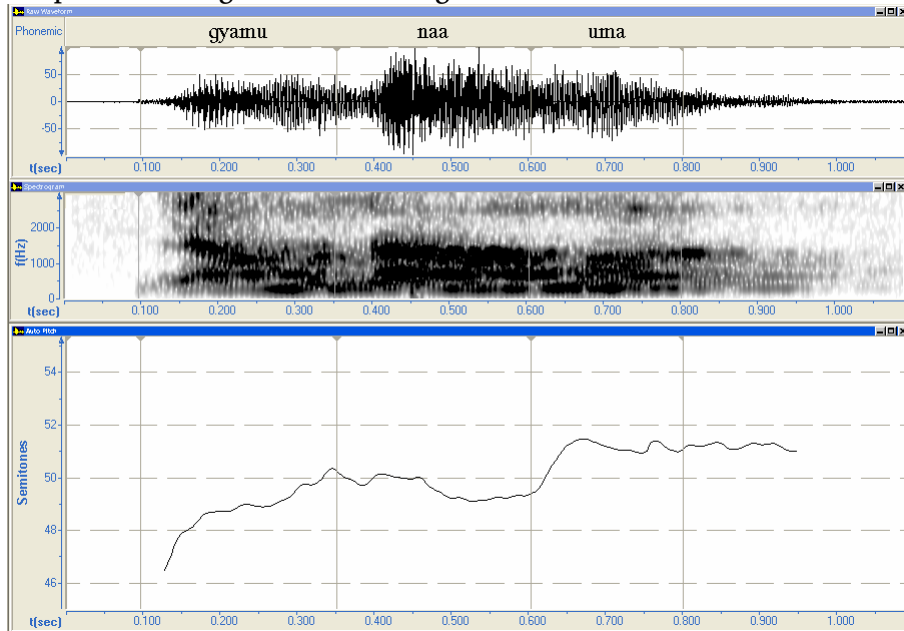


The third graph shows a question ending in the indirect stance marker **-o**, uttered by the same speaker that gave the first example. Around about 2.2 seconds, the tone stays level for a while, before the following clause starts.

(22)  **yír = ṇ̩**          **ye-kṅ̀**  **mīt'n̄-o**           **yí = ge-ṅ̀**
　　　 what = 1SG        2SG-DAT  witness-STI.ADDR   3FS = say-DS

　　　 ' "What could I say in favour of you?" she said;…'

Graph 3. Interrogatives: with stance marker
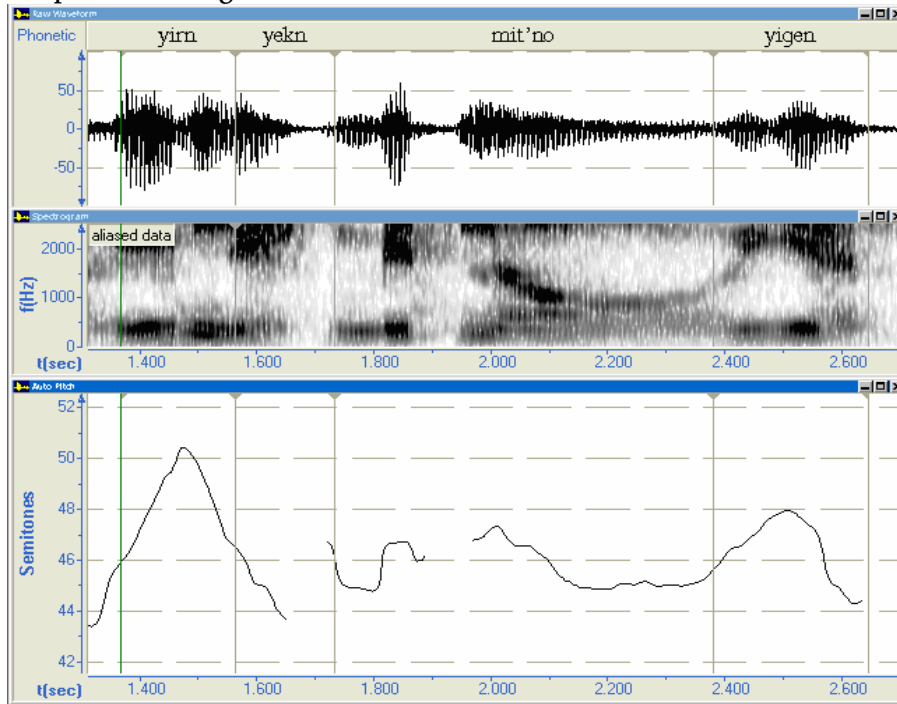


Interestingly, the Guraferda variant of Sheko has segmental question markers, namely -à and ne. Apparently, ne only occurs in open questions (23), whereas -à occurs in open questions (24) as well as polar questions (25). It is possible that the falling tonal intonation of the Sheko variants spoken around Sheko town is related to -à. Diizi has segmental question markers as well (Beachy 2005:106f).

(23)  yír=n̩        getə      n̩=an-ki-ne
      what=1SG      say-SS    1SG=put-exist-OQ
      'What can I say?'

(24)  ant-anta        a=ʔe-t=a            wuʔ-à
      RDP-how/where    2SG=do.NV-SS=2SG    enter-Q
      'How did you enter?'

(25) á = ʃèèn-à      yí = ge-n
 3MS = be.bad-Q    3FS = say-DS

 'Is/was it bad?' she said

Finally, the alternative conjunction -ná (~ -ná`) is used in questions giving a choice (26). Also, -ná is used to ask for confirmation (27). The expected answer is a 'yes'.

(26) bēngī  ás-kǹ  gatsu  fyáádí-ka-ná`  zírkú-ka-ná`
 year    3MS-DAT start   number-WITH-or  time-WITH-or

 ʔyáts'ń-ka      íʃì = t'ùùs-kì            yí = ge-t = í
 moon-WITH      3PL = know-exist[Q]       3FS = say-SS = 3FS

 bádìgǹ        ootʃu-k-ə
 Badign        ask-REAL-STI

 'Badign asked "Do they know the start of the year by counting or by day or by the moon?" '

(27) ṇ-k'òy-ná
 1SG.POSS-one-or

 'On my own?' (i.e. 'Should I do this on my own?')

## 13.4  Interrogative pronouns

The basic question words are listed in (28).

(28) ītī        'who'
 yírà        'what'
 nā         'where'
 áás        'how'
 gēbǹ       'how much'

Here are a few sentential examples:

(29) kírà           ye-kn  yír = á        há = ʔàtsù
 bird.of.prey    2SG-DAT what = 3MS     3MS = give[Q]

 'What did the *kira* bird give you?'

(30) há = byāāsū    k'ay-tə áás = ǹ        n = ʔēg-o
 3MS = crocodile  rise-SS how = 1SG      1SG = do-STI.ADDR

 'the crocodile rose and (said): "What (Lit: how) shall I do?…" '

The word for 'which?' is built on **nā** 'where' with a proximal demonstrative following it.

(31)  **ha = bààs-kì-b**          **nāās-tə**
  2sg = want-exist-REL          where.PROX-COP[Q]
  'which one do you want?' (Lit: the one you want is which?)

(32)  **nā̲-ās-t = ǹ**              **ǹ = téé-t = ǹ**              **tʃ'āārū**
  where-PROX.M-COP = 1sg      1sg-go.NV-ss = 1sg          medicine

  **yááf-o**          **ge-b-tà**
  find-STI.ADDR      say-REL-LOC
  'when he said: "Which (way) can I go and obtain a medicine?"...'

Several options are available to ask about time. One is to use a word referring to a time period, such as **bókǹ** 'day' (33a), or a loanword from Amharic such as **k'en** 'day', **gize** 'time', or **saati** 'hour'. Another way is to use a word that Sheko has presumably in common with (or borrowed from) Benchnon (b). In Guraferda yet another word is used, which is clearly compounded (c).

(33)  a.    **yír-bókǹ**
      what-time[Q]
      'when?'

  b.    **wōskǹ**          (cf. Bench **wǒskèn** 'when?')

  c.    **antakyaasta**    (Guraferda, tone not known)

With additional case marking, other question words can be made, e.g suffixing the dative marker **-kǹ** to **ītī** gives **ītīkǹ** 'whose?', suffixing the object marker **-ra** gives **ītīra** 'whom?', and so forth. Below some examples with **yírà** 'what?':

(34)  **yír-èʃǹtà**          **yí = batʃ'ù**
  what-MOTIVE          3FS = voice.anger.Q
  'Why is she angry?'

(35)  sāāyā   yír-kɨ̀-tə̀
      fable    what-DAT-COP.Q
      'What is the story about?'

**yírà** 'what' does not get an accusative marker, not even when it is used as object. When **-əra** is added, it conveys annoyance. It is analysed in this case as the short form of the inclusive marker.

(36)  yír-əra
      what-INCL
      'What (on earth is it that you bother me)?'

The combination of a question word with the inclusive marker **k'erà** 'also, even' yields indefinite pronominal expressions, or 'polarity items'. Interrogative-based indefinite pronouns are common cross-linguistically (Haspelmath 1997:26). Two examples are given in (37)-(38). In combination with negation an interpretation as negative indefinite arises (39)-(41). See also section 14.4.

(37)  yírà-k'arà      há=fɔ̀ɔ̀t-ǹtà            ṇ=ɔ́ɔ́tʃ-á-m-ə
      what-INCL       3MS=happen-COND        1SG=ask-put-IRR-STI
      'I will ask any question.' (Lit. whatever it be, I'll ask.)

(38)  ītī-k'ərà       há=yə̀g-ǹtà
      who-INCL        3MS=come-COND
      'if anybody comes,…/ whoever comes,…'

(39)  gōnà            nā-k'arà         tée-ṇ-kɨ̀-k-ə
      yesterday       where-INCL       go.NV-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI
      'I didn't go anywhere yesterday.'

(40)  yír-bánà-k'arà          bāās-ēn-kɨ̀-k-ə
      what-matter-INCL        want-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI
      'I don't want anything whatsoever.'

(41)  ītī-ra-k'arà    séé-ṇ-kɨ̄-k
      who-ACC-INCL    see.NV-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL
      'I didn't see anybody/I saw nobody.'

### 13.5 'Embedded questions'

Sheko does not have true embedded questions. The language employs various other constructions to render what would be an embedded question in an European language. First of all, Sheko prefers quotes, i.e. a direct question plus a medial verb (**gé** 'say').

(42) **há = gama**    **te-k-ə**      **ge-tə**
      3MS = true       COP-REAL-STI    say-SS
      'he said: "It is true, " and he…' (saying/thinking that it was true, he…)

In a few instances, a question word occurs in a complement clause complementised by -**ǹtà** (see also section 11.5.6).

(43) **hāāy**    **na-ɨ̀**    **ats-ə**    **ge-kì-b**      **ītī**      **há = tə-ǹtà**
      water    1SG-DAT   give-STI   say-exist-REL    <u>who</u>    3MS = COP-<u>COND</u>

      **ha = t'ùùs-ǹtà**
      2SG = know-COND
      'If you knew who it is that said "Give me water,"…'

(44) **nā-tə**       **íʃ = tə̀g-ǹtà**    **t'úús-en-k'e-k-ə**
      <u>where</u>-COP     3PL = go-<u>COND</u>    know-NEG.1SG-remain-REAL-STI
      'I didn't know where they went.'

(45) **ītī-ka**       **daan**   **yə̀g-ǹtàsàg = à**
      <u>who</u>-WITH      together come-<u>COND</u>     see = 2SG.Q
      'Did you see with whom he came?

For yes-no questions, various strategies appear to be possible: example (46) shows a clause with an Irrealis verb form nominalised by **bāāb** 'father'; example (47) two clauses in -**ǹtà** and example (48) two Jussives. The first came up more or less spontaneously in elicitation. The latter two examples are elicited using Amharic example sentences. The structure closely follows the Amharic stimulus; however, my informants judged it proper Sheko.

(46)　**bērn**　　　　**téé-r = íʃì-kì-ǹtà**　　　　**kōm̄-s**
　　　　tomorrow　　　go.NV-NEG = 3PL-exist-COND　　chief.DEF-M

　　　**māāk-m̄-bààb-əra**　　**t'ūūs-ēr = íʃì-k'y-á-m-ə**
　　　tell-IRR-<u>father</u>-ACC　　know-NEG = 3PL-remain-IRR-STI

　　　'If they don't go tomorrow, they won't know whether the chief will
　　　tell.'

(47)　**há-bààs-ǹtà**　　**bāās-ār = á-kì-ǹtà**　　**t'ùùs = a-kì**
　　　3MS = want-<u>COND</u>　want-NEG-3MS-exist-<u>COND</u>　know = 2SG-exist[Q]

　　　'Do you know whether he wants or not?'

(48)　**hà = ʔútú-kī-ə**　　　**út-ár = a-kī-ə**
　　　2SG = love-exist-STI　　love-NEG = 2SG-exist-STI

　　　**há = fòòt-ǹtà**　　**t'ūūs-ēn-kì-k**
　　　3MS = become-COND　know-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL

　　　'I don't know whether you like it or not.'

# 14 Negation

Sheko has a negative existential verb **kááy** 'be not there' and two verbal negation markers, which I have dubbed event negation marker (**-ǝra**) and state negation marker (**-ŋ**). Negated verbs lack TAM and person distinctions, unless an auxiliary predicate is added (complex negative). In addition, the way in which Sheko expresses 'never' and 'nothing other than' is described here.

## 14.1  Negative verb of existence

The existential verb **kì** 'exist, live' has a negative counterpart **kááy** 'be not there, be not present'. A stance marker can be suffixed to the negated form. There is no subject agreement and no aspect/mood marking in negated existential predicates (1b).

(1)  a.  **àhee  kì=á-k-ǝ**
     yes    exist=3MS-REAL-STI

   'Yes, it is there.'

   b.  **àʔáà  kááy-ǝ**
     no    be.not-STI

   'No, it is not there.'

## 14.2  Event negation

The event negation marker is **-ara ~ -ǝra**. It suffixes to the verb stem. The verb form negated by **-ara** can form an utterance by itself and is called a simple negative here. A simple negative followed by an auxiliary predicate is called a complex negative.

### 14.2.1  Simple negatives

Simple negated verb forms in Sheko consist of the verb stem followed by **-ara ~ -ǝra**. The tone on the negative suffix is identical to the tone of the preceding verb stem. If the indirect stance marker **-ǝ** follows, the vowels of the negative suffix and stance marker are changed into **-e**. Example (2) illustrates verbs without and (3) verbs with a stance marker. As with the negative verb of existence, there is no subject clitic, nor any aspectual or modal marking on a simple negated verb form.

(2)    **síís-árá**        'not listen'
          **kāās-ārā**     'not play'

(3)    **síís-érée**      'not listen'
          **kāās-ērēe**    'not play'

Here are two sentential examples:

(4)    **ṣāād-ǹ-s**       **sàm = á-k-ə**            **dīr-t'-ārā**
          pond-DEF-M     remain.behind = 3MS-REAL-STI     sweep-PASS-NEG

          'The pond went out of use. It has not been cleaned.'

(5)    **tìmhĭrt**       **gàd = íʃì**
          education(Amh)  start = 3PL[Q]

          'Have they started school?'

          **kàtʃa**   **gād-ērēe**
          yet      start-NEG.STI

          'They haven't started yet.'

Out of context, a simple negative is interpreted first as a realis, e.g. **bāʒ-ārā** '(he) did not work/ has not worked', but a simple negative can occur in irrealis contexts as well (6b).

(6)    a.    **yí-bay**       **íʃ-kǹ**    **yí = gāts'ī̃-à**
               3FS.POSS-mother   3FS-DAT   3FS = help-put.Q

               'Will her mother help her?'

    b.    **gāts'ī̃-ārā**     **yír = í**        **yí = gāts'ī̃-ā**
               help-NEG       what = 3FS      3FS = help-put[Q]

               'She won't help. Why (what) would she help?'

Equational sentences with the copula are negated by adding the negation marker plus indirect stance marker (**-rée**) to the copula.

(7)    a.    **ṇ-naanu**          **tə-k-ə**
               1SG.POSS-elder.brother   COP-REAL-STI

               'It is my elder brother.'

b.    **n̩-naanu**            **té-rée**
    1SG.POSS-elder.brother    COP-NEG.STI
    'It is not my elder brother.'

To question a simple negative declarative or a copula, only the final falling intonation (marked here by tone 1 on the last tone bearing unit) marks it as an interrogative, as in the (a) examples; or else an auxiliary predicate is added, as in the (b) examples (see complex negatives below). For some speakers, the negated copula [ **téréè** ] can be pronounced [ **tírîî** ].

(8)    a.    **fūr-t'-ārà**
                trade-PASS-NEG.Q
                'Has it not been bought?'

        b.    **fūr-t'-ār=á-kì**
                trade-PASS-NEG=3MS-exist[Q]
                'Has it not been bought?'

(9)    a.    **áz**      **ha-naanu**         **té-réè**
                3MS     2SG.POSS-elder.brother    COP-NEG.STI.Q
                'Is he not your brother?'

        b.    **áz**      **ha-naanu**         **té-ré**
                3MS     2SG.POSS-elder.brother    COP-NEG.STI
                **kì(=â)**
                exist(=3MS).Q
                'Is he not your brother?'

### 14.2.2   Complex negatives

The simple negated form of the verb is often followed by a second auxiliary predicate, comprising a subject clitic, a verb denoting aspect and a clause or sentence type marker. The verbs occurring as the second predicate are restricted to Imperfective **ki** 'exist, live' and Perfective **k'é** 'remain', as well as the Irrealis suffix **-a** 'put'. Since the information in this second predicate consists of grammatical notions such as TAM and person, I call it an auxiliary predicate.

The auxiliary predicate may be more or less integrated to the negated verb, because the subject clitic is attracted by the

negation and encliticizes to the negated form (cf. section 15.2.3). Examples are given below. In (10), a Realis predicate follows the negated verb form. Depending on the context, it can be translated by any of the following: 'I do/did not listen, am/was not listening, have not listened'. The list in (11) shows the contracted (more integrated) form. In these forms, the last vowel of the negative marker is dropped when it is followed by a subject marker starting with a vowel; in the first person the negative marker and subject marker merge to **-en-** or **-n̩**.

(10)  síís-árá    n̩=kì-k-ə     'I do not listen'
      síís-árá    ha=kì-k-ə    'you do not listen'
      síís-árá    há=kì-k-ə    'he does not listen'
      síís-árá    yí=kì-k-ə    'she does not listen'
      síís-árá    ń=kì-k-ə     'we do not listen'
      síís-árá    ítí=kì-k-ə   'you do not listen'
      síís-árá    íʃì=kì-k-ə   'they do not listen'

(11)  síís-en-kì-k-ə          'I do not listen'
      síís-ár=a-kì-k-ə        'you do not listen'
      síís-ár=á-kì-k-ə        'he does not listen'
      síís-ár=í-kì-k-ə        'she does not listen'
      síís-én-kì-k-ə          'we do not listen'
      síís-ár=ítí-kì-k-ə      'you do not listen'
      síís-ár=íʃì-kì-k-ə      'they do not listen'

Here are some sentential examples from spontaneous discourse. Note that the complex negative can be a final verb (12), medial verb (13) or subordinate verb (14) in accordance with the clause marker on the auxiliary predicate.

(12)  k'őy    k'erà    síís-ə́r=í-kì-k-ə
      one.ELAT INCL        listen-NEG=3FS-exist-REAL-STI
      'She doesn't understand anything (of the language).'

(13)  gōōtà  yááf-ə́r=í-kì-n̩          há=kār-k'à    kòb-tee-tə
      night   find-NEG=3FS-exist-DS    3MS=forest-IN  take-go.NV-SS
      '…at midnight she did not notice; he took them into the forest…'

(14)  **bááʃ-n̄-s**    **yīs**    **bāʃ-t-ērē**    **há=k'e-n̄tà**
slaughter-DEF-M    DIST.M    slaughter-PASS-NEG.STI    <u>3MS=remain-COND</u>

**túúrù**  **batà**  **yōg-m̄-bààb**  **gaydu**    **yír-tə̀**
land  on.LOC  come-IRR-father  problem    what-COP.Q

'If those are not/would not be slaughtered any more, what are the problems which would hit the land?'

The subject clitic follows the negated verb in most cases. It is also possible that the subject clitic of the auxiliary predicate occurs preceding the negative (15).

(15)  **yénʈʂ'à**    **<u>há</u>=āāt-ārā**  **kì-n̄tà**    **m-árá**
avoidance    <u>3MS</u>=hold-NEG  exist-COND    eat-NEG

**há=k'é-m-ə**
3MS=remain-IRR-STI

'If he did not avoid sexual contact, he could not eat (the milk at that time).'

Since the second (auxiliary) predicate provides information about aspect and mood, it can be used to assert (16) or to weaken (17) the negated statement. (Recall that the verb-plus-negator is sufficient in itself.) The following sentence is from the story of the Samaritan woman who has an encounter with Jesus. He asked her to give him water, although Jews in Jesus' time didn't want to associate with Samaritans at all. The addition of **kìkə** 'it is' asserts that the part 'water was not the problem' holds true.

(16)  **kōmtū**  **há=fòòt'-àb-əra**    **há=māāk-n̄**  **èʃn̄tà**
king    3MS=become-REL-ACC    3MS=tell-PURP  MOTIVE

**há=bààs-k-ə**    **hāāy**  **gáydú té-ré**  **kì-k-ə**
3MS=want-REAL-STI    water  problem <u>COP-NEG.STI</u> <u>exist-REAL-STI</u>

'He wanted to tell that he is king. Water was not the problem.'

Likewise, the use of the Irrealis in example (17) casts some doubt on **kááy** 'not there' by not asserting it.

(17)  **kááy**    **yí=kī-m-ə**
be.not    3FS=exist-<u>IRR</u>-STI

'She is probably not there/She might be absent.'

Finally, Prohibitives or negative Imperatives consist of a negative followed by an Imperative verb form of **k'é** 'remain', as in example (18)-(19). See section 4.3.2 for more information on affirmative Imperatives.

(18)  **māāk-ārā**          **k'é-ə**
      tell-<u>NEG</u>            remain-STI

      'Don't tell!'

(19)  **má=ṇ**                    **fìkùs-ǹ**          **k'ééts'-árá**
      earlier.today=1SG          prepare.CAUS-DS   take.apart-<u>NEG</u>

      **k'é-yt**
      remain-PL.ADDR

      'I just fixed it, don't take it off! (pl)' (Context: men were putting wooden handles on iron tools.)

## 14.3  State negation

The negation marker **-ṇ** has the same tone as the preceding tone bearing unit. Semantically, it functions in contexts which refer to more time-stable concepts, e.g. in the description of properties and states. However, the clause type may account for (part of) the semantics as well, since all examples up to (25) feature relative clauses. In contrast to **-əra**, the marker **-n** needs a following auxiliary predicate, as illustrated below, and always occurs in a complex negative.

(20)  a.  **áz**      **t'ūūs-ārā**
          3MS      know-NEG

          'he doesn't know'

      b.  **\*áz**     **t'ūūs-ń**
          3MS      know-NEG2

          'he doesn't know'

In example (21)-(22), intrinsic properties of individuals are referred to.

(21) **ás-kɨ̀ ááb sə́g-ɲ́-kɨ̀-b bār-n̄-s-ə̀b**
3MS-DAT eye see-<u>NEG2</u>-exist-REL be.blind-DEF-M-REL

**tə-k-ə**
COP-REAL-STI

'One whose eye doesn't see is a blind person.'

(22) **bōw án-ɲ́-ky-àb-kɨ̀ há=bōw àʂkù**
belly put-<u>NEG2</u>-exist-REL-DAT 3MS=belly meat

**àst=á há=kòb-t=á īy**
give.PASS=3MS 3MS=take-SS=3MS house

**ɗuuru-k'à ʔyàrdù-k-ə**
deserted.place-IN enter-REAL-STI

'To him who has no stomach (a fool) the meat of the stomach (worthless entrails) was given; he took (accepted) it and entered a deserted house (without cooking facilities).' (Proverb emphasizing stupidity)

The examples (23)-(25) illustrate that the properties or states characterize the entity that they refer to. For example, the leaders which are referred to in example (23) habitually do not have people from the Bəndu clan living on their lands. The form **ánɲ́kɨ̀b** would not be used for a leader who had only temporally no Bəndus, but at other times would have them. In other words, the negation marker **-ɲ** is used to present a state of affairs as a (time-stable) state.

(23) **bēndū án-ɲ́-kɨ̀-b kōmtū-s háák'àstà**
Bəndu put-<u>NEG2</u>-exist-REL chief-PL now

**íʃ=fàdù-t'-ɲ̀ sììs=ítí-k-ə**
3PL=count-PASS-DS hear=2PL-REAL-STI

'You just heard the chiefs who do not maintain Bəndus be counted.'

(24) **zīrkū t'ūūs-n̄-kɨ̀-b súkú íʃì=tūūʈʂ-ā-m-ə**
time know-<u>NEG2</u>-exist-REL rope 3PL=knot-put-IRR-STI

'Those who did not know time (did not use a calendar) knotted a rope.'

(25) ōtì    baatʃi  án-ń-kì-b    tēngì  bàtà
     cow      skin    put-<u>NEG</u>-exist-REL tree.sp  on.LOC

     íʃì = sōk'ū-kì-b-īs
     3PL = lie.down-exist-REL-DIST.M

     'those who didn't have a cow hide, that they slept on *tengi* bark…'

**-ṇ** can also be used with non-relative verb forms, but impressionistically this is infrequent. When I elicited negative optatives, example (27) was given as an alternative to (26). Another context in which both negators are attested is given in sentences (28)-(29). Further research should establish the exact semantic or structural difference between the two verbal negators.

(26) ṇ-gágì         bey-ǹ-s-kǹ          kárbú  fōōt-ārā
     1SG.POSS-revenge mother-DEF-M-DAT      strength become-<u>NEG</u>

     k'y = á-s-ə
     remain = 3MS-OPT-STI

     'May my enemy have no strength'

(27) ṇ-gágì         bey-ǹ-s-kǹ          kárbú  fōōt-ń
     1SG.POSS-revenge mother-DEF-M-DAT      strength become-<u>NEG2</u>

     k'y = á-s-ə
     remain = 3MS-OPT-STI

     'May my enemy have no strength'

(28) baasa  tə́-ń-kì-t = á        ʈʂ'ukn tə
     Baasa   COP-<u>NEG2</u>-exist-SS = 3MS   X'ukn  COP

     yèè-k-ə
     come.NV-REAL-STI

     'It was not Baasa but X'ukn who came.'

(29) badign tə́-r = í-kì-ǹ       boori  tə
     Badign   COP-<u>NEG</u> = 3FS-exist-DS   Boori  COP

     yèè-k-ə
     come.NV-REAL-STI

     'It was not Badign but Boori who came.'

Finally, here is a rare example of the negation marker **-ŋ̩** with more eventive verbs, from spontaneous discourse:

(30)    **áz**      **kāỳ**      **ás-k'à**        **ʃīīf-m̄-kī-ǹtá**
         3MS     god     3MS-IN      add-<u>NEG2</u>-exist-COND.CONT

         **kāỳ**      **áz-k'à**      **ár-ń-kí-ǹtà**       **yírà-be**
         god     3MS-IN     think-<u>NEG2</u>-exist-COND     what-mother

         **fōōt-n̄-bàb**        **kááy**
         become-IRR-father    be.not

         '...if he, if God does not add on it, if God does not approve of it, nothing whatsoever will happen.'

## 14.4   Negative polarity and 'nothing other than'

To express negative polarity, Sheko uses indefinite pronominals together with negation on the verb. The indefinite pronominals are formed by adding the inclusive marker **k'əra** 'also, even' to a question word (section 13.4). Example (31) illustrates a positive statement, while (32)-(33) contain negated forms.

(31)    **yír-k'ərà**      **na-ŋ̀**       **ats-ə**
         what-INCL     1SG-DAT     give-STI

         'Give me any of them.'

(32)    **ŋ̩=tee-b-kǹ**        **ādī-k'à**      **yírà-k'arà**
         1SG=go.NV-REL-DAT    footstep-IN     what-INCL

         **fōōt-ār=á-kì-k-ə**
         become-NEG=3MS-exist-REAL-STI

         'Nothing happened after I left.'

(33)    **gōnà**        **nā-k'arà**      **tée-ŋ̩-kì-k-ə**
         yesterday     where-INCL     go.NV-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI

         'I didn't go anywhere yesterday.'

Example (34) uses an indefinite noun phrase instead of a question word. See section 7.3.3 on the uses of **k'oy** 'one' for indefiniteness.

(34)   **k'óy**   **yaab**   **yēē-r = á-k'y-á-m-ə**
       one.ELAT man    come.NV-NEG = 3MS-remain-put-IRR-STI
       'Nobody will come.' (*A man will not come.)

       Also possible: **yááb k'oy-k'arà**…

The expression 'never/ever' is closely related to the notion of experiential perfect, i.e. whether a person experienced a particular event at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present (Comrie 1976:58). Many languages of Ethiopia convey this notion through the verb 'to know' (Crass and Meyer 2008:244). Sheko is no exception. Thus, the expression of 'never/ever' is with a verb form of **t'uus** 'know', as illustrated in (35) and (36).

(35)   a.    **kuki-k'à**       **tee-t'ùùs = a-kì**
           Kuki-IN        go.NV-know = 2SG-exist[Q]
           'Have you ever been to Kuki?' (Lit: Do you know going to Kuki?)

       b.    **t'ūūs-ēn-kì-k-ə**
           know-NEG.1SG-exist-REAL-STI
           'Never.' (Lit: I don't know.)

(36)   **ṇ-tuurù**    **yaab-ù-s**    **gēētù**    **séé-t'ūūs-ērēe**
       1SG.POSS-land   man-m-PL    waterpipe    see.NV-know-NEG.STI
       'The people of my country have never seen a waterpipe.'

The notion of 'nothing other than X' can be expressed as in the following examples. In (37) and (38), X may be viewed as a kind of Ground marked by the dative in a locational construction with **fatà** 'on' or **ʃíʃtà** ~ **ʃoʃtà** 'at the side', or simply as a locational expression with body parts in which the possessor NP is dative-marked (see section 9.3.3). In example (39), the 'Ground' is also in the dative. Only in (40) there is no dative case. The latter part of **mōkārì** may be related to **kaarì** 'towards'. Note furthermore that the last two examples use a form of **t'uus** 'know'.

(37) íʒ     t'árà-kɩ̀     fatà    yí = ʔúm-kīs    úmt'à  kááy
     3FS    injera-DAT   on.LOC  3FS = eat-?    food  be.not

'She eats nothing but bread.' (Lit: upon injera there is no food she eats.)

(38) áz     baʒà-kɩ̀    ʃóʃ-tà  k'oysɩ̀s    (noogù)
     3MS   work-DAT   side-LOC other.DEF.M   thing

án-ár = á-kɩ̀-k-ə
put-NEG = 3MS-exist-REAL-STI

'He does nothing but work.' (Lit: he does not put other things at the side of work.)

(39) há = bāʒ-n̄-bààb-kɩ̀   k'oysɩ̀s
     3MS = work-IRR-father-DAT  other.DEF.M

t'ūūs-ār = á-kɩ̀-k-ə
know-NEG = 3MS-exist-REAL-STI

'He does nothing other than work.' (Lit:. he doesn't know other (things) to work.)

(40) úmt'à  úm-ḿ-bààb  mōkārì  há = t'uus-kis  kááy-ə
     food    eat-IRR-father  except?  3MS = know-?  be.not-STI

'He does nothing but eat.' (Lit: there is nothing he knows except eating food.)

# 15  Subject clitics and focus

This chapter treats the function of subject clitics.[48] The form of the subject clitics is given here again for ease of reference.

(1)  1sg  n̩=      1pl  ń=
     2sg  ha=     2pl  ítí=
     3ms  há=     3pl  íʃi=
     3fs  yí=

The presence/absence of subject clitics and their place in the clause are related to information structure. Regarding the function of subject clitics, one language consultant offered the following as a summarizing description: **yīz nóógù sēsūkìb** 'this is something which shows words/things'. I have only started to investigate the relations between information structure, focus and the grammar of subject clitics, and therefore I can present merely a partial picture of the system here.

Section 1 aims at giving an overview of the occurrence of clitics, while section 2 and 3 discuss subject clitics in final main clauses and medial clauses respectively. Section 4 compares Sheko to languages with a similar strategy of using subject clitics to indicate focus and information structure. Section 5 discusses clefting as well as a construction used to contrast propositions and a contrastive topic marker.

## 15.1  Proclitics, enclitics and the absence of clitics

### 15.1.1  Overview

The subject clitic is basically a proclitic to the verb stem in final main verb clauses. This preverbal position appears to be the "unmarked" position, corresponding to a topic-comment informational structure (Lambrecht 1994:16, 235). Likewise, the clitic in medial clauses occurs in clause-initial position in clauses with a topic-comment structure, and usually procliticizes to the first constituent of the clause. However, the subject clitic may also encliticize to the medial verb of the

---

[48] This chapter benefitted greatly from discussions following two presentations, especially from comments by Orin Gensler, Tom Güldemann and Ines Fiedler.

preceding clause, a fact which is further discussed in section 15.3.1.

In addition, the subject clitic may encliticize to another part of the clause if that part is highlighted; in other words, the clitic generally follows a salient part of the sentence. For instance, in both main and medial clauses, the subject clitic encliticizes to wh-words and negatives, which are often assumed to be inherently focused. The subject clitic also follows non-subject constituents which are in focus and stage-setting adverbials. Furthermore, the subject clitic encliticizes to the verb stem in main clauses when the truth value of the predicate is asserted (with Factual verb stems such as in the Realis). In medial clauses, the subject cannot encliticize directly to the verb stem, for the reason that a medial verb is dependent on a final verb for modal values and assertion.

Thirdly, the subject clitic may be absent. In many medial verb clauses there is no overt reference to the subject participant at all, and subject continuation is expressed only through the same-subject switch-reference marker. In addition, the subject clitic is absent in subject focus constructions. In these clauses, a full noun phrase or pronoun overtly refers to the subject in focus.

### 15.1.2    'Double' occurrence

It is not easy to establish whether clitization occurs to the left or to the right. In fact, both directions are possible, but the full nature of left- and rightward clitization is not understood yet. The following example illustrates both, i.e. the 1sg clitic ṇ encliticizes while the 3fs clitic yí procliticizes.

(2)    yír=ṇ          ye-kɨ̀  mīt'n̄-o       yí=ge-ɨ̀
       what=1SG       2SG-DAT  witness-STI.ADDR  3FS=say-DS
       ' "What could I say in favour of you?" she said'

In a discussion about orthography, some language consultants expressed a preference for writing the first clitic twice, as <Yirɨ̀ ɨ̀ yekn mixno?>, but they didn't comment on the second clitic, written only once as <yi gen>.

(2')  yír=n̪        n̪=ye-kǹ       mīt'n̄-o         yí=ge-ǹ
      what=<u>1SG</u>    <u>1SG</u>=2SG-DAT    witness-sti.ADDR   <u>3FS</u>=say-DS

' "What could I say in favour of you?" she said'

Concerning the first clitic in (2'), future research should investigate what the native speakers' intuition for writing the clitic doubly is based upon. Here, I follow the language consultants' choices in the texts that we have discussed. Concerning the second clitic **yí=**, the fact that there is a clause boundary before the 3FS clitic is not a sufficient explanation for its proclitization, as there are other examples in which a clitic encliticizes to the verb of the preceding clause (3).

(3)   ...ń=ín-ə       ge-t<u>=á</u>      uutǹ-əra       zèèr-ǹ
      1PL=go-STI    say-SS<u>=3MS</u>    rat-ACC        advise-DS

'saying "…let's go," he advised the rat'

There are also instances where the clitic cliticizes both ways across a clause boundary. In (4), the 3fs clitic **yí=** occurs encliticized to the medial verb of the first clause and is followed by a short pause (indicated by the vertical bar), and then it procliticizes to the object argument in the second medial clause.

(4)   yí=bārkāy-ǹ       k'ay-t<u>=í</u> │   <u>yí=fārā</u>      yaaf-m̀
      3FS=monkey.F-DEF   rise-SS<u>=3FS</u>    3FS=horse    find-DS

'the monkey rose and found a horse'

Cross-linguistically, there is probably a preference for enclitization, just as most affixes are suffixal (Dryer 2005). The 'double' occurrence may be caused by the conflicting tendencies to procliticize and encliticize. Compare the underlined clitic in (4) with the 1sg clitic in (2') which cliticizes to a wh-word as well as the following constituent. If it is correct that the subject clitic canonically is proclitic, it may (still) have an inclination to procliticize in the cases in which it is attracted by focused elements away from the verb and has encliticized to its host.

## 15.2 Subject clitics in main clauses

This section first establishes that main clauses in which the subject clitic procliticizes to the verb stem have verbal predicate focus, correlating to a topic-comment structure. Secondly, various environments are listed in which the subject clitic occurs as an enclitic to the verb stem (for verb polarity focus and thetic sentences) or as an enclitic on some constituent preceding the verb (identificational focus of non-subject constituents (Lambrecht 1994) and discourse focus on stage-setting adverbs).

### 15.2.1 Preceding the main verb

Final verbs to which a subject clitic is procliticized are interpreted as having predicate (VP) focus, such as in (5b) and (6b). These sentences have a topic-comment stucture.

(5)  a.  **bádìgì**     **yír=í**     **bàʒù-kì**
     Badign      what=3FS      work-exist[Q]
     'What is Badign doing?'

     b.  **baakà**   **yí=fyaan-kì-k-ə**
       taro      3FS=peel-exist-REAL-STI
       'She is peeling taro.'

(6)  a.  **Gurma-o**
     Gurma-STI.ADDR
     'What about Gurma?'

     b.  **zeed-k'a**     **há=gadu-k-ə**
       eight-IN      3MS=start-REAL-STI
       'He started in the eight grade.'

Consider also the following stretch of natural discourse, which in simple sentences comments on the behaviour of adolescents in the past and present. In the first three lines of (7), the topic is a boy and in the comments three things are predicated of him, namely what he did as work. The subject clitic is procliticized to the final verb in each line. Likewise, the last two lines of (7) predicate on the topic 'boys and girls'. In each case, the verbal predicate is the salient information, while the

subject clitic appears on the verb as proclitic. Again, it is clear that these clauses exhibit a topic-comment structure.

(7)  **há-bààb**          **òtì**       **há = ∫ét∫-á-m-ə**
     3MS.POSS-father      cow          3MS = herd-put-IRR-STI

     **há-bààb**          **guy**          **há = búúts-á-m-ə**
     3MS.POSS-father      grassland       3MS = cut-put-IRR-STI

     **há-bààb**          **kat∫i**     **há = yáán-á-m-ə**       (…)
     3MS.POSS-father      yam          3MS = plant.yam-put-IRR-STI

     **háák'àstà**        **yīs**       **kááy-ə**        **dēyg-ī-k'erà**
     now                  DIST.M       be.not-STI       child.F-DEF-INCL

     **dēd-ī-s-k'erà**    **tàmāārìy-ta**    **í∫ = nòn-kì-k-ə**
     child-DEF-M-INCL     school-LOC        3PL = talk-exist-REAL-STI

     **wó-kà**            **tìmhīrtìy-k'à**    **āṣū-ka  í∫ì = kààs-kì-k-ə**
     down.there-LCT       school-IN          leg-WITH 3PL = play-exist-REAL-STI

     'He herded his father's cattle. He cut his father's grassland. He planted his fathers' yam. (…) This is not so now. The girls and boys are talking at school. Down at the school they are playing with their feet.'

### 15.2.2    Following stem in Realis forms

The placement of subject clitics creates a meaning difference in Realis verb forms. In contrast to a form in which the subject clitic precedes the verb stem (8a), a form in which the subject clitic follows the verb stem is used to highlight the verb or its polarity, as in (8b). This latter form is employed frequently in yes-or-no questions and answers (9).

(8)  a.    **ń = t'ùùs-k-ə**
           1PL = know-REAL-STI
           'we know it'

     b.    **t'ùùs = ń-k-ə**
           know = 1PL-REAL-STI
           'we KNOW it', 'we do know it'

(9)  a.    **sāāy-ǹ-s-a**        **ye-kǹ   mààk = î**
           fable-DEF-M-ACC      2SG-DAT   tell = 3FS.Q
           'Did she tell you the story?'

b.     mààk=í-k

tell=3FS-REAL

'She did.'

Verb forms in the Obvious mood, marked by the gloss KNOWN, display the same variation in clitic placement regarding encliticization to the main verb stem. In (10), the subject clitic appears preceding the verb stem, indicating that the verbal predicate is in focus; in (11), the subject clitic occurs following the verb stem, indicating focus on the truth value of the predicate. (See section 10.3.6 for the semantics of the Obvious, which posits something as generally known or known to the addressee).

(10)   baak-ǹ-s     m̩=fyààn-kì-kn-yà

yam-DEF-M     1SG=peel-exist-KNOWN-STD

'But I am peeling the yams!' (Context: father asked teenage daughter to do something for him.)

(11)   bàʒ=á-kn

work=3MS-KNOWN

'It WORKS.' (Context: machine works properly after it is fixed.)

Apart from polarity or truth value focus, subject clitics occur encliticized to the verb stem in thetic main clauses as well. In example (12), the sentences function to report an event, while in example (13), the sentences function to present a referent.

(12)   a.   íírú     k'yar=á-k-ə

rain     beat=3MS-REAL-STI

'It rains!'

    b.   gébèn  bây   dàdù  nyààs=í-k

Geben  female  child   give.birth=3FS-REAL

'Geben has given birth to a daughter!'

(13)   a.   ṣāād   kì=á-k-ə

pond   exist=3MS-REAL-STI

'There is a pond.' (Context: introduction of ṣaad in the discourse. ṣaad is a pond with water which reportedly contains minerals stimulating milk production of cattle.)

### 15.2.3    Following non-subject wh-words and constituents

A subject clitic appears encliticized to non-subject constituents in focus. The subject clitic identifies the referent for a given proposition. It is interesting that in this function the subject clitic, which is topical itself, attaches to the most salient argument in the clause.

Wh-words are assumed to be inherently focused, and the subject clitic always follows it directly, except when **tə** COP is employed (see section 15.5.1). In example (14), the 3pl clitic follows the wh-word **yír(à)** 'what' and in (15), the 1sg clitic follows **nā** 'where'.

(14)  **gōnà**　　　**yír=íʃì**　　　**ye-kɨ̀　mààkù**
　　　yesterday　　what=3PL　　　2SG-DAT　tell[Q]

　　　'WHAT did they tell you yesterday?'

(15)  **nā=ṇ**　　　**íʃì-ra　án-á-o**
　　　where=1SG　　3PL-ACC　put-put-STI.ADDR

　　　'WHERE can I put them?'

Example (16) shows that the subject clitic also directly follows the corresponding constituent in the answering sentence. Furthermore, the subject clitic follows non-subject NPs with intended focus (17), and adverbs which refer to the setting for events (18).

(16)  **yír=a**　　　**ha=na-ɨ̀ŋ**　　**āts-o**　　　**yí=ge-ɨ̀n**
　　　what=2SG　　2SG=1SG-DAT　give-STI.ADDR　3FS=say-DS

　　　**zūnkù=ṇ**　　**ṇ=ye-kɨ̀**　　**āts-ā-m-ə**　　**há=ge-ɨ̀n**
　　　sheep=1SG　　1SG=2SG-DAT　give-put-IRR-STI　3MS=say-DS

　　　'she said: "WHAT will you give me?" (and) he said: "I'll give you A SHEEP."

(17)  **woogi-o**　　**bāārā=a**　　**ha=na-ɨ̀ŋ**
　　　Woogi-STI.ADDR　maiden=2SG　2SG=1SG-DAT

　　　**bààs-ɨ̀t-o**
　　　want-COND-STI.ADDR

　　　'Hey Woogi, (what if) you search a GIRL for me?'

(18) yīs-t=íʃì    tūbsū  ʔyats'n̩     gé-m-ə
     DIST.M-LOC=3PL  seven   moon       say-IRR-STI
     'THEN they would say: "Seven months".'

Like wh-words, negation is assumed to be inherently focused. The subject clitic regularly encliticizes to the negated verb, as in (19).

(19) nyākū         bútà   bòòz-n̄tà-ee  gyābt'à
     young.man     outside  stroll-COND-STI  front.yard

     sāā-r=í-k'y-á-m
     arrive.NV-NEG=3FS-remain-put-IRR
     'If a young man walked outside, she wouldn't enter the front yard.'

### 15.2.4    Main clauses without subject clitic

The only main clauses which do not contain subject clitics are those which focus the subject. When the subject is focused, there is necessarily a subject NP which refers to the subject.

(20) m̩-bāyǹ      nata   gasku-k-ə
     1SG.POSS-wife  1SG    insult-REAL-STI
     'MY WIFE insulted me.'

(21) yīs   kòòsù-rà     ītī     māāk-o
     DIST.M  tradition-ACC  who   tell-STI.ADRR
     'WHO will tell this traditional wisdom?'

In most cases, the focused subject appears in a cleft construction (see section 15.5.1). In example (22) and (23), the subjects are clefted and there is no subject clitic on the main verb.

(22) bārkāỳ  ṣōōn tə    tʃ'āārū     fōōt-ā-m-ə
     monkey   heart COP  medicine     become-put-IRR-STI
     'A MONKEY'S HEART will/could be medicine.'

(23)  báỳ    ʔyār-s-ārā-kì-b         ʔyéts-ʔyéts-àb-īs
      woman  enter-CAUS-NEG-exist-REL  PLUR-big.DEF.M-REL-DIST.M

      yīs-tə          k'īīṣ-ā-m
      DIST.M-COP      milk-put-IRR

      'Who have not married a wife, who have become big, THOSE are the
      ones who milk.'

Enclitization of the subject clitic to a subject constituent is
always ungrammatical, in contrast to enclitization of the
subject clitic to a focused non-subject constituent. The
following functional account may explain why the subject clitic
cannot encliticize to a subject constituent: whether the subject
clitic procliticizes or encliticizes, it always refers to the topic of
the clause, namely the subject about which something is
predicated. The clitic serves thus at once to refer to the topical
subject and to indicate by its position which part of the clause
is in focus. If the clitic would encliticize to a focused subject,
the interpretation of the subject as topical (rendered by its
referring function) would clash with the interpretation of the
subject as focal (rendered by its position in the clause).

### 15.2.5    Restrictions regarding clitic placement

From the description so far, it is clear that subject clitics occur
in various places in the sentence. To look at the data from
another angle, this section lists the restrictions on clitic
placement in the earlier sections.

First, there are restrictions on clitic placement with regard to
modal distinctions. While it may not be possible to fully
separate the effects of information structure on the one hand
and modal distinctions on the other hand, it may be helpful to
note the following: in the Imperative there is no clitic at all; in
the Jussive, Irrealis and Implicative the clitic cannot follow the
verb stem; and in the Optative the clitic must follow the verb
stem. In the Realis and Obvious there are no restrictions.

(24)  a.    fōōt=á-s-ə                  (Optative)
            become=3MS-OPT-STI

            'may it be'

b.    **há꞊fōōt-ā-m-ə**          (Irrealis)

      3MS꞊become-put-IRR-STI

      'it will become'

c.    **há꞊fōōt-ə**              (Jussive)

      3MS꞊become-STI

      'let it be'

Of course, the different sentence types each have characteristic (discourse) functions which have implications for the possibilities with regard to information structure. For instance, imperatives are directives rather than predications and the subject (second person) is understood. Furthermore, in contrast to e.g. the Irrealis, the Realis and Obvious typically assert predications and therefore the truth value can be questioned or emphasized for these two modal types. The Optative, which is mainly used for curses and blessings, might be taken as a predictive modality which emphasizes the verb.

Secondly, the subject clitic cannot encliticize to the subject constituent, in contrast to non-subject constituents in focus. In medial clauses, the subject clitic can procliticize to a subject constituent; which is evidence that proclitization serves a function (indicating verbal predicate focus) that differs from enclitization (indicating argument focus).

Thirdly, the subject clitic may not encliticize to some modified and/or case-marked noun phrases. This issue awaits further research.

(25)   **ˀˀhá-zègù꞊á**        **na-ŋ**   **kòb-yèè-k-ə**

      3MS.POSS-ox꞊3MS      1SG-DAT  take-come.NV-REAL-STI

      intended: 'He brought HIS OX for me.'

### 15.2.6   Summary

In conclusion, clitic placement is remarkably flexible in Sheko. Cysouw (2003) proposes a focus hierarchy of clitic attraction, in which he links clitization to focus structure of the clause. While some languages have special clitic placement for one of the extremes of the hierarchy only, only a very small number of languages move further up or down the hierarchy. The table

below is adapted to reflect the situation as attested in Sheko main clauses:

| *⇑ enclitization away from verb* | *strong non-verb focus ⇑* |
|---|---|
| ⇑ Wh-word, (negation) | inherent focus ⇑ |
| ⇑ Focused non-subject NP | constituent focus ⇑ |
| ⇑ Adverb of time/place | stage setting ⇑ |
| proclitic to verb stem | VP focus ("neutral") |
| ⇓ enclitization to stem - Opt | strong focus on verb ⇓ |
| ⇓ enclitization to stem - Real (negation) | focus on verb polarity ⇓ |
| *⇓ enclitization on the verb* | *strongest predicate focus ⇓* |

Table 1. Clitic attraction in main clauses correlated with focus
(adapted from Cysouw 2003).

In summary, the clitic placement interacts with information structure (topicality, focus type) and modality. Sheko subject clitics appear away from the verb encliticized to wh-pronouns, negation, non-subject NPs and adverbs. In the case of wh-words and non-subject NPs, the sentences have argument (identificational) focus. For adverbs, identificational focus may be insufficient as features of (larger) discourse appear to play a role as well. In case of negation, next to being inherently focused, focus on verb polarity can also be assumed. In "unmarked" sentences, corresponding roughly to predicate focus in a topic-comment sentence structure, the clitic appears procliticized to the final verb. Irrealis type clauses are more or less treated as "unmarked" final verb clauses, but clitization is different from "unmarked" final verbs in two cases: a clitic appears encliticized to the verb stem in Optatives, and in Realis forms signaling verb polarity focus. Finally, a thetic informational structure, which presents events or entities, is expressed by an enclitic on the verb stem as well (not indicated in the table).

## 15.3 Subject clitics in medial clauses
Main clauses and medial clauses are similar in that proclitization of the subject clitic is a sign of a topic-comment structure. However, while in main clauses the clitic

procliticizes to the main verb stem, in medial clauses the clitic appears in clause-initial position. Its separation from the verb may be the reason that in this position, it does not always procliticize to the following element. A further trait of medial clauses is that under topical subject continuation the subject clitic may be dropped. Absence of the subject clitic is furthermore attested for subject focus/thetic clauses.

### 15.3.1    Subject clitics in clause-initial position

For a string of clauses with medial verbs, verbal predicate focus is expressed with the subject clitic being the first element of the clause.

For same-subject medial verbs, there are two possibilities for the clitization of subject clitics. In some instances, the clitic procliticizes to the following element in its clause (26)-(27). In these instances, there is a clearly audible pause between the medial verb and the clitic. Pauses are marked with a vertical line here. (If there is no other constituent, the clitic will attach to the verb, as e.g. in the third clause of (26).)

(26)    **ás-kɩ̀**    **gə́rī**    **bàtà**    **an-tə** | **há = uk'-n-s-əra**
       3MS-DAT head    on.LOC    put-SS    <u>3MS =</u> milk-DEF-M-ACC

       **bondu**   **um-tə** | **há = saw-tə** |        **há = kuuʂ-n-ʂ-əra**
       copious   eat-SS   <u>3MS =</u> arrive.NV-SS        <u>3MS =</u> plug-DEF-M-ACC

       **baas-ɩ̀** |
       want-DS

       '…he put (the stopper) on his head and he ate his fill of the milk and then he searched for the stopper…'

(27)    **…há = yēē-kɩ̀-bààstà** |        **íʃɩ = byāāsū**    **baayɩ̀**
       <u>3MS =</u> come.NV-exist-WHILE        <u>3PL =</u> crocodile    wife.F.DEF

       **yārtī-nonko**    **see-tə** |        **íʃɩ = íʃ-kɩ̀**      **mààk-ɩ̀** |
       friend-KPL       see.NV-SS        <u>3PL =</u> 3FS-DAT    tell-DS

       **yí = byāāsū**    **baayɩ̀**        **k'ay-tə** | **yí = zérkń**    **k'oy…**
       <u>3FS =</u> crocodile   wife.F.DEF      rise-SS | <u>3FS =</u> day      one

       '…while he came (from the house of the monkey), the friends of the crocodile's wife saw him and told it to her, and the wife of the crocodile rose and one day she…'

In other instances, the subject clitic of a certain clause encliticizes to the medial verb form of the preceding clause, as the underlined clitics in examples (28)-(30) illustrate.

(28) yááb    ṣub-ǹtà |        yēē-t＝á       fòòt-àb        ēkī |
     man     die-COND          come.NV-SS＝3MS become-REL      money

     zúnkù bááʃ-t＝á |               yérbɨ́n  ʃō-ʃū-t＝á  | ...
     sheep  slaughter-SS＝3MS        blood   spill-CAUS-SS＝3MS

     'If someone died, he would come and slaughter some livestock, a sheep, and spill the blood and...'

(29) dāānà   k'íṣ-t＝íʃì |      yīs     gōntʃì íʃì-gə-gərì-kǹ
     beer     drink-SS＝3PL      DIST.M  like   3PL.POSS-PLUR-head-DAT

     gúy-k'à           téé-t＝íʃì |     íʃì-ʔùmtà
     grassland-IN       go.NV-SS＝3PL    3PL.POSS-food

     íʃì＝kōōṣ-ō-m
     3PL＝farm-put-IRR

     '...they drank beer and like this they went to their own fields and they farmed their food.'

(30) ʒaaʒ＝á-k-ə          há＝ge-t＝á |       ás-kǹ
     be.good＝3MS-REAL-STI 3MS＝say-SS＝3MS     3MS-DAT

     kum-k'à      an＝á       gáámtà       sàw-tə |
     neck-IN      put＝3MS    far.side.LOC  arrive.NV-SS

     úʃtà        fín      há＝ge-ǹ |
     down.LOC    descend  3MS＝say-DS

     ' "Fine," he said and he put (the snake) round his neck and reached the shore and said: "Descend!";...'

It is not clear if there is a difference between the two sets of examples (i.e. between pro- and enclitization of the subject clitic in medial clauses). If there is, the type of clause linkage may differ. On the other hand, the variation could also be caused by the conflicting tendencies of the clitic to cliticize leftward as well as rightwards (see section 15.1.2).

Enclitization of a subject clitic to the verb form of the preceding clause is impressionistically very infrequent when that verb form is a different-subject medial verb. Most

different-subject medial verbs are immediately followed by a pause (31). The different-subject switch-reference marker may correspond to a somewhat heavier boundary than the same-subject marker (cf. section 11.1.2).

(31)    … yí = ge-ǹ  |  há = ás-kǹ      kú{ʂ'-ń-ʂ-əra    àts-ǹ |
          3FS = say-DS      3MS = 3MS-DAT     hand-DEF-M-ACC   give-DS

          yí = bārkày      áz-k'à   ààtù-tə
          3FS = monkey     3MS-IN   hold-SS

          '…she said; he gave his hand; the monkey took it and…'

At any rate, the subject clitic is the first element in the majority of medial clauses (about three quarters of the medial clauses in my small sample). The association of this clause structure to predicate focus is therefore even more plausible, since a topic-comment (corresponding to a subject-predicate) structure is likely to be common in stories.

### 15.3.2    Subject clitics in medial position

In medial clauses, examples with subject clitics in non-initial position are rare. From the few examples I have, it is clear from the context that the constituent preceding the clitic is in focus. However, it appears that the subject clitic does not attach to these focused constituents, but to the following verb. The direction of clitization needs to be verified in future research.

(32)    há-k'amù-kǹ   k'aabu-tə      k'iʂ-tə
          3MS-servant-DAT   pour-SS        drink-SS

          na-ɨ̀    <u>há</u> = k'aab-ǹ
          1SG-DAT   <u>3MS</u> = pour-DS

          '…pours for his servants, drinks, pours for ME;…'

(33)    má           n = ʔats-n     íʃì = ʔum-k-ə
          earlier.today    <u>1SG</u> = give-DS    3PL = eat-REAL-STI

          ts'èsǹ = íʃì-k-ə
          replete = 3PL-REAL-STI

          'I gave them EARLIER; they have eaten. They really are satisfied.' (Context: stephmother lies when the father of the children asks her to give them food.)

### 15.3.3    Medial clauses without subject clitics

Not all medial clauses have a subject clitic. In a small sample of seven **sāāyàs** 'stories, fables', about a quarter of the 350 medial (non-copula, non-direct speech) clauses does not have a subject clitic. In the case of subject focus, an NP or other overt reference to the subject is usually present. Likewise, new participants are sometimes introduced in clauses with a full referring NP, but no subject clitic. In contrast, there are also clauses which contain neither a subject clitic nor another reference to the subject; this concerns mainly connected series of actions in which the topic is understood.

This section first discusses medial clauses in which the subject is focussed, then topical subjects and zero expression of referents.

*Subject focus*
Often a new participant is introduced in a subject position. In that case, normally a full NP but no clitic refers to the new participant (34)-(36). Non-animate entities may also be introduced in this way, as example (37) illustrates. Because of the verb **ki** 'exist, live', the clause in (37) can also be analysed as a thetic medial clause, i.e. it has a presentational function. However, there is no syntactic difference with subject focus medial clauses.

(34)    ş óóz̧    tə-t = á        téé-bààstà
      <u>snake</u>   <u>COP-SS</u> = 3MS    go.NV-WHILE

'There was a SNAKE and while he went…' (Lit: It was a snake… Context: first sentence of a story.)

(35)    íʒ        ş ōōnà  yaaf-m̀        áz      īy      yaaf-m̀
    <u>3FS</u>       <u>booth</u>  <u>find-DS</u>       <u>3MS</u>     <u>house</u>  <u>find-DS</u>

'SHE found a booth; HE found a house;…'

(36)    áás-t = n̩        ēē-t = n̩        hāāy    gaamtà
    how-COP = 1SG   do.nv-SS = 1SG   water   far.side.LOC

    sāk-ā-o            há = ge-m̀      yááb  k'oy  yèg-m̀
    arrive-put-STI.ADDR  3MS = say-DS    <u>man</u>   one   come-DS

' "HOW do I do and reach the other shore?" he said; A MAN came;…'

(37) íʃì = úm-ḿ-bààb　　　kááy-ǹ　　　yí = téé-bààstà
　　　3PL = eat-IRR-father　　　be.not-DS　　　3FS = go.NV-WHILE

　　　myāngū　　　ìy　　　kì-ǹ
　　　spirit　　　house　　exist-DS

　　　'there was nothing they could eat; while she went (looking for food),
　　　there was THE HOUSE OF A SPIRIT,…'

As an aside, a new participant may be referred to by a
non-subject constituent as well when it is mentioned for the
first time, even if the new participant is going to play an
important role in the story, such as **yàtn̄bey** 'fox' in (38). New
actors with low importance in the story usually are referred to
by an NP as well as a clitic, such as the neighbor in (39), who
is probably part of the frame of reference (everybody has
neighbors).

(38) há = yàtn̄bey　　　dàtà　sàk-ǹ
　　　3MS = fox.mother　　　near.LOC arrive-DS

　　　'he reached a fox;…'

(39) … ge-t = á　　　góràbèt　　　íʃ-a　zèèr-ǹ
　　　say-SS = 3MS　　　neighbor(Amh)　3FS-ACC　advise-DS

　　　'saying "…" a/the neighbor advised her;…' [presented as topical]

*Zero expression of arguments*
Examples (40) and (41) illustrate medial clauses without a
subject clitic and without another overt reference to the
subject. Many of these clauses have same-subject marking.
They are used among others for series of actions or steps of a
procedure by a certain participant, as shown in the examples.

(40) há=zūyǹ-a      baaʃ-gyaʔu-tə
3MS=sheep.F.DEF-ACC    slaughter-chew-SS

íʃ-kǹ   báátʃí-ra      kyānū bàtà sììp'ù-tə
3FS-DAT skin-ACC      dog   on.LOC sew-SS

íʃ-kǹ   kum-k'à      gyādū an-tə
3FS-DAT neck-IN      rope   put-SS

há=kòb-tee-t=á
3MS=take-go.NV-SS=3MS

'… he slaughtered and ate the sheep, and sewed her skin on the dog, and put a rope around her neck, and he brought her and…'

(41) yīs-tà       yí-baad-ǹ-s-əra
DIST.M-LOC    3FS.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M-ACC

wor-kèsù-tə      úʃtà   bàrù-tə      ʃēʔī-ra
draw-go.out.CAUS-SS   ground throw.away-SS   stone-ACC

haaku-tə   yáb-m̀-s      ʔyan-n-s-k'à    goom-tə
pick-SS     man-DEF-M      pot-DEF-M-IN    pile-SS

yí-baad-n-s             kòb-tə    ūk'-ī̄-n-s-a
3FS.POSS-younger.sibling-DEF-M   take-SS   milk-DEF-M-ACC

wùʂk-kòb-tə   yí=k'yààz-yèg-ǹ
untie-take-SS   3FS=leave-come-DS

'Then she drew her brother out, left him on the ground, gathered stones, stacked them in the man's pot, took her brother, unknotted and took the milk, and she left;…'

Example (42), from a fable about a monkey and a crocodile, is exceptional in that there is even no subject clitic after the different subject marker. From the context it is clear that the referent must be the crocodile.

(42) yí=bārkày   k'ay-tə ás-kǹ   fāāfā-ka      áámà-ka
3FS=monkey    rise-SS 3MS-DAT papaya-COOR   yam.sp-COOR

k'áʃù        àts-ǹ    <u>um-tə</u> bārkày-ka   gúúrú
hanging.fruit?   give-DS   <u>eat-SS</u> monkey-WITH   only

daan   feeʃ-tə      há=yēē-kì-bààstà
together spend.day-SS   3MS-come.NV-exist-WHILE

'Monkey rose and gave him papaya and *aama* yams and tree-fruits; (he, the crocodile) ate and spent the day only with Monkey and while he came (home),…'

Obviously, the subjects in (40)-(42) refer to highly topical referents. As the examples show, expression of a topical referent is not obligatory and may be zero. Otherwise, this environment is identical to the string of medial verbs in (26)-(30) above, which also refer to a coherent sequence of actions.

It is common in the language to leave arguments unexpressed. In (43)-(44), the direct and indirect objects are referred to anaphorically by a zero pronoun. In (45), the first verb (**kaʦ'**) refers to a ritual concerning cows. The speaker presupposes that his interlocutor knows the ritual, which involves cutting a hair from the tail of the cow for the chief. Without this knowledge the example would be difficult to understand.

(43)  **myāng-ń-s**　　**tə-s-a-a**　　**nā=ń**　　**téé-t=ń**
  spirit-DEF-M　　COP-VIEWP-STD　　where=1PL　　go.NV-SS=1PL

  **ń=āātū-kōy-t=ń**　　**ń=sē-s-o**
  1PL=hold-bring-SS=1PL　　1PL=see.NV-CAUS-STI.ADDR

  'It is a spirit. Where do we go and take (it) and bring and show (it)?'

(44)  **k'īīṣ-ʔātsū-kì-b**　　**k'arà**　**há-bayǹ-ka**　**kì-b**
  milk-give-exist-REL INCL　　3MS.POSS-wife-WITH　　exist-REL

  **kì-ǹtà**　　**há=k'īīṣ-ʔāts-ā-m**　　**ge-tə**　**má-árá**
  exist-COND　　3MS=milk-give-put-IRR　　say-SS　eat-NEG

  **há=k'é-m-ə**
  3MS=remain-IRR-STI

  'Even the one who milks and gives, if he was with his wife (i.e. has had intercourse), he milks and gives (the milk to her), but does not drink (the milk himself).'

(45)  kàʂt'=í-k-ə            ge-t'-ǹ    fùs=í-k-ə
      cut.back.PASS=3FS-REAL-STI    say-PASS-DS   complete=3FS-REAL-STI

      ge-t-ǹ        yōk'à    yīs-tà      yááb-kǹ
      say-PASS-DS   INTJ    DIST.M-LOC    man-DAT

      k'àp't'ù-ʔàst-ǹ        yīs-kaarì      ūm-t'-ārā
      cut.PASS-give.PASS-DS   DIST.M-toward    eat-PASS-NEG

‘she has been cut back, it is said; she fulfilled the time, it is said; well, then (a hair from her tail) is cut for someone (=the chief) and given (to him or to his deputy); until then (her milk) is not eaten.’

### 15.3.4  Background clauses

A cursory investigation of clitics in background clauses reveals that 'while...'-background clauses (nearly) always contain a subject clitic.

(46)  íʃì=nōn-kì-bààstà     yí-bààb        yèè-sàw-tə
      3PL=talk-exist-WHILE    3FS.POSS-father    come.NV-arrive.NV-SS

‘while they were talking, her father arrived and he...’

Some of these background clauses allow for two interpretations, together with the preceding clause. For example, in (47) the clitic belongs either to the preceding clause or it belongs to the 'while'-clause:

(47)  há=byāāsū     k'ay-tə ...     ge-b-tà
      3MS=crocodile   rise-SS        say-REL-LOC

‘the crocodile rose and when he said "...", ...’

The clitic in (47) likely belongs to the 'while' clause, because a subject NP in a clause without subject clitic is attested independently (see section 15.2.4). Furthermore, sometimes a subject and the rest of the clause are divided by an intervening clause, as in (48).

(48)  íʃì=yáb-m̀-s    īy-k'=á        sòk'ù-kì-ǹ      bútà
      3PL=man-DEF-M   house-IN=3MS    sleep-exist-DS    outside

      sàw-tə
      arrive.NV-SS

‘they, the man sleeping in the house, arrived outside and...’

## 15.4   Flexible subject clitics in other languages

The phenomenon of subject markers following focused elements is found in other Omotic languages as well. It is reported for Diizi, the southern Majoid language (Beachy 2008). However, some differences can be observed, particularly that Diizi subject markers which follow the verb stem are different from subject markers which precede the verb stem, see (49)-(50). In Guraferdan Sheko enclitization of subject clitics to the verb stem is ungrammatical. It is as yet not known how verb polarity focus is expressed in Diizi and Guraferda.

(49)   **ŋ̀-zoku**      **mo**          **otu**   **dad**   **siag-o**
       1SG.POSS-bull   earlier.today   calf      child     give.birth-**3MS**

       'My bull gave birth to a calf.' (Adapted from Beachy 2005 appendix A.)

(50)   **undi**   **yir-g**    **ki**     **gob-ə-g**        **tə-n**   **á-zoku otu**
       past      what-IN     exist      country-EPEN-IN   BE-DS     **3MS**-bull calf

       **siag-də-ni**
       give.birth-IPF-CQ

       'In the past, in which country was it where a bull gives birth to a calf?' (Idem.)

Benchnon subject pronouns clearly have a relationship with topic and focus. However, unlike in Sheko, the pronouns differ slightly in form regarding tone and presence/absence of a final alveolar nasal. For instance, 'long strong' forms (**tằn** 'I, as for me') code topical or contrastive topical subjects. The 'short weak' forms (**tā**), associated most with topic continuity, express verb or verb polarity focus in compound verb forms when they follow the lexical verb; and perhaps they express non-subject constituent focus when they preceed the verb. Subject pronominal suffixes (-**tằn**) on simple main verbs indicate verb or verb polarity focus (cf. section 15.2.2). A number of other forms exist; details of the system can be found in Rapold (2006: 341-363).

Zargulla, an East-Ometo language, shows remarkable similarities with Sheko. In Zargulla, the copula marker -**tte** has

an extended grammatical function as focus marker (Azeb 2008). In focused verbal clauses, such as below, -tte is immediately followed by a set of suffixes which co-varies for person, number and gender of the subject (51). -tte plus the subject agreement suffix can attach to any non-subject focused element, such as an adverb (52). The agreement suffix (without -tte) cliticizes obligatorily to wh-words. Hayward (1990b:320ff) reports a similar situation for the closely related Zayse and proposes that the phenomenon originates in erstwhile cleft constructions, because the verb form is similar to the verb form in a relative clause.

(51)  kast-íʃʃin-na    ʔáik-útt-o-tt-iʃ-inne
      steal-TEMP-INST   catch-PASS-THV-FOC-3FS-PAST
      'while stealing, she was CAUGHT.'

(52)  ʔeeré  ʔeeré-tt-iʃ      bal-utt-e
      little  little-FOC-3FS   make.mistake-PASS-REL.IPF
      'It differs (only) A LITTLE'

In some Omotic languages, information structure interacts with subject agreement marking only marginally. [49] In Koorete, another East-Ometo language, it is not a subject marker but a focus/sentence type marker which follows the salient part of the sentence. However, there is some interaction with person marking as well, since in some cases the subject agreement morpheme is not present when the verb is out of focus. For example, in example (53b), both the focus marker and the subject agreement marker are dropped. In example (54b), the object is marked for focus and the 2pl agreement marker **itu** is not present (Binyam 2008:124-6; 172).

(53)  a.    tan-i   hant-uu-s-so
            I-NOM   work-PAST-1SG-A.FOC:DECL
            'I WORKED'

---

[49] In Zay, a Gurage language, some interaction is also noted: in some cases of nominal predication, subject marking follows the focus marker or may be added to it optionally (Meyer 2005:338,340). Andreas Wetter kindly pointed this out to me.

b.      **tan-i    hant-o**
        I-NOM     work-PAST
        'I worked'

(54)   a.      **hinun-i       doro     woon-d-o-itu-w-a̲**
           you-NOM         sheep     buy-PF-PAST-2PL-EPEN-<u>FOC:Q</u>
           'did you (pl) BUY sheep?'

     b.      **hinun-i       doru-w-a̲      woon-d-o**
           you-NOM         sheep-EPEN-<u>FOC.Q</u>   buy-PF-PAST
           'did you (pl) buy SHEEP?'

For Aari, a South Omotic language, "inflecting" adverbs and wh-words are reported (Bender 1991 citing Tully; see also Hayward 1990c:454). We can conclude that languages of various branches of Omotic, which do not all border each other, display at least traces of the same phenomenon. For some languages, a high-quality documentation is still lacking; hence it is not yet clear to which extent and with what variation the subject clitic is used to shape the information structure of sentences in Omotic languages.

Subject markers following focused or salient information are of course not only attested in Omotic, but also in Cushitic. In the well-known case of Somali, person marking is fused with the focus marker (Saeed 2000). In Konso, subject clitics are central to structuring information at sentence level as well, although in some verb paradigms additional person marking is found on the verb. Consider the following examples from Ongaye (2009), where the second person clitic appears procliticized to the verb (55a), encliticized to a focused NP (b), and proclitized to the first element of the sentence (b). The form differs because of morphophonological rules.

(55)   a.      **ɗoyra   ʔim=mur-t-i**
           tree      2=cut-2-PF
           'You CUT a tree.'

     b.      **ɗoyr=im     mur-t-i**
           tree=2        cut-2-PF
           'You cut   A TREE.'

c.     ʔiɗ = ɠoyra     mur-t-i
        2 = tree        cut-2-PF

       'You CUT A TREE'

In wh-questions, the clitic obligatorily attaches to the wh-word (56). There is no clitic and no person agreement on the verb when the subject is emphasized (57).

(56)    maana = n     piɗɗ-a
       what = 1        buy-IPF

      'WHAT shall I buy?'

(57)    kee     ɠoyra   mur-e
       you       tree     cut-PF

      'It is YOU who cut a tree'

In the genetically unrelated Khoisan language Sandawe (Eaton 2002; Steeman in preparation), subject clitics co-express modality. These port-manteau clitics have an information structuring function, and in addition the realis subject clitics also occur obligatorily on clause conjunctions. Moreover, realis subject clitics can occur more than once in a clause. An interesting parallel with Sheko, Zargulla and Konso is that in Sandawe the clitic is not allowed to attach to the subject. Ouside Africa, some Iranian languages have 'flexible' subject clitics indicating information structure and focus. Cysouw (2005) discusses Northern Talysh (Iranian), citing Schulze (2000), and the Jewish dialect of Hamadān, citing Stilo (2003). Related Jewish dialects such as spoken in Isfahan and Gaz (Stilo 2007) can also be mentioned. [50]

## 15.5   Other strategies indicating focus and contrast

This section discusses three other devices in Sheko which function in the domain of focus and contrast. First clefting is treated; secondly, clause linkage with **getə**, which contrasts propositions; and finally a contrastive topic marker.

---

[50] In Iranian languages, there are in fact two sets of clitics and clitization to the subject is not excluded (Stilo 2008).

### 15.5.1 Clefting

Next to flexible placement of subject clitics as a strategy to indicate focus and sentence structure, Sheko makes use of a cleft strategy. Clefting partially complements subject placement, in that clefting applies straightforwardly to subjects (as well as non-subjects), whereas the absence of subject clitics in subject focalization is an inaudible clue. On the other hand, clefting and subject placement reinforce each other, since the subject clitic, if present, attaches to the copula.

The next four examples show the occurrence of the subject clitic following the copula **tə** which functions as a focus marker. The schwa of the copula is deleted. Evidently, it is not the copula which is focal, but the constituent to which the copula is attached.

(58)  **há-dàdù-s**      **t̲=á**        **ás-k'à  an-t=á**
3MS.POSS-child-PL   COP=3MS      3MS-IN   put-SS=3MS

  **há=nata-ra    maad-ǹ**
3MS=1SG-ACC    deceive-DS

  'It's HIS CHILDREN that he put in it, deceiving me' (Context: stepmother discovers why the father has asked her to add cooked grain in the granary.)

(59)  **utʂá**        **utʂà    áz-tà  ky-aàb**        **kàrkà-k'a**
badger.CONT     badger   3MS-LOC  exist-REL       forest-IN

  **īsī-ə̄rā**       **ha=kààf-m̀tǎ  k'éét'-à**        **gúúrú**
beehive-ACC     2SG=build-COND  swallow-INF      only

  **t̲=á**        **k'ēēt'ū-tə    há=tʃōr-ʃ-ā-m̩**
COP=3MS       swallow-SS     3MS=finish-CAUS-put-IRR

  'the badger, if you build beehives in a forest where a badger lives, will ONLY EAT and he will finish (the honey).' (Lit: …it is just eating that he eats and finishes.)

(60)  **ūytī-ka**      **t̲=íʃì-yèè-k-ə**           **batʃ'a-k**
love-WITH       COP=3PL-come.NV-REAL-STI     anger-WITH

  **tə́-rée**
COP-NEG.STI

  'It was WITH LOVE that they came, it was not with anger.' (Context: referring to the separation of the Sheko from the Diizi.)

Wh-words may be clefted as well (61)-(62).

(61)    **áás-<u>t</u>=ņ**      **ʔēē-t=ņ**      **hāāy**    **gaamtà**
       how-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">cop</span>=1<span style="font-variant:small-caps">sg</span>    do.<span style="font-variant:small-caps">nv-ss</span>=1<span style="font-variant:small-caps">sg</span>    water    far.side.loc

       **sāk-ā-o**              **há=ge-ǹ**
       arrive-put-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">sti.addr</span>    3<span style="font-variant:small-caps">ms</span>=say-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">ds</span>

       'he said: " HOW do I do and reach the other shore?"'

(62)    **nāās-<u>t</u>=á**      **sàmù**          **há=ge-b-tà**    **só**
       where-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">cop</span>=3<span style="font-variant:small-caps">ms</span>    leave.behind[<span style="font-variant:small-caps">q</span>]    3<span style="font-variant:small-caps">ms</span>=say-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">rel-loc</span>   up.there

       **íntʃù-k'à**       **há=sàmù-k-ə ...**
       wood-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">in</span>      3<span style="font-variant:small-caps">ms</span>=leave.behind-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">real-sti</span>

       'when he said: "WHERE did it remain?", (she said:) "It remained up there in a tree." '

When the subject is clefted, often the subject clitic is absent (63)-(66). Note that the subject clitic is absent in subject focus constructions, whereas it encliticizes to non-subject constituents in focus. However, in (67) a clitic is attached to the copula in a subject cleft.

(63)    **bārkāỳ**   **şōōn** **tə**      **tʃ'āārū**        **fōōt-ā-m-ə**
       monkey     heart   <span style="font-variant:small-caps">cop</span>     medicine       become-put-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">irr-sti</span>

       'A MONKEY'S HEART will be medicine.'

(64)    **ņ-naanu**          **té-ré**     **ņ-baad-ǹ-s**
       1<span style="font-variant:small-caps">sg.poss</span>-elder.brother    <span style="font-variant:small-caps">cop-neg.sti</span> 1<span style="font-variant:small-caps">sg.poss</span>-younger.sibling-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">def-m</span>

       **tə**     **íʃ-a**     **ʔyār-s-ā-m-ə**
       <span style="font-variant:small-caps">cop</span>    3<span style="font-variant:small-caps">fs-acc</span>   enter-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">caus-put-irr-sti</span>

       'It is not my elder brother. It is my YOUNGER BROTHER who will marry her.'

(65)    **yīs**    **kòòsù-rà**      **ītə**          **māāk-o**
       <span style="font-variant:small-caps">dist.m</span>    tradition-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">acc</span>    who:<span style="font-variant:small-caps">cop</span>      tell-<span style="font-variant:small-caps">sti.adrr</span>

       'WHO will tell this traditional wisdom?'

(66)     **bádìgì**        **yēē-rā**        **kì-ì**    **k'oysì-be**
         Badign         come.NV-NEG     exist-DS   other.F.DEF-mother

         <u>**tə**</u>     **yèè-k-ə**
         COP     come.NV-REAL-STI

         'It's not Badign who came; It's ANOTHER FEMALE who came.'

(67)     **yeta**    **akàrb**   **ás**     <u>**t = á**</u>        **nata-ra**
         2SG     alike    3MS    <u>COP = 3MS</u>   1SG-ACC

         **mēdā**        **bàtà**   **k'ììts'ù-t = á**   **há = in-k-ə**
         plain(Amh)   on.LOC   tie-SS = 3MS    3MS = go-REAL-STI

         'It is SOMEONE LIKE YOU, who tied me on the field and left.'

It appears that a clefted 3ms-pronoun **ás-ta** (from **ás-t = á** 3MS-COP = 3MS ?) functions as a grammaticalised focus marker. In (68), a 1sg clitic is encliticized to the copula. In (69), the subject clitic is not encliticized to the marker.

(68)     **gàm-<u>ást</u> = ṇ**        **mīt'n-ā-m-ə**
         truly-<u>3MS.COP?</u> = 1SG     witness-put-IRR-STI

         'I will witness truthfully (fair and square)'

(69)     **há = fōōt-ə**    **ge-tə**   **áng-ásta**
         3MS = become-STI   say-SS    much.ELAT-<u>3MS.COP?</u>

         **k'iṣ = í-k-ə**
         drink = 3FS-REAL-STI

         'Even so, she has drunk a lot/too much.'

Since the tone marking in my examples is not consistent, another interpretation is possible, namely a proximal demonstrative suffix (-**às**), possibly followed by the locative marker **tà**. Whatever the exact morphological make-up, the form **asta** occurs as an emphasizing device suffixed to e.g. verbs (70) and adverbs (68).

(70)     **ṣūk'-ì-s**        **hàz**     **ūm-t'-ār-<u>āstà</u>**
         porridge-DEF-M    PROX.M   eat-PASS-NEG-<u>3MS.COP?</u>

         **há = k'y-á-m-ə**
         3MS = remain-put-IRR-STI

         'This porridge cannot be eaten at all.'

### 15.5.2 Getə-constructions

The word **getə**, from the verb **gé** 'say', occurs as clause linker in constructions which contrast propositions (71)-(74). It is uninflected. The marker **-tə** may be the copula or the same-subject marker.

(71) **nata** **íntʃù-k'à** **kès-t-us** **tə=ŋ̩**
1SG wood-in go.out-PASS-? COP=1SG

**ʔyazu-kì-k-ə** **ge-tə** **hāāy** **batà** **bòz-t'-us**
be.able-exist-REAL-STI say-COP water on.LOC stroll-PASS-?

**ʔyáz-árá** **ŋ̩-kì-k-ə**
be.able-NEG 1SG-exist-REAL-STI

'I am the one who can climb trees, I can't walk on water.'

(72) **há-bay-ka** **kì-b** **kì-ntà**
3MS.POSS-wife-WITH exist-REL exist-COND

**há=k'ī̧ş-ʔāts-ā-m** **ge-tə** **má-rá** **há=k'é-m-ə**
3MS=milk-give-put-IRR say-COP eat-NEG 3MS=remain-IRR-STI

'If he is with wife, he will milk and give (it to her), but not drink (himself).'

(73) **góórà-ka** **íʃì=nōŋ-ā-m** **ge-tə** **şókú-ka**
Amharic-WITH 3PL=talk-put-IRR say-COP Sheko-WITH

**nōŋ-m̄-bàb** **yaab** **kááy**
talk-IRR-father man be.not

'they talk in Amharic; there is nobody to speak Sheko with.'

(74) **na-ŋ̩** **gùlbə̄tà** **gə̀t'ə̄r-k'à**
1SG-DAT strength(Amh) countryside(Amh)-IN

**há-tʃoru-kì-k-ə** **ge-tə** **katam-k'-às-tà**
3MS-finish-exist-REAL-STI say-COP town-IN-PROX.M-LOC

**na-ŋ̩** **gùlbātà** **tʃór-árá**
1SG-DAT strength(Amh) finish-NEG

'My strength is running out in the countryside, but here in the city my strength doesn't run out.'

In (75), a reaction is given to the question whether there was any difference between the food eaten by a chief and food eaten by his subjects.

(75) **k'oy-ásta**     <u>ge-tə</u> | **liyuneti** |     **kátʃí**
one-3MS.COP?     <u>say-COP</u>   difference(Amh)   yam

    **ky = ă-k-ə**
exist = 3MS-REAL-STI

'It's the same - difference - there was yam.'

The verb 'to say' is also used in adversative linking expressions.

(76) **há-fōōt-ə**     **ge-te**   **hààs-kǹ**     **únà**   **gātsù**
3MS = become-STI   <u>say-COP</u>   PROX.M-DAT     long.ago   begin

    **yēsūs**   **há = ṣúb-t = á**     **há = k'áy-á-m-ə**
Jesus    3MS = die-SS = 3MS     3MS = rise-put-IRR-STI

    **gè-t'ù-ky-àb**   **noog-ǹ-s**     **yīz**   **íʃì-kǹ**   **árà-k'à**
say-PASS-exist-REL   thing-DEF-M     DIST.M   3PL-DAT   thought-IN

    **kááy**    **há = k'e-k-ə**
be.not    3MS = remain-REAL-STI

'Nevertheless, the word that long before this had been said 'Jesus will die and rise,' was not yet in their mind.'

(77) **há = see-k-ə**     **ge-tə**   **tóórá**     **kāārā-kǹ**
3MS = see.NV-REAL-STI     <u>say-COP</u>   downward     grave-DAT

    **bōw-k'à**     **ʔyárd-ár = á-k'e-k-ə**
belly-IN     enter-NEG = 3MS-remain-REAL-STI

'Although he saw it, he didn't enter into the grave.'

It is possible to use the **getə**-construction for contrasting constituents, although I have only elicited examples. The one in (78) is with a dative.[51]

(78) **íʒ**     **bēskū-kǹ**     <u>ge-tə</u>   **yí = ʔyáná-ra**   **zṵ̀ʔm̀-k-ə**
3FS     Besku-DAT     <u>say-COP</u>   3FS = pot-ACC   lend-REAL-STI

'It is to Besku that she lent a pot (not to others).'

---

[51] Cf. Crass & Meyer (2008: 243) who describe a slightly different construction with 'to say' common to many Ethiopan languages.

In (79), **gé** 'to say' is the second verb in a compound. There is probably no contrastive focus here, although the activity denoted by the verb is the focal point of the clause.

(79)  súkú  gúrú  ʔíʃì=tūūtṣū-ge-t=íʃì  tūūtṣū-ge-t=íʃì
      rope   only  3PL=knot-<u>say</u>-SS=3PL  knot-<u>say</u>-SS=3PL

      ʃə́t'-ǹ-ʃ          gāār-k-àbààstà      tùṣt'-àb
      maize-DEF-M       bear.fruit-exist?-WHILE  knot.PASS-REL

      suk-ṇ-s          yīs-kǹ         tūūtṣù  íʃ=fād-ā-m-ə
      rope-DEF-M       DIST.M-DAT     knot    3PL=count-put-IRR-STI

   'They just knotted and knotted a rope and they counted the knots of the knotted rope while the maize ripened.'

### 15.5.3    Contrastive topic marker

**áyntʃi** is tentatively analysed as contrastive topic marker. This analysis agrees with the examples in their context and is also in accordance with the backtranslations of my language informants into Amharic (e.g. **ïne-mma** 'as for me', cf. Girma and Meyer (2007:28); or **ïne rase** 'I myself'). One language consultant translated **az ayntʃi** as 'bässu mïknïyat', i.e. 'on account of him'. The last syllable of **áyntʃi** may relate to the dative case **-tʃi** of which some Omotic language have reflexes. Sheko has **-kǹ** as dative case; another trace of **-tʃi** may be present in the similative (section 9.2.7).

(80)  gàm-ástà       n=mīt'n-ā-m-ə        nat    ayntʃi
      truly-3MS.COP?  1SG=witness-put-IRR-STI  1SG    <u>CONTR.TOP</u>

      ha-kutʃî        gyèw-kì-be     tə-k-ee
      2SG.POSS-ckicken chew-exist-REL.F  COP-REAL-STI

   'I will speak the very truth. I am the one who is eating your chicken."

(81)   ḿ-baadù-s-on-ǹ-ka
      1PL.POSS-younger.sibling-PL-ASS-DAT-COOR

      ń-nini-won-ǹ-ka             kétā     dàmōz
      1PL.POSS-elder.sister-ASS-DAT-COOR    all      salary(Amh)

      íʃ=bègù-k-ee         ná-ɳ     áyntʃi
      3PL=pay-REAL-STI       1PL-DAt  CONTR.TOP

      bēg-ə̄r=íʃ-kì-k-ə
      pay-NEG=3PL-exist-REAL-STI

      'They paid salary to all our younger brothers and elder sisters. To us they haven't paid.'

(82)   yok'à  ń=étʃi       bērgū  sàw-bàstà    kóós-tə
      INTJ    1PL=CONTR.TOP  year   arrive.NV-WHILE  divinate-SS

      'well, we, while the year progressed, divinated and…'

(83)   kāỳ    antʃì         há-bàʒà      ītī
      god    CONTR.TOP   3MS.POSS-work  who

      bāʒ-ā-o
      work-put-STI.ADDR

      'As for God, who can do his work?'

# Bibliography

Abbink, Gerrit Jan (2000). Violence and the crisis of conciliation: Suri, Dizi and the State in south-west Ethiopia. *Africa* 70 (4): 527-550.

Ahland, Michael (2010). Aspects of Northern Mao Phonology. *Linguistic Discovery* 7 (1): 1-38.

Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. (2004). *Evidentiality*. Oxford: OUP.

Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. and R.M.W. Dixon (eds.) (2006). *Serial Verb Constructions: a Cross-linguistic Typology*. [Explorations in linguistic typology 2.] New York: OUP.

Aklilu Yilma (1988). The phonology and grammar of Sheko. MA thesis, Addis Ababa University.

Aklilu Yilma (1989). Aspects of Sheko morphology. Paper presented at the International Symposium on Cushitic and Omotic languages. Turin.

Aklilu Yilma (1990). Two phonological processes in Nayi: palatalization and labialization. In *Proceedings of the First National Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, N.J. Pankhurst et al. (eds.), Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, pp. 433-448.

Aklilu Yilma (1994a). A sketch of Nayi grammar. *Survey of Little-known Languages of Ethiopia* 16: 1-20.

Aklilu Yilma (1994b). A phonological comparison of Bench and two Majoid Languages. In *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies*. Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Harold M. Marcus (ed.), Lawrenceville: Red Sea, vol. 1, pp. 1053-1063.

Aklilu Yilma (1996). Sheko phonology and morphophonemics. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 29 (2): 23-46.

Aklilu Yilma (1997). Some notes on the Nayi grammar. In *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Kyoto, 12-17 December 1997, Kutsuyoshi Fukui, Eisei Kurimoto and Masyoshi Shigeta (eds.), Kyoto: Shokado, pp. 601-618.

Aklilu Yilma (2000). A linguistic analysis of the Dizi language. Mimeographed, 102 pages, Research and Publication Office, Addis Abeba University. Not accessed.

Aklilu Yilma (2003). Comparative phonology of the Maji languages. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 36 (2): 59-88.

Aklilu Yilma and Ralph Siebert (2002). Sociolinguistic Survey Report of the Chara, Dime, Melo, and Nayi Languages of Ethiopia. Summer Institute of Linguistics. http://www.sil.org/silesr/2002/029/SILESR2002-029.pdf. Last accessed on 12-12-2009.

Aklilu Yilma, Ralph Siebert, and Kati Siebert (2002). Sociolinguistic survey of the Omotic languages Sheko and Yem. Summer Institute of Linguistics. http://www.sil.org/silesr/SILESR2002-053.pdf. Last accessed on 12-12-2009.

Allan, Edward Jay (1976). Inalienable possession in four Ethiopian languages. *Afrika und Übersee* 59 (4): 300-307.

Allan, Edward Jay (1976b). Dizi. In Bender (1976), pp. 377-392.

Ameka Felix K. (1992). Introduction - Interjections: the universal yet neglected part of speech. *Journal of Pragmatics* 18:101-118.

Azeb Amha (2001a). *The Maale Language*. (CNWS Publications vol. 99.) Leiden: Research School CNWS.

Azeb Amha (2001b). Ideophones and compound verbs in Wolaitta, In *Ideophones*, F.K.E. Voeltz and Christa Kilian-Hatz (eds), Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 49-62.

Azeb Amha (2007a). Questioning forms in Zargulla. In *Akten des 7. internationalen Semitohamitistencongresses*, Rainer Voigt (ed.), Berlin 2004. [Semitica et Semitohamitica Berolinensia 5] Aachen: Shaker, pp. 197-210.

Azeb Amha (2007b). Are -a- and -o- in the indicative verb paradigms of Zargulla nominalizers? In *Omotic and Cushitic Languages Studies*, Graziano Sava and Maarten Mous (eds.), Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, pp.1-22.

Azeb Amha (2007c). Non-verbal predication in Wolaitta. In *Deictics, Copula and Focus in the Ethiopian Convergence Area*, Ronny Meyer and Joachim Crass (eds.), Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, pp. 99-117.

Azeb Amha (2008). The functions of Zargulla Copula markers -tte and -tta. In *In Hot Pursuit of Language in Prehistory: Essays in the Four Fields of Anthropology in Honor of Harold Crane Fleming*, John D. Bengtson (ed), Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: Benjamins, pp.39-49.

Azeb Amha and Gerrit J. Dimmendaal (2006). Verbal compounding in Wolaitta, In Aikhenvald and Dixon (2006), pp. 319-337.

Baron, Irene and Michael Herslund and Finn Sørensen (eds.) (2001). *Dimensions of Possession*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Beachy, Marvin (2005). An overview of Central Dizin phonology and morphology. MA thesis, University of Arlington, Texas.

Beachy, Marvin (2008). 'Linguistic and orthographic implications of analyzing Dizin possessive prefixes and verbal agreement proclitics as just one set of proclitic personal pronouns'. Presentation given at the North American Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics (NACAL 36), Chicago 14-16 March 2008.

Bearth, Thomas (1999). The contribution of African linguistics towards a general theory of focus: update and critical review. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 20 (2): 121-156.

Belle, William van and Willy van Langendonck (eds.) (1996). *The Dative*, vol 1: descriptive studies. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Bender, Marvin Lionel (1971). Sheko 100 basic words list.

Bender, Marvin Lionel (1976). *The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia*. (Occasional Papers Series, Committee on Ethiopian Studies, 5.) East Lansing: African Studies Center, Michigan State University.

Bender, Marvin Lionel (1991). Comparative Aroid (South Omotic) syntax and morphosyntax. *Afrika und Übersee* 74: 87-110.

Bender, Marvin Lionel (2000). *Comparative Morphology of the Omotic Languages*. Munich: Lincolm Europa.

Bender, Marvin Lionel (2003). *Omotic Lexicon and Phonology.* Carbonale: published by the author.

Bender, Marvin Lionel (2007). Topics in Omotic morphology. In *Morphologies of Asia and Africa*, Alan S. Kaye (ed.), Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp 729-754.

Biermann, Anna (1982). Die grammatische Kategorie Numerus. In *Apprehension: Das sprachliche Erfassen von Gegenständen I: Bereich und Ordnung der Phänomene*, Hansjakob Seiler and Christian Lehmann (eds.), Tübingen: Gunter Narr, pp. 229-243.

Binyam Sisay (2008). Aspects of Koorete verb morphology. PhD. dissertation, University of Oslo.

Bouquiaux, Luc and Jacqueline M.C. Thomas (1976). *L'enquête et description des langues à tradition orale*. Paris: Société d'études linguistiques et anthropologiques de France.

Bhat, D.N.S. (1999). *The Prominence of Tense, Aspect and Mood*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Breeze, Mary (1989). Phonological features of Gimira (Bencho) and Dizi. In *Cushitic Omotic: Papers from the International Symposium on Cushitic and Omotic Languages, Cologne, Jan. 6-9, 1986*, Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Fritz Serzisko (eds.), Hamburg: Buske, pp.475-487.

Breeze, Mary (1990). A sketch of the phonology and the grammar of Gimira (Benchnon). In Hayward (1990a), pp. 1-76.

Bybee, Joan, R. Perkins and W. Pagliuca (1994). *The Evolution of Grammar. Tense, Aspect and Modality in the Languages of the World*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

Cerulli, Ernesta (1956). *Peoples of South-west Ethiopia and its Borderlands.* London: International African Institute.

Chappell, Hilary and William McGregor (eds.) (1996). *The Grammar of Inalienability*: a typological perspective on body part terms and the part-whole relation. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Checci, Antonio (1886) *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa, vol II*. Rome: publisher unknown. Not accessed.

Claudi, Ulrike (1985). How to explain an alleged, disproved, but nevertheless existing gender distinction in Dizi. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 3: 85-91.

Claudi, Ulrike and Franz Serzisko (1985). Possession in Dizi: inalienable or not? *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 7: 131-154.

Comrie, Bernard (1976). *Aspect*: an introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems. [Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics.] Cambridge: CUP.

Comrie, Bernard and Norval Smith (1977). *Lingua descriptive studies: questionnaire.* (= *Lingua* 42: 1-72.) Amsterdam.

Conti Rossinin, Carlo (1937). *Etiopia e genti di Ethiopia*. Florence: publisher unknown.

Crass, Joachim and Ronny Meyer (2008). Ethiopia. In Heine and Nurse (2008), pp. 228-250.

Cristofaro, Sonia (2003). *Subordination*. [Oxford Studies in Typological and Linguistic Theory]. Oxford: OUP.

Cysouw, Michael (2003). 'Towards a typology of pronominal clitization'. Handout for ALT V Conference, Cagliari, Italy, 16-09-2003.

Cysouw, Michael (2005). Morphology in the wrong place. A survey of preposed enclitics. In *Morphology and its Demarcations.* (Current issues in linguistic theory 264), Wolfgang U. Dressler, Dieter Kastovsky, Oscar E. Pfeiffer and Franz Rainer (eds), Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 17-37.

Dahl, Östen (1985). *Tense and Aspect Systems*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Deguchi, Akira (1996). Rainbowlike hierarchy: Dizi social organization. In *Senri Ethnological Studies* 43: 121-143.

Dendale, Patrick and Liliane Tasmowski (2001). Introduction: evidentiality and related notions. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33: 339-348.

Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. (2008). Africa's verb-final languages. In Heine and Nurse (2008), pp 272-308.

Dingemanse, Mark (2009). A working definition of ideophones. *The Ideophone*. http:// ideophone.org/working definition/. Accessed 22-11-2009.

Dixon, R.M.W. (1982). *Where Have All the Adjectives Gone? and Other Essays in Semantics and Syntax*. Berlin: Mouton.

Dixon, R.M.W. and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald (eds.) (2002). *Word. A Cross-linguistic Typology*. Cambridge: CUP.

Dixon, R.M.W and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald (eds.) (2004). *Adjective Classes*. [Explorations in Linguistic Typology vol 1.] Oxford/New York: OUP.

Dryer, Matthew S. (2005). Prefixing versus suffixing in inflectional morphology. In *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, Martin Haspelmath, Matthew S. Dryer, David Gil and Bernard Comrie (eds.), OUP (http://wals.info/feature/26, accessed 26-10-2009).

Eaton, Helen C. (2002). The gramar of focus in Sandawe. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading.

Elders, Stefan (2006). Le chef comme morpheme: les noms complexes en 'possesseur de' et 'chef' en kulango. In *Zwischen Bantu und Burkina. Festschrift für Gudrun Miehe,* Kerstin Winkelmann and Dymitr Ibriszimow (eds.), Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, pp. 59-78.

Evans, N., S. Levison, N. Enfield, A. Gaby and A. Majid (2004). Reciprocal constructions and situation type. *Field Manual 9*, Asifa Majid (ed), Nijmegen, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, pp 25-30.

Firehiwat Takele (2001). The noun phrase in Nayi. BA thesis, Addis Abeba University.

Fleming, Harold (1976). Omotic overview. In Bender (1976), pp. 299-323.

Garretson, Peter P. (1986). Vicious cycles: ivory, slaves, and arms on the new Maji frontier. In *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology,* Donald Donham and Wendy James (eds.), Cambridge: CUP, pp. 196-218.

Girma A. Demeke and Ronnie Meyer (2007). Topics and topicalization in Amharic. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 28 (1): 19-36.

Givón, T. (1990). *Syntax: a Functional-Typological Introduction*, vol II. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Haberland, Eike F.G. (1993). *Hierarchie und Kaste: zur Geschichte und politischen Struktur der Dizi in Südwest-Äthiopien*. Stuttgart: Steiner.

Hagman, Roy S. (1977). *Nama Hottentot Grammar*. [Language and Science Monographs vol 15]. Bloomington: Indiana University.

Halpern, Aaron L. (1998). Clitics. In *The Handbook of Morphology*, Andrew Spencer and Arnold M. Zwicky (eds.), Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 101-122.

Harris, Alice C. (2000). Where in the word is the Udi clitic? *Language* 76 (3): 593-616.

Harris, Alice C. (2002). *Endoclitics and the Origins of Udi Morphosyntax.* Oxford: OUP.

Haspelmath, Martin (1995). The converb as a cross-linguistically valid category. In *Converbs in Cross-Linguistic Perspective: Structure and Meaning of Adverbial Verb Forms: Adverbial*

*Participles, Gerunds.* Martin Haspelmath and Ekkehard Koenig (eds), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp 1-55.

Haspelmath, Martin (1997). *Indefinite Pronouns.* [Oxford studies in typological and linguistic theory]. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hayward, Richard J. (1988). Remarks on Omotic sibilants. In *Cushitic-Omotic. Papers from the International Symposium on Cushitic and Omotic Languages. Cologne, January 6-9 1986,* Marianne Bechaus-Gerst and Fritz Serzisko (eds.), Hamburg: Helmut Buske, pp. 261-299.

Hayward, Richard J. (ed.) (1990a). *Omotic Language Studies.* London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

Hayward, Richard J. (1990b). Notes on the Zayse language. In Hayward (1990), pp. 210-355.

Hayward, Richard J. (1990c). Notes on the Aari language. In Hayward (1990), pp 426-493.

Hayward, Richard J. (1995). *The Challenge of Omotic.* Inaugural lecture. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

Hayward, Richard J. (1996). The velar stem alternation in Omotic. In *Cushitic and Omotic Languages. Proceedings of the third International Symposium, Berlin, March 17-19, 1994,* Catherine Griefenow-Mewis and Rainer M. Voigt (eds.), Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, pp. 167-181.

Hayward Richard J. (2001). A further consideration of terminal vowels in Ometo. In *New Data and New Methods in Afroasiatic linguistics. Robert Hetzron in Memoriam,* Andrzej Zaborski (ed.), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 74-98.

Hayward, Richard J. (2009). What's been happening in Omotic? *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 42 (1-2): 85-106.

Hayward, Richard and Yoichi Tsuge (1998). Concerning case in Omotic. *Afrika und Übersee* 81:21-38.

Heine, Bernd (1976). *A Typology of African Languages Based on the Order of Meaningful Elements.* [Kölner Beiträge zur Afrikanistik 4]. Berlin: Reimer.

Heine, Bernd (1997). *Possession: Cognitive Sources, Forces and Grammaticalization.* Cambridge: CUP.

Heine, Bernd and Tania Kuteva (2002). *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization.* Cambridge: CUP.

Heine, Bernd and Derek Nurse (eds.) (2008). *A Linguistic Geography of Africa.* Cambridge: CUP.

Hellenthal, Anne-Christie (2007). Modality properties of sentence type markers in Sheko. *Leiden Working Papers in Linguistics* 4 (2): 17-32.

Hellenthal, Anne-Christie (2009). Possession in Sheko. In *The Linguistics of Endangered Languages - Contributions to*

*Morphology and Morphosyntax*, L. Wetzels (ed.), Utrecht: LOT, pp. 221-242.

Hellenthal, Anne-Christie (2009). The morphology of Sheko adverbial clauses. In *Selected Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics: Linguistic Theory and African Language Documentation*, Masangu Matondo, Fiona McLaughlin and Eric Potsdam (eds.), Somerville: Cascadilla, pp 118-127.

Hellenthal, Anne-Christie (to appear). Sheko language. Entry in the Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, Siegbert Uhlig (ed.), Hamburg: Harrassowitz.

Hildebrand, Elisabeth A. (2003). *Enset, Yams, and Honey: Ethnoarchaeological Approaches to the Origins of Horticulture in Southwest Ethiopia.* (ProQuest UMI Dissertations Services no 3117062.) Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University.

Hudson, Grover (1999). Linguistic analysis of the 1994 Ethiopian census. *Northeast African Studies* 6 (3): 89-108.

Kazenin, Konstantin I. and Yakov G. Testelec (2004). Where coordination meets subordination: converb constructions in Tsakhur (Daghestanian). In *Coordinating Constructions*, Martin Haspelmath (ed), [Typological Studies in language 58], Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp 227-240.

Keenan, Edward L. (1985). Relative clauses. In *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* Vol II: Complex constructions, Timothy Shopen (ed), Cambridge: CUP, pp 141-170.

Keenan, Edward L. and Bernard Comrie (1977). Noun phrase accessibility and universal grammar. *Linguistic Inquiry* 8:63-99.

Kemmer, Suzanne (1993). *The Middle Voice.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Kutsch Lojenga, Constance (1996) Participatory research in linguistics. *Notes on Linguistics* 73:13-27.

Lamberti, Marcello and Roberto Sottile (1997). *The Wolaytta Language.* [Studia Linguarum Africae orientalis, vol. 6.] Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.

Lambrecht, Knud (1994). *Information Structure and Sentence Form.* [Cambridge studies in linguistics 71.] Cambridge: CUP.

Lange, Werner J. (1975). Gimira (remnants of a vanishing culture). Ph.D. dissertation, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt.

Lazard, Gilbert (1999). Mirativity, evidentiality, or other? *Linguistic Typology* 3: 91-109.

Leslau, Wolf (1976). *Concise Amharic Dictionary.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Lewis, M. Paul (ed.), (2009). *Ethnologue: languages of the World,* sixteenth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com/.

Meyer, Ronny (2005). *Das Zay*. Deskriptive Grammatik einer Ostguragesprache (Aethiosemitisch). Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.

Mous, M. (1993). *A grammar of Iraqw*. Hamburg: Buske.

Muldrow, William (1976). Languages of the Maji area. In Bender (1976), pp. 603-607.

Mulugeta Seyoum (2008). *A Grammar of Dime*. Utrecht: LOT (Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics).

Ongaye Orkaydo Oda (2009). 'Subject clitics in Konso.' Handout. Presented at the Friday Afternoon Lectures, Leiden University, 15 May 2009.

Palmer, F.R. (2001). *Mood and Modality*. [Second edition. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics.] Cambridge: CUP.

Payne, Thomas E. (1997). *Describing Morphosyntax*. A guide for field linguists. Cambridge: CUP.

Perham, Margery (1948). *The Government of Ethiopia*. London: Faber and Faber.

Rapold, Christian J. (2006). Towards a grammar of Benchnon. PhD dissertation, Leiden University.

Rapold, Christian J. (2008). Mediativity marking in Benchnon. Paper read at the Conference on Omotic Utterance Types and Linguistic Typology, Leiden, 23-25 October 2008.

Saeed, John Ibrahim (1999). *Somali*. [London Oriental and African Language Library vol 10.] Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Saeed, John Ibrahim (2000). The function of focus in Somali. *Lingua Posnaniensis* XLII (42): 133-143.

Saha, P. K. (1984). Interrogativity in Bengali. In *Interrogativity: A Colloquium on the Grammar, Typology and Pragmatics of Questions in Seven Diverse Languages,* William S. Chisholm Jr., Louis T. Milic and John A.C. Greppin (eds.), Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 113-143.

Schulze, Wolfgang (2000). *Northern Talysh*. [Languages of the world/materials 380]. Munich: Lincom.

Snider, Keith (1999). *The Geometry and Features of Tone.* Dallas: SIL International.

Stauder, Jack (1970). Notes on the history of the Majangir and their relations with other ethnic groups of Southwest Ethiopia. In *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, pp. 104-115.

Stilo, Donald L. (2003). Hamadan IX: Jewish Dialect. In *Encyclopedia Iranica* Vol XI/6, Ehsan Yarshater (ed), New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, pp. 623-627. (www.iranica.com, last accessed 26-10-2009.)

Stilo, Donald L. (2007). Isfahan xix Jewish dialect. Isfahan xxii Gazi dialect. In *Encyclopedia Iranica,* www.iranica.com, last accessed 26-10-2009.

Stilo, Donald L. (2008). Two sets of mobile verbal person agreement markers in the northern Talyshi language. In *Aspects of Iranian Linguistics,* Simin Karimi, Donals Stilo and Vida Samiian (eds.), Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, pp.363-390.

Steeman, Sander (in preparation). A grammar of Sandawe. Ph.D. dissertation, Leiden University.

Straube, Helmut (1963). *Westkuschitische Völker Süd-Äthiopiens.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Tadesse Habte Addo (2001). *The Tonology of Kafi Noonoo.* (Working papers in Linguistics, 15.) Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Tamirat Jiffar (1988). Verb morphology of Dizi (some inflections and derivations). BA thesis, Addis Abeba University.

Teberh Anania (1989). Noun morphology of Dizi. BA thesis, Addis Abeba University.

Theil, Rolf (2007). Kafa phonology. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 28 (2): 193-216.

Tolemariam Fufa (2009). *A Typology of Verbal Derivation in Ethiopian Afro-Asiatic Languages.* Utrecht: LOT (Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics).

Valenzuela, Pilar (2002). *Relativization in Shipibo-Konibo: A Typologically-oriented Study.* [LINCOM Studies in Native American Linguistics 43]. München: Lincom Europa.

Van Valin, Robert D. and Randy J. LaPolla (1997). *Syntax. Structure, meaning and function.* [Cambridge textbooks in linguistics]. Cambridge: CUP.

de Vries, Mark (2002). *The Syntax of Relativization.* Ph.D. dissertation. Utrecht: LOT (Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics).

Wedekind, Klaus (1983). A six tone language in Ethiopia. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* XVI: 129-156.

Wedekind, Klaus (1985a). Thoughts when drawing a map of tone languages. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 1: 105-124.

Wedekind, Klaus (1985b). Why Bench' (Ethiopia) has five level tones today. In *Studia linguistica diachronica et synchronica,* Ursula Pieper and Gerhard Stickel (eds.), Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 881-901.

Wedekind, Klaus (1990). *Generating Narratives.* Interrelations of knowledge, text variants, and Cushitic focus strategies. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Yip, Moira (2002). *Tone.* [Cambridge textbook in linguistics 34.] Cambridge: CUP.

# Appendix A. Texts

When transcribing and translating texts, some changes have been made for various reasons, e.g. a slip of the tongue or mistake from the speaker has been corrected, or language consultants proposed a different wording. The edited texts are presented here, with the | to mark a pause and **[ ]** to mark a place which is edited.

In the footnotes, an asterisk denotes a change made because of grammaticality judgments. The asterisk is only used when I felt certain the construction was wrong. In less clear cases, no asterisk is used. The use of \ \ in the footnotes signals which material was added in editing, while ( ) signals which material was deleted in editing. Where possible, comments from the language consultants have been included.

### Text 1. The snake, the man and the fox.

**Sāāyā** 'story' told by Ayna Bejih, 28 April 2008. Present: AB, his son Adane, researcher. Place: house of AB. Story told on request of researcher.

(1)  ṣóóẓ     tə-t=á            há=téé-bààstà |
     snake    COP-SS=3MS       3MS=go.NV-WHILE

     hāāy     tèèr-t=á          kì-n |
     water    swell-SS=3MS      exist-DS

     'There was a snake and while he went, the river was flooded

(2)  áás-t=ṇ          ṇ=ʔēē-t=ṇ            hāāy    gaamtà
     how-COP=1SG      1SG=do.NV-SS=1SG     water   far.side.LOC

     sāk-ā-o              há=ge-ǹ |
     arrive-put-STI.ADDR  3MS=say-DS

     'he said: "How do I do and reach the other shore?"

(3)  yááb    k'oy    yə̀g-ǹ |
     man     one     come-DS

     'a man came

(4)　**gé=n̩**　　　　**ye-kǹ**　**kum-k'à |**　　**k'õrk-n̄-t=n̩ |**
say=1SG　　　　2SG-DAT　neck-IN　　twist-MIDD-SS=1SG

　　　**n̩=gáámtà**　　　　**sak-ə**　　　**[ha=nata-ra**
　　　1SG=far.side.LOC　　arrive-STI　　2SG=1SG-ACC

　　　**fin-s-ə ]**[1]　　**há=ge-ǹ**
　　　descend-CAUS-STI　3MS=say-DS

　　　'he (the snake) said: "Say, let me curl around your neck and reach the other shore (but) you should let me descend."

(5)　**ʒaaʒ=á-k-ə**　　　**há=ge-t=á |**　　**ás-kǹ**
be.good=3MS-REAL-STI　3MS=say-SS=3MS　　3MS-DAT

　　　**kum-k'à**　　**an=á**　　　**gáámtà**　　　**sàw-tə |**
　　　neck-IN　　　put=3MS　　far.side.LOC　　arrive.NV-SS

　　　**úʃtà**　　　**fín**　　　**há=ge-ǹ |**
　　　down.LOC　　descend　　3MS=say-DS

　　　'he (the man) said: "Fine," and put him on his neck and reached the shore and said: "Descend!"

(6)　**hàà-s-tà**　　**fín-én̩=k'y-á-m-ə**　　　　　**só**
PROX-M-LOC　　descend-NEG.1SG-remain-put-IRR-STI　up.there

　　　**yī-n-t=n̩**　　**n̩=téé-fín-á-m-ə**　　　　**há=ge-ǹ |**
　　　DIST-F-LOC=1SG　1SG=go.NV-descend-put-IRR-STI　3MS=say-DS

　　　'he said: "I won't go down here. Just over there I'll go and descend."

(7)　**só**　　**yī-n-t=á**　　　**sàsk-ǹ |**
up.there　DIST-F-LOC=3MS　arrive.CAUS-DS

　　　'he brought him a little further

(8)　**fín-ə**　　　**há=ge-ǹ |**
descend-STI　3MS=say-DS

　　　'he said: "Descend!"

---

[1] [(**há=*ge-ǹ |**) **há=nata\-ra\ fin-s-ə**] : 3MS=say-DS 3MS=1SG-ACC descend-CAUS-STI. Comment: the same person keeps talking, so we can't use the say-verb here.

(9)     **[fín-éṇ=k'y-á-m-ə |]²**         **só**    **ōtì**
          descend-NEG.1SG=remain-put-IRR-STI     up.there cow

         **ás-tà**   **kì-b-tà**      **ṇ=sāw-t=ṇ**
         3MS-LOC  exist-REL-LOC   1SG=arrive.NV-SS=1SG

         **fín-á-m-ə**       **há=ge-ǹ |**
         descend-put-IRR-STI  3MS=say-DS

         'He said: "I won't descend. Up there where that cow is I will arrive
         and descend."

(10)   **ō<y>t-ǹ**      **datà**   **íʃ=sàk-ǹ |**
       cow<F>-DEF   near.LOC 3PL=arrive-DS

      'they arrived near the cow

(11)   **ōtì-o**        **na-ŋ**   **mīt'ñ-ə |**     **há=ge-bààstà |**
       cow-STI.ADDR  1SG-DAT  witness-STI    3MS=say-WHILE

       **yáb-m̀-s**    **yē**     **ge-t=á**    **há=ʔō<y>t-ǹ-kǹ**
       man-DEF-M   like.this say-SS-3MS  3MS=cow<F>-DEF-DAT

       **gé-bààstà |**   **ō<y>t-ǹ**    **k'ay-tə |**      **yeta**   **akàrb**
       say-WHILE    cow<F>-DEF  rise-SS      2SG   alike

       **ás**      **[tə]³**   **nata-ra**     **mēdā**      **batà**
       3MS    COP    1SG-ACC   plain(Amh)  on.LOC

       **k'ììts'ù-t=á |**   **há=ʔin-k-ə**    **|**     **yír=ṇ**
       tie-SS=3MS    3MS=go-REAL-STI what=1SG

       **ṇ=ye-kǹ**     **mīt'ñ-o**      **yí=ge-ǹ |**
       1SG=2SG-DAT   witness-STI.ADDR  3FS=say-DS

      'when he said: "Oh cow, argue for me," while the man said that to
      the cow, the cow rose and said: "It is someone like you who tied me
      on the field and left. What shall I say in favour of you?"

(12)   **kàyēēstà**    **há=tee-t=á**      **tee-t=á**
       again        3MS=go.NV-SS=3MS   go.NV-SS=3MS

       **tee-t=á |**  **[]⁴**  **dāwā**  **kì-ǹ |**
       go.NV-SS=3MS     deer    exist-DS

      'again he went and went and went and - there was a deer

---

² Comment: it starts with **fínéṇk'yámə**. I.e. added for symmetry.

³ [**tə**(-t-á **há**=)] : COP-SS=3MS 3MS=. Or: [**t**(=á **há**=)] : COP=3MS 3MS=.

⁴ [(**há**=)] : 3MS. Speaker hesitated. Not clear whether there is a 3MS clitic present on
the tape.

Note that the deer gets feminine agreement in the following clauses.

(13) **dāw-ı̄n**      **datà**   **sò̀ò-tə** |      **dāwā-o** |
deer-F.DEF      near.LOC arrive.NV-SS      deer-STI.ADDR

**[na-ı̀ŋ**   **ṣóóẓ**   **às-à]**[5]      **mı̄t'n̄**   **há=úʃtà**
1SG-DAT   snake   PROX.M?-ACC      witness   3MS=down.LOC

**sak-ə**      **há=ge-ǹ** |
arrive-STI      3MS=say-DS

'he arrived near the deer and said: "Oh deer, bear witness for me against the snake. Let him reach the ground."

(14) **nat**    **dāwā**   **ge**    **bútà**   **nat**    **zi̇im̀-tə** |
1SG    deer   say    outside   1SG    chase-SS

**géék'ù-ra**      **īy-k'à**      **an-kì-b**      **[yeta**
goat-ACC      house-IN      put-exist-REL      2SG

**tə́-r=a-kì]**[6]      **yír=ṇ**      **ṇ=ye-kǹ**
COP-NEG-2SG-exist[Q]      what=1SG      1SG=2SG-DAT

**mı̄t'n̄-o**      **yí=ge-ǹ** |
witness-STI.ADDR   3FS-say-DS

'she said: "Are you not the one who calling me deer chased me outside, and put a goat in the house? What could I witness for you?"

(15) **kàyēēst**      **yí=ʔōy=á**   **tee-t=á**      **tee-t=á**
again      3FS=deny=3MS   go.NV-SS=3MS      go.NV-SS=3MS

**tee-t=á** |      **há=yàtn̄-be**   **datà**   **sàk-ǹ** |
go.NV-SS=3MS      3MS=fox-mother   near.LOC arrive-DS

'again, she refusing, he went and went and went and arrived near a fox

(16) **yàtn̄-bey-o**      **na-ı̀ŋ**   **mı̄t'n̄-ee**      **há=ge-ǹ** |
fox-mother-STI.ADDR      1SG-DAT   witness-STI      3MS=say-DS

'he said: "Oh fox, witness for me."

---

[5] [**s'óós' ásà na-ı̀ŋ**] : snake PROX.M?-ACC 1SG-DAT
[6] [**yet\a\ tə-k**] : 2SG COP-REAL. Statement changed into a question during editing.

(17)  **yàtn̄-bey |**    **gàm-ástà**    **ṇ=mīt'n-ā-m-ə |**
fox-mother    truly-3MS.COP?    1SG=witness-put-IRR-STI

**[nat    aynci]**[7]    **ha-kutʃì**    **gyèw-kì-be**
1SG    CONT.TOP    2SG.POSS-chicken    chew-exist-REL.mother

**tə-k-ə |**    **ye-kǹ**    **ṇ=mīt'n-ā-m-ə**    **yí=ge-ǹ |**
COP-REAL-STI    2SG-DAT    1SG=witness-put-IRR-STI    3FS=say-DS

'the fox said: "I will speak the very truth. It is me who is eating your chicken. I will witness for you."

(18)  **na-ɽ**    **mīt'n̄-ə**    **há=gè-b-tà |**    **ṣóóṣ**    **yeta**
1SG-DAT    witness-STI    3MS=say-REL-LOC    snake    2SG

**fín-tə**    **[ha=ʔé-k-īs-tà]**[8]    **sak-ə**
descend-SS    2SG=there-LCT-DIST.M-LOC    arrive-STI

**yí-ge-ǹ |**
3FS=say-DS

'while he said: "Witness for me,", she said: "Snake, you go down and arrive over there,"

(19)  **ṣóóz̧-ǹ-ṣ**    **é-k-ī-s-t**    **sàk-ǹ |**
snake-DEF-M    there-LCT-DIST-M-LOC    arrive-DS

'the snake arrived over there

(20)  **yáb-m̀-s**    **yeta**    **akǹ-ààs-tà**    **ááṣ-ə**
man-DEF-M    2SG    here-PROX.M-LOC    stand-STI

**yí=ge-ǹ**
3FS=say-DS

'she said: "Man, you stand over here."

(21)  **há=ʔaaṣ-ǹ |**
3MS=stand-DS

'he stood (over here)

---

[7] [**nata (ṇ=)aynci** ]: 1SG (1SG=)CONTR.TOP.
[8] [\**ha=\é-k-īs-tà**] : \3MS=\ there-LCT-DIST-M-LOC.

(22)     [yòwk'a]⁹     yáb-m̀-s-ara |   ye-kǹ ṣóón   kááy   tèè |
           INTJ          man-DEF-M-ACC   2SG-DAT heart   be.not   COP.Q

           ye-kǹ kútṣú-k'à        gātʃī   hàs-à         há-batà
           2SG-DAT   hand-IN        stick   PROX.M-ACC   3MS.POSS-on.LOC

           bār-ār = a       ha = k'y-â     yí = ge-t = í     zeer-ǹ |
           throw-NEG = 2SG   2SG-remain-put.Q   3FS = say-SS = 3FS   advise-DS

           'telling the man: "Well, don't you have a heart? Won't you throw this stick in your hand on him?" she advised him

(23)     há = ṣóóṣ-ǹ-ṣ-ara       yéb-m̀-s       duufu-t = á
           3MS = snake-DEF-M-ACC     man-DEF-M     hit-SS = 3MS

           wuṣ-ǹ |
           kill-DS

           'the man hit the snake and killed it

(24)     yí = sàw-t = í         yír = a       ha = na-ɳ̀
           3FS = arrive.NV-SS = 3FS   what = 2SG     2SG = 1SG-DAT

           āts-o         ge-t = í       ge-ǹ |
           give-STI.ADDR   say-SS = 3FS    say-DS

           'she came and said: "What will you give me?"

(25)     zūnkù = ṇ       ṇ = ye-kǹ      āts-ā-m-ə      há = ge-ǹ |
           sheep = 1SG     1SG = 2SG-DAT    give-put-IRR-STI   3MS = say-DS

           'he said: "I'll give you a sheep."

(26)     ʒaaʒ = á-k-ə     |       yí = ge-ǹ |
           be.good = 3MS = REAL-STI   3FS = say-DS

           'she said: "It is good."

(27)     īy-tà          [ha = yēē-t = a]¹⁰     kob-ə   há = ge-ǹ |
           house-LOC    2SG = come.NV-SS = 2SG    take-STI   3MS = say.DS

           'he said: "Come to the house and take it."

---

⁹ [**yowk'**( **= f**)] : INTJ = 3FS
¹⁰ [**\ha = \yee-t = a**] : 2SG = come.NV-SS = 2SG. Not clear why the 2sg proclitic was added in editing.

(28) yí = tee-bààstà |       wó-k            órá-tà
    3FS = go.NV-WHILE        down.there-IN    garden-LOC

téé-kī-n |         [n̥ = ye-kǹ      kōb-téé-tə      n̥ = ʔats-ə][11]
go.NV-exist-DS    1SG = 2SG-DAT    take-go-SS      1SG = give-STI

há = ge-ǹ |
3MS = say-DS

'While she went, he said: "Go and stay down in the garden; let me bring it for you and give it."'

(29) íʒ        yówk'á        órá-tà          yí = tee-t = í
    3FS       INTJ          garden-LOC      3FS = go.NV-SS = 3FS

kootu-kī-bààstà |         há = zūyǹ-a
wait-exist-WHILE         3MS = sheep.F.DEF-ACC

baaʃ-gèw-tə |         íʃ-kǹ      báátʃí-ra        kyānū batà
slaughter-chew-SS    3FS-DAT    skin-ACC         dog    on.LOC

sììp'ù-tə |        íʃ-kǹ     kum-k'à         gyādū an-tə |
sew-SS           3FS-DAT   neck-IN         rope  put-SS

há = kòb-tee-t = á         bōy-ʔin-ə        ge-ǹ |
3MS = take-go.NV-SS = 3MS   drive-go-STI     say-DS

'Well, while she went to the garden and waited, he slaughtered and ate the sheep and sewed her skin on the dog and put a rope around her neck and took her and went and said: "Go drive it."'

(30) yí = zūnkù        tə-k-ə           ge-t = í
    3FS = sheep       COP-REAL-STI     say-SS = 3FS

bòy-kòb-t = í          kōōkī-tà         sāw-b-tà |
drive-take-SS = 3FS    road-LOC         arrive.NV-REL-LOC

há = wúwúwúw          ge-tə íʃ-əra wóóts'-ń          ge-ǹ |
3MS = IDEO           say-SS 3FS-ACC bite-1SG        say-DS

'she drove it away, saying: "It is a sheep," and when she reached the road, he barked and wanted to bite her

---

[11] [ye-kǹ kob-t *yí = ʔats-ə] : 2SG-DAT take-SS 3FS = give-STI. Mistake of storyteller.

(31)  yí = k'ay-tə |   yááb   dàdù-kì̀ |   ṣūbū
      3FS = rise-SS   man   child-DAT   death

      yì̀r = á-k-ə |           ge-tə   yí = tee-k-ə
      be.less = 3MS-REAL-STI   say-SS   3FS = go.NV-REAL-STI

      há = gè-t'ù-k-ee |
      3MS = say-PASS-REAL-STI

      'she rose and saying: "Death is less to mankind," she went away, it is said.'

## Text 2. Sheko history

**Tōsā** 'history'. Some passages from an interview with Komtu Shewa Tureta, recorded 23 February 2008. Present: Komtu Shewa Tureta, several men (some elderly, two youth) and some children, Ayna Bejih, and the researcher. Place: under a big tree on the compound of Komtu Shewa.

(1)  ń-kòòsù-ee |           náta |   koynəb   dàdù   tə-k-ə |
     1PL.POSS-divination-STI   1PL   Koynəb   child   COP-REAL-STI

     'As for our tradition, we are the children of Koynəb.

(2)  ń-kòòs           yòk'a |   ēgītà   gè-t'-ùb
     1PL.POSS-divination   INTJ   Egita   say-PASS-REL

     kì̀y = á-k-ə |
     exist = 3MS-REAL-STI

     'Well, our tradition - There is a place called Egita.

(3)  é-ká|   ēgītà   gè-t'-àb-īs-tà   ń-bààb
     there-LCT   Egita   say-PASS-REL-DIST.M-LOC   1PL.POSS-father

     ń-ʔàkù   kèès-yèè-k'e-k |
     1PL.POSS-grandfather   go.out-come.NV-remain-REAL

     'From there around the place called Egita our fathers and our grandfathers came.

(4)  yòk'a  ń=etʃi |        bērgū  sàw-bàstà      kōōs-tə |
     INTJ   1PL=CONTR.TOP   year   arrive.NV-WHILE  divinate-SS

     éés-kǹ         às-tà          kōōs-tə |       umt'à
     honey-DAT      PROX.M-LOC     divinate-SS     food

     gāār-m̄-bààb       ń=kōōs-tə|       umt'à  múr-ń-bààb
     ripen-IRR-father   1PL=divinate-SS  food   ripen(tuber)-IRR-father

     ń=kōōs-tə |         yē        tə=ń          kì-k |
     1PL=divinate-SS     like.this  COP=1PL       exist-REAL

     'well, we, while the year(s) progressed, divinated and we divinated
     for honey here and we divinated grains and tubers to ripen and like
     this we lived.'

(5)  kayēēstà       n=mààk-àb-ee |        zoyti |  ʒaba
     again          1SG=tell-REL-STI      Zoyti    Jeba

     burʒi-ka       koynəb-ka       k'oy   tə-k-ə |
     Burzh-COOR     Koynəb-COOR     one    COP-REAL-STI

     náánú-ka              báádù-ka |
     elder.brother-COOR    younger.sibling-COOR

     'Again as for what I am telling, Zoyti, (i.e.) Jeba Burzh[12] and Koynəb
     were one: elder and younger brother.'

(6)  yēē     ky-à-a |          ʒaba    burʒi   wó-k'à
     like.this  exist-IMPLC-STD   Jeba    Burzh   down.there-LOC

     sàm=a |        koynəb   yè-k          ēgītà | (... ...)
     remain=3MS?    Koynəb   come.NV-REAL   Egita

     'It being like this, Jeba Burzh stayed down there and Koynəb came,
     from Egita.'

---

[12] Zoyti is the name of Jeba Burzh in a spiritual cult.

(7) ʃə́t'ì  kōʂ-t-n̄-bàb |  baakà  āʂ-t-n̄-bàb
maize  farm-PASS-IRR-father  taro  plant-PASS-IRR-father

kátʃí  yān-t'-n̄-bàb̀ |  yīs-əra  səg-ǹtà-ee |
yam  plant.yam-PASS-IRR-father  DIST.M-ACC  see-COND-STI

yááb-o  dādū-o  k'áy-t=ítí  baʒ-ə |
man-STI.ADDR  child-STI.ADDR  rise-SS=2PL  work-STI

baʒà  sààtì  àlèf=á-k-ə  k'áy-ít-ə |
work  hour(Amh)  pass(Amh)=3MS-REAL-STI  rise-PL.ADDR-STI

gúy  káát'-ít-ə |  ʃə́t'ì  kooʂ-ít-ə |
grassland  hoe-PL.ADDR-STI  maize  farm-PL.ADDR-STI

duuk'-ít-ə |  ń=ge-ǹ
plant.corn-PL.ADDR-STI  1PL=say-DS

'Maize is to be tilled, taro to be planted, yam to be planted; regarding this, we say: "Hey people, hey children, rise up and work. The time of work is over, wake up. Hoe the grassland. Farm the maize, sow it."

(8) íʃì=yòk'a |  səbəsəb-t=íʃì  ààs-tà |
3PL=INTJ  collect°(Amh)-SS=3PL  PROX.M-LOC

dāānà  àn-t'-ǹtà  k'īʂ-t=íʃì |  yīs  gōntʃi
beer  put-PASS-COND  drink-SS=3PL  DIST.M  SIMIL

íʃì-gə-gərì-kǹ  guy-k'à  téé-t=iʃi |
3PL.POSS-PLUR-head-DAT  grassland-IN  go.NV-SS=3PL

íʃì-ʔùmt'à  íʃ=kōōʂ-ō-m |
3PL.POSS-food  3PL=farm-put-IRR

'Well, they gathered and if beer was ordered, they drank here (i.e. on the compound of the traditional leader) and like this they went to their own grasslands and they farmed their food.'

(9) yīs-ka  ta=ń  [ń-woom]¹³
DIST.M-WITH  COP=1PL  1PL.POSS-blessing°

yaafu-k'e-k-ə |
find-remain-REAL-STI

'It has been with this that we found our blessing.'

---

¹³ Text on tape unintelligible (**idata**?).

(10) kōōṣ̄n yīs  há=kòṣ-t-ùb-īs-ee |  tùrētà-kǹ
farm  DIST.M  3MS=farm-PASS-REL-DIST.M-STI  Tureta-DAT

há=kōṣ-t-ā-m-ə |
3MS=farm-PASS-put-IRR-STI

'As for these fields which were farmed, for Tureta would be farmed.'

(11) bádì-kǹ  há=kōṣ-t-ā-m-ə |
Badi-DAT  3MS=farm-PASS-put-IRR-STI

'For Badi would be farmed.'

(12) aybara-kǹ  há=kōṣ-t-ā-m-ə |
Aybara°-DAT  3MS=farm-PASS-put-IRR-STI

'For Aybara would be farmed'

(13) [ás-kǹ  ts'ōōnī  sáánt'à][14]  bàlàbātì
3MS-DAT  top  before  traditional.leader(Amh)

gè-t'-àb-īs  yaab-ù-s-kǹ  há=kōṣ-t-ā-m-ə | (… …)
say-PASS-REL-DIST.M  man-m-PL-DAT  3MS=farm-PASS-put-IRR-STI

'Before the top, they would farm for the people who were called chiefs.'

(14) íírú  kaay-ǹtà |  kàyēēstà  íʃì=dūp-m̄-t=íʃì |
rain  be.not-COND  again  3PL=gather-MIDD-SS=3PL

íírú  kaay=á-k-ə |  ts'yāāts'ù  náta-ra
rain  be.not=3MS-REAL-STI  sun  1PL-ACC

wúṣ-ā-m-ə  íʃì=ge-ǹtà |
kill-put-IRR-STI  3PL=say-COND

'If there was no rain, again they would gather and if they said "There is no rain, the sun will kill us"'

(15) m̄-bèk'ǹ  ky-ǎ-k-ə |
1PL.POSS-spear  exist=3MS-REAL-STI

'We have a spear.'

---

[14] The text on the tape is short and somewhat cryptic: [as-kn anati] : 3MS-DAT summit(Amh). 'Before its top' can either refer to a time, like 'just before the peak of the year' or to the grains for sowing, like 'before the people took the first from their own seeds'.

(16) **bēk'n̄** **gyēbtà** **kōb-kēsū-tə |**
spear    front.yard    take-come.out.CAUS-SS

      **ḿ-bààb-o |**      **ń-ʔàkù-o | (...)¹⁵**
      1PL.POSS-father-STI.ADDR    1PL.POSS-grandfather-STI.ADDR

      'Taking the spear out into the front yard, (saying:) "Our father, our grandfather..." '-

(17) **yīs-a**      **ōs̠kū-tə |**     **ééz**    **kì-ǹtà |**       **tākā**
DIST.M-ACC    call-SS     honey   exist-COND     mead

      **[māt'ū-tə**        **dyāās-tə]¹⁶ |**   **yīs-t=ń**
      ferment-SS         soak.in.water-SS   DIST.M-COP=1PL

      **yòwk'a**    **k'òr-ǹ |**      **én-ást**
      INTJ       beg-DS       later.today-3MS.COP?

      **bērn-ást**       **há=k'yár-á-m-ə |**
      tomorrow-3MS.COP?   3MS=beat-put-IRR-STI

      'We called these (forefather spirits) and if there was honey¹⁷, fermenting and soaking it in water, made beer and well, we begged; later that day, the following day, it would rain.

(18) **nata**    **n̠-gərì-k'əra**      **n̠=òs̠k-ǹtà**    **énà**
1SG      1SG.POSS-head-INCL      1SG=call-COND    later.today

      **á=yēē-k'yán-á-m-ə |**
      3MS=come.NV-beat-put-IRR-STI

      'Even as I called myself, it would rain the same day.'

## Proverbs

Below, four **hamsus** 'proverbs, examples' are given; the fourth is in the Guraferda (Samərta) dialect.

---

¹⁵ The speaker explains that he calls his *myangu*, 'forefather spirits'.

¹⁶ [**dyāās-tə baṭ'baṭ'u-tə**] : soak.in.water-SS beat.a.liquid°(Amh)-SS. Commentary: too much Amharic and the speaker should describe the process correctly.

¹⁷ According to one informant, making honey beer was not facultative but essential for the ritual.

(1)  **door**　　　　**ōrā-tà**　　　　**sàk-ǹ**　**há=byāk'n̄**
elephant　　　　garden-LOC　　　arrive-DS 3MS=speak

**bora-k'à**　　**àʂ-tù-k-ə**
tree.sp-IN　　　plant-PASS-REAL-STI

'An elephant reached the garden; the spear stood in a *bora* tree.'

(Context: used to comment on cowardice. The *bora* tree has soft wood, and a man would plant his spear in strong wood.)

(2)  **ūkā**　**gù-t'-ǹ**　　　**āāp-m̄-s**　　**ás-tà**　**sàw-tə**
uncle　hang-PASS-DS　　nephew-DEF-M　　3MS-LOC　arrive.NV-SS

**ás-kǹ**　**fōrī**　**há=k'òòtʃù-k-ə**
3MS-DAT　throat　3MS=scratch-REAL-STI

'The (maternal) uncle was hanged; the man's sister's son arrived and scratched his throat.'

(Context: spontaneous grief at someone else's misfortune.)

(3)  **gáydú**　**bààb**　**zùnk'ù-ra**　　**há=zīīnà**　　**ààtù-k-ə**
problem　father　goat-ACC　　　3MS=leopard　　hold-REAL-STI

'The leopard caught the goat of a poor man.'

(4)  **kátʃí**　**kob-as**　　　　**kàha**　**baat'-ǹ**
yam　　take-REL.M?　　quietly　turn.away-DS

**há=syanga**　**kob-as**　　**gàytù-t'n-s**
3MS=dried.vines take-REL.M?　hold-PASS-DECL

**há=gè-t'ǹ-s**
3MS=say-PASS-DECL

'The one who took (stole) the yams walked away quietly; the one who took the dried vines was caught, it is said.'

(Context: Someone can use this proverb to declare his innocence when he is falsely accused or reproached because the circumstances speak against him.)

# Appendix B. Alphabet

In 2008, the Bench-Maji Zonal government decided to develop six of the languages spoken within the Zone for the purpose of mothertongue education. Sheko is one of these languages, together with Benchnon, Diizi and three Nilo-Saharan languages.

Before the development of the Sheko alphabet, there were no official written publications in Sheko. Some people wrote informal letters and notes using the Amharic script. Published audio material is restricted to some Christian cassette tapes. The first cassette tape with Sheko songs was released in 2007, entitled *Byargu yeekə* 'The year has come', singer Amanuel Kani Shindu, of the Qorxha Mekane Yesus Betel congregation. This tape was quickly followed by some others from different congregations, of which I have only details on *Nàng s'uuno Yesusəra naas'ə* 'My soul, praise Yesus' by Sintayo Zerkns from the Shashaqa congregation.

The Sheko alphabet, called **S'oku noogu aab**, was drafted in 2009 after a decision was made for Latin script. This script decision meeting took place on 13-14 February 2009 in Sheko town and was attended by more than 250 Sheko from all administrative districts. Six people were then selected by the Sheko wärädä administration to discuss the details of the alphabet and orthography in workshops for the three Omotic languages, facilitated by SIL Ethiopia. The trial version of the Sheko alphabet is presented here, with the corresponding IPA symbols below:

a b ch c' d e ə f g h i k m n o p  q  r s sh s' t ts u w x xh xs  x' y z zh z'  '
a b tʃ  ʈʂ d e ə f g h i k m n o p' k' r s  ʃ  ʂ t ts u w t' tʃ ts' ʈʂ' y z ʒ  ʐ  ʔ

The first booklets in the Sheko orthography were produced by Sheko participants of the workshops and published in September 2009 by the SIL Bench-Maji Zone Language Development and Mothertongue-based Multilingual Education Project, Mizan Teferi. Here is a list:

*Kaari S'oku nooguqa kobtəgnbaab maxsafi*
  (Sheko transition primer, trial edition)

*S'oku noogu maxsafi - dadu kotnsabkn*
   (Sheko book for children, contains short stories and rhymes)
*S'oku noogu maxsafi - dadu iiqnsabkn*
   (Sheko book for teenagers, contains contemporary stories)
*S'oku saayka há bazhaka maxsafi*
   (Sheko stories and practices book, contains some traditional
   stories and some descriptive texts)

The language workers Xərata Aləmu and Agəgnəw Worku, who are appointed by the Sheko wärädä administration, play a large part in starting up the language work in Sheko. Aim is to provide training as well as the necessary materials in Sheko for education up to grade four.

The language workers have written two poems for this book, to celebrate the development of the language with verbal art.

1.    QOY S'OON Ń FOOTƐ

> kookn shadnka daanta kib S'oku yaabonka
> dacha ítira sasku qarnsab bengiqa
> bengs náng təkə azqa ń qaynbab
> náng s'oon qoy antə faadu ń kaysnbab
> unabab qyaastə qarns footutə
> ń dadu tamarstə ń noogu arutə
> wota saanta ń baznbab ń dadukn maakutə
> unaka haaqastaka bazxabara sesutə
> ń noogu ń angusə qoy footutə
>
>   ìtitə há tuurukn gibta fóotnbab
>   S'oku gaydura há gaydu genbab
>   S'oku tosəra há etka maaknbab
>   qoy s'oon ń footə nátas do təkə
>
> faadu ń kesnbab yeshnta daan gibmtə
> ń S'oku noogukn ara atsutə
> ń dadu tamarstə aska xsafutə
> qoysnsab xsafnbab yeshnta tamarstə
> ń aska xuustə S'oku ń noogu təkə
>
> xsafab Agəgnəw Worku

1.    LET US BE ONE HEART

Sheko people in far places and nearby
in the new era which got you there suitably
the year is ours in it we will rise
make our hearts one wipe out hunger
leave the past and become new
teach our children consider our language
in the future what we will do is tellling our children
showing what has been done in the past and now
expand our language becoming one

> who is the one who will be a defence for the land?
> who calls the Sheko problems his problems
> who lends his own voice to Sheko history
> Let us become one heart, it's just us

let's struggle together to remove hunger
let's give thought to the Sheko language and
teach our children and write it
teach because they will write other things
let's get to know it Sheko is our language

writer Agəgnew Worku (translation ACH with AW)

UTI

uti umxa təkə
uti ugn təkə
uti uqu təkə
uti ushta há saskamə
uti...    taamu qeexns təkə
        taafutə tikara kib qemə
        qeexns təkə
        qeex'u samara qemə
uti...    aabka seetə há toosnsəra
        aynərá qemə aas'utə
        arará qemə arara yekn
uti...    s'uun təkə s'ubará qemə
        s'uma tiskukib təkə
        faadura fayxustə
        faaraka dorsukub təkə
utab askn ushn z'arará qemə
utab ugnta bartəb qena kinta oyará qemə
uti uutn zyaama há saskamə
wo uti ishi gekə
        unutə taamura s'oonkn boqa
        uusu byaqn urgn iiru
wo uti ishi gekə wo uti ishi gekə
        ugn gonchi shishqukib
wo uti ishi gekə
        umxa footab s'uunkn
        ura durnstə
        umsutə há umxəra
        há gərikn uusu gorqntə
        koru samutə
        kooru qeexutə
        komtu dadura konqa saskutə
        qanqabaabara konqa qaysutə
        qoy gaamta saskutə
wo uti ishi gekə
        utə utuxə
        utira umə
        utira umsə

    xsafab Xərata Aləmu

2.　　LOVE

love is food
love is salt
love is milk
love helps up who is on the ground
love … is the catching of fire
　　　　will not cool down and extinguish
　　　　is flaming
　　　　will not stop burning
love… watching a relative
　　　　does not envy him, she stands
　　　　does not think, does not assume for you
love… is life, she does not die
　　　　is what quenches thirst
　　　　defeats hunger
　　　　is what sets running on the highway
who loves does not drop the flowers
does not refuse even the one who fell into the rubbish dump
love makes from the poor a next of kin
oh love they say
　　　　ignite the fire in the heart
　　　　spear of the bones, hailstorm
oh love they say
　　　　which is tasty like salt
oh love they say
　　　　which is food for life
　　　　wanting to delight
　　　　feeding its fare
　　　　eating her own bones
　　　　remaining behind empty
　　　　to swallow up bareness
　　　　carrying the king's child on the hip
　　　　lifting who is on the bottom to her hip
　　　　bringing it to the other side
oh love they say
　　　　love and be loved
　　　　eat love
　　　　feed love

writer Xərata Aləmu (translation ACH with AB)

# Appendix C. Wordlist

The wordlist uses the Sheko alphabet as listed in Appendix B.

Part 1: S'oku - Ingliz
Part 2: English - Sheko

Abbreviations:
| | |
|---|---|
| *adj.* | adjective |
| *adv.* | adverb |
| *caus* | causative derivation |
| *dem.* | demonstrative |
| *f.* | feminine gender |
| *H, L* | verb class |
| *loc.* | with locative case |
| *midd* | middle derivation |
| *n.* | noun |
| *num.* | numeral |
| *nvs* | non-velar stem |
| *pass* | passive derivation |
| *pron.* | pronoun |
| *q.* | question word |
| *quant.* | quantifier |
| *v.* | verb |
| *1,2,3,4* | tone |
| > | to be found under |

## S'oku - Ingliz

**aab** *4 n.* 1. eye; 2. fruit **aab bita** face **ǹ-aabka ǹ seekǝ** I saw with my own eyes

**aas** *4 q.* how?

**aas'** *H v.* stand, stop

**aat** *L v.* hold, catch

**absi** *41 adv.* upward

**adi** *33 n.* footprint, footstep **Xkn adiqa** after X

**aft** *L v.* be drunk **aftu baab** drunkard

**an** *H v.* put, do

**anga** *33 quant.* much, very

**angus** *L v.* make big *pass: angux*

**ar** *H v.* think **ara** *41 n* brains, thought **ara an** hope

**asha** *33 n.* debt

**as'** *L v.* plant

**as'ku** *33 n.* meat

**as'u** *33 n.* leg, foot

**atn** *L v.* become used to **atnsi** *n.* exercise

**ats** *L v.* give

**ax'u** *21 n.* tooth

**ay** *L v.* dance

**ayn** *L v.* think much about, worry, be sad, long for **ayna** *33 n.* desire, wish, grief

**az** *4 pron.* he **asa** *42* him

**baab(a)** *31 n.* father **babm** *41* father (term of address) **baabu** *33 n.* male

**baachi** *44 n.* skin

**baadu** *41 n.* younger sibling

**baaka** *21 n.* taro (*Colocasia esculenta*)

**baaku** *41 n.* firestones

**baar** *H v.* take a mouthful

**baara** *33 n.f.* girl teenager, unmarried woman

**baara** *31 num.* hundred

**baarin** *31 n.f.* star

**baas** *L v.* search, want, like **basus** *v caus.* need **nàng há basuskikǝ** It is necessary for me

**baash** *H v.* slaughter

**baaya** *33 n.* lion

**bacha** *33 n.* paternal uncle

**bacha** *21 n.* bed

**bakara** *441 n.* griddle

**bakasha** *331 n.* stool

**bakn** *44 n.* molar tooth

**bambu** *44 n.* grave, pit

**bangar** *H v.* return, answer

**bar** *H v.* become blind

**bar** *L v.* 1.boil, cook (of liquid); 2. throw away, abandon; 3. do completely, finish **ǹ xesbarukǝ** I finished baking

**barka** *33 n.* thigh

**barkay** *331 n.f.* grivet monkey

**barm** *L v.* become adult (girl)

**barxhush** *H v caus.* wash, bathe *pass: barxhux*
**basn** *44 n.* doorstep
**baxa** *33 n.* soft cheese
**baxh** *H v.* voice your anger
**bay** *41 n.f.* mother, female *31* mother (term of address) **bayn** wife
**bazh** *L v.* work, make, do **bazha** *21 n.* work
**ba'** *L v.* carry on the back **kum ba'** embrace
**beg** *L v.* pay
**bengi** *33 n.* year
**besk**, **bes'k** *L v.* divide
**bets** *L v.* leave standing while cutting weed around; put neatly together
**bez** *L v.* grow, sprout out, be produced
**bəndu** *33 n.* clan of potters and hunters
**bii** *33 n.* feather
**biik** *H v.* stop (of rain)
**bitsu** *31 n.* fern
**bokn** *44 n.* day
**bonq** *L v.* burn
**boob** *H v.* speak in your sleep
**boog** *H v.* harvest yam *caus: bosq*
**boor** *H v.* move to another region
**booru** *33 n.* harvested farmland
**boota** *33 n.* dust
**boox** *L v.* paint, rub, smear
**boox'** *H v.* dig up, scrape
**booz** *L v.* stroll, walk, visit
**bora** *21 n.* goiter
**bota** *41 n.* calebash half
**bota** *33 n.* mortar **botn** *L v.* grind in mortar
**bow** *33 n.* stomach, belly **bow annkib** fool **bow kaaf** mislead
**box'a** *21 n.* shelf or sitting place from mud
**boy** *L v.* drive (cattle, vehicle)
**boys** *L v.* wed **boysu** *44 n.* dowry
**buchi** *33 n.* wound

**buc'a** *21 n.* nest
**buda** *31 n.* pumpkin
**buh** *H v.* bark
**bur** *H v.* 1. fly, flow by; 2. ask payment of debt
**bur** *L v.* flood
**bura** *44 n.* waistcloth
**but** *L v.* throw
**buta** *41 loc.* outside
**buuts** *H v.* cut (horizontal movement), clear ground
**byaa** *21 n.* calf
**byaasu** *33 n.* crocodile
**byad** *H v.* be slippery
**byah** *H v.* open
**byaqn** *33 n.* spear
**byarn** *33 adv.* tomorrow

**daab** *L v.* create
**daadu** *33 n.* lightning
**daadu** *13 n.* reciprocal labor
**daag** *L v.* invite *pass: datk*
**daaka** *21 n.* yeast
**daaq** *H v.* taste acid (fruit)
**daam** *L v.* plant sticks for yam
**daan** *H v.* be together
**daana** *31 n.* beer made from grain
**daaxhu** *31 n.* worm
**dacha** *12 adv.* right, correct, straight
**dadu** *33 n.* child **dedns** boy **daygn** girl **dadu kotns** baby, little child **dadu iiqns** teenager
**dafa** *12 ideo.* slowly, careful
**damxhara** *211 n.* ginger
**darq** *L v.* be cut in long pieces
**daya** *21 n.* bow
**da'** *H v.* batter
**deeb** *L v.* 1. bury; 2. beat, strife
**deyna** *21 n.* burial site in forest
**dəwa** *41 n.* python
**dəwa** *33 n.f.* deer
**dich** *L v.* sneeze
**didu** *33 n.* scar
**diiq** *L v.* be anointed, painted *caus: disk* **diiqu** 21 n. ointment, cream, paint

diiqa *31 n.* mute, dumb
diin *4 n.* erosion, landslide
dikn *31 n.* heel
dincha *13 n.* black spotted maize
dinga *13 adv.* round
dinguru *331 n.* viper
dir *L v.* sweep, brush
dod *L v.* be fresh (butter), be young (wood)
dogama *131 n.* dove
donqa *33 n.* (red durra) sorghum
dook *L v.* roast uncooked food on fire
donq *H v.* dip
door *L v.* run
doosha *33 n.* baboon
dooz *L v.* trudge, make slow headway
dori *33 n.* rainbow
duba *41 n.* maggot
dubdus *H v caus.* collect *pass: dubdux, midd: dubm*
dud *H v.* be deaf **dudu baab** deaf
duf *H v.* hit
dufara *331 n.* elephanthiasis
dukn *44 n.* jawbone
duqasha *211 n.* garlic
duqux *Lv pass.* be spoiled by vermin
dum *L v.* hit with fist
dunki *21 n.* basket used for honey
dupqn *31 n.* smal leaf at bottom of ensete
duuq *L v.* sow corn
dyaas *L v.* immerse, soak in water
dyabxsu *33 n.* dung (of cow)

ed *4 n.* mouth, rim (of cup)
eeb *L v.* be blessed (by father)
eed *3 n.* door
eekn *33 n.* cabbage (*Brassica caranata*)
eena *44 n.* wealth, riches **eena baab** rich person
eeri *33 n.* hare, rabbit
eez *4 n.* honey

eeza *21 n.* cat
eg *L v.* do *nvs: ee*
eki *33 n.* cattle, money, resources **eki baab** rich person
ema *21 n.* so-and-so
ena *41 adv.* later today
erfu *44 n.* wild ensete
es *H v.* take honey from a hive
exs *H v.* be sweet

faad *L v.* count **f(y)aadi** *44 n.* number
faad *2 n.* body
faafa *41 n.* honeycomb
faafa *33 n.* papaya
faan *v.* saw
faana *31 n.* fork (in branch, in road)
fadus *L v caus.* make hungry *pass: fadux* **faadu** 41 hunger
fak *L v.* split, be dissected *caus: fakus*
far *H v.* clear ground
fara *33 n.* horse
fay *L v.* be saved, healed
fayx *L v.* be weak, tired
feesh *H v.* spend the day
fer *L v.* blow
fik *H v.* be convenient **fikus** *H v caus.* put in order, prepare, fix
fin *H v.* descend, dismount
fits *L v.* walk, take big step
fooq *H v.* disclose, unlock, open
foot *L v.* become, happen
fora *21 n.* hole (in the ground)
fori *33 n.* throath
fosq *L v.* skin, cut a slice
forxhush *L v caus.* undress *pass: forxhux*
funchu *44 n.* chaff, hulls
funchu *33 n.* honey grates
fur *H v.* slip through, under
furfi *44 n.* storm, hurricane
fus *L v.* finish a period of time
fuur *L v.* trade, buy, sell *pass: furx* 1.be traded; 2.obey **fuurkob** buy **fuurbar** sell
fyaan *L v.* peel

**fyaanu** *44 n.* frog
**fyaaxs** *L v.* shave

**gaachu** *33 n.* teff (*Eragrostis tef*)
**gaam** *H v.* roast
**gaamta** *41 loc.* other side, bank (of river)
**gaan** *L v.* make consenting or encouraging noises
**gaar** *L v.* bear fruit (of grains)
**gaazh** *L v.* bite, itch
**gaazhu** *33 n.* sideboards, whiskers
**gaaz'** *L v.* prune
**gab** *H v.* collect, be gathered
**gab** *L v.* gossip **gaba** *41 n.* gossip
**gaba** *33 n.* market
**gachi** *33 n.* stick
**gad** *L v.* start (something)
**gagi** *41 n.* revenge **gagi baab** enemy
**gama** *12 adv.* truly, really **gamabaab** truth
**gang** *L v.* fly
**ganxsu** *44 n.* noise
**ganxsu** *31 n.* dewlap
**gap** *L v.* roast under hot stones
**gar** *L v.* sing drunkenly
**gara** *33 n.* 1. joke; 2. albino skin
**garga** *33 n.* termite **garga iy** termite hill
**garus** *L v caus.* greet *pass: garux* **garusn** greet each other
**garz'** *L v.* be not cooked well, stay unripe
**gask** *H v.* insult
**gashtu** *41 n.* pig, swine
**gatsn** *L v.* **nàng há gatsnkə** he helped me
**gax'** *L v.* be greedy
**gaydu** *44 n.* problem
**gaz** *L v.* snap, break *midd:* **gazn** snap (spontaneously)
**gazhira** *131 n.* long knife
**ge** *H v.* say
**gebm** *31 q.* how much
**gyabta** *31 n.* front yard

**geen** *L v.* pour with a cup **geeni** *33 n.* gourd with long neck
**geequ** *41 n.* goat
**gees'u** *33 n.* lower back
**geetu** *31 n.* waterpipe
**geex'** *L v.* laugh **geex'u** *31 n.* laughter, **durx'a geex'** smile
**gera** *44 n.* hill, upward slope
**gerbi** *33 n.* armpit
**gəri** *41 n.* head **nàng gəri** my head, **ǹ-gəri** myself, **geriqa** up, above **Xkn gərita** above, more than, greater than X
**gibm** *L v.* wrestle, struggle
**gibu** *41 n.* cloud
**gich** *H v.* lean
**gift** *L v.* boast, brag
**giis'** *L v.* pull, abduct for marriage
**giixs** *L v.* rub (ointment), batter (on millstone)
**giizhu** *41 n.* cheek
**ginginga** *131 n.* milipede
**ginq** *v.* nod off, doze
**girfu** *33 n.* 1. spider; 2. trap
**girm** *L v.* ruminate
**gixs** *L v.* girdle, dress (trousers, skirt)
**gob** *H v.* jump
**gob** *2 n.* welkin **gob saaxsákə** It has dawned, become light
**gofara** *211 n.* toad
**gogu** *33 n.* tortoise
**gona** *31 adv.* yesterday
**gooba** *33 n.* bed of mud
**gooch** *H v.* bite (of snake)
**goof** *L v.* brood (of chicken)
**goom** *H v.* pile, heap, stack
**gooma** *33 n.* someone born in the same month, equal
**goona** *33 n.* beehive half
**goona** *21 n.* mat
**goora** *41 n.* Amhara, north Ethiopian, outsider, stranger
**goorz'n** *44 n.* gullet, throat
**goosu** *33 n.* gourd
**goota** *31 adv.* midnight
**gooxsn** *L v.* be white
**gopara** *331 n.* bark of tree

gorz'u *13 n.* lizard
gotn *L v.* be far, distant
goydu *31 n.* guereza monkey
gozh *H v.* praise
gub *4 n.* chest
gumt *L v.* kneel down
gupm *L v.* be turned upside down
gurxi *33 n.* navel
gushn *44 n.* porcupine
gut *L v.* hang, string up
guuru *44 quant.* only
guy *4 n.* farmland which has to be tilled
guym *L v.* bow down, worship
gyaamu *33 adv.* evening
gyaasu *33 n.* shield
gyadu *33 n.* rope
gyanu *33 n.* coffee (plant, drink) **gyanu aab** coffee beans
gya' *L v.* eat, chew

haak *H v.* pick, gather
haaqasta *411 adv.* now
haara *44 n.* knife
haaz *1 dem. m.* this
haani *11 dem. f.* this
haashu *31 n.* tail
haatu *41 n.* razor
haay *L v.* spend the night
haay *3 n.* water
haay *2 n.* 1. ear; 2. leaf of ensete or yam
hamshu *41 n.* sand
hark *L v.* respect a taboo **harku** *44 n.* taboo
harxh *H v.* rip, tear, break
has'kn *L v.* be wide
hayqa *21 adv.* up
hays *L v.* 1. shut one's mouth, be quiet 2. manage, govern
humxha *41 n.* midrib of ensete

iid *H v.* fetch water
iiq *H v.* be old
iir *see* iid
iiru *44 n.* rain **iiru qyarákə** It rains
iits *L v.* boil (drinks)

iiz' *4 n.* new tubers that form after yam is harvested
in *H v.* go (*alt. of* **təg**)
inchu *41 n.* wood, tree
ins *L v.* be pregnant
ints *L v.* be heavy, difficult
irish *H v.* ululate
irxhush *L v caus.* rub (dry material) *pass: irxhux*
is *L v.* close
isn *33 n.* beehive
ishi *41 pron.* they
iti *44 pron.* you pl.
iti *33 q.* who?
iw *L v.* live, reside
ixh *H v.* bewitch, do evil **iixha baab** witch
iy *3 n.* house
izh *4 pron.* she
izhama *211 n.* hippo

kaaf *L v.* 1. build; 2 add, cover
kaam *H v.* be lit
kaama *44 n.* flame, spark
kaari *21 adv.* toward
kaaru *33 n.* cementary, grave
kaaru *41 n.* canine tooth
kaas *L v.* play **kaasu** *31 n.* game
kaas' *H v.* warm oneself by the fire
kaats *H v.* be ripe *caus:* **kats** cook
kaax *H v.* hoe, dig
kaay *H v.* be absent, lack *caus:* **kays** lose
kaazh *H v.* be happy, glad **kaazha** *41 n.* joy
kabe *32 n.* dream
kabi *44 n.* axe
kabi *21 n.* shoulder
kacha *12 adv.* already, yet
kachi *44 n.* yam (*Dioscorea*)
kada *n.* top part
kadi *31 n.* cactus (*Euphorbia candelabrum*)
kadu *33 num.* three
kafa *21 n.* bird
kaga *44 n?* left

**kamdi** *31 n.* cow which has given birth often
**kant** *H v.* beg milk
**kanta** *31 n.* carrying basket
**kaq** *H v.* suspend, hang up
**kara** *21 n.* leaf
**karb** *L v.* be strong, powerful **karbu** *44 n.* strength
**karm** *33 n.* fence
**karka** *31 n.* forest
**karsi** *44 n.* doll representing deceased person
**kasa** *21 n.* mamba snake
**kask** *H v.* be cheerful, laugh out
**kasn** *44 n.* whiskers
**kashkush** *H v caus.* harvest
**kashu** *44 n.* garbage, dirt
**kat** *v.* gallop
**kawa** *21 n.* fat
**kay** *31 n.* god, idol **kaym** *f.* reddish sun disc
**keec'** *H v.* spin, twist
**kees** *L v.* climb, go out, up
**keexh** *v.* snore
**kengaxha** *441 n.* pipe
**keri** *31 n.* finger
**keru** *33 n.* pelvis
**kesa** *41 n.* thatch, reeds
**ket** *H v.* plaster (with mud)
**keta** *41 quant.* all
**ki** *L v.* be, exist, live **X nàng kiákə** I have X.
**kob** *L v.* take
**kobxh** *H v.* make roofbeams, **kobxha** *41 n.* roofbeam
**koh** *H v.* ripple, murmur (of water)
**komtu** *33 n.* king, chief, traditional leader
**konda** *44 n.* jug
**kongu** *33 n.* wing, fin
**koobu** *33 n.* cock
**koochi** *41 n.f.* mother-in-law
**kooka** *44 n.* lowest point of valley
**kookn** *33 n.* road, path, place
**koon** *v.* prophesy, foretell
**koos** *L v.* divinate, practice traditional customs **koosu** *21 n.* divination, culture, traditional practice, wisdom
**koos'** *L v.* farm, plough, till **kos'n** *33 n.* farm, field
**koot** *H v.* wait, look after **hà-gəri koot** beware!, you are warned
**kooc'** *H v.* 1. vomit; 2. throw a spear
**kooya** *41 n.* bridge
**kor** *H v.* be dry
**koru** *31 adv.* empty
**kos'qn** *31 n.* wedge
**kota** *42 quant.* few, little
**koxa** *31 n.* comb
**koy** *L v.* 1. answer a call; 2. joke with somebody
**koyg** *L v.* bring *nvs koy*
**kubm** *33 num.* four
**kuchi** *41 nf.* chicken, hen
**kuc'u** *44 n.* arm, hand **kuc'u kumu** elbow
**kum** *2 n.* neck
**kums'** *L v.* be pulverized, crumbled (by hand)
**kundus** *L v caus.* push *pass: kundux*
**kur** *L v.* heft, lift up
**kurkns** *L v.* bore, do not interest
**kush** *L v.* be ill, sick
**kuura** *31 n.* donkey
**kuysn** *H v.* drizzle
**kuzhu** *33 n.* cockscomb
**kyaaz** *3 n.* lord, chief
**kyab** *L v.* burn farmland (**guy**)
**kyaka** *31 n.* border
**kyam** *L v.* meet
**kyangar** *H v.* curse
**kyanu** *33 n.* dog
**kyat** *H v.* sting (of bee)
**kyats** *L v.* fell (a tree)

**ma** *4 adv.* earlier today
**maak** *L v.* tell
**maara** *31 n.* beads
**maaru** *21 n.* mercy **maaru qor** repent
**maaya** *21 n.* raincape of grass

**mad** *H v.* deceive **maadi** *33 n.* deceit

**mak** *H v.* measure in cups

**maka** *33 n.* best man, mediator in marriage

**man** *H v.* braid, plait hair **manta** *44 n.* braid

**mar** *H v.* stink, smell bad

**mash** *H v.* 1. be brave; 2. be patient **mashknsh** courageous, patient

**mas'a** *33 n.* spirit

**mati** *41 n.* clay cup (for woman)

**max** *L v.* ferment

**meen** *2 n.* buffalo

**meer** *H v.* be thick, fat

**mixi** *31 n.* chili pepper

**mixn** *L v.* witness

**miznx** *L v.* despise

**mooq** *L v.* break off, destroy

**moy** *21 adv.* quick

**mukmuri** *131 n.* top ensete leaf, still curled up

**mur** *H v.* bear fruit, ripen (of tubers)

**mura** *41 n.* mead

**muru** *44 n.* lower part of yam tuber, corm (ensete bulb)

**mus'a** *41 n.* moss

**mus'qn** *L v.* swim

**muti** *33 n.* cubit, forearm

**muz'** *L v.* shred

**muz'rn** *L v.* melt

**myaaqu** *44 n.* egg

**myangu** *33 n.* forefather spirit

**myas** *H v.* hew, carve

**myawu** *41 n.* jackal

**na** *3 q.* where?

**naanu** *44 n.* elder brother

**naar** *H v.* blow (of wind), make dry **naaru** *33 n.* wind, weather

**naas'** *L v.* praise, thank, honor **naas'i** *44 n.*

**nar** *H v.* dance together (of two persons)

**nas'a** *33 n.* husband

**nàta** *22 pron.* I **nàng** *21* to/for me

**náta** *42 pron.* we **náng** *41* to/for us

**neep** *L v.* be ripe and good (of tubers, pumpkin)

**nefa** *42 adv.* always

**nesha** *13 adv.* firmly

**nexs** *H v.* taste food on your hand

**nibm** *H v.* dew

**niini** *44 n.* elder sister

**nin** *H v.* kiss

**niqn** *L v.* be pulverized

**noki** *33 n.* tonsil

**nong** *L v.* talk **noogu** *41 n.* word, language, matter

**nooxha** *21 n.* leech

**nori** *33 n.* butter

**nunq** *H v.* suck

**nuuxu** *33 n.* 1. wild animal 2. thing, device

**nuuc'u** *31 n.* hyena

**nyaas** *L v.* bear a child

**nyaku** *33 n.* young man, bachelor **nyakn** *L v.* become adult (of man)

**ochi** *44 n.* mushroom

**oc'** *L v.* cough

**om** *H v.* boast

**om** *L v.* be replete, more than satisfied

**oof** *H v.* dress

**oon** *4 n.* plain, flat ground

**oor** *v.* set a snare **oora** *21 n.* snare

**ooru** *33 n.* fish

**ooxh** *H v.* 1. ask; 2. visit **ooxha** *44 n.* question

**or** *L v.* make a sound (of animals)

**or** *H v.* urinate **ooru** *44 n.* urine

**ora** *44 n.* wet dung

**orata** *33 loc.* (in the) garden

**orxhush** *L v caus.* peel (e.g. hairs of taro) *pass: orxhux*

**orq** *L v.* peel banana

**ors'a** *41 n.* cardamom

**os'a** *44 n.* dry dung

**os'k** *L v.* call

oti *31 n.f.* cow *n.m.* cattle
oy *L v.* refuse oysns *L v.* look
down on

peep *H v.* pray peepu *21 n.*
prayer
peexa *31 n.* grass used to thatch
a roof
peezu *21 n.* ring on grass roof
piizi *44 n.* hole as small as a
pinprick
puxha *44 quant.* many, much
purq *L v.* be uprooted, fallen
down

qaab *H v.* pour out
qaam *H v.* bring up (someone
else's) child
qaax' *L v.* stone
qaax'u *41 n.* red army ant
qaaza *41 n.* trap
qabxsi *33 n.* cockroach
qabus *L v caus.* order, command
qabust *L v.* obey
qambu *13 n.* settlement, village
qamu *41 n.* servant, slave
qanda *41 n.* backyard
qapm *44 n.* big gourd holder
qapxs *H v.* cut (e.g. with scissors)
qarns *44 adj.* new, raw (meat)
green (nearly ripe maize)
qarx'u *44 n.* wrist or ankle joint
qəsh *H v.* pluck, break fruit from
stem
qaxi *33 n.* ring
qay *H v.* rise
qed *v.* swear qeda *33 n.* oath
qeeda *41 n.* ring for wearing
things on the head
qeeru *33 n.* door (old style)
qeexs *L v.* 1. be sharp, hot; catch
(of fire) 2. be roasted (of
cooked food)
qeexs *H v.* get iron tool off its
wooden handle
qeex *L v.* swallow, eat (honey),
take medicine
qeex' *H v.* be cold
qeqiri *441 n.* dung (of goat)

qemti *31 n.* co-wife
qenq *v.* ring a bell
qepm *41 n.* peg, nail
qesha *44 n.* handle, ear
qeshk *H v.* stab with finger, hit
with knuckles
qes' *v.* be wonderful, frightening
qiis' *L v.* milk
qiixs *L v.* tie cattle
qiix *L v.* grind dry material on
millstone
qiq *H v.* intertwine
qirq *H v.* bend, curve, twist
qis' *H v.* drink
qof *L v.* estimate, guess
qorq *H v.* see qirq
qooxh *L v.* scratch
qopm *33 n.* eyelash
qor *L v.* beg
qosa *21 n.* basket
qoy *2 num.* one, a certain
qoysns *33 adj.* other, different,
unique, special
qozh *L v.* be strong, hard
qud *L v.* cover qudi *31 n.* lid,
cover
qumu *33 n.* knee
qundi *44 n.* buttocks, bottom
quxs *L v.* cut
qyaaf *H v.* kick
qyaas *H v.* leave, let go,
abandon (an activity)
qyar *H v.* beat

saaku *41 n.* downward slope,
ravine
saanta *41 loc.* in front
saaqu *33 n.* sky
saaxnta *441 adv.* in the morning
saaxs *H v.* dawn
saaya *31 n.* story (for fun)
saba *33 n.* mane
sagn *21 num.* nine
sak *L v.* arrive, reach *nvs: sa,
caus:* sask bring (out), invent,
show the way
sam *L v.* remain
san *2 n.* forehead
san *L v.* be turned, go around

**sar** *H v.* be hot
**seema** *41 n.* tusk
**seh, syah** *H v.* erase, wipe out
**sekiri** *331 n.* wattle, sixth finger
　or toe
**səg** *H v.* see *nvs: see, caus:* **ses**
　show *pass:* **sex** be visible
**siiku** *33 n.* chin
**siip** *L v.* sew **sipm** *33 n.* awl
**siis** *H v.* hear
**sinxu** *41 n.* nose
**sir** *H v.* be dented, cracked
**siskn** *41 n.* scorpion, crab
**sita** *44 n.* sword
**sitsu** *44 n.* hair
**so** *4 adv.* up there
**soq** *L v.* lie down, sleep
**sub** *L v.* be red
**suku** *44 n.* rope (esp. of **humxha**)
**suma** *41 n.* name
**sumini** *131 n.* 25 ct coin
**sunda** *31 n.* 1. bridge of rope 2.
　cloth for carrying children on
　the back
**sutn** *H v.* be sharp, pointy
**syaaf** *L v.* be wet, be rotten
**syaak** *H v.* give birth (of animal)
**syaaru** *33 n.* red soil

**shaad** *H v.* be long, tall
**shaaku** *41 n.* firesticks
**shaaqu** *33 n.* soup
**shaam** *L v.* glitter
**shaan** *H v.* break
**shaanu** *44 n.* hoof
**shaar** *L v.* 1. rob, snatch; 2. sing
　**shaara** *31 n.* song
**shach** *H v.* herd
**shafa** *44 n.* fingernail
**shak** *H v.* weave
**shapk** *v.* be thin
**shapm** *33 n.* bee larvae
**sharux** *L v pass.* be asleep (of
　body part)
**shash** *H v.* wet, make sharp
**sheen** *L v.* be bad
**sheema** *33 n.* clothing
**shenshi** *44 n.* 50 ct coin
**shey** *H v.* forget

**she'i** *33 n.* stone, rock
**shənku** *33 ideo.* quickly
**shəxi** *41 n.* maize
**shəxu** *31 n.* earthworm
**shi** *4 n.* dung (of dog)
**shibar** *H v.* stroke over the head
**shiif** *L v.* add
**shiiru** *33 n.* abundance,
　prosperity
**shima** *31 adv.* day after
　tomorrow
**shiq** *L v.* be short
**shiqu** *31 n.* thorn
**shira** *44 adv.* two days after
　tomorrow
**shishk** *L v.* be delicious, tasty
**shishkn** *41 n.* claw, fingernail
**shishu** *44 n.* side
**shitn** *41 n.* pool, lake
**shənku** *33 ideo.* quickly
**shoota** *44 n.* little filter for
　coffee
**shooy** *L v.* spill (of liquids)
**shor** *L v.* be afraid
**shora** *44 n.* locust
**shorkn** *33 n.* grasshopper
**shurxn** *L v.* shrink

**s'aad** *3 n.* water (well)
　containing minerals
**s'aan** *H v.* peek
**s'aan** *L v.* saw
**s'aap** *H v.* tear off
**s'aar** *L v.* cry (of chicken)
**s'an** *H v.* become bald **s'aana** *41*
　*n.* baldness
**s'əfi** *41 n.* grass or leaf used to
　fan oneself
**s'okn** *L v.* wrap (clothes)
**s'oku** *44 n.* Sheko
**s'ongu** *33 n.* lyre
**s'onqu** *44 n.* lie
**s'oog** *H v.* shove, move aside
**s'oon** *4 n.* heart
**s'oona** *31 n.* booth
**s'oonu** *33 n.* squirrel
**s'oota** *33 n.* coals
**s'ooz'** *4 n.* snake
**s'orxn** *13 n.* lung

**s'os'kn** *L v.* be light, easy
**s'ow** *3 n.* cold
**s'oy** *4 n.* stick, tool for pushing or holding something
**s'ub** *H v.* 1. die; 2. be tender (of meat)
**s'ubu** *33 n.* death
**s'uf** *H v.* smell nicely
**s'ukn** *44 n.* eyebrow
**s'uqa** *31 n.* stiff porridge
**s'um** *H v.* make thirsty
**s'us'ku** *44 n.* weed
**suuqu** *41 n.* handle
**s'uun** *3 nf.* life
**s'u'** *H v.* rest **s'u'a** *41 n.* rest, chapter

**taaf** *H v.* cool down
**taamu** *33 n.* fire
**taashu** *33 n.* skirt of grass
**taazn** *33 n.* trumpet, horn
**taft** *L v.* touch
**taka** *33 n.* mead, beer
**tamu** *44 num.* ten
**tara** *21 n.* 1. wasp; 2. spur
**tarti** *41 n.* butterfly
**techa** *31 n.* hip
**tee** see **təg**
**teema** *31 n.* honey (liquid)
**teer** *L v.* swell
**teresha** *441 n.* coffee pot
**təg** *H v.* go *nvs: tee*
**tig** *L v.* shake, trill *caus: tigus*
**tiim** *L v.* mock
**tiira** *31 n.* shadow
**tiit** *H v.* look, watch, stare, gaze
**tiiti** *33 n.* 1. back; 2. corm cortex of ensete
**tiits** *L v.* dismiss
**tik** *L v.* be extinguished, be quenched (of thirst), be turned off (of light) *caus: tisk*
**tir** *L v.* throw tumblingly
**toga** *44 n.* mud
**tooq** *L v.* thunder
**toopa** *31 n.* stem (of ensete)
**toora** *44 adv.* downhill
**toos'** *L v.* add to water
**toot** *H v.* erect, put on its base

**tooz** *4 n.* relative
**tor** *H v.* plant, stick into the ground
**tora** *31 adv.* open
**tori** *41 n.* three-legged fork
**tosa** *33 n.* story, myth, history
**tubsu** *33 num.* seven
**tucha** *21 n.* upper part of a yam tuber
**tufk** *L v.* collide, bump into
**tukn** *31 n.* hole
**tumba** *33 n.* tobacco
**tuqar** *H v.* spring forth, gush
**tura** *31 n.* skin to decorate an artefact
**tura** *21 n.* rainy season
**tuun** *L v.* lead people
**tuun** *4 n.* spring
**tuuri** *33 n.* tree stump
**tuuru** *41 n.* land, ground, earth, soil **tuurukn gəriqa** (in) the world
**tuusu** *44 n.* pole in the middle of the house
**tuuc'** *L v.* knot, tie **tuuc'u** *31 n.* knot
**tyaaq** *L v.* cut a yam root
**tyaara** *41 n.* gourd half for drinking (for men)
**tyarbu** *33 n.* drum

**uba** *44 n.* see **guy**
**ubs** *L v.* creep (of baby)
**udg** *L v.* become night, darken
**udu** *44 n.* ensete
**ugn** *41 n.* salt
**uka** *33 n.* maternal uncle
**uka** *21 n.* cap, hat
**uqər** *H v.* crow (of cock)
**uqu** *33 n.* milk
**um** *H v.* eat **umxa** *21 n.* food
**un** *L v.* ignite
**una** *41 adv.* in the past, long ago
**underkn** *441 adv.* day before yesterday
**urgn** *41 n.* hail
**us'n** *33 n.* horns
**ushn** *44 n.* flower

**ut** *H v.* love, want **uti** *33 n.* love, will
**utsi** *44 n.* fly
**uc'u** *44 num.* five
**uusu** *41 n.* bone
**uutn** *31 n.* rat
**uzi** *21 n.* firstborn

**woka** *44 adv.* down there  **wota** *41* down there, later
**womfa** *33 n.* canoe
**wonxhi** *44 n.* grass
**woog** *H v.* sit down
**wooq** *H v.* 1. be smooth, soft; 2. be weak, tired; *caus:* **wosq** tire
**woom** *L v.* bless
**woor** *H v.* draw from sheat
**wooxs** *H v.* bite, sting (of bees)
**woozh** *L v.* refuse to ripen
**wopmbe** *212 n.* chameleon
**wor** *L v.* miss the mark
**wos** *L v.* send **wosa** 33 n. message, letter
**woskin** *41 q.* when?
**woshkn** *L v.* move, be in motion
**wumx'** *L v.* rinse your mouth
**wunq** *L v.* steal
**wurbm** *H v.* be turbid
**wurxsu** *44 n.* tadpole
**wusk** *L v.* enter, insert
**wusha** *42 adv.* much
**wus'** *H v.* kill
**wus'k** *L v.* untie
**wut** *H v.* fall
**wuuru** *33 n.* flesh (of fruit)

**xaagn** *33 num.* two
**xara** *41 n.* injera
**xechu** *13 n.* pebble
**xef** *H v.* be plump, fat
**xemsi** *44 n.* stone used to steady a pot on the fire
**xep** *H v.* carry (on shoulder, on head)
**xerk** *L v.* push forward, shove
**xes** *L v.* bake bread, injera
**xip** *L v.* fill up, close,
**xoop** *L v.* be baptised
**xosqn** *L v.* leak

**xos'** *H v.* make a sound of beating with one's fingers
**xur** *L v.* roll up **san xurm** frown
**xuum** *L v.* sheave **xuma** *21 n.* sheaf
**xuum** *4 n.* mountain
**xuus** *L v.* know **xuusi** *33 n.* knowledge
**xyabm** *L v.* be thick
**xyam** *4 n.* breast

**xhaaq** *L v.* have headache
**xhaaru** *41 n.* (stone in) waterfall
**xhaaru** *33 n.* medicine
**xhaaru** *21 n.* twin
**xharku** *33 n.* dew
**xharsh** *L v.* carve
**xhir** *H v.* be fresh, unripe, wet **xhirnsh** *44 adj.* green, unripe
**xhix** *L v.* stretch (muscles)
**xhof** *H v.* drip
**xhor** *H v.* finish, come to an end *caus:* **xhorsh** finish, bring to a close
**xhoy** *H v.* go mad
**xubi** *44 n.* small knife

**xsaar** *L v.* be filtered (of liquid)
**xsah** *H v.* dry, ripen
**xsama** *41 n.* eagle
**xsapm** *33 n.* root
**xsarkn** *H v.* spew, spit far
**xsaw** *L v.* darken, be black
**xserti** *21 n.* rue
**xsezga** *21 n.* udder
**xsiiqn** *41 n.* charcoal
**xsir** *4 n.* clay
**xsirku** *44 n.* diarrhea **xsirku goom** lie, tell untruth
**xsog** *L v.* bear fruit (of banana, ensete)
**xsoqu** *31 n.* infructenscence (ensete)
**xsook** *L v.* pray
**xsooq** *H v.* slap with handpalm, clap, applaud
**xsooni** *33 n.* top, edge
**xsooxs** *H v.* be full
**xsubm** *H v.* be narrow

**xsur** *H v.* throw a spear
**xsuuxs** *H v.* whistle
**xsuxs** *L v.* itch
**xsuykn** *21 n.* firefly
**xsyaaxs** *H v.* tie, imprison
**xsyaaxsu** *31 n.* sun, shunshine
**xsyak** *L v.* be good, preferred
**xsyakn** *33 n.* ashes
**xsyaru** *33 n.* beard
**xsyasn** *L v.* be satisfied, replete

**x'ad** *H v.* 1. pierce, pin 2. stretch one's legs
**x'ad** *L v.* cut off new sprouts of yam
**x'adn** *L v.* fight, war **x'adn** *41 n.* fight, war
**x'amfi** *44 n.* bait
**x'ubu** *44 n.* smoke
**x'ubu** *21 n.* sin
**x'ud** *v.* spit **x'ud** *4 n.* saliva
**x'uumu** *33 n.* fog
**x'uux'u** *31 n.* louse

**yaab** *4 n.* person, man
**yaaf** *H v.* find, meet **yaafenkikə** sorry, I don't know (polite answer to a question)
**yaan** *H v.* plant yam
**yaazu** *33 n.* twig
**yadk** *H v.* stir
**yaku** *33 num.* six
**yamz** *L v.* hurt
**yanq** *H v.* be angry, annoyed
**yarmb** *44 n.* blood **yarbm suku** vein
**yari** *41 n.* sesame
**yatn** *13 n.* fox
**yatsa** *21 n.* flat basket coated in cattle dung, winnowing basket
**yazn** *L v.* reproach
**yee** *see* yəg
**yeef** *L v.* weep, cry, mourn **yeeb** *2 n.* tear, mourning
**yəg** *L v.* come *nvs: yee*
**yehi** *44 n.* sieve
**yengi** *44 n.* firewood, deadwood
**yerotsi** *333 n.* God
**yets** *L v.* win, be victorious

**yeta** *22 pron.* you
**yiinu** *41 n.* intestines
**yiir** *L v.* be less, little
**yiish** *L v.* pull out, dig up, uproot
**yiixs** *H v.* sprinkle
**yip** *H v.* wink
**yira** *41 q.* what **yireshnta** why
**yirsi** *41 n.* thing, artefact
**yis** *3 dem. m.* that
**yini** *31 dem. f.* that
**yitn** *L v.* walk happily, gait

**zaaba** *44 n.* line
**zaara** *33 n.* group, clan
**zama** *41 n.* machete
**zeed** *2 num.* eight
**zeer** *L v.* advise
**zegu** *33 n.* ox
**zerkn** *44 n.* day
**ziina** *31 n.* leopard
**ziipm** *L v.* chase away
**ziit** *L v.* hang, pin on the wall, crucify **ziitu** *21 n.* cross
**zugn** *L v.* be infertile
**zuma** *31 n.* veins or ribs of a plant
**zunku** *31 n.* sheep
**zut** *H v.* trample, step
**zyaama** *31 n.* in-law

**zhaazh** *H v.* be good **zheensh** *41 adj.* good, well
**zhaga** *12 adv.* straight
**zhapm** *L v.* shine **zhapm** *44 n.* lamp
**zhazha** *44 n.* goodness, peace
**zhechush** *L v caus.* flower (of maize)
**zhinga** *41 n.* tendon, hind leg
**zhirbi** *44 n.* cotton
**zhumata** *441 adv.* early morning

**z'aakn** *21 adv.* noon, midday
**z'aaq** *H v.* peel, husk (maize)
**z'ar** *H v.* spill (of grains)
**z'ufi** *21 n.* bat

'yaach *H v.* hide
'yaana *44 n.* pot
'yaatns *adj.* big, great
'yab *3 n.* fodder for cattle
'yam *3 n.* paternal aunt
'yanga *33 n.* ram
'yanxsa *21 n.f.* bee
'yar *H v.* eulogize
'yarb *3 n.* tongue
'yard *L v.* enter, understand
　*caus:* 'yars marry 'yarsusn *n.*
　marriage
'yarkn *21 n.* sweat
'yaxsn *44 n.* moon, month
'yaz *H v.* be able
'yazn *44 n.* right


## English - Sheko

abandon　　　bar L, qyaas
able, be　　　'yaz
above　　　　> gəri, hayqa
absent, be　　kaay
abundance　　shiiru
add　　　　　shiif, toos'
adult　　　　yaab, barm,
　nyakn
advise　　　　zeer
after　　　　> adi
afraid, be　　shor
albino skin　　gara
all　　　　　keta
already　　　kacha
always　　　nefa
Amhara　　　goora
angry, be　　baxh, yanq
animal　　　　nuuxu, eki
ankle　　　　qarx'u
anoint　　　　diiq
answer　　　bangar, koy
ant　　　　　qaax'u
applaud　　　xsooq
arm　　　　　kuc'u, muti
armpit　　　　gerbi
arrive　　　　sak
ashes　　　　xsyakn
ask　　　　　ooxh, bur H

aunt　　　　　'yam, > bay
awl　　　　　> siip
axe　　　　　kabi 44

be　　　　　ki
baboon　　　doosha
baby　　　　> dadu
back　　　　tiiti, gees'u
backyard　　qanda
bad, be　　　sheen
bait　　　　　x'amfi
bake　　　　xes
baptized, be　xoop
bark v.　　　buh
bark of tree　gopara
basket　　　　kanta, dunki,
　qosa, yatsa
bat　　　　　z'ufi
bathe　　　　barxhush
batter　　　　da', giixh
beads　　　　maara
bear child　　nyaas
bear fruit　　gaar, mur, xsog
beard　　　　xsyaru
beat　　　　　deeb, duf, qyar
become　　　foot
bed　　　　　bacha, gooba
bee　　　　　'yanxsa
beehive　　　isn, goona 33
bee larvae　　shapm
beer　　　　　daana, taka
beg　　　　　qor, kant
bend　　　　　qirq
best man　　maka
bewitch　　　ixh
big　　　　　'yaatns
bird　　　　　kafa
birth, give　　nyaas, syaak
bite　　　　　wooxs, gooch,
　gaazh
black, be　　xsaw
bless　　　　eeb, woom
blind, become bar L
blood　　　　yarbm
blow　　　　fer
blunt　　　　gonxa
boast　　　　om H, gift
body　　　　faad 2
boil　　　　　bar, iits

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bone | uusu | cheese | baxa |
| booth | s'oona | chest | gub |
| border | kyaka | chicken | kuchi |
| bore | kurkns | child | dadu |
| bow | daya | chin | siiku |
| bow down | guym | clan | zaara |
| boy | > dadu | claw | shishkn |
| buttocks | qundi | clay | xsir |
| braid | man | clear ground | far, buuts |
| brains | ara | climb | kees |
| brave, be | mash | close | is, xip |
| break | shaan, gaz, | clothing | sheema |
| mooq, harxh, qəsh | | cloud | gibu |
| breast | xyam | coals | s'oota |
| bridge | kooya, sunda | cock | koobu |
| bring | koyg, kob, >sak | cockroach | qabxsi |
| bring up | qaam, angus | coffee | gyanu |
| brood | goof | coffee pot | teresha |
| brother | naanu, baadu | coin | sumini, shenshi |
| buffalo | meen | cold | s'ow |
| build | kaaf | cold, be | qeex' |
| burn | bonq, gaazh, | collect | dubdus, gab |
| kyab | | collide | tufk |
| bury | deeb | comb | koxa, kuzhu |
| butter | noki | come | yəg |
| butterfly | tarti | convenient, be | fik |
| buy | fuur | cook | > kaats, bar |
| | | cool | taaf |
| cabbage | eekn | cotton | zhirbi |
| cactus | kadi | cough | oc' |
| calf | byaa | count | faad L |
| calebash | goosu, bota | cover | kud, kaaf |
| call | os'k | cow | oti, kamdi |
| canoe | womfa | co-wife | qemti |
| cardamom | ors'a | crab | siskn |
| careful | dafa | cream | > diiq |
| caress | shibar | create | daab |
| carry | ba', xep | creep | bud |
| carve | xharsh, myas | crocodile | byaasu |
| cat | eeza | cross | > ziit |
| catch | aat, qeexs L | crow | uqər |
| cattle | oti, eki | crumble | kums' |
| chaff | funchu 44 | cry | yeef, s'aar, or |
| chameleon | wopmbe | cubit | muti |
| chapter | > s'u' | cultural | > koos |
| charcoal | xsiiqn | cup | mati, tyaara |
| chase away | ziipm | curse | kyangar |
| cheek | giizhu | | |
| cheerful, be | kask | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| cut | **quxs, buuts, qapxs, darq, fosq, kaas', muz'rn, tyaaq, x'ad** L | dung | **ora, os'a, qeqiri** |
| | | dusk | **gob** 2 |
| | | dust | **boota** |
| custom | > **koos** | | |
| | | each other | **ank'a** |
| dance | **ay, nar** | eagle | **xsama** |
| darken | **udg, xsaw** | ear | **haay** 2, **qesha** |
| dawn | **gob** 2 | earth | **tuuru** |
| day | **bokn, zerkn, shima, shira, underkn** | earthworm | **shəxu** |
| | | easy, be**s'os'kn** | |
| deaf | **dud** | eat | **um, gya', qeex** |
| death | > **s'ub** | egg | **myaaqu** |
| debt | **asha** (bur H) | eight | **zeed** |
| deceit, deceive | **mad** | elbow | > **kuc'u** |
| deer | **dəwa** | elephant | **door** |
| delicious, be | **shishk** | elephantiasis | **dufara** |
| dented, be | **sir** | embrace | > **ba', garus** |
| descend | **fin** | empty | **koru** |
| despise | **miznx** | encourage | **gaan** |
| dew | **xharku, nibm** | enemy | > **gagi** |
| dewlap | **ganxsu** | ensete | **udu, erfu, muru** |
| diarrhea | **farx'a, xsirku** | enter | **'yard, wusk** |
| die | **s'ub** | erase | **seh** |
| different | **qoysns** | erosion | **diin** |
| difficult, be | **ints** | estimat | **qof** |
| dig | **boox', kaax, yiish** | eulogize | **'yar** |
| | | evening | **gyaama** |
| dip | **donq** | exercise | > **atn** |
| dismiss | **tiits** | exist | **ki** |
| divide | **besk** | eye | **aab** |
| divinate | **koos** | eyebrow | **s'ukn** |
| do | **eg, an, bazh** | eyelash | **qopm** |
| dog | **kyanu** | extinguish | > **tik** |
| donkey | **kuura** | | |
| door | **eed, qeeru** | face | **san,** > **aab** |
| doorstep | **basn** | fall | **wut, purq** |
| dove | **dogama** | false banana | *see* **ensete** |
| downward | **toora** | far, be | **gotn** |
| dowry | **boysu** | farm | **koos'** |
| draw | **woor** | farmland | *see* **field** |
| dream | **kabe** | fat (be) | **kawa, meer, xef** |
| dress | **oof, gixs, an** | father | **baab** |
| drink | **qis'** | feather | **biy** |
| drip | **xhof, kuysn** | fell | **kyats** |
| drive | **boy** | female | **bay** |
| drizzle | **kuysn** | fench | **karm** |
| drunk, be | **aft, gar** | ferment | **max** |
| dry, be | **kor, naar, xsah** | fern | **bitsu** |
| drum | **tyarbu** | fetch water | **iid** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| few | kota | game | > kaas |
| field | booru, guy, | gallop | kat |
|   kos'n | | garbage | kashu |
| fight | x'adn | garden | orata |
| filter | shoota | garlic | duqasha |
| filtered, be | xsaar | gather | gab, haak |
| find | yaaf | get off | fin, qeexs H |
| finger | keri | give | ats |
| fingernail | shafa | girdle | gixs |
| finish | xhor, bar L, fus | girl | > dadu, baara |
| fire | taamu | glitter | shaam |
| firefly | xsuykn | go | təg, in |
| firesticks | shaaku | go out, up | kees |
| firestones | baaku | goat | geequ |
| firewood | yengi | god | yerotsi, kay |
| firmly | nesha | goiter | bora |
| firstborn | uzi | good, be | zhaazh, xsyak |
| fish | ooru | gossip | gab L |
| five | uc'u | gourd | goosu, geeni |
| fix | > fik | govern | hays |
| flame | > kaam | grass | wonxhi, peexa |
| flat | oon | grasshopper | shorkn |
| flesh | as'ku, wuuru | grave | deyna, kaaru |
| flood | bur L | greedy, be | gax' |
| flower | ushn | green | xhiru |
| flower v. | zhechush | greet | garus |
| fly | utsi | griddle | bakara |
| fly v. | gang, bur H | grind | botn, qiix |
| fodder | 'yab | group | zaara |
| fog | x'uumu | grow | bez, > angus |
| forehead | san | guess | qof |
| fork | faana, tori | gullet | goorz'n |
| food | > um | | |
| fool | > bow | hail | urgn |
| foot | as'u | hair | sitsu |
| footprint, | adi | hand | kuc'u |
| forest | karka | handle | suuqu |
| forget | shey | hang | gut, kaq, ziit |
| four | kubm | happen | foot |
| fox | yatn | happy, be | kaazh |
| frightening, be | qes' | hare | eeri |
| frog | fyaanu | harvest | kashkush, boog |
| front, in | saanta | hat | uka 21 |
| front yard | gyabta | have | > ki |
| frown | > xur | he | az |
| fruit | aab | head | gəri |
| full, be | xsooxs, xip | headache | > xhaaq |
| | | heal | >fay |
| | | hear | siis |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| heart | s'oon | | |
| heavy, be | ints | jackal | myawu |
| heel | dikn | jawbone | dukn |
| help | gatsn | joke | gara, koy |
| herd | shach H | joy | > kaazh |
| here | haaz, haani | jug | konda |
| hew | myas | jump | gob |
| hide | 'yaach | | |
| hill | gera, saaku | kick | qyaaf |
| hip | techa | kill | wus' |
| hippo | izhama | king | komtu, kyaaz |
| hit | duf, dum, qeshk | kiss | nin |
| hoe | kaax | knee | qumu |
| hold | aat | kneel | gumt |
| hole | tukn, fora, | knife | haara, xhubi, |
| bambu, piizi | | gazhira | |
| honey | eez, teema | knot | tuuc' |
| honey grates | funchu 33 | know | xuus, > yaaf |
| honey badger | uc'a | knowledge | > xuus |
| honeycomb | faafa 41 | | |
| honor | naas' | lack | kaay |
| hoof | shaanu | lamp | > zhapm |
| hope | ara an | land | tuuru |
| horn | us'n | language | > nong |
| horse | fara | later | ena, > woka |
| hot, be | sar | laugh | geex', kask |
| house | iy | lead | tuun L, boy |
| how? | aas | leader | kyaaz, komtu |
| how much? | gebm | leaf | kara, haay 2, |
| hundred | baara 31 | humxha, mukmuri | |
| hunger | > fadus | leak | xosqn |
| hungry, make | fadus | lean | gich, dooz |
| hurt | yamz | leave | bar, bets, qyaas |
| husband | nas'a | leech | nooxha |
| hyena | nuuc'u | left | kaga |
| | | leg | as'u, zhinga |
| I | nata 22 | leopard | ziina |
| ignite | un, kaam | less, be | yiir |
| ill, be | kush | letter | > wos |
| infertile, be | zugn | lid | > kud |
| infructenscence | xsoqu | lie | s'onqu, >xsirku |
| injera | xara | life | s'uun |
| in-law | zyaama | lift up | kur |
| insert | wusk | light, be | s'os'kn, saaxs |
| insult | gask | lightning | daabu 33 |
| intertwine | qiq | like | baas, ut |
| intestine | yiinu | line | zaaba |
| invite | daag | lit | kaam, un |
| itch | gaazh, xsuxs | live | ki, iw |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| liver | > bow | mother-in-law | koochi |
| lizard | gorz'u | mountain | xuum |
| locust | shora | mourn | yeef |
| long, be | gotn, shaad | mouth | ed |
| look | tiit | mouthful, take a | baar |
| look down on | > oy | move | woshkn, boor |
| lord | kyaaz | much | wusha, puxha |
| lose | > kaay | mud | toga |
| louse | x'uux'u | mushroom | ochi |
| love | ut | mute | diiqa |
| lungs | s'orxn | | |
| lyre | s'ongu | nail | qepm |
| | | name | suma |
| machete | zama | narrow, be | xsubm |
| mad, become | xhoy | navel | gurxi |
| maize | shəxi, dincha | necessary, be | > baas |
| make | bazh, daab | neck | kum |
| man | yaab, > baab | need | > baas |
| mane | saba | nest | buc'a |
| many | puxha | new | qarns |
| market | gaba | night | goota, haay, udg |
| marriage | > 'yard | nine | sagn |
| marry | > 'yard | nod | ginq |
| mat | goona 21 | noise | ganxsu 44 |
| mead | mura | noon | z'aakn |
| measure | mak | nose | sinxu |
| meat | as'ku | now | haaqasta |
| medicine | xhaaru 33, qeex | number | > faad L |
| meet | kyam, yaaf | | |
| melt | muz'rn | oath | > qed |
| mercy | maaru | obey | > fuur, > |
| message | > wos |   qabus | |
| midday | z'aakn | ointment | > diiq |
| midnight | goota | old, be | iiq |
| milipede | ginginga | on | bata |
| milk | qiis', uqu | one | qoy |
| mislead | > bow | only | guuru |
| miss | wor | open | byah, fooq, tora |
| mock | tiim | order | qabus |
| molar | bakn | other | qoysns, gaamta |
| money | eki, | outside | buta |
| monkey | barkay, goydu | ox | zegu |
| month | 'yaxsn | | |
| moon | 'yaxsn | paint | boox, diiq |
| more than | > geri | papaya | faafa 33 |
| moning | zhumata | parch | s'oos' |
| mortar | bota | past | una |
| moss | mus'a | path | kookn |
| mother | bay | patient, be | mash |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| pay | **beg** | rabbit | **eeri** |
| pebble | **xechu** | rain | **iiru** |
| peek | **s'aan** H | rainbow | **dori** |
| peel | **fyaan, orxhush,** | raincape | **maaya** |
| | **orq, z'aaq** | rainy season | **tura** 21 |
| peg | **qepm** | raise | **qaam, angus** |
| pelvis | **keru** | ram | **'yanga** |
| person | **yaab** | rat | **uutn** |
| pick | **haak, qəsh** | ravine | **saaku** |
| pierce | **x'ad** H | raw | **qarns** |
| pig | **gashtu** | razor | **haatu** |
| pile | **goom** | reach | **sak** |
| pipe | **kengaxha** | red, be | **sub, syaaru** |
| place | **kookn** | refuse | **oy** |
| plain | **oon** | relative | **tooz** |
| plant | **as', yaan, tor,** | remain | **sam** |
| | **daam** | remember | **fokka** |
| plaster | **ket** | repair | > **fik** |
| play | **kaas** | repent | > **maaru** |
| plough | **koos'** | reproach | **yazn** |
| pluck | **qəsh** | rest | **s'u'** |
| plump, be | **xef** | return | **bangar** |
| pole | **tuusu** | revenge | **gagi** |
| pool | **shitn** | rich, riches | > **eena,** > **eki** |
| porcupine | **gushn** | right | **'yazn** |
| porridge | **s'uqa** | rim | **ed** |
| pot | **'yaana** | ring | **qaxi, qeeda** |
| pour | **qaab, geen** | ring a bell | **qenq** |
| praise | **gozh, naas', 'yar** | rinse mouth | **wumx'** |
| pray | **peep, xsook** | ripe, be | **kaats, gaar, mur,** |
| pregnant, be | **ins** | | **neep, xsah** |
| prepare | > **fik** | ripple | **koh** |
| prison | > **xsyaaxs** | rise | **qay** |
| problem | **gaydu** | road | **kookn** |
| produce | **bez, bazh,** > **sak** | roast | **gaam, dook,** |
| prophesy | **koon** | | **qeexs** L**, gap, s'oos'** |
| prune | **gaaz'** | rob | **shaar** |
| pulverized, be | **niqn, kums'** | roll | **xer** |
| pumpkin | **buda** | roll up | **xur** |
| push | **kundus** | roofbeam | **kobxha** |
| put | **an, toot** | root | **xsapm** |
| pull | **giis'** | rope | **gyadu, suku** |
| pull out | **bud, yiish** | rotten, be | **syaaf** |
| | | round | **dinga** |
| queen | **gebe** | rub | **giixh, boox,** |
| quench | > **tik** | | **irxhush, shibar** |
| question | > **ooxh** | rue | **xserti** |
| quick | **moy, shənku** | ruminate | **girm** |
| quiet, be | **hays** | run | **door** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| sad, be | ayn | slap | xsooq |
| saliva | x'ud | slaughter | baash |
| salt | ugn | sleep | soq, sharux |
| sand | hamshu | slippery, be | byad |
| satisfied, be | xsyasn, om L | slip | fur |
| saved, be | fay | slow | dafa, dooz |
| saw | faan, s'aan L | skin | baachi, tura 31 |
| say | ge | skirt | taashu |
| scorpion | siskn | sky | saaqu |
| scar | didu | smell | s'uf, mar |
| scrape | boox' | smile | > geex' |
| scratch | qooxh, boox' | smoke | x'ubu 44 |
| search | baas | smooth, be | wooq |
| see | səg | snake | s'ooz', dəwa, |
| sell | fuur | | **dinguru, kasa** |
| send | wos | snap | gaz |
| servant | qamu | snare | oor |
| sesame | yari | sneeze | dich |
| seven | tubsu | snore | keexh |
| sew | siip | so-and-so | ema |
| shadow | tiira | soil | tuuru |
| shake | tig | song | > shaar |
| sharp, be | qeexs L, sutn | sorghum | donqa |
| sharpen | shash | soup | shaaqu |
| shave | fyaaxs | sound | or L, ganxsu |
| she | izh | spark | > kaam |
| sheaf | > xuum | speak | nong, boob |
| sheep | zunku | spear | byaqn |
| shield | gyaasu | special | qoysns |
| shine | xsyaaxs, zhapm | spend day | feesh |
| short, be | shiq | spend night | haay |
| shoulder | kabi 21 | spider | girfu |
| shove | s'oog | spill | shooy, z'ar |
| show | > səg | spin | keec' |
| shred | muz' | spirit | mas'a, myangu |
| shrink | shurxn | spit | xhud, xsarkn |
| sibling | baadu, naanu, | split | fak |
| | **niini** | spoiled, be | duqux |
| side | shishu, gaamta | spring | tuun |
| sideboards | gaazhu | spring forth | tuqar |
| sieve | yehi, shoota | sprinkle | yiixs |
| sin | x'ubu 21 | spur | tara |
| sing | shaar, gar | squirrel | s'oonu |
| sister | niini, baadu | stab | qeshk, x'ad H |
| sit down | woog | stack | goom |
| six | yaku | stand | aas' |
| skin | baachi | star | baarin |
| skin v. | fosq | start | gad |
| | | steal | wunq |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| stem | toopa | termite | garga |
| step | zut, fits | thank | naas' |
| stick | gachi, s'oy | that | yini, yis |
| sting | kyat, wooxs | thatch | kesa, peexa |
| stir | yadk | there | eka, so, woka |
| stone | she'i, xemsi | they | ishi |
| stone v. | qaax' | thick, be | meer, xyabm |
| stool | bakasha | thigh | barka |
| stoop | gabba | thin, be | shapk |
| stop | aas', biik | thing | yirsi, nuuxu |
| storm | furfi | think | ar, ayn |
| story | saaya, tosa | thirst | s'um |
| straight | zhaga | thorn | shiqu |
| stranger | goora | thought | ara |
| strength | > karb | three | kadu |
| stretch | xhix, x'ad H | throath | fori, goorz'n |
| strong, be | karb, qozh | throw away | bar L, xsur |
| struggle | gibm | throw | but, tir, kooc' |
| suck | niqn | thunder | tooq |
| sun | xsyaaxsu, > kay | tie | xsyaaxs, qiixs, |
| swallow | qeex | | tuuc' |
| swear | qed | till | koos' |
| sweat | 'yarkn | tired, be | wooq |
| sweep | dir | top | xsooni |
| sweet, be | shishk, exs | trap | girfu |
| swell | teer | truly, truth | gama |
| swim | mus'qn | toad | gofara |
| swine | gashtu | tobacco | tumba |
| sword | sita | today | ma, ena |
| | | together, be | daan |
| taboo | > hark | tomorrow | byarn |
| tadpole | wurxsu | tongue | 'yarb |
| tail | haashu | tonsil | noki |
| tall, be | shaad | tooth | ax'u, bakn, |
| taro | baaka | | kaaru |
| take | kob, es, qeex | top | tuum, kada, |
| take off | forxhush | tortoise | gogu |
| talk | nong, maak | touch | taft |
| taste | nexs, daaq, | toward | kaari |
| shishk | | trade | fuur |
| tear | yeeb | trample | zut |
| tear v. | harxh, s'aap | trap | qaaza |
| teenager | baara, nyaku, > | tree | inchu, tuuri |
| dadu | | trill | tig |
| teff | gaachu | trouble | gaydu |
| tell | maak | trumpet | taazn |
| ten | tamu | turbid, be | wurbm |
| tender, be | s'ub | turn | san, gupm, |
| tendon | zhinga | | bangar |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| tusk | **seema** | wedge | **kosqn** |
| twig | **yaazu** | weed | **s'us'ku** |
| twin | **xhaaru** 21 | weep | **yeef** |
| twist | **keec'** | wet | **shash** |
| two | **xaagn** | what? | **yira** |
| | | when? | **woskin** |
| udder | **xsezga** | where? | **na** |
| ululate | **irish** | whiskers | **kasn, gaazhu** |
| uncle | **bacha, uka** 33 | whistle | **xsuuxs** |
| understand | **'yard** | white, be | **gooxsn** |
| undress | **forxhush** | who? | **iti** 33 |
| unique | **qoysnsn** | why? | **> yira** |
| unlock | **fooq** | wide, be | **has'kn** |
| unmarried | **baara, nyaku** | wife | **> bay, qemti** |
| unripe | **xhiru, garz',** | wild | **> nuuxu** |
| **woozh** | | win | **yets** |
| untie | **wus'k** | wind | **> naar** |
| up | **hayqa, so** | wing | **kongu** |
| uprooted, be | **purq** | wink | **yip** |
| upward | **absi** | wisdom | **> xuus, > koos** |
| urinate | **or** H | witch | **> ixh** |
| | | witness | **mixn** |
| valley | **kooka** | woman | **bay** |
| vein | **zuma, > yarbm** | wonderful, be | **qes'** |
| vermin | **duqux** | wood | **inchu, yengi** |
| very | **anga** | word | **> nong** |
| village | **qambu** | work | **bazh, bazha,** |
| viper | **dinguru** | **daabu** | |
| visit | **booz, ooxh** | world | **> tuuru** |
| vomit | **kooc'** | worm | **daaxhu, duba** |
| | | worry | **ayn** |
| waistcloth | **bura** | worship | **guym** |
| wait | **koot** | wound | **buchi** |
| walk | **booz, fits, yitn** | wrap | **s'okn** |
| want | **baas, ut** | wrestle | **gibm** |
| war | **x'adn** | wrist | **qarx'u** |
| warm oneself | **kaas', s'okn** | | |
| wash | **barxhush** | yam | **kachi, tucha** |
| wasp | **tara** | year | **bengi** |
| watch | **shach, tiit** | yeast | **daaka** |
| water | **haay** 3, **s'aad** | yesterday | **gona** |
| waterfall | **xhaaru** 41 | yet | **kacha** |
| waterpipe | **geetu** | you | **yeta, iti** 44 |
| wattle | **sekiri** | young, be | **>dadu, dod** |
| we | **nata** 42 | | |
| weak, be | **fayx, wooq** | | |
| wealth | **eena** | | |
| weather | **> naar, saaqu** | | |
| weave | **shak, qiq** | | |

# Samenvatting

(Summary in Dutch. For a summary in English, see section 1.2.4.)

Dit proefschrift beschrijft de grammatica van het Sheko. Het Sheko is een Omotische taal in het zuidwesten van Ethiopië en telt ongeveer 37.500 sprekers. Hoofdstuk een vertelt kort over de geschiedenis en cultuur van de sprekers, en bespreekt de sociale context van het Sheko. Er is tot nog toe zeer weinig geschreven over deze taal. Het proefschrift vergroot de kennis van het Sheko aanzienlijk en kan goed worden gebruikt in vergelijkende onderzoeken.

Hoofdstuk twee behandelt de klanken van de taal en de combinaties waarin ze voorkomen. Bijzonder in de Ethiopische context is de serie retroflexe klanken (waarbij het puntje van de tong omhoog en naar achteren krult). Net als andere Omotische talen heeft het Sheko regel die bepaalt dat alle *s*-achtige klanken in een woordstam op dezelfde plaats in de mond worden gemaakt (sibilantharmonie). Een woord als *sjezen* komt dus niet voor. Verder zijn er lange en korte klinkers en een klinkerachtige nasaal.

Hoofdstuk drie somt alle processen op waardoor klanken veranderen of wegvallen, evenals verdubbelingprocessen, d.w.z. reduplicatie van lettergrepen of klanken.

Hoofdstuk vier bespreekt en illustreert toon. Het Sheko is een toontaal. Een verandering in toonhoogte op een lettergreep leidt dus tot een verandering in betekenis. Dit betekenisverschil kan zowel grammaticaal zijn als lexicaal, d.w.z. op woordniveau. Het Sheko is een van de weinige Afrikaanse talen die vier distinctieve toonhoogtes kent. De vier tonen zijn niet gelijk verdeeld over het lexicon en het beperkte aantal lexicale toonpatronen voor naamwoorden en werkwoorden wijst erop dat de taal vroeger minder dan vier tonen had. Verder heeft het Sheko een dalende intonatie op het eind van sommige vraagzinnen.

Hoofdstuk vijf behandelt de opbouw van zelfstandige naamwoorden. Dit hoofdstuk gaat onder andere in op de verhoudingen tussen bepaaldheid, geslacht en getal. Het

markeren van bepaaldheid ('*de*'/ '*een*') en het markeren van getal (enkelvoud/ meervoud) sluit elkaar uit. Als een zelfstandig naamwoord bepaald wordt gemaakt, wordt tegelijk ook het geslacht aangeduid. Het aanduiden van bepaaldheid en getal is niet verplicht. Een ongemarkeerd woord kan dus ook verwijzen naar iets bepaalds of naar een meervoud. Verder worden afleidingen en samenstellingen van naamwoorden besproken.

Hoofdstuk zes beschrijft persoonlijke voornaamwoorden en reflexiviteit: wederkerende voornaamwoorden (*zich*) zijn in het Sheko identiek aan persoonlijke voornaamwoorden. In het Sheko kan *hij prikt hem* dus of 'hij prikt zich' of 'hij prikt iemand anders' betekenen, waarbij de context duidelijk moet maken welke van de twee bedoeld is.

Hoofdstuk zeven gaat over verschillende andere woordklassen. Aanwijzende voornaamwoorden (*dit, dat*) zijn gemarkeerd voor geslacht. Corresponderende bijwoorden van plaats en richting (*daar*, *daarheen*) maken onderscheid op grond van hoogteverschil. Bijvoeglijke naamwoorden, die van werkwoorden worden afgeleid door de markeerders van bepaaldheid en geslacht, kunnen op grond van hun eigenschappen als een aparte categorie worden beschouwd. Telwoorden, kwantificerende woorden (*alle*) en bijwoorden van tijd en hoedanigheid worden ook behandeld.

Hoofdstuk acht voegt de categorieën ideofoon en tussenwerpsel toe. Anders dan bijvoorbeeld bijvoeglijke naamwoorden, beschrijven ideofonen een gebeurtenis niet zozeer maar roepen de gebeurtenis als het ware op (*rinkeldekinkel*). De meeste ideofonen hebben een karakteristiek, opvallend reduplicatiepatroon. Tussenwerpsels zijn er in drie soorten: expressieve tussenwerpsels weerspiegelen de emoties van de spreker (*nee toch!*), conatieve tussenwerpsels duiden een verzoek aan de luisteraar aan (*hé,…*) en phatische tussenwerpsels dienen om het communicatieproces te starten of soepel te laten verlopen (*ja… m-m…*).

Hoofdstuk negen gaat in op de naamwoordelijke zin. Wanneer een zelfstandig naamwoord wordt voorafgegaan door een ander

(voor)naamwoord, verandert het toonpatroon van het zelfstandig naamwoord. Als er binnen de naamwoordgroep iets volgt op het zelfstandig naamwoord, is er geen tonale verandering. Verder kan een naamwoordgroep gemarkeerd worden voor naamval: de nominatief heeft geen naamvalsuitgang; de accusatief is in een deel van de gevallen gemarkeerd; verder kent het Sheko een datief (*voor, aan*), locatief (*te, in, bij*), inessief (*binnenin*), instrumentalis (*met*), similatief (*zoals*) en motief (geeft grond of beweegreden aan). Er zijn drie genitieve constructies (*mijn vriend, vriend van mij, hij is een vriend voor me*). In constructies met het werkwoord 'zijn' wordt de nadruk gelegd op de bevestiging van de bezitsrelatie. In constructies waarin twee woorden naast elkaar staan (juxtapositie), ligt de nadruk op het geheel (de bezitter), en in constructies met de datief op het woord dat het geheel aanduidt ligt de nadruk op het deel (dat wat wordt bezeten).

Hoofdstuk tien behandelt de vorming van werkwoorden die zelfstandig een zin kunnen vormen, de finale werkwoorden. De werkwoordsvorm eindigt met een stance markeerder, die aanduidt hoe de spreker zich verhoudt tot zijn uitspraak. Een indirecte stance markeerder druk een zekere afstand uit (voor bijv. beleefdheid of rapportage van andermans uitspraken) en een directe stance markeerder drukt het ontbreken van afstand uit. Verder heeft het werkwoord een modaal achtervoegsel, een aspectueel achtervoegsel, een stam en een subjectcliticum, d.w.z. een element dat verwijst naar het onderwerp en dat vrij is om zich behalve aan het werkwoord ook aan andere woorden te hechten.

Modale wijzen zijn onder meer de Realis, die een gebeurtenis presenteert als bevestigd (gebeurd of aan het gebeuren); Irrealis, die wordt gebruikt als de gebeurtenis niet kan worden bevestigd (bijv. bij vermoeden, mogelijkheid, toekomende tijd, gewoonte); Obvious, die een gebeurtenis presenteert als algemeen bekend; Imperatief-jussief, voor bevelen en verzoeken; en de Optatief; voor zegeningen en vervloekingen. Een klein groepje werkwoorden heeft twee stamvormen, waarvan de stam eindigend met een g-klank wordt gebruikt in contexten waarin grotere zekerheid bestaat over het realiseren van de gebeurtenis.

Hoofdstuk elf beschrijft werkwoordsvormen die niet alleen kunnen staan. Mediale werkwoorden vormen vaak een lange keten van deelzinnen met alleen op het eind een zinsdeel met een finaal werkwoord. Mediale vormen bestaan uit een onderwerpscliticum, stam en een zogenaamde switch-reference marker, d.w.z. een achtervoegsel dat aangeeft of het onderwerp in het volgende zinsdeel hetzelfde zal blijven of zal veranderen. Seriële werkwoorden hebben geen switch-reference markering en maar één onderwerpscliticum per seriële constructie. Sommige seriële werkwoorden drukken aspect uit, bijvoorbeeld 'voortdurende' of 'voltooide' handeling.

Verder komen ook in ondergeschikte bijzinnen onzelfstandige werkwoordsvormen voor. Bijzinnen van plaats, tijd en reden zijn gebaseerd op een relatieve werkwoordsvorm, terwijl voorwaardelijke bijzinnen hun eigen markering kennen. Werkwoordscomplementen (heb je gehoord *dat hij komt*?) zijn relatiefvormen, behalve als er een vraagwoord in voorkomt; dan zijn ze gemarkeerd als een voorwaardelijke zin.

Relatiefzinnen (de man *die daar loopt*) zijn interessant, met name omdat ze vaak een anafoor bevatten, d.w.z. een persoonlijk voornaamwoord dat verwijst naar het antecedent (dus krijg je in het Sheko zoiets als: 'de man die ik een boek *aan hem* gaf'). Dit gebeurt zelfs als de relatiefzin vóór het antecedent komt, terwijl anaforen meestal terugverwijzen naar iets dat al genoemd is, in plaats van vooruitverwijzen naar iets dat nog genoemd moet worden.

Hoofdstuk twaalf beschrijft de afleidingen waarmee nieuwe werkwoordstammen worden gevormd: de causatief (*lachen > doen lachen*), de passief (*eten > gegeten worden*) en de middle, die onder andere wordt gebruikt voor wederkerige situaties en in het Sheko vaak met de causatief voorkomt (*slaan > elkaar (doen) slaan*).

Hoofdstuk dertien behandelt vraagzinnen. Het Sheko heeft drie manieren om vraagzinnen te maken. In alle vraagzinnen ontbreekt een modaal achtervoegsel op het werkwoord. In sommige gevallen is dit het enige verschil tussen een stellende en een vragende zin. Ten tweede wordt in sommige vraagzinnen, in het bijzonder ontkennende vraagzinnen, gebruik gemaakt van een dalende intonatie op de laatste

lettergreep. In de derde plaats heeft de stance markeerder, als deze aanwezig is, een andere vorm dan in stellende zinnen.

Hoofdstuk veertien gaat in op de uitdrukking van ontkenning. Naast een negatief koppelwerkwoord 'niet zijn' heeft het Sheko twee werkwoordachtervoegsels die ontkenning aanduiden, waarbij de meestvoorkomende wordt gebruikt voor ontkenning van een gebeurtenis, terwijl de andere lijkt te worden gebruikt voor het ontkennen van een langdurige toestand.

Hoofdstuk vijftien laat zien dat de plaats van het onderwerpscliticum erg flexibel is en correspondeert met de informatiestructuur van de zin. Met andere woorden: het onderwerpscliticum verwijst niet alleen naar het onderwerp maar geeft ook door zijn positie aan welk deel van de zin het belangrijkste is. Dit laatste doen we in het Nederlands met de klemtoon. Wanneer het onderwerpscliticum vooraan het werkwoord staat, heeft de zin een topic-comment structuur, waarbij het hele predikaat (werkwoord, lijdend voorwerp en eventuele andere bepalingen) als informatief wordt beschouwd. Wanneer het onderwerpscliticum direct achter de werkwoordstam wordt geplaatst, ligt de nadruk op de polariteit van het gezegde (vergelijk Nl. *en, hééft hij haar gezoend?* ). Wanneer het onderwerpscliticum na een naamwoordgroep komt, wordt die naamwoordgroep als meest informatief beschouwd (*ik ben gisteren in Katwijk naar de kérk gegaan*). De naamwoordgroep kan echter niet verwijzen naar het onderwerp. Bij nadruk op het onderwerp is het onderwerpscliticum afwezig.

Ten slotte volgen een lijst met referenties en drie bijlagen: een gedeelte met verschillende soorten teksten, een stuk dat kort ingaat op de ontwikkeling van de spelling van het Sheko, met als illustratie twee gedichten, en een woordenlijst Sheko-Engels en Engels-Sheko.

# Curriculum Vitae

Anne-Christie Hellenthal is born on 11 November 1980 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. She attended the Prof. S. Greijdanus comprehensive school, Zwolle, and studied African Languages and Linguistics at Leiden University from 1999 to 2004. For her masters' thesis, she did research on the Konso language (Cushitic). She worked for a short interval on Mao (Nilo-Saharan) for the language development programme of the Benishangul-Gumuz regional government. In 2005, she started describing and analyzing the Sheko language for her Ph.D. as part of the research project "Two modal categories in Omotic languages", under supervision of prof.dr. M. Mous and dr. Azeb Amha, within the endangered languages programme of the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). In total, she made five field trips to Ethiopia to do original research.