



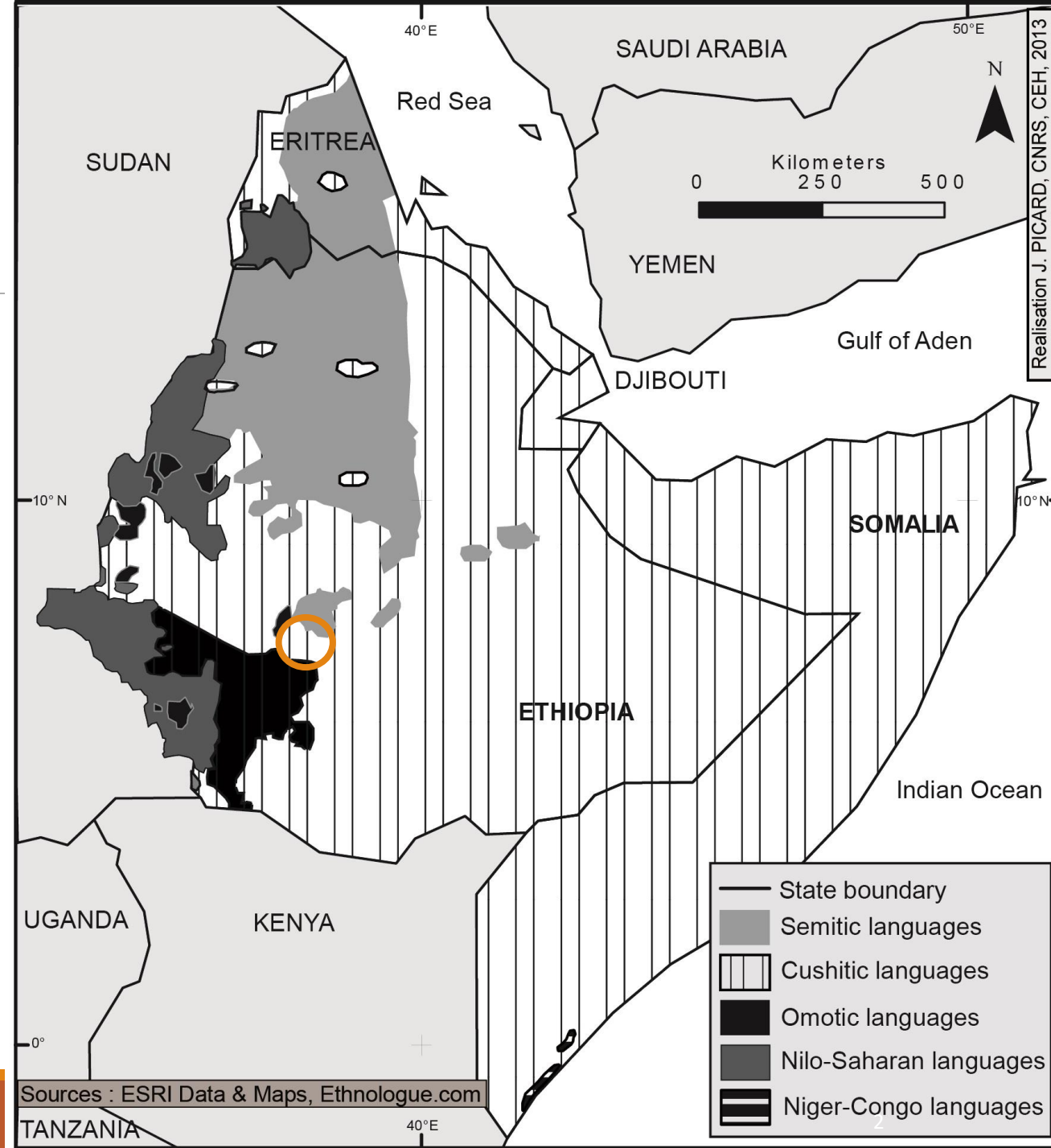
Yvonne Treis
(CNRS-LLACAN)

Kambaata inflectional morphology: Uninflectedness – defectiveness – syncretism

WORKSHOP „UNINFLECTEDNESS“, 45. JAHRESTAGUNG DER DEUTSCHEN GESELLSCHAFT FÜR SPRACHWISSENSCHAFT, UNIVERSITY OF COLOGNE, 7-10 MARCH, 2023

Speaker area

- Classification:
Cushitic > East Cushitic ... >
Highland East Cushitic
- Number of speakers: > 600,000
(acc. to 2007 census)



Kambaata is a language with a lot inflection but no uninflectability

No lexical uninflectability

No constructional uninflectability

Systematic syncretism between individual cells in a paradigm

Only 1 defective verb

Some (unexciting) uninflecting word classes

1. Introduction

GENERAL NOTES ON KAMBAATA'S INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY

Basic characteristics of Kambaata's morphology

- (Almost exclusively) suffixing
- Agglutinating-fusional with many portmanteau morphemes
- Bound roots
 - nouns are minimally marked for case and gender
 - verbs are minimally subject-indexed
- Morphological stress
 - Every word has one prominent syllable
 - Roots and derivational morphology are not specified for stress
 - Stress is introduced by **inflectional** morphology: inflection is minimally realized by a suprafix, but usually by segmental suffix + suprafix
 - Many systematic minimal stress pairs (grammatical minimal pairs!)

Minimal triplet

- *áng-a-nne* (hand-F.NOM-1PL.POSS) ‘our hands’ vs. *ang-á-nne* (hand-F.ACC-1PL.POSS) ‘our hands’ vs. *ang-a-nné* (hand-F.GEN-1PL.POSS) ‘of our hands’
- Feminine declension F1a:
’-a (F.NOM) VS. -á (F.ACC) VS. -a’ (F.GEN)

Inflecting word classes

- **Nouns** (~ 20 declensions/inflection classes)
 - 2 genders: masculine vs. feminine
 - 9 cases: accusative [= citational], nominative, genitive, dative, ablative, locative, instrumental, oblique/vocative, predicative
- **Adjectives**
 - 2 genders: masculine vs. feminine
 - 3 cases: accusative, nominative, oblique
 - agreement with the head noun
- **Pronouns**
 - person, number, gender, honorificity, case
- **Verbs**
 - Subject-indexing
 - Aspect (imperfective, perfective, progressive, perfect)
 - Mood (indicative, imperative, jussive/benedictive, apprehensive)
 - Polarity
 - Dependency status (main verb vs. converb vs. relative verb)
 - Negative relative verbs index their subjects and agree with their head nouns in case and gender
 - ...

Almost everything inflects

- (1) *Aador-á* *úl-t* *tíg-unta*
rock-M.ACC touch-2SG.PFV.CVB tumble_down-3M.PURP.DS
áabb-a, *eeb-bókkoot* *reh-úta*
son-M.OBL bring-2SG.APPR death-F.ACC

‘(Watch out!) When you touch the rocks and cause a landslide, (my) son, you might bring death!’

(Genre: *qaanqúta* ‘double entendre’ with alliteration and rhyme, Alemu Banta, pers. comm., 2019; unusual word order due to the artistic genre)

No uninflectability? Did I look hard enough?

Nouns:

- Proper nouns
- Loanwords
- Loan proper nouns
- Letters
- Acronyms etc.
- ... are perfectly integrated into the case/gender system

Nouns

- The final vowel of borrowed common nouns is interpreted as an ACCUSATIVE or VOCATIVE suffix, e.g.
 - (Ital. >) Amh. *b^wamb^wa* ‘water pipe’ > Ktb. *boomb-á* (M.ACC) and hence *boomb-í* (M.GEN), *boomb-ín* (M.ICP) etc.
 - (Fr. >) Amh. *biro* ‘office’ > Ktb. *biir-o* (F.VOC) > backformation: *biir-úta* (F.ACC)
 - Amh. *baläge[:]* ‘ill-mannered person’ > Ktb. *baalag-ée* (F.VOC) > backformation: *baalag-éeta* (F.ACC)
- Consonant-ending borrowed common nouns receive a DEFAULT ACCUSATIVE ending *-á**, e.g.
 - Amh. *hakim* ‘doctor’ > Ktb. *haakiim-á* (M.ACC), *haakiim-í* (M.GEN) as in *haakiim-í min-í* ‘hospital (lit. doctor’s house)’
- Consonant-ending borrowed proper nouns are interpreted as NOMINATIVE, reason: nominative of one of the proper nouns declensions ends in C on the surface (underlying unaccented suffix *-i*)
 - e.g. <Yvonne> /i'vɔn/
 - Ibón* (F.NOM) > backformation: *Ibon-é* (F.ACC) > *Ibon-ée* (F.DAT), *Ibon-éechch* (F.ABL), *Ibon-éen* (F.ICP) etc.

*ending of the largest masculine declension

Verbs

- Loan verbs from Amharic (templatic morphology!) always take Kambaata inflection
- Perfective stem of Amharic verbs is interpreted as the base
 - e.g. Amh. *azzäzä* order\PFV.3M > Ktb. *azzaz-áamm* order-1SG.IPFV ‘I order’
- Loan verbs also undergo the regular morphophonological rules, e.g. gemination and palatalisation in the perfective
 - e.g. *azzaz-* ‘order’ > *azzázhzho* /az:az:o/ order.3M.PFV ‘he ordered’
- No uninflectable verbs in Kambaata

2. Uninflectedness

UNINFLECTING WORD CLASSES: INTERJECTIONS, IDEOPHONES ...

Uninflecting word classes

- Some discourse particles
- 2 conjunctions: *té* ‘or’ and *bagáan* ‘but’
- A handful of adverbs: *léelan* ‘carefully, slowly’, *dángo* ‘unexpectedly’ ...
- Interjections

(2) *Hashshú*, *góon-ch-u-ta*, *abb-ishsh* *galaxx-áan-ke*.
yay.INTJ males-SGV-F.PRED-F.COP2 exceed-CAUS1.1SG.PFV.CVB thank-1SG.IPFV-2SG.OBJ
Y-itoontí=r-a *gu'mm-ánka* *ekkú!*
say-2SG.PFV.REL=NMZ4-M.ACC all-M.ACC<EMP> okay.INTJ

‘Yay, you are a hero! I thank you very much. Okay to all what you said.’ (SMS exchange 2019, BN)

Uninflecting word classes (II)

- Ideophones (~ 850 entries in Alemu 2016):
 - morphologically invariant + must be combined with *y-* ‘say’ (intransitive clauses) and *a’-* ‘do’ (transitive clauses) to be inflected

(3) *mikk.mill*=*y-itu’nmáachch* *címm*=*y-ít*
budge.IDEO=say-3F.NEG4.CVB shrink.IDEO=say-3F.PFV.CVB
afuu’ll-ít, *ill-í-se* *al-í,* *muggeem-á,*
sit_down-3F.PFV.CVB eye-F.ACC-3F.POSS up-M.ACC down-M.ACC
gur-áta, *makk-íta* *bolóng~bolóng*=*at-táa’*,
left-F.ACC right-F.ACC RED~move_one’s_eyes.IDEO=DO-3F.IPFV
tah-íchch-u *waal-anó=g-a* *zug-gán.*
flies-SGV-M.NOM come-3F.IPFV.REL=SIM-M.ACC lie_in_ambush-3F.PFV.CVB

(Speaking about a chameleon:) ‘It (lit. she) sat (there) stock-still, shrunk, (and only) moved its eyes up, down, to the left, to the right, (while) lying in ambush for a fly.’ (TD2016-02-11_001)

Uninflecting word classes (III)

- Ideophones are not used isolation – except sometimes in artistic speech: riddles, poetry

(4) *Cuph-á* *dúbb,* *can-á* *wiqq*
pestle-M.ACC pound.IDEO leather_bag-M.ACC tie_tightly.IDEO

(Riddle) ‘A pestle – to pound, a leather bag (filled with air) – to tie up.’ (Desalegn 2020: 111; transcription, glossing and translation adapted; solution of the riddle unknown)

Uninflecting word classes (IV)

- Ideophones (+ *y*- ‘say’/*a*’- ‘do’) are syntactically indistinguishable from verbs
- Verbal concepts are arbitrarily distributed across the word classes of verbs (2/3) and ideophones (1/3 of the verbal lexicon)
- One could, therefore, analyse ideophones as **uninflectable** verbs (cf. Treis submitted)

- (5) *búrr*=*y*- ‘fly’ (IDEO) vs. *dagud*- ‘run’ (VERB)
cál~*cál*=*y*- ‘hang (vi) freely’ (IDEO) vs. *olaal*- ‘hang (vi) freely; lean (e.g. of a tree about to fall)’ (VERB)
dákk=*a*’- ‘hide, conceal (sth.)’ (IDEO) vs. *maax*- ‘hide, conceal (sth.)’ (VERB)
xóqq=*y*- ‘rise, get up’ (IDEO) vs. *uurrr*- ‘stand (up); stop’ or *ke*’- ‘rise, get up; start’ (VERB)

3. Defectiveness

DEFECTIVE EXISTENTIAL VERB

Overview of Kambaata verbal pardigms

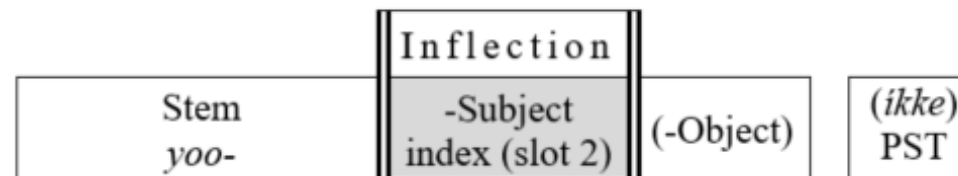
		Affirmative	Negative
Main verbs	Indicative	Imperfective	Negative imperfective
		Perfective	Negative non-imperfective
		Perfect	
		Progressive	
	Directive	Imperative	Negative imperative
		Jussive	Negative jussive
		Benedictive	
Apprehensive		—	
Subordinate verbs	Relative	Imperfective	Negative relative
		Perfective	
		Perfect	
		Progressive	
	Converb	Perfective(-DS)	Negative converb
		Imperfective(-DS)	
		ss Purposive	—
		DS Purposive	—
Non-finite	Verbal noun	—	

See Treis (forthc.) on affirmative-negative syncretism

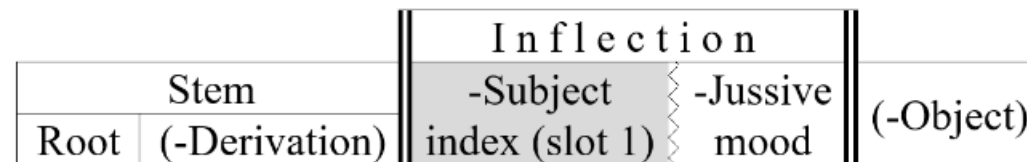
Defective verb: *yoo-* ‘exist’

	<i>yoo-</i> ‘exist’
1SG = 1PL	<i>yóo-m(m)</i>
2SG	<i>yóo-nt</i>
3M = 3F/PL	<i>yóo-(’u)</i>
3HON	<i>yóo-mma</i>
2PL/HON	<i>yóo-nta</i>

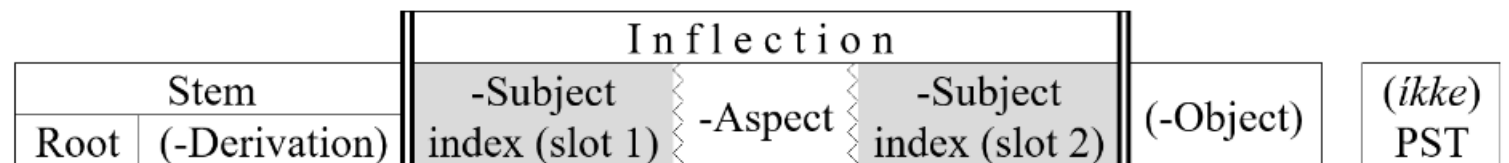
Morphological structure of existential main verb



Morphological structure of, e.g., jussive main verb



Morphological structure of (affirmative) indicative main verb

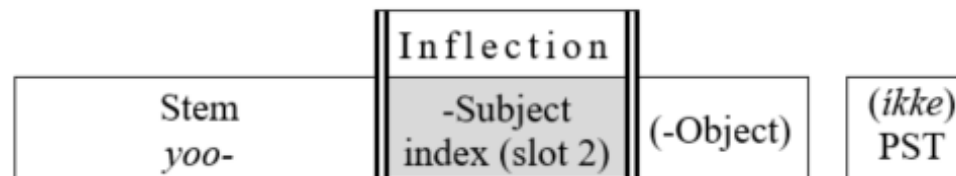


NB: bracketed elements are not always realized

Defective verb: *yoo-* ‘exist’

	<i>yoo-</i> ‘exist’
1SG = 1PL	<i>yóo-m(m)</i>
2SG	<i>yóo-nt</i>
3M = 3F/PL	<i>yóo-(’u)</i>
3HON	<i>yóo-mma</i>
2PL/HON	<i>yóo-nta</i>

Morphological structure of existential main verb



- Existential: aspectually neutral
- One a single paradigm
- If overt marking of aspect or mood is needed: use of fully inflecting substitute verb *he'*- ‘live’

Defective verb: *yoo-* ‘exist’

- Aspectually unmarked *yoo-* ‘exist’

(6) *esáa* *mát-u* *shárb-u* *yóo-’e*
1SG.DAT one-M.NOM scarf-M.NOM exist.3-1SG.OBJ
‘I have one scarf.’

- Perfect aspect (in irrealis conditional clause) > only possible with *he’-* ‘live’

(7) (...) *esáa* *mát-u* *shárb-u* *hé’-ee-’e* *ikkeeráan* (...)
1SG.DAT one-M.NOM scarf-M.NOM live-3M.PRF-1SG.OBJ IRR
‘If I had one scarf,’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)

4. Systematic syncretism

Types of syncretism

- Case syncretism
 - most systematic: locative = instrumental for feminine nouns
 - certain syncretic patterns restricted to individual declensions: oblique = predicative, genitive = dative, accusative = genitive, rarest: accusative = nominative
- Neutralisation of aspectual and modal distinctions in the negation
- Syncretism in the subject-indexing system
 - 9 independent pronouns
 - 7 forms in most main verbs
 - 5 forms in subordinate verbs

PERSONAL PRONOUNS	INDICATIVE MAIN VERB	CONVERB
1SG	1SG	1SG=3M
3M	3M	
2SG	2SG	2SG=3F=3PL
3F	3F=3PL	
3PL		
3HON	3HON	3HON
1PL	1PL	1PL
2HON	2PL=2HON	2PL=2HON
2PL		

Perfect-perfective syncretism

- Perfect(ive) paradigms (excerpt; 3HON, 1PL AND 2PL not given)

		Endings of the perfective	
1SG	after C	(PAL/GEM)	-óom(m)
	after CC		-éem(m)
2SG			-tóont
3M	after C	(PAL/GEM)	'-o
	after CC		-ée('u)
3F/PL			-tóo('u)
...			

<i>mar-</i> 'go'	<i>mass-</i> 'send'
<i>marr-óomm</i>	—
—	<i>mass-éemm</i>
<i>mar-tóont</i>	<i>mass-itóont</i>
<i>márr-o</i>	—
—	<i>mass-ée'u</i>
<i>mar-tóo'u</i>	<i>mass-itóo'u</i>

		Endings of the perfect	
1SG	after C	(PAL/GEM)	'-eem(m)
	after CC		-éem(m)
2SG			'-teent
3M	after C	(PAL/GEM)	'-ee('u)
	after CC		-ée('u)
3F/PL			'-tee('u)
...			

<i>mar-</i> 'go'	<i>mass-</i> 'send'
<i>márr-eemm</i>	—
—	<i>mass-éemm</i>
<i>már-teent</i>	<i>mass-íteent</i>
<i>márr-ee'u</i>	—
—	<i>mass-ée'u</i>
<i>már-tee'u</i>	<i>mass-ítee'u</i>

Perfect-perfective syncretism

- Perfect(ive) paradigms (excerpt; 3HON, 1PL AND 2PL not given)

		Endings of the perfective	
1SG	after C	(PAL/GEM)	-óom(m)
	after CC		-éem(m)
2SG			-tóont
3M	after C	(PAL/GEM)	'-o
	after CC		-ée('u)
3F/PL			-tóo('u)
...			

<i>mar-</i> 'go'	<i>mass-</i> 'send'
<i>marr-óomm</i>	—
—	<i>mass-éemm</i>
<i>mar-tóont</i>	<i>mass-itóont</i>
<i>márr-o</i>	—
—	<i>mass-ée'u</i>
<i>mar-tóo'u</i>	<i>mass-itóo'u</i>

		Endings of the perfect	
1SG	after C	(PAL/GEM)	'-eem(m)
	after CC		-éem(m)
2SG			'-teent
3M	after C	(PAL/GEM)	'-ee('u)
	after CC		-ée('u)
3F/PL			'-tee('u)
...			

<i>mar-</i> 'go'	<i>mass-</i> 'send'
<i>márr-eemm</i>	—
—	<i>mass-éemm</i>
<i>már-teent</i>	<i>mass-iteent</i>
<i>márr-ee'u</i>	—
—	<i>mass-ée'u</i>
<i>már-tee'u</i>	<i>mass-itee'u</i>

The two most common forms of the perfective and perfect are indistinguishable

'I sent' = 'I have sent'
'he sent' = 'he has sent'

Perfect-perfective syncretism

- The distinction between the perfect and the perfective (re-)emerges in the **relative** forms
- Relative **suprafix** in the perfective (but not the perfect) that overrides the stress pattern of the perfective

(8) *mass-éemm/i/*
send-1SG.PRF/PFV
'I have sent / I sent' [Perfect = Perfective]

(9) *mass-éemmi* N vs. *mass-eemmi* N
send-1SG.PRF.REL send-1SG.PFV.REL
'the N which I have sent' 'the N which I sent'

Perfect-perfective syncretism

- The distinction between the perfect and perfective (re-)emerges in **relative verb forms with objects**

(10) *mass-ée'u*
send-3M.PRF/PFV

'He has sent / he sent' [Perfect = Perfective]

(11) *mass-ée* N
send-3M.PRF/PFV.REL

'the N which he has sent / he sent' [Perfect = Perfective]

(12)	<i>mass-ée-'e</i>	N	vs.	<i>mass-ee-'é</i>	N
	send-3M.PRF.REL-1SG.OBJ			send-3M.PFV.REL-1SG.OBJ	
	'the N which he has sent for me'			'the N which he sent for me'	
	[Perfect]		≠	[Perfective]	

6. Summary

Summary

- No lexical or constructional uninflectability
- Uninflecting word classes: conjunctions (2 members overall), adverbs (~ 5 members overall), discourse markers, interjections and ideophones
 - But: ideophones could be analysed as uninflectable verbs
- Defective existential verb
- All nouns and adjectives inflect without exception but instances of systematic case syncretism
- All verbs inflect without exception but cases of systematic syncretism, e.g. in the subject-indexing system, under negation, between perfect and perfective in 1SG and 3M

References

Alemu Banta Atara [Alamu Banta Ataara]. 2016. *Kookaata: Kambaatissa-Amaarsa-Ingiliizissa laaga doonnuta* [Kambaata-Amharic-English dictionary]. Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing.

Desalegn Haile Arficho. 2020. *Ideophones in Kambaata*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University (PhD dissertation).

Treis, Yvonne. forthcoming. Negation in Kambaata. In Matti Miestamo & Ljuba Veselinova (eds.), *Negation in the languages of the world* (Research on Comparative Grammar). Berlin: Language Science Press.

Treis, Yvonne. submitted. Ideophones in Kambaata (Cushitic): Grammar, meaning and use. *Linguistic Typology at the Crossroads*.

Orthography and abbreviations

- Kambaata official orthography:

- Following graphemes not in accordance with IPA conventions: $ph = /pʰ/$, $x = /tʰ/$, $q = /kʰ/$, $j = /dʒ/$, $c = /tʃ/$, $ch = /tʃ/$, $sh = /ʃ/$, $y = /j/$ and $' = /ʔ/$
- Gemination and long vowels marked by doubling: e.g. $shsh = /ʃ:/$, $ee = /e:/$, nasalization: $\bar{a} = /ã/$

- Abbreviations

- ABL ablative, ACC accusative, APPR apprehensive, CAUS causative, COP copula, CVB converb, DAT dative, DS different subject, EMP emphasis, F feminine, GEM gemination, GEN genitive, HON honorific, ICP instrumental-comitative-perlative, IDEO ideophone, INTJ interjection, IPFV imperfective, IRR irrealis, NMZ nominalizer, NOM nominative, OBJ object, OBL oblique, PAL palatalization, PFV perfective, PL plural, POSS possessive, PRED predicative, PRF perfect, PURP purposive, RED reduplication, REL relative, SGV singulative, SIM simulative, SS same subject, VOC vocative