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# Negation and the expression of phasal polarity in Kambaata

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: THE EXPRESSION OF PHASAL POLARITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN LANGUAGES, 2-4 FEB 2018, U HAMBURG

# Introduction

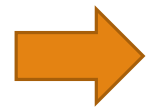
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- My first observation: There are hardly any phasal polarity expressions in my translations of recorded Kambaata sentences.
- My English-speaking Kambaata consultants do not seem to master the use of English *still, no longer, already, not yet* – maybe because there is no one-to-one equivalent in their native language?
- Challenge: Does Kambaata have function words and/or phrasal means to convey the idea of phasal polarity (and that I have overlooked so far)?

# Introduction

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Where to start looking for the expression of PhP in a language that has probably not grammaticalised PhP? (Because if it had, I should have noticed after so many years...)



Translational equivalents in texts SAE > Kambaata

- Little Prince (Saint-Exupéry [transl. by Deginet & Treis] 2008)
- Biblical texts (Gospel of John) – but: probably translated from Amharic

# Structure of this talk

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- 1. Introduction into Kambaata
- 2. Overview of the negation system
- 3. *kas-* ‘have (n)ever V-ed (once)’
- 4. Translational equivalents of phasal polarity expressions

# 2: Some background on Kambaata

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CLASSIFICATION, SPEAKER AREA, TYPOLOGICAL PROFILE ...


# Background on Kambaata I

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- Afro-Asiatic > Cushitic > ... > Highland East Cushitic
- Speaker Area: Southwest Ethiopia
- Number of speakers: > 600,000 (acc. to 2007 census)
- Official orthography (follows the Oromo *Qubee*)
- In the last 3 years: Concerted efforts to increase the number of local Kambaata publications

# Background on Kambaata II

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- **Exclusively suffixing**, agglutinating-fusional (many portmanteau morphemes)
- Head- and dependent-marking: elaborate case system + subject indexing on verbs
- **Strict head-finality**: dependent clauses before main clauses; main verb or copula = last constituent in a sentence; all modifiers before head noun
- Stress-accent language: no lexical, only grammatical minimal pairs
- Parts of speech: 4 sets with open membership (nouns, verbs, adjectives, ideophones); several closed sets; negligible word class: **adverbs**   
instead: case-marked nouns and adjectives; converbs



# Background on Kambaata III

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- Nouns are always marked for gender (m vs. f) and case
  - ACC, NOM, GEN, DAT, ABL, ICP, LOC, OBL/VOC, PRED
- Fully finite main verbs/final verbs marked for
  - Subject indexes
  - Aspect (imperfective, perfective, perfect, progressive) / Mood (imperative, jussive, apprehensive)
  - Polarity
- Subordinate verbs with a decreased inflectional potential
  - Relative verbs
  - Converbs (but: switch-reference marking)
  - Verbal nouns

# 3: Negation system

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INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES, (A)SYMMETRY, MORPHOLOGICAL SLOTS

# Negative inflectional morphemes

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## 5 inflectional negation morphemes

- *-ba'a*: Standard negation – Negation of **declarative main verbs** (imperfective, perfective, perfect, progressive), **existential verb *yoo-*** and **non-verbal predicates**
- *-oot*: Negator of **imperatives**
- *-ka*: Negator of **jussives** (= directive verb forms 1<sup>st</sup> + 3<sup>rd</sup> person)
- *-u'nn(a)*: Negator of **converbs**
- *-(um)b*: Negator of **relative verbs** (and all relative-based subordinate verb forms)

# Negative inflectional morpheme: Slot

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Negative imperfective main verbs:

Root-	(Derivation)	-Subject1	-Aspect	-Subject2	(-Object)	<b>-Negation</b>	(-X)
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Other negative main verbs and negative converbs:

Root-	(Derivation)	-Subject1	-Aspect/ -Mood/ -Converb	<b>-Negation</b>	(-Object)	(-X)
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Negative relative verbs:

Root-	(Derivation)	-Subject1	-Aspect	<b>-Negation</b>	-Case	-Gender	(-Object)	(-X)
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X = pragmatically determined discourse morphemes; coordinative; additive; subordinating morphemes

# Standard negation

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- *-ba'a*:

Imperfective: totally symmetrical affirmative-negative paradigm

e.g. *dag-gáant*[<sup>i</sup>] find-2sIPV 'you find'| > *dag-gáanti-ba'a* 'you don't find'

(2) (...) *dikk-ú-s*                      *zahh-íteent*                      *ikkí-i*  
market-fACC-DEF                      wander-2fPRF                      HYP-ADD

*kank-á*                      *xe'-anó*                      *burtukaan-ú*                      *dag-gáanti-ba'a*  
EQ1\_A\_DEM-mACC                      be\_sweet-3mIPV.REL                      orange-mACC                      find-2sIPV-NEG

'(...) even if you trawled the market, you would not find oranges this sweet.'

(Fn\_2014-12-24\_Dialogue)

# Standard negation

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- *-ba'a*:

Non-verbal predicate: symmetrical affirmative-negative forms

(3)    *hittiin*                      *ii-taa*                      *lúus-a(-ba'a)*  
P\_DEM1.fNOM    1sGEN-fCOP2    fault-fPRED(-NEG)

'This is (not) my fault.'

|

## 4. *Kása* ‘ever?’ – *kása-ba’a* ‘never!’

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A PHASAL POLARITY-GRAMMEME?

# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

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Construction: perfective converb + *kása(-ba’a)* = ‘have (n)ever V-ed (once)’

(4) A: *Kám* *wacyy-áno!*  
put\_away.2sIMP probably\_not-3mIPV

*Át* *Duuball-í* *min-í* *már-t* *kása-ndo?*  
2sNOM PN-mGEN house-mACC go-2sPCO ever-Q

A: ‘Come on, I doubt that! Have you **ever** been to Duuballa’s house?’

B: *Márr* *kása-ba’a* *gagás.* *Ikkodáa ...*  
go.1sPCO ever-NEG in\_fact but

B: ‘I have in fact **never** been (there). But ...’ (Comparison\_dialogue\_2014-12-10f)



# Kása 'ever?' – kása-ba'a 'never!'

- Converbs: (co-)subordinate non-final verbs, reduced in finiteness

**Márr**

*kása-ba'a.*

go.1sPCO ever-NEG

'I have **never** gone (there).'

- **Perfective converbs:** semantic relation to superordinate verb vague
- [Imperfective converbs: temporal simultaneity
- Negative converbs
- Purposive converbs]

			Perfective
1s	3m		'(GEM/PAL)-Ø ~ -Ø-í
2s	3f	3p	'-t
3hon			-één
1p			'-n
2p	2hon		-téén

# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

**Márr**      *kása-ba’a*.  
 go-1sPCO ever-NEG  
 ‘I have **never** gone (there).’

**Már-t**      *kása-ba’a*.  
 go-2sPCO ever-NEG  
 ‘You have never gone (there).’

**Mar-éen**      *kása-ba’a*.  
 go-3honPCO ever-NEG  
 ‘S/he (hon) has never gone (there).’

**Mán-n**      *kása-ba’a*.  
 go-1pPCO ever-NEG  
 ‘We have never gone (there).’

etc.

Only the converb  
 changes with the subject

			Perfective
1s	3m		‘(GEM/PAL)-∅ ~ -∅-í
2s	3f	3p	‘-t
3hon			-éen
1p			‘-n
2p	2hon		-téen

# Kása 'ever?' – kása-ba'a 'never!'

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Origin of *kása*: Noun?

+ stress pattern of a predicate noun

+/- standard negator *-ba'a*

– no copula

*Márr* *kása-ba'a.*

go.1sPCO ever-NEG

'I have **never** gone (there).'



# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

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+ *kása* inflects for 3mIPV in questions

2 examples in the corpus: 1 from a schoolbook, 1 from the Bible

- (6) *Kii hegeg-óon mánn-u yáa’ kas-áno?*  
2sGEN area-mLOC people-mNOM hold.3mPCO (do\_)ever-3mIPV  
‘Have the people in your area ever held meetings/a meeting?’ (K89: 3.41)

Problem: both examples with 3m subject – unknown whether *kas-* inflects or is invariantly 3m

# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

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+ *Kása* can be relativised + takes the relative negator

- (7) (...) *mexx-e-nii maccoocc-í kas-úmb-ut* Relative clause  
single-MULT-ADD hear-1sPCO (do )ever-1sNREL-fNOM
- kohichch-ut láag-at gisan-áachch báqq=át-t* Head noun  
strange-fNOM voice-fNOM sleep-fABL wake=do-3fPCO
- ke'-is-soo-'é j-áata (...)*  
get\_up-CAUS-3fPFV-1sO time-fACC
- ‘(...) when I was woken up from (my) sleep by a strange voice that I had **never** heard before.’ (QL: §2)

# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

---

+ *Kása* can be relativised + takes the relative negator

- (8) *Fénd-u-u*                      *Ludág-u-u*                      *ám-a-ssa*                      *hittig-úta*  
PN-fNOM-ADD    PN-mNOM-ADD    mother-fNOM-3pPOSS    SIM2\_P\_DEM-fACC  
*ík-ki-yan*                      *xíud-d*                      *kas-súmb-o=bikkii*                      *hiliq-qóo ’u.*  
become-3fPCO-DS    see-3fPCO    (do\_ever)-3fNREL-mOBL=BEC    shock-3fPFV

‘Fendo and Ludago were shocked because (lit. for the reason that) they had **never** seen their mother like this before.’ (NJ: vol. 5)

NB: Plural subject takes 3f agreement (3p = 3f).

# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

---

Interim conclusion on the form:

- *Kása* has a verbal origin > auxiliary
- Synchronically: morphologically defective
  - Invariant in declarative clauses
  - Invariant or inflecting imperfective in interrogative clauses (but only 3m ex. so far)
  - Inflecting in relative clauses
- Experiential construction: perfective converb + imperfective auxiliary/verb



# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

---

Interim conclusion on the meaning: Experiential

- Negative Declarative: \* ‘have never V-ed (once)’ – no conventionalized ‘not yet’/lateness-interpretation, construction leaves open whether subject is going to change the situation, can be reinforced by adverbials, e.g. *mexxeníi / hínatén* ‘not even a single time’
- Interrogative: ‘have ever V-ed (once)?’ – no conventionalized ‘already’/earliness-interpretation
- Meaning of experiential construction uninfluenced by tense (*ikke* PAST)

- (9) *Mexx-e-níi*                      *daqq-ámm*                      *kása-si-ba’a ikke*  
single-MULT-ADD                      meet.MID-PASS.1sPCO                      ever-3O-NEG PAST  
(Context: Did you know my father who died last year?) ‘I had never met him (before he died).’ (Elicited 2004 with Dahl’s TMA questionnaire, sent. 50)

\*not used in affirmative declarative with the intended meaning: ‘I have seen him (at least once) before.’

# Kása ‘ever?’ – kása-ba’a ‘never!’

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- In other Ethiopian languages, e.g. Koorete, Bench (Omotic); Sidaama, Oromo (Cushitic); Amharic (Semitic): converb + ‘know’

Oromo (Lowland East Cushitic)

(12a) *An takkaa ududdee oof-ee hin-beek-u.*

[I once motorcycle drive-1sPCO NEG-know-1sIPV]

‘I have never driven a motor-bike.’ (Gragg 1982: 44, glosses mine)

(12b) *Ityopyaa adeem-tee beek-taa?*

[Ethiopia go-2sPCO know-2sIPV]

‘Have you ever been to Ethiopia?’ (Gragg 1982: 44, glosses mine)

- No evidence that *kása* goes back to a verb ‘know’ in Kambaata (no ‘know’ cognates in related HEC languages that resemble *kása*) – lexical origin of *kása* unknown

# 5. Tracking down PHP in translations

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STILL, NO LONGER, NOT YET, ALREADY

# Already

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## Translational (non-)equivalents

(1a) ‘No. This sheep is **already** very sickly. Make me another.’

*Ti*                      *hóol-ch-ut*                      *abbíss*    *moos-áan-ch-u-ta*  
A\_DEM1.fNOM    sheep-SG-fNOM    very    sickness-PROP-SG-fPRED-fCOP2

*Wol-ú*              *misil-á*                      *ke'-ís-e-'e*  
other-mACC    picture-mACC    get\_up-CAUS1-2sIMP-1sO

Lit. ‘This sheep is very sick. Draw another picture for me.’ (QL: §2)

# Already

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10 instances of ‘already’ in the Little Prince (*Qakkichchu Laaha*): 9 simply ignored in the translation

(1b) *Kánn*                      *dimb-aan-ch-ii*                      *wóna-n kichché’-eesi*  
A\_DEM1.mOBL get\_drunk-PROP-SG-mDAT first-N feel\_sorry-3mPRF-3mO.REL  
*qakkichch-u láah-u “(…)” y-í=ké’*                      *xa’mm-ée-s*  
little-mNOM prince-mNOM say-3mPCO=SEQ ask-3mPFV-3mO

“(…)” inquired the little prince, who **already** was sorry for the drunkard.’ (QL: §12)

Elsewhere: *wóna(n)* ‘at first, before, at an earlier time’  
(= adverbial form of the ordinal numeral ‘first’)

[NB: *wónan* for ‘already’ also found John 9, 27]

# Not yet

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1 instance of ‘not yet’ in *Qakkichchu Laaha*

- (2) Ikkodáa **tadáa** **iill-án** **qax-ée**  
but now reach-3mICO extent-mDAT  
án ka ba'-o-'é horophphill-á  
1sNOM A\_DEM1.mACC break-3mPFV-1sO.REL plane-mACC  
makkicc-óta dandim-bá'a  
be\_made-CAUS1.MID-1sPURP be\_able-1sNIPV-NEG

‘("Ah," I said to the little prince, "these memories of yours are very charming;) but I have not yet succeeded in repairing my plane.’ (QL: §24)

Elsewhere: *tadáa iill-án qax-ée* ‘until now’ (lit. for the extent (of) reaching now); commonly used temporal phrase; no lateness implication (NB: also used in the Dahl questionnaire elicited 2004)

# ‘Still’

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Common translation: *teesúu* (additive form of *téesu* ‘now’)

- (3) *Tees-ú-u*      *híkku*                      *qakkichch-u*    *láah-u*                      *mát-u*  
now-m[?]-ADD    A\_DEM2.mNOM    little-mNOM    prince-mNOM    one-mACC
- bar-í*              *Uull-áta*              *fanqáll*                      *waal-áno*              *y-í=ké’*  
day-mACC      Earth-fACC    return.3mPCO    come-3mIPV    say-3mPCO=SEQ
- horophhill-í*    *búrr=a’-áan-ch-u*                      *tass-áa*                      *ass-áno.*  
plane-mGEN    fly=do-PROP-SG-mNOM    hope-mACC    do-3mIPV

‘The pilot **still** hopes the little prince will return to Earth one day.’ (QL: intro)

# ‘Still’

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Common translation: *teesúu* (additive form of *téesu* ‘now’)

5/15 ‘still’ examples in *Qakkichchu Laaha* are translated by *teesúu*

Elsewhere with dynamic predicates: *teesúu* ‘again’ (lit. now too)

- (3)     *Tees-ú-u*           *líushsh-eemm*  
          now-m[?]-ADD   make\_mistake-1sPRF  
          ‘I have made a mistake **again.**’ (K89: 3.46)



# ‘No longer’

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4 instances in *Qakkichchu Laaha*: all are left untranslated

- (4) ‘The planet now makes a complete turn every minute, and I **no longer** have a single second for repose.’

*Téesu ku plaanéet-u wiim-á<n>ta-s zahhit-úta*  
now A\_DEM1.mNOM planet-mNOM full-fACC<N>-DEF turn-fACC  
*méxx-o daqiiq-áan zahh-i xoof-áno=tanee*  
single-mOBL minute-mLOC turn\_around-3mPCO finish-3mIPV.REL=BEC1  
*esáa méxx-u fooloocc-uhú-u yoo-’e-ba’a.*  
1sDAT single-mNOM rest-mNOM-ADD COP1-1sO-NEG

Lit. ‘Because the planet now makes a complete turn every minute, I don’t have a single (moment to) rest.’ (QL: §14)

# Conclusions

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- Kambaata has grammaticalized an experiential perfect expressing ‘have (n)ever V-ed’, no conventionalized lateness or earliness implications, no change of situation implied
- Phasal polarity expressions are often ignored in translated texts or translated by adverbials that are commonly used with a purely temporal reading (non-PhP reading) elsewhere.
- Kambaata is one of the languages that have not grammaticalized phasal polarity.

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# Abbreviations

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A = adjective, ABL = ablative, ACC = accusative, ADD = additive, BEC = reason, CAUS = causative, CONTR = contrastive COP = copula, DAT = dative, DEF = definite, DEM = demonstrative, DS = different subject, EQ = equative, f = feminine, GEM = gemination, GEN = genitive, hon = honorific, HYP = hypothetical, ICO = imperfective converb, ICP = instrumental-comitative-perlative, IMP = imperative, IPV = imperfective, LOC = locative, m = masculine, MID = middle, MULT = multiplicative, N = pragmatically determined morpheme (still unanalyzed), NEG = negation, NOM = nominative, NREL = negative relative, O = object, OBL = oblique, p = plural, P = pronoun, PAL = palatalization, PASS = passive, PAST = past tense, PCO = perfective converb, PFV = perfective, PN = proper noun, PRED = predicative, PRF = perfect, PROP = proprietive, PURP = purposive, Q = question, REL = relative, s = singular, SEG = sequential, SG = singulative, SIM = simulative, VV = vowel lengthening

# Open questions

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- How common is it for languages of the world to have a construction with ‘know’ for an experiential construction?
- Terminology: Experiential perfect / past / perfective?
- Suggestion: Include experiential perfect constructions in negation and phasal polarity questionnaire