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The expression of elevation in demonstratives of the Omotic-Lowland East Cushitic contact zone

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“ELEVATION AS A DEICTIC CATEGORY. TYPOLOGICAL AND DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVES”

1. Starting point

1.1. Claims in the literature

- “Demonstratives indicating up-ward and down-ward directions are used to refer to persons or places located at a higher or lower altitude from both the speaker and the listener’s point of view. [...] This might be **wide-spread among languages of the area.**” (Mulugeta 2008: 75 in the description of Dime)
- “Already in 1986, Sasse had mentioned a deictic system based upon the landscape as an **areal feature** of the Southwest Ethiopia linguistic area (Sasse 1986) [YT: where?].” (Tosco 2012: 531 in the description of Gawwada)
- “Distal/proximal deixis and elevation relative to the speaker are **commonly attested** in the deictic systems of Omotic languages and other languages of Ethiopia.” (Petrollino 2016: 114 in the description of Hamar)

1.2. Aim of this presentation

- Investigate: Is there a linguistic area in southern Ethiopia where elevation is encoded/lexicalised in the demonstrative (or more general: deictic) system? If yes, how many languages share this trait? How similar are the systems in these languages?
- > Present the (messy) state of the art based on available published and grey sources on Cushitic, North Omotic and South Omotic languages

1.3. Problems of the study

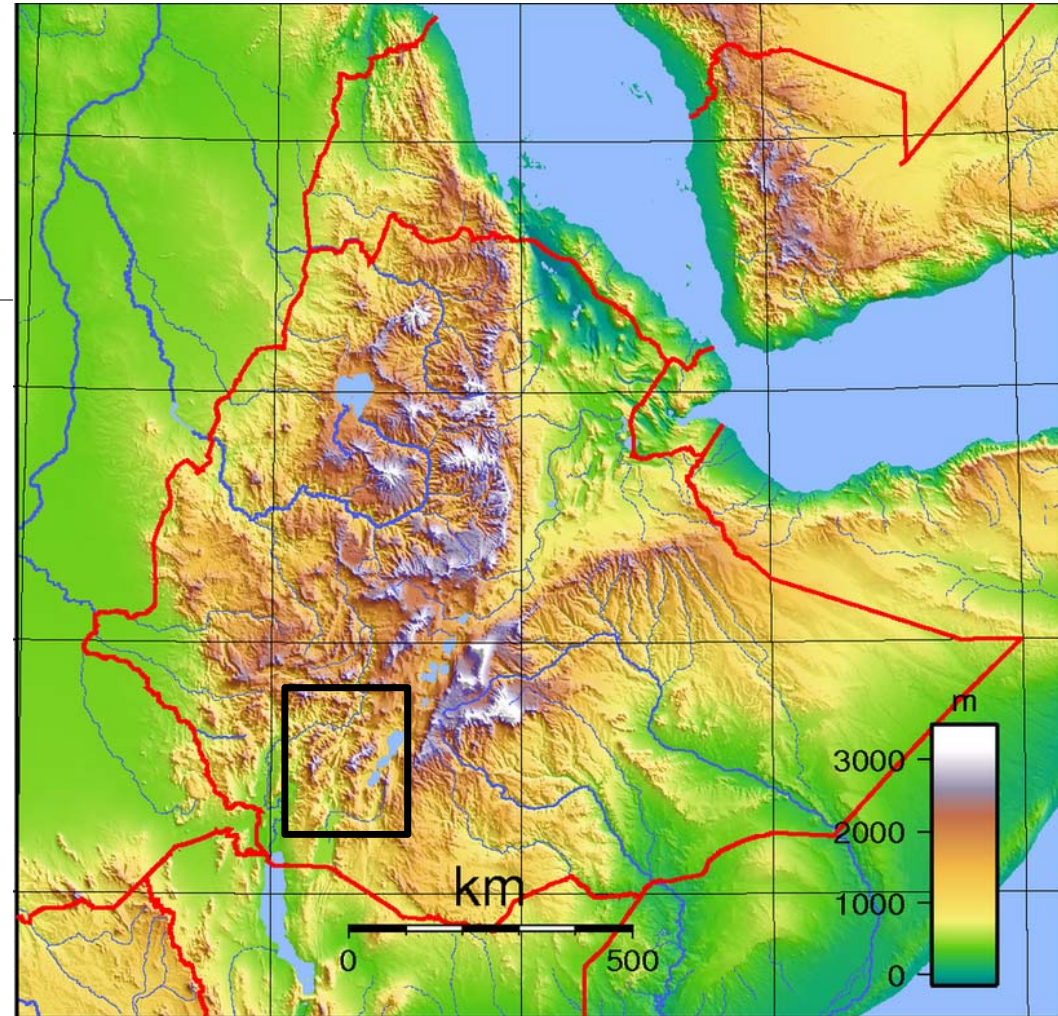
- Patchy data
 - Claims not (always) empirically backed up
 - Contradictory claims
 - Restricted comparability of the deictic systems
- > Preliminary overview

2. Introduction to the contact zone

GEOGRAPHY, LANGUAGES AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION, STATE OF DOCUMENTATION ...

2.1. Geography

- Southwestern quarter of Ethiopia: area of high linguistic diversity; languages of different families; mountainous area
- Focus on sub-area (~ black rectangle) where languages of North Omotic, South Omotic and Lowland East Cushitic meet
- ~ Area between the Rift Valley lakes and the Omo River



2.2. Languages and their classification

- Cushitic* > East > Lowland > Southern > Transversal > **Dullay cluster**
Cushitic > East > Lowland > Southern > Nuclear > Oromoid > **Konsoid cluster**
- North Omotic (Ta-Ne) > Ometo > **Northwest Ometo**
- South Omotic (Ari-Benna): ~ 4 languages

*Cushitic classification acc. to Tosco (2000)

3. Elevation in deictic systems

NORTH OMOTIC, SOUTH OMOTIC, LOWLAND EAST CUSHITIC

3.1. NW Ometo branch of North Omotic

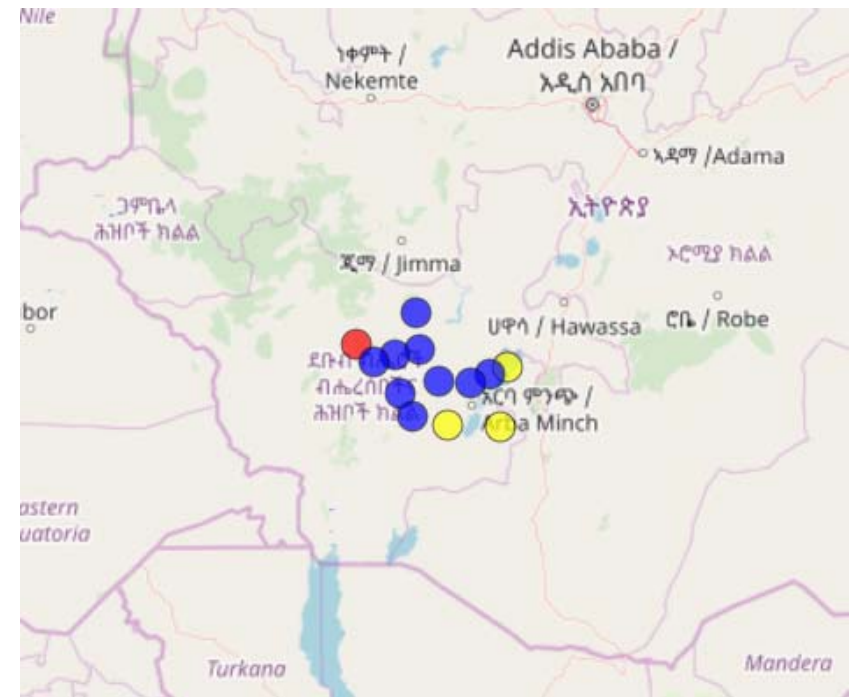
- Chara

- **Northwest Ometo**

- Baskeet
- Central
 - Dawro, Wolaitta, Gamo, Gofa, Melo, Oyda ...
- Maale

- East Ometo

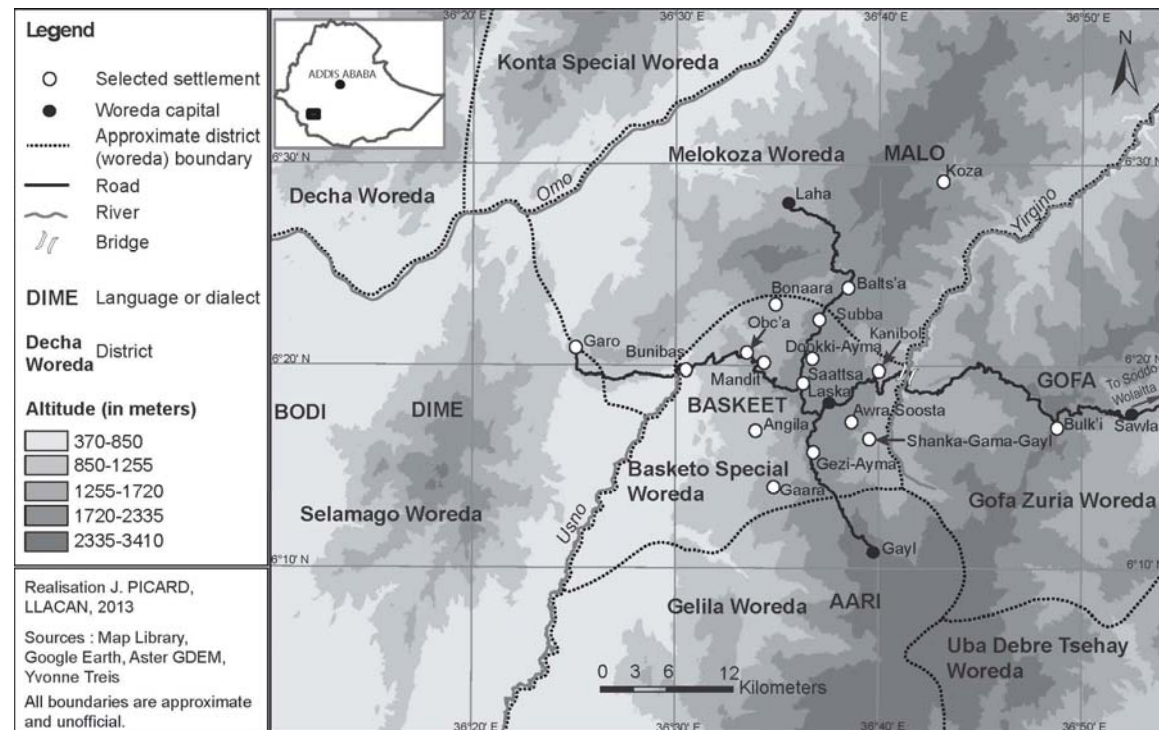
languages to be investigated



*Source of map:
<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/omet1238>

3.1.1. Baskeet (I)

- Classification:
North Omotic > Ometo language
- Spoken in a mountainous area
- Lowest settlements ~800m
- Highest settlements ~2200m
- Own Baskeet fieldwork data:
convenience corpus of interviews,
songs, narratives, elicited data etc.



3.1.1. Basket (II)

- Distinction between demonstrative determiners/pronouns and adverbs
- Determiner/pronouns are marked for gender (masculine/feminine), number (singular/plural) and case (primary: nominative, accusative, predicative; secondary: ablative, allative, locative, instrumental)
- Six deictic degrees (see table of demonstrative determiners/pronouns in the ACC case)

		M	F	PL
DEM1	Proximal	<i>hía[á]</i>	<i>hínní</i>	<i>híants</i>
DEM2	Proximal, invisible	<i>yíi</i>	<i>yiinní</i>	<i>yíints</i>
DEM3	Medial	<i>gedáá</i>	<i>gedanní</i>	<i>gedánts</i>
DEM4	Distal	<i>sekáá</i>	<i>sekanní</i>	<i>sekánts</i>
DEM5	Down	<i>yetáá</i>	<i>yetanní</i>	<i>yetánts</i>
DEM6	Up	<i>lokáá</i>	<i>lokanní</i>	<i>lokánts</i>

NB: No evidence for Distal-up and Distal-down, i.e. Up and Down are not subordinate to Distal.

3.1.1. Basket (III)

- Table of (selected) demonstrative adverbs

		'(to) here/there' (+ LOC <i>-ta</i>)			
DEM1	Proximal	<i>háná</i>	<i>háy</i>	<i>háy-dá</i>	<i>hád-dá</i>
DEM2	Proximal, invisible	-	-	-	<i>yíid-dá</i>
DEM3	Medial	<i>gedá</i>	<i>gedáy</i>	<i>gedáy-dá</i>	<i>gedáád-dá</i>
DEM4	Distal	<i>sékk</i>	<i>sekáy</i>	<i>sekáy-dá</i>	<i>sekáád-dá</i>
DEM5	Down	<i>yétt</i>	<i>yetáy</i>	<i>yetáy-dá</i>	<i>yetáád-dá</i>
DEM6	Up	<i>lókk</i>	<i>lokáy</i>	<i>lokáy-dá</i>	<i>lokáád-dá</i>

NB: Functional differences between the 4 „variant“ forms still to be investigated. Shorter forms tend to refer to locations around, approximately at a place, while longer forms (with the locative) seem to refer to confined places.

3.1.1. Baskeet (IV): Examples

- Demonstrative determiner

(1) *án,* *zúggóò,* *áyssh* *lokíí* *né* *núúb* *imm-ísh*
2M.SG.VOC Zugga.VOC meat DEM6.M 2SG 1PL.DAT give-2SG.IMP.POL

[The hyenas said:] “Come on, Zugga, please, give us this meat up there!” [Meat hanging in the roof]

(2) *yetanni* *édin* *ábz* *wot-áár-a?*
DEM5.F old_woman-F.DEF what do_what-F.IPFV-Q
‘What does that old woman down there do?’

NB: The position of the demonstrative relative to the head noun is pragmatically determined.

3.1.1. Basket (V): Examples

- Demonstrative adverbs

(3) [...] *i* *eesshinda[a]* *yetáy*
3M shadow-F.DEF DEM6.PLACE

íik *zóbb-ák* *hani* *yéyi=gondo* [...]
3M.ALL lion-ALL DEM1.PLACE come=TEMP

‘When his (mirror) image down there (in the water) came to him, to Lion here [...].’

3.1.1. Baskeet (VI)

- Two uses of adverbial demonstratives need to be distinguished
 - (i) Reference to locations and directions in the environs of the speech situation dependent on the elevation of the referent (see e.g. previous examples)
 - (ii) Reference to locations and directions in the wider geographical context (cardinal directions): ‘up’ = ~‘East’, ‘down’ = ~‘West’, ‘over there’ = ~‘North/South’ (cf. geophysical elevation in Antoine Schapper’s workshop intro)

(4) [...] *Góóp-ants yizí hátár Góóp **lókk-app** yeepí gel-íir-ko* [...]
Gofa-PL so ? Gofa DEM6.PLACE-ABL funeral enter-3M.IPFV-COND

‘[...] if the Gofa (people) come from Gofa up there (i.e. from the East) to the funeral [...].’

(5). [...] ***sékk** Tigray Mek’ele níún-ána ts’éyg-in*
DEM4.PLACE T. M. 1PL-ACC call-DS

‘[...] they invited (lit. called) us to over there (i.e. North), Tigray, Mekele.’

3.1. North Omotic (cont'd)

- Open question: In which related languages (North Omotic: NW Ometo) do we find similar demonstrative systems where elevation is *not only* lexicalised in the system of demonstrative adverbs but also in the system of demonstrative determiners/pronouns?
- NW Ometo: Apart from Baskeet, elevation is expressed in the adnominal/pronominal demonstrative system of Dawuro, possibly also in Gamo; *no* mention of elevation in Wolaitta (Wakasa 2008) and Gofa (Sellassie 2015);* elevation only expressed in adverbial demonstratives in Maale

NB: Dawuro, Gamo, Wolaitta, Gofa are members of the same dialect cluster

3.1.2. Dawuro*

*northernmost Ometo language,
no direct neighbour of Baskeet

Hirut (2001: 165; 2006/2007: 113-119)

- Adnominal/pronominal demonstratives

- Proximal *ha*
- Hearer-proximal *hini*
- Distal *yee*
- Distal-down *hirki*
- Distal-up *killi*
- “Confidential” *inii*

(6) *killi* *bora-tuu* *yeddino*
 that/those:U ox-PL:NOM came:PL
 ‘Those upward located oxen came.’ (Hirut 2006/2007: 117)

Compare with Baskeet:

		M
DEM1	Proximal	<i>há[á]</i>
DEM2	Proximal, invisible	<i>yíí</i>
DEM3	Medial	<i>gedáá</i>
DEM4	Distal	<i>sekáá</i>
DEM5	Down	<i>yetáá</i>
DEM6	Up	<i>lokáá</i>

→ Not many cognate forms

3.2.3. Gamo

Contradictory information:

Hayward & Eshetu (2014): grammar and dictionary (~ 1000 pp.)

 vs. Hirut (2007): dedicated paper on Gamo demonstratives

3.2.3. Gamo

Hayward & Eshetu (2014: 115-124)

- Deictic determiners
[= adnominal demonstratives]
 - proximal *há* ‘this’/*hákki* ‘this particular’
 - distal (1) *sékki* ‘that’
 - distal (2) (invisible) *hé* ‘that’/*hékki* ‘that particular’
 - contrastive (“allogenuous”) *hankó* ‘this other’
- Locative deictic pronouns
[= adverbial demonstratives]
 - proximal: *háà* ‘here’
 - distal (1) *sékkii* ‘there’
 - distal (2) *héè*, *hékkii* ‘there’
- No mention of elevation



Hirut (2007)

- Demonstrative modifiers and pronouns
 - proximal *há* ‘this’
 - speaker-distal/hearer-proximal *hé* ‘that’
 - distal-horizontal *seekki* ‘that’ [cf. Baskeet]
 - distal-down *hirki* ‘that down’ [cf. Dawuro]
 - distal-up *killi* ‘that up’ [cf. Dawuro]

Forms not attested in
Hayward & Eshetu’s DIC

3.2.3. Gamo

Contradictory information:

Hayward & Eshetu (2014): grammar and dictionary (~ 1000 pp.)

 vs. Hirut (2007): dedicated paper on Gamo demonstratives

→ Unclear: Is Gamo a language marking elevation?

3.2.5. Maale

Azeb (2001: 138ff)

- Adnominal/pronominal demonstratives distinguish only: proximal *ha-* vs. distal *yé-*
- Locative adverbs and their corresponding deictic forms, can co-occur with demonstratives

Proximal	<i>hai-ka, ha-ka</i>	‘here’ (this-LOC)
Distal [medial?]	<i>ye-ka, ?ii-ka</i>	‘there’ (that-LOC, he-LOC)
(Distal) up	<i>lóó</i>	‘up’
	<i>lé-ka</i>	‘up there’
(Distal) down	<i>líú</i>	‘down’
	<i>lí-ka</i>	‘down there’
Distal level	<i>sóó</i>	‘there on level ground, distant but visible’
	<i>sé-ka</i>	‘there on level ground, to the side of the speaker’

NB: *-ka* locative suffix

(7) *yénná* *líkká* *belet’éci-ke*
 that:F:NOM down_there:NOM Beletech-BE:A:DCL
 ‘That, down there is Beletech’ (Azeb 2001. 141)

NB: Demonstrative adverbs in various transcriptions, e.g. *léka, lika, séka* (p. 140) vs. *lékká, líkka, sékká* (p. 141)

- > Elevation seems only expressed in adverbial demonstratives
- Unknown: How common and conventionalized are combinations of DEM + ‘up’, ‘down’, ‘level’?

3.3. South Omotic

- South Omotic (Aroid) family
 - Dime*
 - Aari, Gayl*
 - Hamar-Banna, Karo
- Dime and Hamar are reported to express elevation in their deictic systems (see below)
- No mention of elevational deictics in Gayl (Tsuge 2006) and Aari (Hayward 1990)

*Dime and Gayl are direct neighbours of Baskeet



*Source of map:

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sout2845>

3.3.1. Dime (I)

Mulugeta (2008: 72-77):

- Confusing description, use of demonstratives not exemplified with naturalistic data
- Simple adnominal/pron. demonstratives: proximal [distance neutral?] *si-* vs. distal *sa-*
- Corresponding demonstrative adverbs: *sikiyó* ‘here’ vs. *sakiyó* ‘there’
- Complex demonstratives:
 - Alone (see ex. (7)) or in combination with proximal [!] demonstrative *si-*:
 - *ʔaa-* higher distal altitude
 - *čúú-* lower distal altitude*

(7) *čúú-ná sugur ʔámzi dán*
down-3FS Bodi woman COP

‘That down there is a Bodi woman.’ (Mulugeta 2008: 76)

*But see in appended wordlist: *čúú*
adv ‘bottom’ (p. 224)!

3.3.1. Dime (II)

Mulugeta (2008: 72-77):

- Complex demonstratives (continued):
 - “Prefixes” combining with the proximal [!] demonstrative *si-*:
 - *s’ay-* higher altitude* > e.g. *s’ay-si-nú* UP-PROX-M.SG ‘this (m.) above the speaker’
 - *ʔoy-* same altitude, proximal
 - *say-* same altitude, distal**
 - *s’uy-* same altitude, furthest away/out of reach/invisible

*Unclear: Why is there no lower altitude “prefix”?

**Unclear: identical to simple distal demonstrative?

3.3.2. Hamar (I)

Petrollino (2016)

- Primary distinction of adnominal/pronominal demonstratives: proximal vs. distal (p. 110ff)
- Adverbial demonstratives (p. 114)

	Proximal	Distal
M	káa	agá
F	koró	ogoró ~ ogó
PL	kirá	igirá

Proximal	<i>ka-</i>	here (specific)
	<i>ko-</i>	here (non-specific)
Distal	<i>oo</i>	there
Elevation	<i>baa</i>	up there, from above
	<i>saa</i>	there (same level), from there (same level)
	<i>coo</i>	down there, from below
Directional	<i>tura, turawal</i>	up, uphill, upward
	<i>mée, méewal</i>	down, downhill, downward
	<i>óra, órawal</i>	hither
	<i>us, usuwal</i>	thither

3.3.2. Hamar (II)

- Adverbial demonstratives

(8) (a) *saxá* ***baa*** *lala-r* *han=aaq-áino*
tomorrow **UP** Lala-IN 2SG=see-REL.PRES.F
‘the one (F) that you will see tomorrow **up there** in Lala [...]

(b) *kidi* *noqó-n-sa* *ii-n-te* ***coo*** *kin=shed-énka*
3 water-F.OBL-GEN stomach-F.OBL-LOC **DOWN** 3=look-CNV2
‘when he looked **down** inside the water’

(Petrollino 2016: 117)

- Elevation deictics not used adnominally/pronominally
- In how far are *baa* and *coo* different from e.g. English adverbs *up* and *down*?

3.3.3. Kara

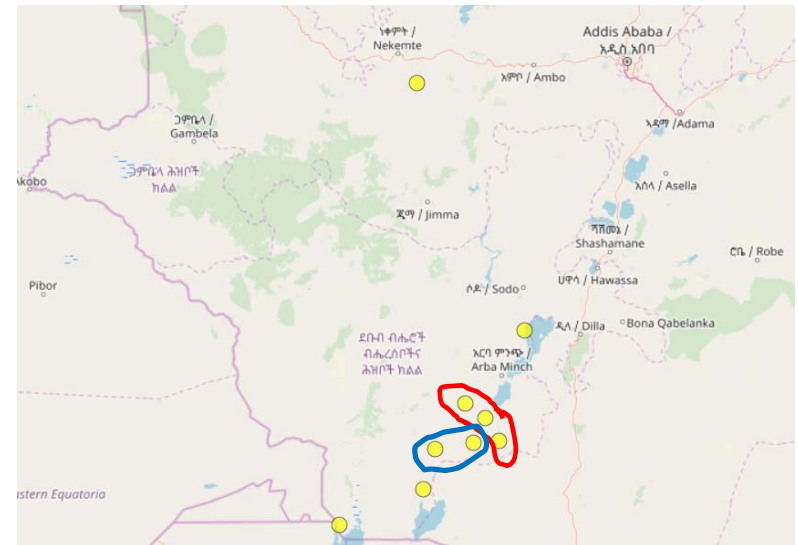
Alemgena (2018: 121f)

- Primary distinction between proximal (*ka-/ko-*) and medial/distal (*aga-/ogo-*)
- Distal demonstratives can receive the prefixes *oo-* and *sa-* to express far and extra-far distance, respectively
- No mention of elevation as a relevant factor in the demonstrative system
- The lexemes *tfo(o)* ‘down’ and *ba(a)* ‘up’, cognates to the Hamar locative deictics, are simply interpreted as **locative adverbs** – see also Takahashi (2016: 50) in a section of adverbial concepts: *čo:* ‘down’ and *ba:* ‘up’.

3.4. Lowland East Cushitic

Focus on two language clusters of LEC in southwestern Ethiopia
(neighbours, but no close genetic relation)

- Konsoid (red)
- Dullay cluster (blue)



*Source of map: excerpt of
<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/lowl1267>

3.4.1. Konso (I)

Source: Ongaye (2013)

- Proximal demonstrative suffixes *-(VV)siʔ* (singular), *-oosiniʔ* (plural) (p. 97-101)
- Location is expressed by an independent locative adverb, placed after the demonstrative suffix (p. 101)

kaharroosiniʔ ʔirre ca ileki

kaharr-oosiniʔ

irre

kiy-a

i = lek-i

sheep-DEM.P

up.there

be-IPF.FUT

3 = be.many-PF

‘Those sheep up there are numerous.’

3.4.1. Konso (II)

- Locative adverbs:

ile	‘up there’	ille/irre	‘further up there’
aye ~are	‘here’	disse	‘further there (sideways)’
dise	‘there (horizontal plane, sideways)’	χatte	‘further down there’
χate	‘down there’		

- Directional adverbs:

χata	‘downwards—from a higher altitude to a lower altitude’
dela	‘upwards—from a lower altitude to a higher altitude’
desa	‘sideways—on a horizontal plane’

3.4.2. Gidole (Dullay cluster) (I)

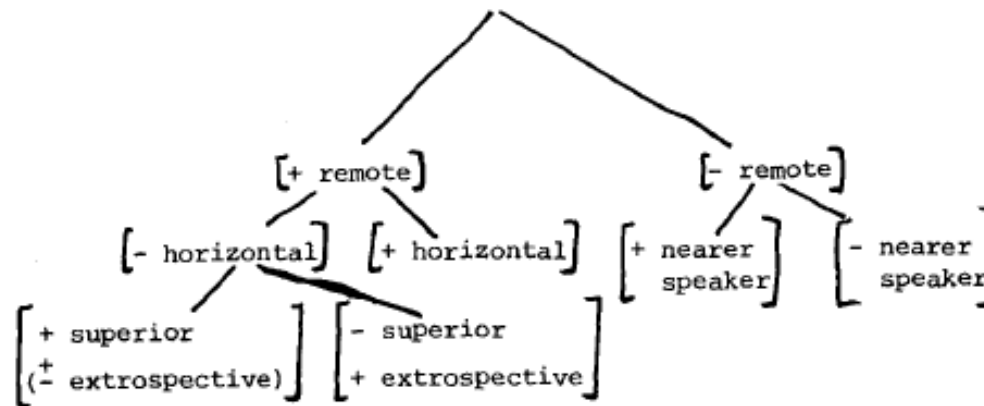
Hayward (1986), the published version of a paper given in (1980), is possibly the **earliest** source discussing elevational deictics (“locative specifiers” in his terminology) in a southwestern Ethiopian language, namely Gidole (Dirayta)

Important features (p. 284ff):

- Elevation only relevant in the distal (remote) domain
(→ analysis taken up in descriptions of other languages above, e.g. Dawuro, Maale, in which scholars also assume elevation to be subordinate to distal deixis)
- “Locative specifiers” used **in addition** to another deictic, after the so-called “general deictic particle” (~ ‘this here’, ‘that up’, ‘that down’) – see ex. (9) below
(→ compare with the complex demonstratives in Dime, Konso etc.)
- Hayward links geography to linguistic expression: “The Diraaš are hill people and the interesting asymmetry in the set of locative specifiers reflects a recognition of the mountainous terrain in which they live.” (p. 284) (→ also stated by other authors)

3.4.2. Gidole (II)

Hayward's feature analysis of the deictic elements (1986: 284ff):



NB: +/-Extrospective:
direction faced by speaker

- (9) *iyy hin hatu ʔórruseet*
[3M.SG DEM.NFS DOWN people]

‘Those (down there) are THE PEOPLE.’ (Hayward 1986: 285; tentative glossing mine)
(NFS = non-focalized subject)

3.4.2. Gidole (III)

- The data from Hayward (1986) leaves unclear: In how far are the Gidole “locative specifiers”, ^ʔ*aru* [‘here’], ^ʔ*aytu* [‘there’], *dásu* [‘there far along’], ^ʔ*elu* [‘there far up’] and *hátu* [‘there far down’], different from locative adverbs in other languages, e.g. from English adverbs such as *up* and *down*? And in how far is the complex deictic expression in (9) above different from the English periphrasis *those down there*?

3.4.3. Gawwada (Dullay cluster) (I)

- Tosco (2012, 2013) on spatial orientation in Gawwada
- “[...] is spoken in a mountainous area about 1,600-1,700 meters upon the sea level. In Gawwada country, houses, or better compounds, are located upon the slopes of rugged hills, and are surrounded by fields; most daily activities involve climbing up and down the hills. This landscape has **momentous consequences** on the semantics of the language insofar as the linguistic expression of position and movement is concerned, because it provides the basic framework according to which the position of elements is described.” (Tosco 2012: 523, emphasis mine)
- Gawwada has an **absolute frame of reference**; the following “cardinals” (landmarks/directions) are used to describe the location of things, either with respect to each other or the participants, irrespective [!] of their actual physical position on the vertical plane (Tosco 2012: 525): *kut-e* lit. ‘uphill’ (Northeast), lit. *kal-e* ‘downhill’ (Southwest), lit. *kor-e* ‘along the horizontal plane’ (Northwest/Southeast)
- Elevation is not lexicalized in the Gawwada demonstrative system (see data in Tosco forthc.).

3.4.3. Gawwada (II)

- “In the same general area of Southwest Ethiopia, a system apparently **starkly similar** to the Gawwada one has been discovered in at least a few genetically unrelated languages, both Cushitic and Omotic. Konso, a neighbouring East Cushitic language belonging to a different subgroup (Oromoid) seems indeed **very similar** (Daudey & Hellenthal 2004). [...] More to the North, the Omotic languages Dawuro (Hirut 2001), Gamo (Hirut [2006/]2007), and Maale (Azeb 2001) – all belonging to the Ometo subgroup – as well as South Omotic Dime (Mulugeta 2008) have been reported to have **similar systems**” (Tosco 2012: 531; emphasis mine)
- But, in fact, insufficient evidence that the deictic systems of Gawwada and other languages are, as Tosco (2012) says, “starkly similar”; see, for instance, that
 - There are so far no reports about other languages applying an absolute frame of reference (cardinals) to locate objects in the speech situation.
 - Some of the languages mentioned to be “starkly similar” to Gawwada have lexicalized elevation in their demonstrative system (e.g. Dawuro) – but this is not the case in Gawwada.

4. Summary

4.1. Summary

- The deictic systems in southwestern Ethiopia are fairly different and not readily comparable
- Languages differ in whether they have lexicalised elevation in the demonstrative determiner/pronoun system or not
 - Lexicalised in **Baskeet** and **Dawuro**, and potentially in Gamo (conflicting evidence) and Dime (description unclear)
- In most languages elevation is only expressed in locative adverbs (labelled differently from source to source) > Unclear: In how far are these locative adverbs different from adverbs expressing ‘up’ and ‘down’ in other languages in the world?
- Languages differ in whether elevation is subordinate to distal deixis (see e.g. Dawuo) or whether elevation deixis is independent of distance deixis (see Baskeet)
- Languages differ in whether they use elevation-related terms as cardinals, i.e. as landmarks in an **absolute frame of reference** (Gawwada) (geophysical elevation)

4.2. Where from here?

- More data is urgently needed
- Studies based on naturalistic data are mostly lacking
- Comparison of forms and functions across closely related languages needed

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