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# Kambaata negative participles: (almost) perfect verb-adjective hybrids

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# An introductory example

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Negative participle

- is marked by the morpheme *-umb*
- agrees in case and gender with the head noun (here: *láag-at* ‘voice’)
- carries a subject index

- (1) *mát-it* [ *maccooc-i-níi* *kas-∅-úmb-ut* ] *láag-at*<sub>Head noun</sub>  
one-fNOM hear-1sPCO-ADD do\_ever-1s-NEG.PTC-fNOM voice-fNOM
- gisan-áachch* *báqq=át-t* *ke'-is-soo'-é* *j-áata* (...)  
sleep-fABL wake=do-3fPCO rise-CAUS1-3fPFV-1sO.REL time-fACC
- ‘When a voice [(that) I had never heard before] woke me up from (my) sleep (...).’

# Structure of this talk

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## **1. Introduction**

## **2. Form**

Morphology of (relative) verbs

Morphology of adjectives

Negative participles = hybrids of adjectives and verbs

## **3. Use**

As adnominal modifiers

As predicates

As heads of an NP

## **4. Why “almost” perfect?**

## **5. Summary**

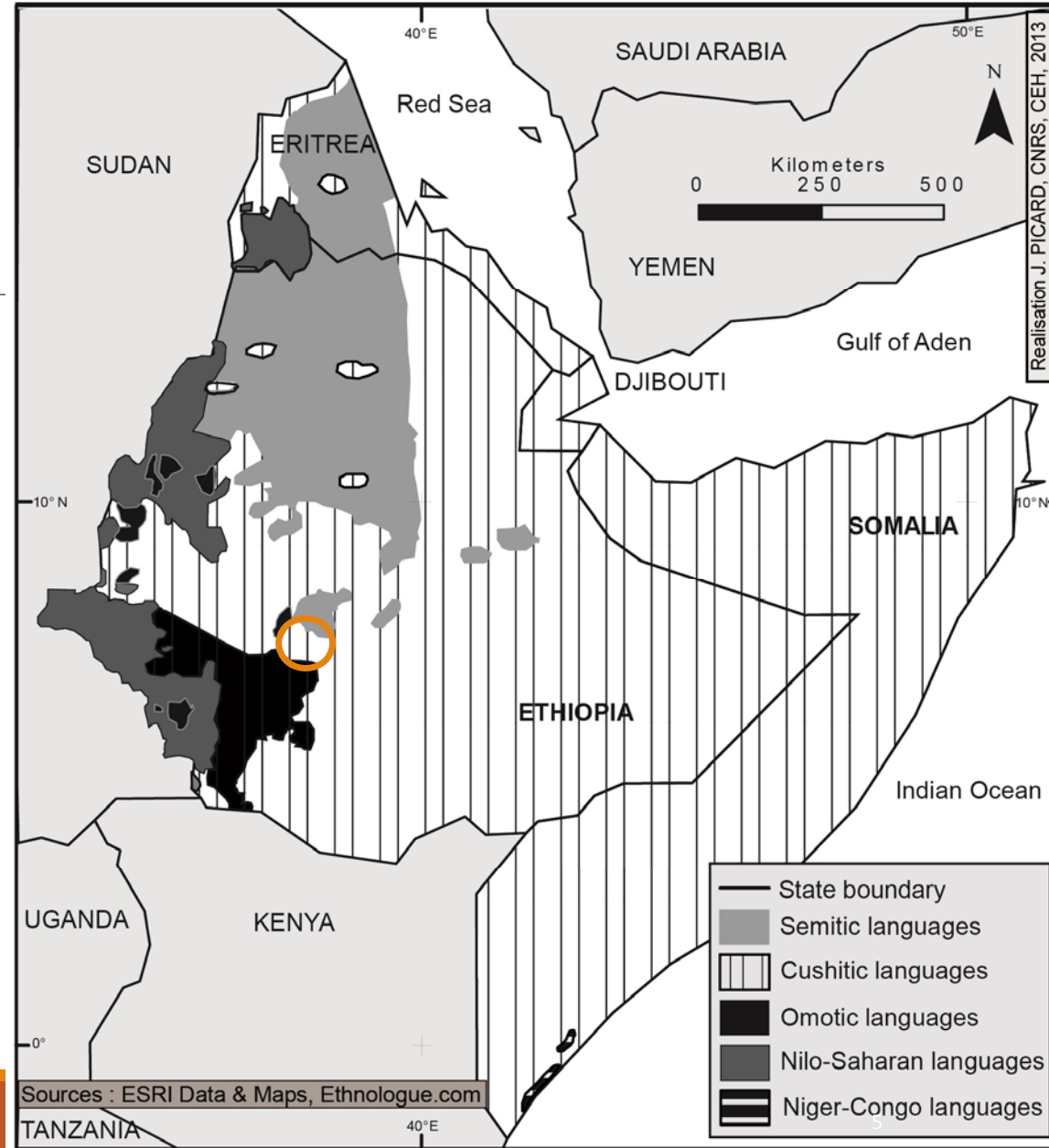
# 1. Some background on Kambaata

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CLASSIFICATION, SPEAKER AREA, TYPOLOGICAL PROFILE ...

# Where are we?

- Afro-Asiatic > Cushitic > ... > Highland East Cushitic
- Number of speakers: > 600,000 (acc. to 2007 census)
- Neighbours: Cushitic (Hadiyya, Alaaba), Omotic (Wolaitta, Dawro)
- Second language: Amharic
- Kambaata is the medium of instruction in primary schools and taught as a subject up to university level



# Kambaata official orthography

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- Phonemic – except for stress, here marked by acute accent
- Based on the Roman script
- Following graphemes not in accordance with IPA conventions:  $ph = /p'/$ ,  $x = /t'/$ ,  $q = /k'/$ ,  $j = /dʒ/$ ,  $c = /tʃ/$ ,  $ch = /tʃ/$ ,  $sh = /ʃ/$ ,  $y = /j/$  and  $' = /ʔ/$
- Gemination and long vowels marked by doubling: e.g.  $shsh = /ʃ:/$ ,  $ee = /e:/$ , nasalization:  $\bar{a} = /ã/$
- Unstressed, partly devoiced final  $i$  is not written
- Examples
  - $qáchchut$   $/k'atʃ:utʃi/$  ‘granary (mNOM)’
  - $xóoqqee'u$   $/t'o:k':e:ʔu/$  ‘it burst open (of blister)’ (3fPRF)

# Typological profile of Kambaata

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- Open word classes: nouns, adjectives, verbs, ideophones and interjections
- **Suffixing**, agglutinating-fusional with many portmanteau morphemes
- Lexical roots are **bound** and do not occur without inflectional morphology
- Lexical roots are unspecified for stress; most inflectional morphemes have both a supra-segmental and a segmental component, some are only suprafixes, others stress-neutral; stress is realised on the inflectional morpheme itself, on the stem, or on a following morpheme (problem for glossing ...)
- Stress is **phonemic**, but no lexical, only grammatical minimal pairs; see ‘our hands’  
*áng-a-nne*                      –                      *ang-á-nne* (fACC)                      –                      *ang-a-nné* (fGEN)  
Nominative: -'a                      Accusative: -á                      Genitive: -a'
- Fairly elaborate case system (for an African language ...): 9 nominal cases

# Typological profile of Kambaata

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- **Strict head-finality**
  - Dependent clauses before main clauses
  - Main verb or copula = last constituent in a sentence
  - All modifiers (incl. **relative clauses**), irrespective of their complexity, before head noun



# Going back to the introductory example

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- (1) *mát-it* [ *maccoocc-i-níi* *kas-∅-úmb-ut* ] *láag-at*<sub>Head noun</sub>  
one-fNOM hear-1sPCO-ADD do\_ever-1s-NEG.PTC-fNOM voice-fNOM  
*gisan-áachch* *báqq=át-t* *ke'-is-soo'-é* *j-áata* (...)  
sleep-fABL wake=do-3fPCO rise-CAUS1-3fPFV-1sO.REL time-fACC  
'When a voice [(that) I had never heard before] woke me up from (my) sleep (...).'

See: bound roots, case marking, converbs (here: PCO = perfective converb), head-finality etc.

# Terminological caveat

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Term “participle” in the works on related and adjacent languages:

- (i) Term sometimes used for subordinate semi-finite/infinite verbs in adverbial function, i.e. converbs. – See g. Owens (1985) on Harar Oromo, Banti & Vergari (2005) on Saho and Hayward (1980) on Afar
- (ii) Term associated with a certain template that generates agent nouns in (Ethio)-Semitic languages

(NB: Kambaata also has several types of converbs, but they are formally and functionally clearly distinct from the participle.)

# The participle in typological works

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- Shagal (2017: 35): participle as a **comparative concept** – features:
  - “a) ability to introduce a headed relative clause, while being itself the locus of subordination marking;
  - b) pertaining to the verbal paradigm, i.e. being formed by morphological rather than syntactic means, and at the same time demonstrating enough regularity and generality to qualify as inflection rather than derivation;
  - c) being morphosyntactically deranked, i.e. demonstrating certain morphosyntactic deviation from the prototypical predicate of an independent sentence in a given language.”
- Haspelmath (1996) on word-class changing inflection
  - Narrow formal definition: Participles are adjectives with respect to their word form class, but verbs in terms of their lexeme word class. (Morphology and external syntax: adjectival; internal syntax: verbal)

# 2. Forms

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(RELATIVE) VERBS, ADJECTIVES, PARTICIPLES

## 2.1. Verbs

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Kambaata makes an important distinction between

- **Fully finite main verbs/final verbs:**  
subject indexes (5-7), aspect (4), mood (4), polarity (2)

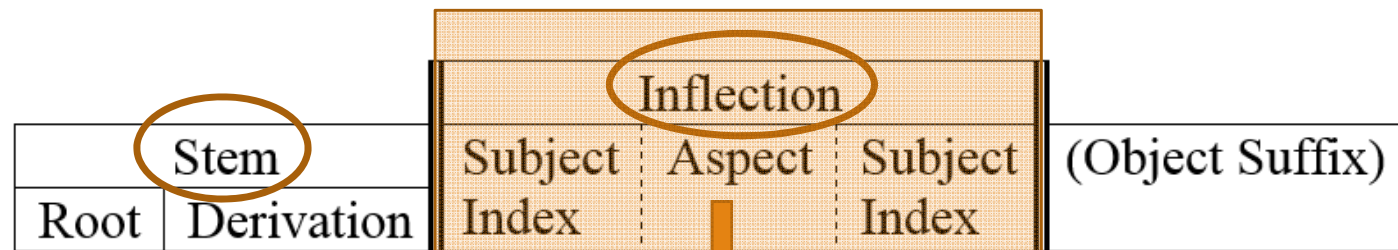
- **Subordinate verbs with reduced inflectional potential:**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| • Relative verbs  | (7 SBJ, 4 aspects, no mood, only affirmative)     |
| • Converbs        | (5 SBJ, 2 aspects, no mood, 2 polarities, SR)     |
| • Purposive verbs | (5 SBJ, no aspect, no mood, only affirmative, SR) |
| • Verbal nouns    | (infinite)  |

→ Negative counterpart: Negative participle

# 2.1. Main verbs

Figure 1. Structure of indicative affirmative main verbs



Fusion of inflectional morphemes > glossed as one portmanteau morpheme

e.g.  
Causative  
Passive  
Middle

Imperfective  
Perfective  
Perfect  
Progressive

e.g.

*mar-áno* 3mIPFV 'he goes'  
*márr-o* 3mPFV 'he went'  
*márr-ee'u* 3mPRF 'he has gone'  
*mar-áyyoo'u* 3mPROG 'he is going'

Bipartite (discontinuous) subject index



## 2.1. Relative verbs

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- **Stress shift** in the imperfective (IPFV) and perfective (PFV) – but *not* in perfect (PRF) and progressive (PROG)

### Main verb forms

*mar-áno* 3mIPFV ‘he goes’

*márr-o* 3mPFV ‘he went’

*márr-ee’u* 3mPRF ‘he has gone’

*mar-áyyoo’u* 3mPROG ‘he is going’

### Relative verb forms

*mar-anó* 3mIPFV.REL + N ‘[the N where] he goes [to]’

*márr-ó* 3mPFV.REL + N ‘[the N where] he went [to]’

*márr-ee* 3mPRF.REL + N ‘[the N where] he has gone [to]’

*mar-áyyoo* 3mPROG + N ‘[the N where] he is going [to]’

- (Independent of stress shift) Loss of “glottal appendices” in certain persons (e.g. ’u); process not restricted to relativization, but whenever another morpheme is suffixed to the main verb

## 2.1. Relative verbs

|           | Imperfective<br>main verb<br><i>fan-</i> ‘open’ | Imperfective<br>relative verb<br><i>fan-</i> ‘open’ |           | Imperfective<br>main verb<br><i>fan-</i> ‘open’<br>plus <i>-se</i> 3fO | Imperfective<br>relative verb<br><i>fan-</i> ‘open’<br>plus <i>-se</i> 3fO |
|-----------|---|---|-----------|--|--|
| 1s        | <i>fan-áamm[i]</i>                              | <i>fan-aammí</i>                                    | 1s        | <i>fan-áan-se</i>  | <i>fan-aan-sé</i>  |
| 2s        | <i>fan-táant[i]</i>                             | <i>fan-taanti</i>                                   | 2s        | <i>fan-táanti-se</i>   | <i>fan-taanti-sé</i>   |
| 3m        | <i>fan-áno</i>                                  | <i>fan-anó</i>                                      | 3m        | <i>fan-áno-se</i>  | <i>fan-ano-sé</i>  |
| 3f = 3p   | <i>fan-táa’u</i>                                | <i>fan-táa</i>                                      | 3f = 3p   | <i>fan-táa-se</i>  | <i>fan-taa-sé</i>  |
| 3hon      | <i>fan-éenno</i>                                | <i>fan-eennó</i>                                    | 3hon      | <i>fan-éenno-se</i>  | <i>fan-eenno-sé</i>  |
| 1p        | <i>fan-náamm[i]</i>                             | <i>fan-naammí</i>                                   | 1p        | <i>fan-náan-se</i>   | <i>fan-naan-sé</i>   |
| 2p = 2hon | <i>fan-teenánta</i>                             | <i>fan-teenantá</i>                                 | 2p = 2hon | <i>fan-teenánta-se</i>   | <i>fan-teenanta-sé</i>   |

‘[SBJ] open(s) for her’    ‘that [SBJ] open(s) for her’

Main verb: stress on the penultimate syllable of the inflectional morpheme –  
Relative verb: stress on the penultimate syllable of the **word**



## 2.1. Relative verb [Example]

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- (3) *Tiin* [ *gall-ó=r-a*  
P\_DEM1.fNOM stay\_overnight-3mPFV.REL=NMZ4-mACC  
*it-eennó*] Relative\_clause *jeechch-úta* Head\_noun *agúd-dee-'e*  
eat-3honIPFV.REL time-fACC seem-3fPRF-1sO

‘I think, it’s time for breakfast (lit. This seems to me the time (at which) **one eats** what has stayed overnight).’

## 2.1. Relative verb [Example]

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(3) *Tiin* [gall-ó=r-a  
P\_DEM1.fNOM stay\_overnight-3mPFV.REL=NMZ4-mACC  
*it-eennó*]\*<sub>Relative\_clause</sub> *jeechch-úta* <sub>Head\_noun</sub> *agúd-dee-'e*  
eat-3honIPFV.REL time-fACC seem-3fPRF-1sO

‘I think, it’s time for breakfast (lit. This seems to me the time (at which) **one eats** what has stayed overnight).’



No case/gender agreement between  
relative verb and head noun

\*Corresponding main verb form: *it-éenno* ‘one eats’

## 2.1. Negative relative verbs

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- Stress shift and drop of “glottal appendices” (e.g. *'u*) > leads to ungrammatical relative forms if applied to **negative** main verbs (standard negator *-ba 'a*)

*mar-áno-ba'a* 3mIPFV-NEG ‘he does not go’

*mar-im-bá'a* 3mNON.IPFV-NEG ‘he did not go/hasn't gone/isn't going’

→ *\*mar-ano-bá* 3mIPFV-NEG.REL + N

intended meaning: ‘[the N where] he does not go [to]’

→ *\*mar-im-bá* 3mNON.IPV-NEG.REL

intended meaning: ‘[the N where] he did not go/hasn't gone/isn't going [to]’



Negative counterpart: Negative participle

## 2.2. Adjectives

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- As modifiers in the NP: case/gender-agreement with head noun, 3-case system ACC, NOM, OBL
- As NP heads: full case-marking potential, 9-case system like nouns ACC, NOM, GEN, DAT, ABL, ICP,\* LOC, OBL, PRED
- Adjectives fall into 5 declensions

Table 1. Case/gender morphemes on adjectives in *-ú(-ta)* (Declension A2)

|   | ACC          | NOM          | OBL                 |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| M | <i>-ú</i>    | <i>'-u</i>   | <i>'-o ~ '-u-a</i>  |
| F | <i>-ú-ta</i> | <i>'-u-t</i> | <i>'-o ~ '-u-ta</i> |

\*ICP = instrumental-comitative-perlative

## 2.2. Adjectives

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- Case/gender-agreement agreement of adjectives

(2) *muccur-ú*      *wo'-á*  
clean-mACC    water-mACC

*muccúr-u*      *wó'-u*  
clean-mNOM    water-mNOM

*muccúr-o*      *wo'-íin*  
clean-mOBL    water-mICP\*

‘(with) clean water’

*muccur-úta*    *bu'leechch-úta*  
clean-fACC      spring-fACC

*muccúr-ut*      *bu'lléechch-ut*  
clean-fNOM      spring-fNOM

*muccúr-o*      *bu'leechch-óochch*  
clean-fOBL      spring-fABL

‘(from a) clean spring’

\*ICP = instrumental-comitative-perlative

## 2.3. Negative participles

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Figure 2. Structure of negative participles

= final verb in a negative relative clause

|      |            | Verbal Inflection |      | Adjectival inflection |                 |
|------|------------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Stem |            | Subject Index     | -umb | Case/Gender           | (Object Suffix) |
| Root | Derivation |                   |      |                       |                 |

## 2.3. Negative participles

Figure 2. Structure of negative participles = final verb in a negative relative clause

|      |            | Verbal Inflection |      | Adjectival inflection |                 |
|------|------------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Stem |            | Subject Index     | -umb | Case/Gender           | (Object Suffix) |
| Root | Derivation |                   |      |                       |                 |

Suprising position of OBJ after the adjectival agreement morphology

Figure 1. Structure of indicative affirmative main verbs

|      |            | Inflection    |        |               |                 |
|------|------------|---------------|--------|---------------|-----------------|
| Stem |            | Subject Index | Aspect | Subject Index | (Object Suffix) |
| Root | Derivation |               |        |               |                 |

= basis for the final verb in an affirmative relative clause

## 2.3. Negative participles

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**Table 2. Inflection of negative participles**  
(Subject index-NEG.PTC-Case/gender)

|          | -mACC               | -mNOM               | -mOBL*              | -fACC                 | -fNOM                | -fOBL*              |
|----------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1s/3m    | -Ø- <i>umb-ú</i>    | -Ø- <i>úmb-u</i>    | -Ø- <i>úmb-o</i>    | -Ø- <i>umb-úta</i>    | -Ø- <i>úmb-ut</i>    | -Ø- <i>úmb-o</i>    |
| 2s/3f/3p | - <i>t-umb-ú</i>    | - <i>t-úmb-u</i>    | - <i>t-úmb-o</i>    | - <i>t-umb-úta</i>    | - <i>t-úmb-ut</i>    | - <i>t-úmb-o</i>    |
| 3hon     | - <i>een-umb-ú</i>  | - <i>een-úmb-u</i>  | - <i>een-úmb-o</i>  | - <i>een-umb-úta</i>  | - <i>een-úmb-ut</i>  | - <i>een-úmb-o</i>  |
| 1p       | - <i>n-umb-ú</i>    | - <i>n-úmb-u</i>    | - <i>n-úmb-o</i>    | - <i>n-umb-úta</i>    | - <i>n-úmb-ut</i>    | - <i>n-úmb-o</i>    |
| 2p/hon   | - <i>teen-umb-ú</i> | - <i>teen-úmb-u</i> | - <i>teen-úmb-o</i> | - <i>teen-umb-úta</i> | - <i>teen-úmb-ut</i> | - <i>teen-úmb-o</i> |

\*Only one of two alternative oblique forms is given.



## 2.3. Negative participles

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While affirmative relative verbs can be marked for four aspects (like indicative main verbs), these aspectual categories are **neutralised** in negative participles.

A negative participle can have an imperfective meaning:

- (4) [*reh-een**umb**-ú*]=*bb-a*                      *iill-áamm*                      *y-ít (...)*  
die-3hon**NEG.PTC**-mACC=place-mACC reach-1sIPFV                      say-3fPCO

‘Assuming that she would reach a place where one does not die, (...).’  
(Excluded in the context: ‘where one hasn’t died/did not die’)

Corresponding affirmative relative verb: *reh-eennó* die-3hon**IPFV**.REL ‘(where) one dies’

## 2.3. Negative participles

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A negative participle can also have a non-imperfective, e.g. a perfect, meaning:

- (5) [*Mexx-uhú-u*                      *af-umb-ú*]                      *mat-ú*                      *daqayy-á*  
single-mNOM-ADD    take-3m**NEG.PTC**-mACC    one-mACC                      pasture-mACC
- daqq-itoontiichch*    *hitt*                      *íull-at*                      *kii-taa*  
find-2sPFV.ABL    A\_DEM2.fNOM                      land-fNOM                      2sGEN-fCOP2

‘When you discover a pasture that nobody has (yet) taken then this land is yours.’  
(Excluded in this context: ‘that nobody will take’)

Corresponding affirmative relative verb: *áff-ee* take-3m**PRF**.REL ‘(that) he has taken’

## 2.3. Negative participles

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In the same way as the affirmative relative verb, the negative participle can carry an object suffix (position **after** case/gender morpheme)

- (6a) [héechch-at] bajig-is-s-**umb-u-sí** manch-ú  
 life-fNOM become\_happy-CAUS1-3f-**NEG.PTC**-mACC-3mO man.SG-mACC
- sáz-u*                      *baréed-a-a*  
 advise-mNOM      good-mPRED-mCOP2

‘Advising a man [(whom) life does not make happy] is good.’  
 (lit. Advising a [life does not make him happy] man is good.)

Here: participle is indexed for the subject ‘life’, agreement in case and gender with the head noun ‘man’, object pronoun co-referent with ‘man’

## 2.3. Negative participles

---

In the same way as the affirmative relative verb, the negative participle can carry an object suffix (position after case/gender morpheme)

(6b) [*Azzazam*- $\emptyset$ -*umb-o-ssá*]                      *mann-á*  
obey- $\emptyset$ -**NEG.PTC**-mACC-3honO    people-mACC

*hór-a-nii*                      *iyy-aqq-een-úmb-u-a*  
all-mOBL-ADD    carry-MID-3hon-NEG.PTC-mPRED-mCOP2

‘He (honorific) does not at all support (lit. carry) people (who) don’t obey him (honorific).’

Here: head noun is the object in the matrix clause but the subject in the relative clause, participle is indexed (3m) for the subject ‘people’, participle agrees in case and gender with the head noun ‘people’, object pronoun co-referent with the honorific subject of the matrix clause

# 3. Uses

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ADNOMINAL MODIFIER, PREDICATE, HEAD OF NP

## 3.1. As adnominal modifier

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- Negative participles in noun-modifying (relative) clauses  
- see all examples so far
- Negative participles in *all* relative-based adverbial and complement clauses – see e.g. the purpose clause marked by =*g-a* (diachronic source: noun ‘manner’)

(7) (...) *barg-í*      *zákk-o*      *ka*      *xah-á*  
add-3mPCO    later-mOBL    A\_DEM1.mACC    word-mACC

*hab-úmb-o=g-a.*

forget-3m**NEG.PTC**-mOBL=PURP-mOBL

‘(...) he repeated (what he had said) so that he wouldn’t forget the words later.’

## 3.2. As predicate

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- Negative participles can function as non-verbal predicates > combine with a copula (‘[Subject] is (someone who) never Vs’; predicate-focus construction)

(8)     *Gorréekk*                             *té*     *sagább*  
become\_hungry.3mPCO   or   become\_thirsty.3mPCO

*kas-úmb-u-a*  
do\_ever-3m**NEG.PTC**-mPRED-mCOP2

‘He has never been either hungry or thirsty.’

NB: Negative participles are not used in other complex predicates.

### 3.3. As head of a noun phrase

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- Adjectives can simply become the head of an NP if the head noun is dropped. The adjective just takes on nominal morphology.
- The same is possible for negative participles.

(9) [ *Aass-ú*      *dag-umb-íi* ]  
give-mACC    know-3mNEG.PTC-mDAT  
*aaqq-ú*      *áy*              *ros-íshsh-o-s?*  
take-mACC    who.mNOM    learn-CAUS1-3mPFV-3mO

‘Who has taught taking [to the one who doesn’t know giving]?’  
(Alamu & Alamaayyo 2017)

- **But ...**



## 4. Why „almost“ perfect hybrids?

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Difference 1 between adjectives and participles: Negative participles are often nominalized when used as heads of noun phrases (and thus resemble affirmative relative verbs). Still to be explored: what triggers/blocks nominalization?

- (13) *Bilaambil-úta*      *haar-óo*    *waas-íin*      *shol-éenno*,  
type\_of\_dish-fACC new-fOBL waasa-mICP    cook-3honIPFV  
*abbíshsh*              *eger-úmb-o=hann-íin*  
exceed.3mPCO        stay-3mNEG.PTC-mOBL=NMZ3-mICP

‘The *bilaambiluta*-dish is cooked with new *waasa* (fermented enset pulp), with one that has not been stored (lit. has not stayed) for a long time.’

Excepted form would have been: *eger-umb-íin* {stay-3mNEG.PTC-mICP}

NB: Affirmative relative verbs are **always** nominalized when used as the head of an NP – see (3) above.

# Why „almost“ perfect hybrids?

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The stress pattern of adjectives and negative participles is usually identical; for both it is determined by the case/gender inflection:

|   | ACC  | NOM  | OBL |
|---|------|------|-----|
| m | -ú   | '-u  | '-o |
| f | -úta | '-ut | '-o |

Inflection of simple ADJ and NEG.PTC

# Why „almost“ perfect hybrids?

|   | ACC  | NOM  | OBL |
|---|------|------|-----|
| m | -ú   | '-u  | '-o |
| f | -úta | '-ut | '-o |

Inflection of simple ADJ and NEG.PTC

Difference 2: Stress pattern of negative participles deviates from that of adjectives in one context, i.e. in the accusative when the participle carries an object suffix

Adjectives with POSS pronouns

|   | ACC     | NOM      | OBL      |
|---|---------|----------|----------|
| m | -ú-POSS | '-u-POSS | '-o-POSS |
| f | -ú-POSS | '-u-POSS | '-o-POSS |

POSS does not influence stress placement

Negative participles with OBJ pronouns

|   | ACC    | NOM     | OBL     |
|---|--------|---------|---------|
| m | -u-ÓBJ | '-u-OBJ | '-o-OBJ |
| f | -u-ÓBJ | '-u-OBJ | '-o-OBJ |

Stress shifts unexpectedly to OBJ in the ACC  
(cf. word-final stress on affirmative relative verbs)

# 5. Summary

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- Negative participles are (internally) verbal
  - contain verbal derivational morphemes (passive, causative, middle etc.)
  - carry subject indexes (= identical to those in other verb forms)
  - carry pronominal object suffixes
  - retain verbal argument structure
  - govern subordinate clauses (recall ex. (1))
- Negative participles are (externally) almost perfectly adjectival
  - agree in case/gender with the head noun (= defining feature of adjectives in Kambaata)
  - can (sometimes) simply be used as heads of NP if head noun is dropped
- Negative participles are aspectually unmarked

# Mysteries ...

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- No other East Cushitic languages seems to have participles (verb-adjective) hybrids – but see gender/number agreeing affirmative and negative relative forms in Xamtanga (Central Cushitic, Darmon 2015: 225-228)
- Where does the negative participle morpheme *-umb* (< *\*um-b* ?) come from, which is not found in the most closely related languages (Alaabe, K'abeena)? > Maybe a study of relativization and negation in regional variants of Kambaata could help.
- How could the morphological make-up of the negative participle be explained?

# References

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# Abbreviations

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A\_DEM = adjectival demonstrative, ABL = ablative, ADD = additive, CAUS = causative, COP = copula, DAT = dative, f = feminine, GEN = genitive, hon = honorific/impersonal, ICP = instrumental-comitative-perlative, IPFV = imperfective, LOC = locative, NEG = negation, NMZ = nominalizer, NOM = nominative, NON.IPFV = non-imperfective, O = object, OBL = oblique, p = plural, P\_DEM = pronominal demonstrative, PCO = perfective converb, PFV = perfective, PRED = predicative, PRF = perfect, PTC = participle, REL = relative, s = singular, SG = singulative, SIM = simulative, SR = switch-reference

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