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## Chapter xxx

# The apprehensive in Kambaata (Cushitic): Form, meaning and origin

Yvonne Treis

LLACAN (CNRS, INALCO)

Kambaata, a Cushitic language, has a dedicated, fully grammaticalised apprehensive paradigm without known parallels in related or neighbouring languages. This chapter presents an analysis of the morphology, syntax, meaning and origin of the apprehensive. Morphological and syntactic criteria demonstrate its main clause status. Data from a variety of sources show that the apprehensive is usually employed in interactional contexts. It encodes that a situation is unrealised at reference time, considered possible in the future and judged to be undesirable, if not dangerous by the speaker. The primary function of the Kambaata apprehensive, in any person, is to express warnings to the addressee, who is alerted to avert the danger. Apprehensive forms of the first person may also serve as a threat. In the second person, the apprehensive has come to express prohibition. Based on detailed language-internal evidence, this chapter demonstrates that the apprehensive paradigm is likely to have resulted from the fusion of a periphrastic verb form in the recent history of the language. The source construction consisted of an affirmative same subject purposive converb plus the existential copula and may have first served to express intentional/imminent future.

## 1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the fully grammaticalised apprehensive paradigm in Kambaata,<sup>1</sup> a Cushitic language of Ethiopia. The apprehensive, as illustrated by *agókkookke* ‘it might drink you, it might make you drown’ in (1) and *eebbókkoot* ‘you might bring’ in (2), expresses apprehension on the part of

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<sup>1</sup>Iso-code 639-3: *ktb*, Glottolog code: *kamb1316*.

the speaker that a potential, undesirable situation may arise and serve as warnings to the addressee. The addressee is alerted so that they take care or counteract any adverse effects. The apprehensive is often translated as negative ('beware that [subject] does not V') but does not contain any overt negative morphology.

- (1) Dialog in a narrative (Field notes 2004)

Wó'-u            ag-ókkoo-kke!  
water-M.NOM drink-3M.APPR-2SG.OBJ

(Husband alerts his wife when approaching a dangerous river) '(Watch out!) The water might "drink" you. / Beware that the water does not "drink" you (i.e. that you don't drown).'

- (2) Double entendre (Alemu Banta, personal communication, 2019)<sup>2</sup>

Aador-á      úl-t                      tíg-unta  
rock-M.ACC touch-3M.PFV.CV tumble.down-3M.PURP.DS  
áabb-a,      eeb-bókkooont reh-úta  
son-M.OBL bring-2SG.APPR death-F.ACC

(In a playful competition, a girl warns a flirty boy of undesirable consequences of his advances) '(Watch out!) When you touch the rocks and cause a landslide, (my) son, you might bring death! / Don't touch the rocks to cause a landslide, (my) son, and (thus) bring death!'

Kambaata is one of only two known African languages with a dedicated verb form for warnings and threats (see Fedotov this volume on the apprehensive construction in the Mande language Gban).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this chapter envisages a detailed synchronic and diachronic description of the Kambaata apprehensive based on field notes and data from local publications. The first section of this chapter is a brief introduction into the language; it provides information on its classification, sociolinguistic aspects and official orthography (§1.1) and on typological features (§1.2). In §1.3, the type of linguistic data used for this study and the number of occurrences of apprehensive examples in the corpus are tabulated. §2 is dedicated to formal aspects of the apprehensive paradigm: §2.1 discusses where the apprehensive fits into the typology of Kambaata verb forms, while §2.2 analyses the individual apprehensive forms and explains their morphological makeup. Semantic aspects of the apprehensive are the focus of §3,

<sup>2</sup>Genre: *Qaanqúta* 'double entendre'. Note the alliteration and the rhyme.

<sup>3</sup>As pointed out to me by Ronny Meyer (personal communication, 2020), Muher, an Ethiosemitic language of the Gunnän Gurage branch, may also have a yet undescribed dedicated apprehensive paradigm. Muher is unrelated to Kambaata but spoken in the proximity of Highland East Cushitic languages in southwestern Ethiopia.

which divides into sections on third, first and second person forms (§3.1-§3.3). The syntax of apprehensive sentences and the expression of pre-emptive measures are elaborated on in §4. Finally, §5 traces the historical development from a periphrastic imminent future verb to an apprehensive on the basis of detailed language-internal evidence. The paper is concluded in §6.

Terminological note: In earlier publications and conference papers on Kambaata, I have glossed and labelled the verb forms for warning and threats in various ways. As I was unsure about the functional range and typological parallels of the *-ókkoo*-paradigm, I was torn between the labels “intimidative”, “admonitive”, “preventive” and “advertive”. The comparison with functionally equivalent verb forms in other languages shows that “apprehensive” is the most appropriate name for the *-ókkoo*-paradigm.

## 1.1 Classification, sociolinguistics and orthography

Kambaata (endonym: *Kambaatissáta*) is a Cushitic language of the Afroasiatic phylum. Together with six other languages it constitutes the Highland East Cushitic language group; Alaaba and K’abeena are its closest relatives. Kambaata is spoken in southwestern Ethiopia in the Kambaata-Xambaaro Zone of the Southern Nation, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region, about 300km far from the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. According to the last census data ([Central Statistical Agency 2007](#): 91), the language has (at least) 615,000 speakers. Kambaata is used as a medium of instruction in public primary schools and taught as a subject up to university level. In September 2018, a Kambaata B.A. programme was launched at Wachamo University in Duuraame (Durame). Amharic, the Ethiopian lingua franca and federal working language, is the most important second language of Kambaata speakers.

The official Kambaata orthography is based on the Roman script ([Treis 2008](#): 73–80; [Alemu 2016](#)) and follows the spelling conventions of the Oromo Qubee script. The orthography is largely phonemic: It represents the five vowel and 27 consonants phonemes as well as phonemic length. In this contribution, the official orthography is adopted with only minor adaptations: phonemic stress is consistently marked throughout the paper by an acute accent, and the phonemic glottal stop is consistently written wherever it occurs in word-medial and word-final position. The following graphemes of the official orthography are not in accordance with the IPA conventions: <ph> /pʰ/, <x> /tʰ/, <q> /kʰ/, <j> /dz/, <c> /tʃ/, <ch> /tʃ/, <sh> /ʃ/, <y> /j/ and <’> /ʔ/. Geminate consonants and long vowels are marked by doubling, e.g. <shsh> /ʃ:/ and <ee> /e:/. Nasalisation is marked by a macron, e.g. <ā> /ā/. Consonant clusters consisting of a glottal stop

and a sonorant are written as trigraphs, e.g. <'rr> /ʔr/, to distinguish them from laryngealised sonorants, e.g. <'r> /r'/.

## 1.2 Typological profile

Kambaata is an agglutinating-fusional language and strictly suffixing. Its constituent order is head-final; hence all modifiers precede the noun in the noun phrase, and all dependent clauses precede independent main clauses. The last constituent in a sentence is usually a fully finite verb or a copula.<sup>4</sup> The following open word classes can be defined on morphosyntactic grounds: nouns, adjectives, verbs, ideophones and interjections. The word class of adverbs is marginal, there are a small number of independent discourse markers, no adpositions and only two true conjunctions. Kambaata is head- and dependent marking with an elaborate case system and subject indexing on verbs. The case system is nominative-accusative: The nominative marks the grammatical subject, whereas the accusative marks direct objects and certain adverbial constituents and serves as the citation form. Nouns and certain pronouns distinguish nine case forms, all of which are marked by a segmental suffix and a specific stress pattern; the case system of adjectives is reduced to three forms. Nouns, pronouns and adjectives are not only obligatorily marked for case but also for gender (masculine vs. feminine). The assignment of gender is mostly arbitrary and only sex-based in the case of nouns referring to human beings and higher animals. Adjectives are a macro-word class of case-/gender-agreeing lexemes that also encompasses cardinal numerals and adnominal demonstratives. Pronouns form a heterogeneous closed word class that subdivides into personal, interrogative and demonstrative pronouns. Ideophones and interjections are morphologically invariant. The former are syntactically integrated and inflected with the help of light verbs (*y-* 'say', *ih-* 'become', *ass-* ~ *a'-* 'do'), the latter constitute utterances of their own. Important features of the verbal system are highlighted in §2 to compare the morphology of the apprehensive with that of other verb forms.

## 1.3 Data

My corpus contains altogether 135 apprehensive examples, which come from a variety of sources that were collected since 2002: recorded conversations and stories, overheard examples, solicited mock dialogues, elicited data and local publi-

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<sup>4</sup>In poetry – see e.g. (2) – the word order is more flexible.

cations (see Table 1).<sup>5</sup>

Table 1: Sources of apprehensive examples

	1 <sup>st</sup> person	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	All
Recorded: Conversations	-	2	1	3
Recorded: Stories	-	-	1	1
Field notes: Overheard	-	4	-	4
Field notes: Mock dialogues	3	5	13	21
Field notes: Elicitation	11	17	19	47
Written: Little Prince	-	7	1	8
Written: Schoolbooks	2	27	11	40
Written: Gospel of John	-	1	-	1
Written: Deuteronomy (ms.)	-	1	5	6
Written: Religious text	-	1	-	1
Written: Dictionary	-	1	1	2
Written: Proverb collection	-	-	1	1
Total	16	66	53	135

Mock dialogues are dialogues of a small number of turns (often 2–4) that are invented by a native speaker under minimal meta-language influence. The speaker is either given a certain communicative setting in English, as in (3), or a Kambaata word form as a point of departure, as in (4).

(3) Example instruction

Imagine a natural dialogue between a mother and a daughter about a dangerous situation for their chicken. (For the apprehensive form thus obtained see (27).)

(4) Example instruction

Imagine a natural dialogue between two people in which the word form *osa'llókkoombe* (= 2SG.APPR of *osa'll-* 'laugh') is naturally used by one of the speakers. (For the example sentence thus obtained see (11).)

<sup>5</sup>The written sources consulted are: Saint-Exupéry (2018); schoolbooks: Kambaata Education Bureau (1989: grade 1–8), (2007: grade 9–10), (2008a: grade 1–4), (2008b: grade 11) and (2010: grade 12); biblical and religious texts: Kambaata and Hadiyya Translation Project Hosaina (2005) and ([n.d.]), and Brook & Yonathan (2013); dictionary: Alemu (2016); proverb collection: Alamu & Alamaayyo (2017).

Elicited data was prompted by apprehensive examples extracted from oral and written texts, or examples sentences were generated by native speakers after I had proposed potential verb forms to them. Elicited examples are also found as by-products in questionnaires on the tense-aspect system or on subordination. The elicited examples were discussed with native speakers to solicit descriptions of possible natural contexts in which they could occur. Most of the data on which this contribution is based was again verified during a field trip in February 2019.

## 2 Morphology

### 2.1 The apprehensive in the typology of Kambaata verbs forms

Kambaata makes a primary morphological distinction between verbs that are used in main vs. subordinate clauses (Figure 1). Fully finite main verbs sub-divide into indicative and directive verb forms. Indicative main verb forms are marked for four different aspects.<sup>6</sup> The directive is unmarked for aspect and splits up into imperative, jussive and benedictive moods. As the apprehensive is exclusively used as a final verb in main clauses and can as such govern all types of subordinate clauses (§4), it definitely belongs to the class of main verbs.

Determining the exact place of the apprehensive in this classification is not trivial. If the criterion of morphological structure is applied, then the apprehensive clearly patterns with affirmative indicative main verbs. Like indicative verbs, it has two slots of subject morphology (Figure 2), whereas directive verbs have only one subject slot (Figure 3) preceding the aspect/mood (A/M) slot. The bipartite, discontinuous subject indexes of indicative verbs are likely the result of the fusion of a periphrastic verb form consisting of a subordinate verb and a superordinate auxiliary, each of which contributed its subject index slot to the fused verb.

Other criteria suggest that the apprehensive is better considered to be a type of directive verb together with the imperative and the jussive. The discussion of the meaning of the apprehensive in §3 shows that it shares semantic features with the negative imperative and jussive. Furthermore, two formal criteria set the apprehensive apart from other indicative verbs: (1) The apprehensive cannot be relativized, unlike all indicative verbs (Treis 2012: 222–226). (2) The apprehensive may not combine with the past and counterfactual particle *ikke* – again unlike all indicative verbs (Treis 2015). Finally, the combinability of the apprehensive

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<sup>6</sup>Tense is not an inflectional category of the Kambaata verb system. The post-predicate particle *ikke* is used to mark past tense (if not clear from the linguistic context) or counterfactuality.

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		Affirmative	Negative	
Main verbs	Indicative	Imperfective	Negative Imperfective	
		Perfective	Negative Non-Imperfective	
		Perfect		
		Progressive		
		←		Apprehensive?
	Directive	Imperative	Negative Imperative	
		Jussive	Negative Jussive	
		Benedictive		
			←	
		←		Apprehensive?

		Affirmative	Negative
Subordinate verbs	Relative	Imperfective	Negative Relative
		Perfective	
		Perfect	
		Progressive	
	Converb	Perfective(-DS)	Negative Converb
		Imperfective(-DS)	
		SS Purposive	(Periphrasis: Negative Relative + =g 'like')
		DS Purposive	
	Infinitive	Verbal noun	(Periphrasis with <i>hoog-</i> 'not do')

Figure 1: Classification of Kambaata verb forms

Stem		Inflection		(Object Suffix)
Root	(Derivation)	Subject Index 1	A/M Subject Index 2	

Figure 2: Structure of inflected verbs with two subject index slots (all affirmative indicative verbs, **apprehensive**, negative imperfective, affirmative relative)

Stem		Inflection		(Object Suffix)
Root	(Derivation)	Subject Index 1	A/M	

Figure 3: Structure of inflected verbs with one subject index slot (all affirmative and negative directive verbs, negative non-imperfective, negative relative, all affirmative and negative converbs)



with pragmatically determined verbal suffixes (e.g. mitigators, markers of (non-)shared knowledge, speaker attitude) seems to be similar to that of directives.<sup>7</sup> Finally, one may also consider establishing a third sub-category of main verb forms for the apprehensive alone – see the third option in Figure 1. Unlike all other main verbs, the apprehensive does not come in an affirmative-negative polarity pair and cannot be morphologically negated.

## 2.2 The morphological structure of the apprehensive

The apprehensive paradigm distinguishes between seven bipartite, discontinuous subject indexes (Table 2), of which the first element precedes and the second element follows the apprehensive morpheme *-ókkoo*: 1SG, 2SG, 3M, 3F/3PL, 3HON, 1PL, and 2PL/2HON. The subject indexes in the first slot (SBJ1) are identical across all finite and partially finite verb forms of Kambaata, those in the second slot (SBJ2) are only found in indicative affirmative main verbs and in the indicative negative imperfective paradigm.<sup>8</sup> The apprehensive morpheme that is wedged between the two parts of the discontinuous subject marker occupies the same position as aspect morphemes (imperfective, perfective, perfect, progressive); aspect-marking and apprehensive morphology is thus mutually exclusive.<sup>9</sup>

Table 2: The apprehensive paradigm

	-SBJ1	-ókkoo	SBJ2	e.g.	<i>ub-</i> ‘fall’	<i>torr-</i> ‘throw’
1SG	-∅	-ókkoo	- <i>mm</i>		<i>ub-ókkoomm</i>	<i>torr-ókkoomm</i>
2SG	- <i>t</i>	-ókkoo	- <i>nt</i>		<i>ub-bókkoo<sup>t</sup></i>	<i>torr-i-tókkoo<sup>t</sup></i>
3M	-∅	-ókkoo	- <i>'u</i>		<i>ub-ókkoo'u</i>	<i>torr-ókkoo'u</i>
3F/3PL	- <i>t</i>	-ókkoo	- <i>'u</i>		<i>ub-bókkoo'u</i>	<i>torr-i-tókkoo'u</i>
3HON	- <i>een</i>	-ókkoo	- <i>mma</i>		<i>ub-eenókkoomma</i>	<i>torr-eenókkoomma</i>
1PL	- <i>n</i>	-ókkoo	- <i>mm</i>		<i>u&lt;m&gt;b-ókkoomm</i>	<i>torr-i-nókkoomm</i>
2PL/2HON	- <i>t-een</i>	-ókkoo	- <i>nta</i>		<i>ub-beenókkoo<sup>t</sup></i>	<i>torr-i-teenókkoo<sup>t</sup></i>

At the boundary between the verb stem and the first subject index slot, predictable morphophonological processes are observable, as the exemplary para-

<sup>7</sup>The last statement is to be taken with due care as the pragmatically determined verbal suffixes, which are a characteristic trait of natural conversations, are still little investigated. Here definitely opens up a field of future research.

<sup>8</sup>There are slight differences in the 3M, 3HON and 2PL/2HON morphemes of the SBJ2 slot across the main verb paradigms; see Table 5.

<sup>9</sup>The aspect/mood slot in Figure 2 and Figure 3 may be filled by one morpheme only.

digms of *ub-* ‘fall’ and *torr-* ‘throw’ in Table 2 illustrate. Assimilation, epenthesis and metathesis help prevent illicit consonant clusters when 2SG or 3F/3PL *-t* or 1PL *-n* meet C- and CC-final verb stems. In the examples given in this contribution, the discontinuous subject index and the apprehensive morpheme are not segmented from each other (see right half of Figure 2), but the inflectional complex is glossed as if it was a portmanteau-morpheme, namely as 1SG.APPR, 2SG.APPR, etc. Predictable morpho-phonological changes are not indicated in the glosses either. Dependent object pronouns are suffixed after the second subject index slot – see, for instance, (1), (5), (6) and (19). Pragmatically determined discourse suffixes may occur in the slot after the object pronouns – see, for instance, (11). The morphological structure of the apprehensive verb is sketched in Figure 4.

Root	(-Derivation)	-SBJ1	<i>-ókk</i>	-SBJ2	(-OBJ)	(-PRAG)
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Figure 4: Morphological structure of the apprehensive verb

### 3 Semantics

The discussion of the semantics of the apprehensive divides into three sections that treat third (§3.1), first (§3.2) and second person forms (§3.3). The division of §3 into subsections for different persons is motivated by Vuillermet’s (2018) observation that languages may impose person restrictions on apprehensives, that some person forms may be less frequent than others, and/or that certain persons favour default readings.

#### 3.1 Third person apprehensive forms

In the third person, the apprehensive forms express warnings of potential events that the speaker is worried about, that they consider undesirable (if not dangerous) and that they expect the addressee to avert. Pre-emptive measures do not need to be expressed overtly – but they are often mentioned in adjacent sentences or in clauses that are subordinate to the apprehensive clause (see details in §4). As shown in Table 2, Kambaata distinguishes three third person forms: masculine, feminine/plural and honorific/impersonal.<sup>10</sup> In the introductory example (1), a husband warns his wife of a dangerous river, which might make her

<sup>10</sup>By accident, all apprehensive forms in (near-)natural examples have 3M subjects; 3F and 3HON forms are only attested in elicited data.

drown. In (5), from a recorded conversation about birth traditions, the quoted impersonal speakers (= the Kambaata people) fear that a young mother falls victim to a disease. As a pre-emptive measure, the mother leaves the house with a knife and a bunch of sooty straw in her hand. The addressees of the reported speech event are unexpressed but can be assumed to be her family members.

- (5) Recorded conversation (EK2016-02-23\_002)  
 (...) shum-áa ful-taní-i (...) billaww-ahá-a  
 urine-F.DAT go.out-3F.IPFV.CV-ADD knife-M.ACC-ADD  
 ka xit-ahá-a áf-f ful-táa'u,  
 A\_DEM1.M.ACC soot-M.ACC-ADD seize-3F.PCO go.out-3F.IPFV  
 michch-ókkoo-se y-éeni-yan (...)  
 cause.disease.sp-3M.APPR-3F.OBJ say-3HON.IPFV.CV-DS

(Speaking about a woman who has recently given birth) ‘(...) and when she goes out to pee, she grabs a knife and this (bunch of straw smeared with) soot, (because one) says (among the Kambaata): “She (as a young mother) might get attacked by the *michcha*-disease (lit. it might *michcha* her)”’.

Also the following apprehensive examples from the written corpus are found in reported speech. Example (6) is a self-quotation, in which the speaker reports a warning from an internal monologue.<sup>11</sup> Example (7) is here presented to demonstrate that the quoted speaker (and not the actual speaker/writer) is the source of the evaluation of the situation as undesirable and as apprehension-causing.<sup>12</sup>

- (6) (Saint-Exupéry 2018: 87)  
 (...) án waal-tókkooont y-áayyoommi-i  
 1SG.NOM come-2SG.APPR say-1SG.PROG.REL-NMZ1.M.NOM  
 worr-íichch-u kar-ókkoo-he y-í-ne-eb-be  
 snakes-SGV-M.NOM sting-3M.APPR-2SG.OBJ say-1SG.PFV.CV-L-COP3-PRAG5  
 (Little Prince speaking to the pilot) ‘(...) I said “(Better) don’t come!”  
 (because) I thought (lit. said) “The snake might bite you”’.

- (7) (Alamu & Alamaayyo 2017: 52)

<sup>11</sup>I refer here to the form *kar-ókkoo-he*; second person forms such *waal-tókkooont* and their prohibitive pragmatic force are discussed in §3.3.

<sup>12</sup>All examples taken from publications in the Kambaata language are stress-marked, segmented, glossed and translated to English by the present author.

Gag-á-s                      sh-eenáni-yan                      “Arg-é                      oddishsh-áta  
 self-M.ACC-3M.POSS kill-3HON.IPFV.CV-DS                      loan-F.GEN clothes-F.ACC  
 qég-u                      ba’-is-ókkoo’u”                      y-ée’u  
 blood-M.NOM become.spoil-CAUS1-3M.APPR say-3M.PFV

‘When he is being killed, he says, “The blood might spoil the borrowed clothes.”’ (i.e. He is more worried about his borrowed clothes than his own life).

Kambaata does not seem to impose any semantic restrictions on the verbs that can serve as input for the apprehensive form. One finds, for instance, not only dynamic verbs but also inchoative-stative property verbs in warnings (8).

(8) Elicited (Field notes 2019)

Juus-áan                      hoolam-á                      wo’-á                      wór-tooti,  
 juice-M.LOC much-M.ACC water-M.ACC put.in-2SG.IMP.NEG2  
 qac-ókkoo’u  
 become.thin-3M.APPR

‘Don’t pour too much water into the juice, it might become (too) thin.’

Furthermore, Kambaata does not exclude verbs that typically express positive states of affairs, such as *bajig*- ‘be(come) happy’, from apprehensive clauses. However, when such verbs are apprehensive-marked, the event can only be interpreted as negative for the speaker and/or the addressee. In (9), the speaker is worried that the addressee’s enemy is happy about the addressee’s failure.

(9) Elicited (Field notes 2019)

Qáar-t    huját-i!  
 become.strong-2SG.PFV.CV work-2SG.IMP  
 Bux-xoontí=da    díin-u                      bajig-ókkoo’u  
 become.poor-2SG.PFV.REL=COND enemy-M.NOM become.happy-3M.APPR

‘Work hard! If you sink into poverty, the enemies might be happy.’

### 3.2 First person apprehensive forms

First person singular and plural apprehensive forms are the least frequent forms in my corpus (see Table 1), hence I supplemented the two examples from the schoolbooks, which are quoted in (13) and (16), by elicited sentences and invented dialogues. In the first person, as in the third person (§3.1), the apprehensive is used to utter warnings of looming dangers and potential accidental events, such

as a dangerous fall (10), an unintended breach of social conventions (11), or a car crash (13). The speaker assumes the addressee to be able to take pre-emptive steps in order to avert the undesirable event.

- (10) Elicited (Field notes 2019)

Ub-ókkoomm, ka masalaal-á áf-i  
fall-1SG.APPR A\_DEM1.M.ACC ladder-M.ACC seize-2SG.IMP

(Possible context provided: Speaker is standing on a ladder that is held by the addressee) ‘(Take care!) I might fall. Hold the ladder!’

- (11) Mock dialogue (DW2019-02-17)

Osa’ll-ókkoomm-be, sá  
fall-1SG.APPR-PRAG5 shush.INTJ

(Context: On the way to visit a mourning family, Speaker asks Addressee to keep his mouth shut so that he doesn’t burst out laughing. However, Addressee keeps chatting away. Speaker interrupts him:) ‘(Watch out!) I might laugh (as I said earlier), shush!’

The worried speaker and the alerted addressee can be the same person, as in (12), which is a warning to self.

- (12) Elicited (Field notes 2003, 2019)

Ub-ókkoomm, qoraphph-eemmi=da xúm-a-a  
fall-1SG.APPR take.care.MID-1SG.PFV.REL=COND good-M.PRED-M.COP2

(Possible context provided: Speaker spots a slippery spot ahead of them and tells themselves) ‘I might fall, it’s good to be careful.’

The potential event is undesirable for the speaker (10)-(12), or the speaker and their group (13).

- (13) (Kambaata Education Bureau 2008a: 4.55)

Háy lášsh=y-ít otá-i! Ka’llixx-áan  
please.INTJ slow.IDEO=say-2SG.PFV.CV drive-2SG.IMP accident-M.LOC  
aa<n>gókkoomm  
enter<1PL>APPR

(Speaker warns a speeding driver) ‘I beg you, drive slowly! We might have (lit. enter) an accident.’

Apart from expressing the speaker’s fear of an undesirable event with a negative impact on themselves, the first person apprehensive form is also used for

threats. Here the potential danger is not accidental but inflicted on the addressee by the speaker. The event expressed in the apprehensive clause can be straightforwardly undesirable, such as the kicks in (14) and the betrayal of a secret in (15), or have undesirable consequences, such as the inevitable punishment that would follow if the speaker saw the addressee breaking the rules in (16).

- (14) Elicited (Field notes 2019)

Ool-ókkoon-ke  
kick-1SG.APPR-2SG.OBJ

(Possible context provided: Addressee has been teasing Speaker for a while. Speaker threatens) ‘(Stop it, otherwise) I kick you!’

- (15) Elicited (Field notes 2004)

Mát-o bare-’ée=bii kul-ókkoomm  
one-M.OBL day-ASSOC=NMZ2.M.ACC tell-1SG.APPR

(Possible context provided: Speaker knows a secret of Addressee that they promised to keep. Now that Addressee annoys them, they threaten) ‘(Stop it, otherwise) I might tell/reveal that (secret) of the other day!’

- (16) (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 4.45)

Īi béet-o lankii kánn haqq-í al-í  
1SG.GEN son-M.OBL again A\_DEM1.M.OBL tree-M.GEN top-M.ACC  
ful-táni-yan xuud-ókkoon-ke  
go.up-2SG.IPFV.CV-DS see-1SG.APPR-2SG.OBJ

(Context: Although the mother has strictly forbidden it, a boy (= the addressee) continues to climb onto the fruit tree in the front yard. The mother gets angry and threatens him) ‘(Stop it,) my son, I might see you climbing this tree again (and this will have negative consequences)!’

Vuillermet (2018) shows in her cross-linguistic study of 46 South American and Australian languages that only 63.6% of the languages with apprehensive morphology have first person forms attested. Among the 17 languages that have first person transitive subject forms with [+control] verbs, evidence of a warning reading (‘I might accidentally hit you’) is provided for only one language, Matses, while in 16 languages only a threat reading is confirmed. Like Matsés, Kambaata does not impose a threat reading on [+control] verbs: The ‘hit’-verb in (13) can equally well be used for a warning, see (17).

- (17) (Deginet Wotango Doyiso, personal communication, 2020)

Woqqar-ókkoon-ke

hit-1SG.APPR-2SG.OBJ

(i) (Threat) ‘(Watch out!) I might hit you!’

(ii) (Warning) ‘(Watch out! Step aside, otherwise) I might accidentally hit you!’

### 3.3 Second person apprehensive forms

The second person apprehensive forms are not only the most frequently attested forms in the database (Table 1) but also commonly overheard in conversations. In (18), the speaker expresses concern that the addressee might finish the coffee to his (= the addressee’s) disadvantage. In (19), the speaker is worried about a potential infection. In an example from the oral literature in (2), a girl warns a boy about the potential undesirable consequences of his advances. The looming, dangerous or disadvantageous situation is undesirable for the speaker and/or the addressee.

- (18) Overheard in a Kambaata household (2019)

Kesáa xoof-fókkoot

2SG.DAT finish-2SG.APPR

(Observed context: Addressee has boiled coffee for three people, now he is generously filling two cups for Speaker and a third person. Speaker is worried that not enough will be left in the pot to also fill Addressee’s own cup.) ‘(Take care!) You might finish it to your disadvantage! / Don’t finish it up on you!’

- (19) Elicited (Field notes 2019)

Gansh-ú-kk                    hígis-sókkonte-’e,                    shiin-á-kk

cold-M.ACC-2SG.POSS pass-CAUS1-2SG.APPR-1SG.OBJ side-M.ACC-2SG.POSS

waal-áam-ba’a

come-1SG.IPFV-NEG1

‘You might pass on the cold to me, I don’t come near you.’

The two alternative translations in (2) and (18) reflect the recurring difficulty to decide whether second person apprehensive forms are better translated as warnings of a worried speaker or as simple negative commands. The use of the conative interjection *háy* ‘please, I beg you’ with the apprehensive form in (20) shows that the utterance is possibly less a warning of an imprudent, unintentional realisation of an event (‘you might hurry on’) than a request (‘do not hurry on’).

(20) (Saint-Exupéry 2018: 95)

Ta ma'nn-ichch-únta-ma iill-iteentáachch  
 A\_DEM1.F.ACC place-SGV-F.ACC<EMP>-CF reach-2PL.PFV.REL.ABL  
 háy sarb-an-teenókkoon-ta  
 please.INTJ hurry-PASS-2PL.APPR

(Pilot to the readers of the Little Prince) 'If you should come upon this very spot, please, do not hurry on.'

In contexts such as (20), the semantic differences between second person apprehensive and negative imperative forms (singular: *'-tooti*, plural: *-téenoochche*) are subtle and hard to pinpoint, and native speakers often accept to swap apprehensive for regular negative imperative forms and vice versa. In discussions about the meaning differences, speakers voice conflicting intuitions. The verb forms are sometimes qualified as synonymous, or the apprehensive is interpreted as a reinforced (21), occasionally even as a mitigated command (20). It seems safe to assume that mitigation and reinforcement are not inherent to the second person apprehensive forms but contributed by other elements in the linguistic context, such as the polite interjection in (20), the adverb *hináten* 'by any means, at all' in (21) and possibly various other factors.

(21) (Alemu 2016: 158)

Buchch-á ít-i! [Definition:] mat-ú ikk-ee  
 soil-M.ACC eat-2SG.IMP one-M.ACC become-3M.PRF.REL  
 xaw-á huj-íta hinát-e-n agur-tókkoon-t  
 issue-M.ACC work-F.ACC totality-F.OBL-EMP abandon-2SG.APPR  
 y-éen qaar-s-íi y-eennó  
 say-3HON.PFV.CV become.strong-CAUS1-M.DAT say-3HON.IPFV.REL  
 yann-á  
 saying-M.ACC

(Dictionary entry) 'Eat soil! (i.e. Persevere!)' = (Definition) 'Saying that is uttered to encourage (lit. strengthen) (somebody), meaning "Do not, by any means, give up on a problem (or) a job!"'

The near synonymy of the apprehensive and the negative imperative is also reflected in the written Kambaata literature where the verb forms may occur in identical contexts; see, e.g., the Bible excerpt in (22).

(22) (Kambaata and Hadiyya Translation Project Hosaina [n.d.]



Bookk-íta it-téenoochche; (...) resh-á-ssa-n  
pigs-F.ACC eat-2PL.IMP.NEG2 carcass-M.ACC-3PL.POSS-EMP  
ul-teenókkoota  
touch-2PL.APPR

(Draft translation of Deuteronomy 14,8) ‘Don’t eat pigs; (...) don’t touch their carcasses.’

Despite examples such as (21) and (22),<sup>13</sup> the apprehensive tends to express warnings of unintended, undesirable actions and the negative imperative prohibitions of actions that the addressee carries out wilfully, as can also be seen in “minimal pairs” such as (23) and (24). All speakers I consulted agreed that (23) is a warning of an unintentional step into the mud, while (24) is a prohibition of an intentional step into the mud. Similarly, the imperative *úb-booti* (fall-2SG.IMP.NEG2) ‘don’t fall’ is only considered felicitous when the speaker trains falling down, and the speaker wants them to stop, while *ub-bókkoot* (fall-2SG.APPR) ‘(watch out!) don’t fall’ is used as a warning of an unintended fall.

(23) Elicited (Field notes 2005)

Orc-áan aag-gókkoot  
mud-M.LOC enter-2SG.APPR

(Possible context provided: Addressee approaches a muddy spot. Speaker warns Addressee of a danger) ‘(Watch out!) You might step into the mud! / Don’t step (accidentally) into the mud!’

(24) Elicited (Field notes 2005)

Orc-áan áag-gooti  
mud-M.LOC enter-2SG.IMP.NEG2

(Possible context provided: Addressee, e.g. a child, is happily jumping into every mud pit on the way) ‘Don’t step (intentionally) into the mud!’

Dobrushina (2006) and Pakendorf & Schalley (2007) have documented a grammaticalization path from markers of possibility to prohibitives via intermediate stages of apprehension and warning. Kambaata gives further evidence for this diachronic development. The apprehensive verb form, which is used to express the speaker’s concern about the realisation of an undesirable potential event, as is still clearly seen in the first and third persons, becomes more and more interpreted as a prohibitive in the second persons. The pre-emptive measure originally

<sup>13</sup>See also the second person apprehensive form used for the prohibition of a willful action in (6).

only implicit in the apprehensive verb (or expressed in adjacent clauses) has become its central meaning component, whereas the apprehensional component is backgrounded or lost: ‘You might finish it (implicit: Take care not to).’ > ‘Do not finish it!’ However, the existence of contexts such as (23) and (24) where either only second person negative imperative or second person apprehensive forms are felicitous, shows that the verb forms are not yet fully synonymous.

## 4 Syntax

Apprehensive verbs are only used in main clauses and, given the fairly strict head-finality of Kambaata, they thus usually occur sentence-finally. Furthermore, they are used in reported speech, see (5)-(7) and (21). Apprehensive verbs may head complex sentences consisting of several clauses. While the apprehensive main clause expresses the apprehension-causing situation, dependent subordinate clauses express the temporal context or the condition under which the apprehension-causing situation is realised. It is fairly common to find the pre-emptive action expressed in a negative subordinate clause (‘if not [pre-emptive action]’). Example (25) consists of three clauses, of which clause 3 contains the apprehension-causing situation, namely the subject’s burning; clause 2 expresses an event that precedes the burning in time; clause 1 states the condition under which the apprehension-causing situation comes true, namely under the condition that the addressee fails to carry out the pre-emptive action. The subordinate clauses in (25) are headed by perfective converbs (PFV.CV), which leave the semantic relation with the subsequent clause fairly vague. Here the perfective converbs are interpreted as expressing a condition (*hóoggiyan*) and anteriority (*aphphítiyan*).

(25) Elicited (Field notes 2004)

[Giir-áta danáam-o=gg-a tú'mm=a'-ú  
fire-F.ACC good-M.OBL=SIM-M.OBL narrow.down.IDEO=do-M.ACC  
hóog-gi-yan]<sub>CLAUSE 1</sub> [mát-oa=rr-áan aphph-íti-yan]<sub>CLAUSE 2</sub>  
not.do-2SG.PFV.CV-DS one-M.OBL=NMZ4-M.LOC seize.MID-3F.PFV.CV-DS  
[bu<m>bókkoomm]<sub>CLAUSE 3</sub>  
burn<1PL>APPR

‘(Watch out!) If you don’t narrow down the fire properly (to the small spot in the centre of the fireplace), it (lit. she = the fire) might light something and we might burn.’

In (26), the pre-emptive action is expressed in a different type of subordinate

clause, in a negative conditional/temporal clause (formally a headless, ablative-marked participle).

(26) Elicited (Field notes 2004)

Rubbat-aan-ch-ú      áf-f      waal-tumb-óochch  
 guarantee-AG-SGV-M.ACC take-2SG.PFV.CV come-2SG.NEG5-ABL  
 gizz-á      kam-ókkoon-ke  
 money-M.ACC deny-1SG.APPR-2SG.OBJ

‘If you don’t come with a guarantor, then, (I am afraid,) I might deny you the money (i.e. the loan).’

Most frequently, however, we find the pre-emptive action expressed in a sentence adjacent to (i.e. syntactically independent of) the sentence expressing the apprehension-causing situation. A typical example is given in (27): here a following imperative sentence tells the addressee how to avert the danger.

(27) Mock dialogue (DW2016-04-01)

Tees-ó      antabee’-ú      súl-u      oróoshsh  
 now-F.GEN chicken-M.ACC predator.sp-M.NOM go.out.CAUS1.3M.PFV.CV  
 kam-ókkoo’u,      háy      xúud-i  
 do.completely-3M.APPR please.INTJ look-2SG.IMP

‘A sula-predator (*genetta abyssinica*) might snatch these chicken away, please, look (after them)!’

In much the same way as in (27), pre-emptive situations are expressed in syntactically independent imperative, prohibitive and indicative sentences in other examples of this chapter; see Table 3 for links to the relevant examples.

Table 3: The expression of pre-emptive situations in independent sentences

Preceding indicative sentence	(5)
Following indicative sentence	(12), (19)
Preceding imperative sentence	(8), (9), (13)
Following imperative sentence	(10), (27)
Following imperative interjection	(11)
Preceding prohibitive sentence	(6)

The Kambaata apprehensive is neither used in negative purpose clauses<sup>14</sup> nor for direct embedding under ‘fear’-predicates (cf. [Lichtenberk 1995](#)). However, an apprehensive form is attested in a reported internal monologue in (28). The reported monologue is followed by the matrix verb ‘say’, which is subordinate to a ‘fear’-predicate.

(28) Elicited (Field notes 2019)

Mar-ókkoo-ndo y-í=ké’                      báabb                      bá’-ee’u  
go-3M.APPR-Q    say-3M.PCO=SEQ fear.3M.PFV.CV go.bad-3M.PRF

‘He<sub>i</sub> was extremely worried that he<sub>i</sub> would leave (lit. Saying “He might leave”, he feared badly).’

## 5 Historical origin

The Kambaata apprehensive must have been grammaticalised fairly recently, because – to the best of my knowledge – no similar paradigm is found in other Cushitic languages. Not even the grammars of the most closely related languages, Alaaba ([Schneider-Blum 2007](#)), K’abeena ([Crass 2005](#)), Hadiyya ([Tadesse 2015](#)) and Sidaama ([Kawachi 2007](#); [Anbessa 2014](#)), mention a verbal paradigm of similar form or function.<sup>15</sup> The discussion of the origin of the Kambaata apprehensive paradigm can thus not be based on comparative but only on language-internal evidence.

I argue in this section that the apprehensive paradigm is of phrasal origin and the result of the merger of a complex verb form consisting of a same subject affirmative purposive converb<sup>16</sup> plus the existential copula *yoo-* ‘exist, be (located)’ – both verb forms still exist independently in the language. The diachronic development of the apprehensive is likely to have proceeded in the scenario depicted in [Figure 5](#), with Stage 4 representing the synchronic stage.

At Stage 1, the purposive converb and the copula were independent words forming a complex predicate. At Stage 2, the tight syntactic link between the two words led to phonological reductions. First, the unstressed final vowel (*a*) of the converb was dropped, then the resulting illicit consonant cluster simplified. The initial consonant (*y*) of the copula assimilated to the abutting final consonant

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<sup>14</sup>In Kambaata, negative purpose clauses are negative relative clauses headed by the similative morpheme =g ‘like; manner’, i.e. ‘so that the SUBJECT does not VERB’ is expressed as ‘like the SUBJECT does not VERB’ (see [Treis 2010](#) and [2017](#) for details).

<sup>15</sup>The apprehensive may, of course, have escaped the attention of Cushitic grammaticographers.

<sup>16</sup>Kambaata makes a distinction between same subject and different subject affirmative purposives ([Figure 1](#)); see [Treis \(2010\)](#) for details.

Stage 1: Purposive converb + existential copula	‘[SBJ] is about to VERB’
{Verbal stem}-SBJ1- <i>ó-ka</i> + <i>yóo</i> -SBJ2	
Stage 2: {Verbal stem}-SBJ1- <i>ó-k</i> + <i>yóo</i> -SBJ2	
Stage 3: {Verbal stem}-SBJ1- <i>ók(-)koo</i> -SBJ2	
Stage 4: {Verbal stem}-SBJ1- <i>ókkoo</i> -SBJ2	‘[SBJ] might VERB (= undesirable)’

Figure 5: The diachronic origin of the apprehensive paradigm

(*k*) of the converb. Thus, at Stage 3, the periphrastic verb became interpreted as a single word, and the stress on the copula was lost. In the synchronic Stage 4, there is no longer any indication of a morpheme boundary between the converb and the copula.

In the following I present evidence for the plausibility of the diachronic scenario in Figure 5. First, I present evidence for the assumption that the existential copula contributed the second syllable of today’s apprehensive morpheme (*koo*) and the second subject index slot (SBJ2). Then, I argue that the first subject index slot (SBJ1) and the first syllable of the apprehensive morpheme (*ók*) can be traced back to a purposive converb. It is important to note that the assumed components of the apprehensive, i.e. the existential copula and the purposive converb, are also attested in closely related Cushitic languages and thus not themselves innovations of Kambaata.

Table 4 demonstrates that the second subject indexes of the apprehensive paradigm are identical to the subject morphemes of the existential copula,<sup>17</sup> but slightly different from the second subject indexes of other main verb forms in the third person masculine, third person honorific/impersonal and in the 2nd person plural/honorific (see the lines formatted in bold in Table 5).

Furthermore, the vowel in the second syllable of the apprehensive morpheme *-ókkoo* is a direct reflex of the *oo* of the existential verb stem *yoo-*. As Kambaata does not allow sequences<sup>18</sup> of *k* and *y* and repairs illicit consonant clusters through assimilation, the *y* of the copula can reasonably be assumed to be at the origin of the second *k* in *-ókkoo*.

The first subject indexes of the apprehensive paradigm are identical to those found in all other verb forms, including those of the same subject purposive con-

<sup>17</sup>The existential copula is a defective verb. It only inflects for perfective aspect in the indicative mood (see the paradigm in Table 4)). Unlike all other indicative main verbs in the language, it only has a single subject index slot.

<sup>18</sup>Kambaata allows essentially only three types of consonant clusters, (i) nasal stop/approximant + obstruent other than glottal stop (e.g. *nt*), (ii) glottal stop + nasal stop/approximant (e.g. /ʔn/ <’nn>) and, exclusive to the causative derivation, (iii) C + s (e.g. *fs*).

Table 4: The apprehensive and the existential paradigm compared

	V	-SBJ1	-APPR	-SBJ2	‘exist’	SBJ
1SG	V	-∅	-ókkoo	-mm	yóo	-mm
2SG	V	-t	-ókkoo	-nt	yóo	-nt
3M	V	-∅	-ókkoo	-’u	yóo	-’u
3F/3PL	V	-t	-ókkoo	-’u	yóo	-’u
3HON	V	-een	-ókkoo	-mma	yóo	-mma
1PL	V	-n	-ókkoo	-mm	yóo	-mm
2PL/2HON	V	-t- <i>een</i>	-ókkoo	-nta	yóo	-nta

Table 5: The second subject indexes (SBJ2) compared across the main verb paradigms

	‘exist’	PFV	PRF	IPFV
	APPR			
	PROG			
1SG	-mm	-mm	-mm	-mm
2SG	-nt	-nt	-nt	-nt
3M	-’u	-∅ / -’u	-’u	-no
3F/3PL	-’u	-’u	-’u	-’u
3HON	-mma	-ma	-mmaa’u	-no
1PL	-mm	-mm	-mm	-mm
2PL/2HON	-nta	-nta	-ntaa’u	-nta

verb; compare SBJ1 in Table 4 and Table 6.

It now remains to be argued that the *ók*-sequence in *-ókkoo* goes back to a purposive converb ending – even though, synchronically, the purposive is not marked by \**-ó-ka* (as assumed in Figure 5), but by *-ó-ta* (as seen in Table 6), with *-ó* being the purposive morpheme in the narrow sense and *-ta* a case/gender suffix.<sup>19</sup> The *-o* and the *-ta* element of the purposive can synchronically still be separated by an object suffix; see *-’é* ‘(for/to/from) me’ in (29).

(29) Recorded conversation (EK2016-02-23\_003)

<sup>19</sup>Most subordinate verb forms (apart from imperfective and perfective converbs) are case- and gender-marked, because Kambaata’s subordinating morphology has its origin in (pro)nouns.

Table 6: The paradigm of the same subject purposive converb

	V	-SBJ1	-PURP.SS
1SG	V	-Ø	-ó-ta
2SG	V	-t	-ó-ta
3M	V	-Ø	-ó-ta
3F/3PL	V	-t	-ó-ta
3HON	V	-een	-ó-ta
1PL	V	-n	-ó-ta
2PL/2HON	V	-t- <i>een</i>	-ó-ta

Át esáa m-á fushsh-it-o'>é>ta  
 2SG.NOM 1SG.DAT what-M.ACC go.out.CAUS1-2SG-PURP.SS<1SG.OBJ  
 kul-áan-ke-la?  
 tell-1SG.IPFV-2SG.OBJ-PRAG1

'What is my aim of telling you this? (lit. I tell you (this) so that you gain what from me?)'

The first argument in favour of a purposive origin concerns the prosody of the apprehensive forms. The morpheme *-ókkoo* imposes the same stress rules as the bare purposive ending *-ó-ta* (i.e. without an inserted object), namely consistent stress on the *ó*, irrespective of the shape of the preceding subject morpheme.

In a second step, the link between the synchronic purposive marking *-ó-ta* and the assumed diachronic input of the apprehensive, i.e. *\*ó-ka*, needs to be clarified. For this, we have to undertake an excursus on case/gender marking in Kambaata.

From a historical perspective, nouns in certain case forms or of a certain morphological makeup mark case and gender twice ("multiple exponence"), by a primary and a secondary case/gender suffix (Treis 2008: 100). In (30)-(31), the secondary case/gender suffix is formatted in bold.<sup>20</sup>

(30) Feminine noun

- a. áng-a-t/i/  
 hand-F.NOM-F.NOM  
 'hand'

<sup>20</sup>Note that I usually do not segment the (historically) primary and secondary case/gender suffixes in the examples, i.e. I write *áng-áta* hand-F.ACC, rather than *áng-á-ta* hand-F.ACC-F.ACC/OBL 'hand'.

- b. ang-á-ta  
hand-F.ACC-F.ACC/OBL  
'hand'
- c. ang-áa ~ ang-áa-ha  
hand-F.DAT hand-F.DAT-M.ACC/OBL  
'for a/the hand'
- d. ang-áan-ta-se  
hand-F.ICP-F.ACC/OBL-3F.POSS  
'with her hand'

(31) Masculine noun

- a. adab-óo-hu  
boy-M.NOM-M.NOM  
'boy'
- b. adab-áa-ha  
boy-M.ACC-M.ACC/OBL  
'boy'
- c. adab-ée ~ adab-ée-ha  
boy-M.DAT boy-M.DAT-M.ACC/OBL  
'for a/the boy'
- d. adab-éen-ta-s  
boy-M.ICP-F.ACC/OBL-3M.POSS  
'with his boy'

The *-ta* of the purposive (Table 6) is the same element that is used as a secondary case/gender suffix for the accusative form of most feminine noun declensions (30b). Historically, it has originated in an accusative/oblique feminine proximal demonstrative *ta* 'this'; see (20) for the use of the demonstrative in adnominal function. The masculine counterpart of *-ta* is *-ha*, as seen in (31b); it goes back to an accusative/oblique masculine proximal demonstrative *ka* 'this', whose adnominal use is illustrated in (5). The secondary case/gender suffixes are no longer gender-sensitive in all contexts; in synchronic Kambaata, dative nouns usually carry a masculine *-ha*, even when the noun is feminine – compare (30c) and (31c). In contrast, possessive-modified instrumental-comitative-perlative and locative nouns take the feminine *-ta* as a secondary suffix, even on



masculine nouns – compare (30d) and (31d). In Alaaba, Kambaata’s closest relative, secondary suffixes have retained their gender-sensitivity everywhere; see, especially the nominal dative forms in (32).

- (32) Alaaba (Schneider-Blum 2007: 128)  
 jaal-áa-ta                      – jaal-íi-ha  
 friend-F.DAT-F.ACC/OBL   friend-M.DAT-M.ACC/OBL  
 ‘for a (female) friend’ – ‘for a (male) friend’

Having demonstrated that there is a clear functional link between the elements *-ta* and *-ha* (\* < *ka*), with both going back to demonstratives and with both presently being used as secondary case/gender markers, among others on accusative and dative nouns, it seems legitimate to hypothesize that the Kambaata same subject purposive converb formerly ended, at least in certain environments, in \**-ó-ka* and not, as at present, (exclusively) in *-ó-ta*.

Additional supporting evidence for the diachronic scenario proposed in Figure 5 comes from the observation that Kambaata has – repeatedly throughout its history – fused periphrastic verb forms into morphologically complex main verb forms. The present-day imperfective, perfective and perfect main verb forms with their two subject index slots (recall Figure 2) can be assumed to go back to a combination of a converb plus an auxiliary – even though not all the forms in the respective paradigms can solely be explained as resulting from the merger of periphrastic verb forms, as pointed out by Tosco (1996). The present-day progressive (Table 7), another recent innovation of Kambaata that is not shared with the most closely related languages, has undergone a development that is parallel to the scenario proposed for the apprehensive (Table 3). A periphrastic verb form consisting of an imperfective converb, marked by *-án*, and the existential copula *yoo-* fused into the progressive morpheme *-áyyoo*. Unlike the source construction of the apprehensive, the periphrastic form that has given rise to the progressive is today still occasionally in use.

After the discussion of the formal development, it is necessary to broach the issue of the semantic changes through time. The proposed scenario for these changes is tentative, but it seems plausible to depart from a periphrastic verb form that expresses intentional/imminent future (‘SUBJECT intends to/is about to VERB’). Although the combination of a same subject purposive converb and an existential copula does not express futurity in the synchronic stage of the language,<sup>21</sup> Kambaata uses a parallel combination of the same subject purposive

<sup>21</sup>No such complex verb forms are attested in my corpus.

Table 7: The origin of the progressive

	V	-SBJ1	-PROG	SBJ2 ←	V	-SBJ1	-IPFV.CV +	‘exist’	-SBJ2
1SG	V	-Ø	-áyyoo	-mm	V	-Ø	-án	yóo	-mm
2SG	V	-t	-áyyoo	-nt	V	-t	-án	yóo	-nt
3M	V	-Ø	-áyyoo	-’u	V	-Ø	-án	yóo	-’u
3F/3PL	V	-t	-áyyoo	-’u	V	-t	-án	yóo	-’u
3HON	V	-een	-áyyoo	-mma	V	-een	-án	yóo	-mma
1PL	V	-n	-áyyoo	-mm	V	-n	-án	yóo	-mm
2PL/2HON	V	-t-een	-áyyoo	-nta	V	-t-een	-án	yóo	-nta

converb and the identificational (non-verbal) copula *-Vt* to express ‘SUBJECT intends to/is about to VERB’ (Treis 2011: 139–141), as illustrated in (33).

(33) Recorded conversation (EK2016-02-23\_002)

Án      íi      beet-í      qenef-á  
 1SG.NOM 1SG.GEN son-M.GEN ceremony.sp-M.ACC  
 aass-aqq-óta-at  
 give-MID-1SG.PURP.SS-COP3

‘For my own benefit, I intend to/am about to provide (food for) my son’s *qenefa*-ceremony.’

The semantic change from intentional/imminent future to apprehensive must have proceeded via an intermediate step in which the future event became interpreted as a potential and then as a potential and apprehension-causing undesirable event (Figure 6). In a last step, the implied pre-emptive action against potential, undesirable VERB-ing, i.e. making sure not to VERB, becomes the central meaning component of the second person forms and the apprehensional component is backgrounded or lost.

At the present state, I am missing language-internal or comparative evidence for the change of intentional/imminent future markers into markers expressing possibility (potentiality). The development from a marker along the chain POSSIBILITY > APPREHENSION > WARNING > (2<sup>nd</sup> person) PROHIBITION is, however, well established through the typological works by Dobrushina (2006) and Pakendorf & Schalley (2007).

Stage 1: '[SBJ] intends to/is about to VERB'	<b>FUTURE</b>
Stage 2: '[SBJ] might VERB'	<b>POSSIBILITY</b>
Stage 3: '[SBJ] might VERB, this is undesirable'	<b>POSSIBILITY + APPREHENSION</b>
Stage 4: '[SBJ] might VERB, this is undesirable, addressee take care or take precautionary measures!'	<b>POSSIBILITY + APPREHENSION + WARNING</b>
Stage 5: '[2 <sup>nd</sup> person SBJ] don't VERB!'	<b>PROHIBITION</b>

Figure 6: The diachronic semantic development towards the apprehensive

## 6 Conclusion

Kambaata has a dedicated, fully grammaticalised apprehensive paradigm without known parallels in related languages or in languages of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area. Like all Kambaata indicative main verb forms, the apprehensive is marked for seven different subjects by a bi-partite, discontinuous subject index. The apprehensive morpheme is found in the same slot as aspectual markers and is thus incompatible with them. The apprehensive verb can carry pronominal object suffixes and pragmatically determined morphology, whose interaction with the apprehensive meaning remains a desideratum of future research. The apprehensive is the only paradigm in Kambaata that does not occur in an affirmative-negative polarity pair. The morphological makeup of the apprehensive is one of several pieces of evidence for its main clause status; other proofs pertain to its sentence-final position and to its ability to govern complex subordinate clauses. The apprehensive is not used in subordinate clauses except in direct speech complements of the verb *y-* 'say' (recall (5)-(7) and (21)).

The apprehensive is usually employed in interactional contexts. It conventionally encodes that a situation is unrealised at reference time, considered possible in the future and judged to be undesirable, if not dangerous by the speaker (or the reported speaker). The Kambaata apprehensive is always future-oriented and cannot be used to express apprehension about an undesirable situation that was potentially realised in the past (the future orientation of the apprehensive may have been inherited from its source construction; cf. §5). The Kambaata apprehensive is indexical, i.e. anchored in the speech act: The (reported) speaker and not the grammatical subject is the source of the evaluation of a situation as undesirable and potential. Undesirability is part of the conventional meaning of the Kambaata apprehensive, it cannot refer to a potential, pleasant situation. If

an apprehensive form of an inherently positive verb such as ‘be(come) happy’ is formed, it is necessarily understood as bringing an unwelcome type of happiness to the addressee’s attention, e.g. the happiness of an enemy (9). I am unaware of any semantic restrictions that would exclude certain verbs from apprehensive clauses.

Although the potential, undesirable situation of which the apprehensive warns is often imminent to the speech situation, imminence is not part of the conventional meaning of the apprehensive, as (34) shows. The undesirable situation, i.e. being dependent on other people, is set in the far future, at the addressees’ old age (the addressees are five-graders).

(34) Excerpt from a poem (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 5.90)

Malees-í roshsh-áta qoorim-áan awwann-é  
wisdom-M.GEN education-F.ACC intelligence-F.ICP follow-2PL.IMP

Mann-í ang-áta xuud-ú ih-ókkoo’u  
people-M.GEN hand-F.ACC look-M.ACC become-3M.APPR

zákk-u-’nne

old.age-M.NOM-2PL.POSS

‘Educate yourself wisely, (otherwise) you (PL) run the risk of being dependent on others (lit. your old age might be looking at people’s hands).’

The primary function of the Kambaata apprehensive is the warning function, which is attested for first, second and third person forms. In addition, the apprehensive form of the first person may serve as a threat; in this case the undesirable situation is not accidental but potentially inflicted on the addressee by the speaker. The warning/threat-polysemy of apprehensives has been reported for a number of languages in the apprehensive literature; see, e.g., Lichtenberk (1995), Faller & Schultze-Berndt (2018) and Vuillermet (2018).

The apprehensive solicits a response (in action) of the addressee, who is alerted so as to avert the danger or to prepare themselves to alleviate its negative effects. The pre-emptive actions can remain unexpressed. If they are expressed overtly, we most commonly find them in sentences that are adjacent but syntactically independent from the apprehensive sentence (Table 3). If the avertive function of the apprehensive is foregrounded, the interpretation as a directive is facilitated. As in many languages of the world (Dobrushina 2006; Pakendorf & Schalley 2007), the second person form of the Kambaata apprehensive has come to be interpreted as a prohibition, ‘you might V (watch out! counteract!)’ > ‘do not V!’. However, to date, the prohibition function of second person form has not yet

ousted the warning function, and second person apprehensive forms continue to be used to alert the addressee of their unintended, undesirable actions.

Based on detailed language-internal evidence, the final section of this chapter has demonstrated that the apprehensive paradigm is likely to have resulted from the fusion of a periphrastic verb form in the recent history of the language. The source construction consisted of an affirmative same subject purposive con-verb plus the existential copula, which may have first served to express intentional/imminent future. Via the intermediate stage of epistemic possibility, the verb form came to express apprehension of potential, undesirable events and acquired a warning function. In a last step, the second person apprehensive form developed a prohibition function.

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## Abbreviations

A_DEM	adnominal demonstrative	NEG1	standard negator
ACC	accusative	NEG2	imperative negator
ADD	additive	NEG5	relative negator (negative participle)
AG	agentive	NMZ1	nominalizer -V
APPR	apprehensive	NMZ2	nominalizer - <i>bii</i>
ASSOC	associative plural	NMZ4	nominalizer = <i>r</i>
CAUS1	simple causative	NOM	nominative
CF	contrastive focus	OBJ	object
COND	conditional	OBL	oblique
COP2	identificational/ascriptive copula -( <i>h</i> ) <i>a(a)</i> (M) / - <i>ta(a)</i> (F)	PL	plural
COP3	identificational/ascriptive copula - <i>Vt</i>	P_DEM	pronominal demonstrative
CV	converb	PASS	passive
DAT	dative	PFV	perfective
DS	different subject	POSS	possessive
EMP	emphasis	PRAG1	mitigator - <i>la</i>
F	feminine	PRAG5	- <i>be</i> -suffix (function yet to be determined)
GEN	genitive	PRED	predicative
HON	honorific, impersonal	PRF	perfect
ICP	instrumental-comitative-perlative	PROG	progressive
IDEO	ideophone	PURP	purposive converb
IMP	imperative	REL	relative
INTJ	interjection	SBJ1	first subject index
IPFV	imperfective	SBJ2	second subject index
L	linker	SG	singular
LOC	locative	SGV	singulative
M	masculine	SIM	similative, manner nominalizer
MID	middle	SS	same subject

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