



Selected aspects of complex predicates in Kambaata

Yvonne Treis
(CNRS-LLACAN)

ComPLETE project: First conference, November 14-16, 2022
Mainz

1. Some background on Kambaata

CLASSIFICATION, SPEAKER AREA, TYPOLOGICAL PROFILE ...

1.1. Classification and Sociolinguistics

- Afro-Asiatic > Cushitic > ... > Highland East Cushitic
- Southwestern Ethiopia
- > 600,000 speakers (acc. to 2007 census)
- Official **orthography** based on the Roman script
- Some important orthographic conventions:
 - Ejective plosives and affricates: <c> /tʃʼ/, <ph> /pʼ/, <q> /kʼ/, <x> /tʼ/
 - Affricates: <ch> /tʃ/, <sh> /ʃ/, <j> /dʒ/
 - Others: <y> /j/, <'> /ʔ/
 - Gemination and long vowels marked by doubling, e.g. <shsh> /ʃ:/ and <ee> /e:/
 - Clusters of glottal stop + sonorant written as trigraphs, e.g. <'rr> /ʔr/ to distinguish them from laryngealised sonorants, e.g. <'r> /rʼ/.

1.2. Typological profile

- **Suffixing**, agglutinating-fusional with many portmanteau morphemes
- **Phonemic stress**, no lexical but systematic grammatical minimal pairs
- **Head- and dependent-marking**
 - 9 nominal cases
 - Obligatory subject indexing on verbs
- **Strict head-finality**
 - Dependent clauses before main clauses
 - Strictly verb-final; main verb or copula = last constituent in a sentence
 - In the NP, all modifiers (incl. relative clauses) before head noun
- **Open word classes**: nouns, adjectives, verbs, ideophones, interjections
- **Conjunctions**: only *té* ‘or’ (between NPs) and *bagáan* ‘even though’

Structure of this talk

- 1. Introduction
- 2. The diachrony of main verb forms
- 3. Complex predicates: a preliminary inventory
- 4. Open questions

2. The diachrony of main verb forms

2.1. Typology of Kambaata verb types

		Affirmative	Negative ⁺
Main verbs	Indicative	Imperfective	Negative Imperfective
		Perfective	Negative Non-Imperfective
		Perfect	
		Progressive	
	Apprehensive		
	Directive	Imperative	Negative Imperative
		Jussive	Negative Jussive
Benedictive			
Subordinate verbs	Relative	Imperfective	Negative Relative
		Perfective	
		Perfect	
		Progressive	
	Converb	Perfective(-DS)	Negative Converb
		Imperfective(-DS)	
		SS-Purposive	
		DS-Purposive	
Verbal noun			

2.1. Morphological verb types

- Verb forms with simple vs. bi-partite subject indexes (i.e. one slot vs. two slots of subject indexes)
- No subject indexing on verbal nouns

Figure 2. Structure of inflected verbs with one subject index slot

Stem		Inflection		(Object Suffix)
		Subject Index 1	TAM	
Root	(Derivation)			

Figure 3. Structure of inflected verbs with bi-partite subject index slot (subject index 1 ≠ subject index 2)

Stem		Inflection			(Object Suffix)
		Subject Index 1	TAM	Subject Index 2	
Root	(Derivation)				

2.1. Typology of Kambaata verb types

		Affirmative	Negative ⁺
Main verbs	Indicative	Imperfective	Negative Imperfective
		Perfective	Negative Non-Imperfective
		Perfect	
		Progressive	
	Apprehensive		
	Directive	Imperative	Negative Imperative
Jussive		Negative Jussive	
Benedictive			
Subordinate verbs	Relative	Imperfective	Negative Relative
		Perfective	
		Perfect	
		Progressive	
	Converb	Perfective(-DS)	Negative Converb
		Imperfective(-DS)	
		SS-Purposive	
		DS-Purposive	
Verbal noun			

Verbs with a bi-partite subject index are likely to be fused complex predicates.

⁺Grey shading in the negative column means that no morphological but only periphrastic negation is possible.

Green colour marks verb forms with a bi-partite subject index

2.1. Verb forms with bi-partite subject indexing

- Indicative affirmative verbs have (probably) originated in fused complex predicates – cf. bi-partite subject indexing; but source construction not known
 - Indicative Affirmative Imperfective: $-SBJ1-a/aa/\emptyset-SBJ2a$
e.g. *mar-t-áa-nt* go-2SG-IPFV-2SG ‘you go habitually, you will go’
 - Indicative Affirmative Perfective: $-SBJ1-o/oo/\emptyset-SBJ2b$
e.g. *mar-t-óo-nt* go-2SG-PFV-2SG ‘you went’
 - Indicative Affirmative Perfect: $-SBJ1-ee/\emptyset-SBJ2c$
e.g. *már-t-ee-nt* go-2SG-PRF-2SG ‘you have gone’
- SBJ1 is shared across all (main verb and subordinate) verbal paradigms (inherited from Afroasiatic)
- The SBJ2-sets vary across the paradigms (sets a, b, c, d)

Cf. Treis (forthc.-a)

2.2. *Complex Predicates > Main verbs

- The components of the imperfective, perfective and perfect verb forms are not entirely clear – but transparent origin of apprehensive and progressive
- Apprehensive (‘[take care!] SBJ might VERB’) < SS-purposive **converb** + *yoo-* ‘exist’

	SS-purposive * <i>-óka</i>	Existential verb <i>yoo-</i>	Fusion	Apprehensive verb ⁺
1SG	* <i>-∅-óka</i>	<i>yoo-mm</i>	>	<i>-∅-ókkoo-mm</i>
2SG	* <i>-t-óka</i>	<i>yoo-nt</i>	>	<i>-t-ókkoo-nt</i>
3M	* <i>-∅-óka</i>	<i>yoo-'u</i>	>	<i>-∅-ókkoo-'u</i>
3F/3PL	* <i>-t-óka</i>	<i>yoo-'u</i>	>	<i>-t-ókkoo-'u</i>
3HON	* <i>-een-óka</i>	<i>yoo-mma</i>	>	<i>-een-ókkoo-mma</i>
1PL	* <i>-n-óka</i>	<i>yoo-mm</i>	>	<i>-n-ókkoo-mm</i>
2PL/2HON	* <i>-teen-óka</i>	<i>yoo-nta</i>	>	<i>-teen-ókkoo-nta</i>

⁺The apprehensive verb, used for warning and threats, is not shared by Kambaata’s closest relatives (Alaaba and K’abeena) and can be assumed to be a fairly recent innovation.

2.2. *Complex Predicates > Main verbs

- Progressive verb ('SBJ is VERB-ing') < imperfective **converb** + *yoo-* 'exist'
- Synchronically: one word (rare instances of multi-word source construction attested in my data)

	Imperfective converb <i>-án</i>	Existential verb <i>yoo-</i>	Fusion	Progressive verb ⁺
1SG	<i>-∅-án</i>	<i>yoo-mm</i>	>	<i>-∅-áyyoo-mm</i>
2SG	<i>-t-án</i>	<i>yoo-nt</i>	>	<i>-t-áyyoo-nt</i>
3M	<i>-∅-án</i>	<i>yoo-'u</i>	>	<i>-∅-áyyoo-'u</i>
3F/3PL	<i>-t-án</i>	<i>yoo-'u</i>	>	<i>-t-áyyoo-'u</i>
3HON	<i>-een-án</i>	<i>yoo-mma</i>	>	<i>-een-áyyoo-mma</i>
1PL	<i>-n-án</i>	<i>yoo-mm</i>	>	<i>-n-áyyoo-mm</i>
2PL/2HON	<i>-teen-án</i>	<i>yoo-nta</i>	>	<i>-teen-áyyoo-nta</i>

⁺The progressive verb is not shared by Kambaata's closest relatives (Alaaba and K'abeena) and can be assumed to be a fairly recent innovation.

2.3. Converbs

- Kambaata converb = dependent verb form, reduced in finiteness, primarily used in adverbial (i.e. non-argumental, non-adnominal) function, one subject-indexing slot (SBJ1)
- 5 converbs are distinguished:
 - Perfective converb (semantically vague): -SBJ1-ʼ(-DS)
 - Imperfective converb (simultaneity): -SBJ1-*án*(-DS)
 - Negative converb: -SBJ1-*ú'nná*
 - SS purposive: -SBJ1-*óta*
 - DS purposive: -SBJ1-ʼ-*unta*

2.3. Converbs

- Kambaata converb = dependent verb form, reduced in finiteness, primarily used in adverbial (i.e. non-argumental, non-adnominal) function, one subject-indexing slot (SBJ1)
- 5 converbs are distinguished:
 - Perfective converb (semantically vague): -SBJ1-'
 - Imperfective converb (simultaneity): -SBJ1-*án*
 - Negative converb: -SBJ1-*ú'nná*
 - SS purposive: -SBJ1-*óta*
 - DS purposive: -SBJ1-'*unta*

Diachronically and/or synchronically used as V1 in complex predicates

3. Complex predicates (synchrony)

3. Preliminary inventory of complex predicates

- 1. Ideophone + light verb (*y-* ‘say’ / *ass-* ‘do’)
- 2. Imperfective converb + ‘exist’ [**Progressive**]
- 3. Perfective converb + ...
 - Perfective converb + *kása* ‘do ever’ [**Experiential perfect**]
 - Perfective converb + *kam-* ‘refuse to give, forbid, protect from, deprive of’ [**Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive**] – transitive clause
 - Perfective converb + *fad-* ‘go away’ [**Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive**] – intransitive clause
 - Perfective converb + *agur-* ‘leave’ [?]
 - Perfective converb + *ba’-* ‘be lost, disappear, go bad, be broken etc.’ [**Positively extreme degree**]
- 4. Negative converb + ...
 - Negative converb + ‘exist’ [**Phasal polarity, ‘not yet’**]
 - Negative converb + negative of *fa’-* ‘remain’ [**High likelihood**]
- 5. SS-Purposive converb + superordinate copula or ‘be(come)’-verb [**Imminent/intentional future**]

3. Preliminary inventory of complex predicates

- Some common features:
 - Constituents of a complex predicate are obligatorily adjacent, i.e. no arguments, adverbials, discourse particles can intervene
 - V1 = semantic core/lexical verb
 - V2 = (all but one) used as regular verbs in the language outside of complex predicates

3.1. Ideophone + light verb

- Very frequent (968 ideophonic roots in Alemu 2016), ideophones need light verbs to be inflected
- e.g. *búqq-búqq=y-* ‘tremble’, *míkk-míll=y-* ‘move a bit, stir’, *címm=y-* ‘slump down’; *hó”a=a’-* ‘cause to vomit’, *bolóng-bolóng=a’-* ‘move one’s eyes’ etc.

(1) *míkk.míll=y-itu’nnáachch* *címm=yít* *afuu’ll-ít,*
move.a.bit.IDEO=say-3F.NEG.CVB slump.IDEO=say-3F.PFV.CVB sit-3F.PFV.CVB

ill-í-se *al-i,* *muggeenn-á,* *gur-á[ta],* *makk-íta*
eye-F.ACC-3F.POSS up-M.ACC down-M.ACC left-F.ACC right-F.ACC

bolóng-bolóng=at-táa’,
move.one’s.eyes.IDEO-RED=do-3F.IPFV

tah-íchch-u *waal-anó=g-a* *zug-gán.*
flies-SGV-M.NOM come-3F.IPFV.REL=SIM-M.ACC lie.in.ambush-3F.PFV.CVB

(Speaking about a chameleon (= grammatically feminine):) ‘She sat (there) stock-still, slumped down, (and only) moved her eyes up, down, to the left, to the right, (while) lying in ambush for a fly.’ (TH2016-02-11_001)

- Does not fall under the definition of verb-based verbal predicates

3.2. Progressive

- Imperfective converb + ‘exist’ [**Progressive**] - cf. discussion above.
- Multi-word form possible but very rare (see ex. below); synchronically, normally fused form used (would give *aass-an-táyyoo* ‘u=g-u ‘that she/it is being given/provided’ in ex. below)

(2) (...) *won-á* *gardabb-i* *róshsh-at* *isiini-n*
first-M.GEN level-M.GEN teaching-F.NOM 3M.ICP-EMP
aass-an-tán *yóo=g-u* *dag-ámm-ee-haa.*
give-PASS-3F.IPFV.CVB exist.3.REL=SIM-M.NOM know-PASS-3M.PRF.REL-M.COP2

‘It is known (that Kambaatissa has developed into a written language and) that primary school teaching is being provided in it.’ (Maatewoos 1992)

3.3. Perfective converb + X

- Constructions so far determined
 - 1. Perfective converb + *kása* ‘do ever’ [**Experiential perfect**]
 - 2a. Perfective converb + *kam-* ‘refuse to give, forbid, protect from, deprive of’ [Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive] – transitive clause
 - 2b. Perfective converb + *fad-* ‘go away’ [Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive] – intransitive clause
 - 3. Perfective converb + *agur-* ‘leave’ [?] – Function still unclear, not discussed further.
 - 4. Perfective converb + *ba’-* ‘be lost, disappear, go bad, be broken etc.’ [Positively extreme degree]

3.3.1. Experiential perfect

- Perfective converb + *kása(-ba'a)* (< *‘know’): ‘have (n)ever VERB-ed (once)’ (cf. Treis 2021)
- V2: very defective verb, not used independently in the language (i.e. borderline case for ComPLETE)
- Construction expresses that a certain type of event occurred at least once in the past/in the person’s lifetime, e.g. ‘I have been to Paris (at least once before).’

(3) A: *Kám waayy-áno!*
 leave.2SG.IMP probably.not.do-3mIPV

Át Duuball-í min-í már-t kása-ndo?
 2SG.NOM D.-M.GEN house-M.ACC go-2SG.PFV.CVB ever-Q

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

B: *Márr kása-ba'a gagás. Ikkodáa ...*
 go.1SG.PFV.CVB ever-NEG in.fact but

B: ‘I have in fact **never** been (there). But ...’

Perfective converb
(semi-finite)

(very) defective
‘(do) ever’-verb

3.1.1. Experiential perfect

- V2: Only traces of verbal inflection
 - *kása* can be shown to take object (and not possessive) suffixes
e.g. *xúujj kása-he-ba 'a* (see.1SG.PFV.CVB ever-2SG.OBJ-NEG1) ‘I have never seen you.’
 - *kása* can inflect for 3M.IPFV in questions (only 2 examples); no other persons attested
e.g. *yáa 'kas-áno-ndo* (hold.meeting.3M.PFV.CVB ever-3M.IPFV-Q) ‘Has (one) ever held meetings?’
 - Inflected as negative participle in relative clause (like a regular verb)

(4) (...) *mexx-e-nii* *maccoocc-í* *kas-úmb-ut*
single-MULT-ADD hear-1SG.PFV.CVB ever-1SG.NEG.REL-F.NOM

kohíchch-ut *láag-at* (...)
strange-F.NOM voice-F.NOM

Relative clause

Head noun

‘a strange voice that I had never heard before’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)

3.3. Perfective converb + X

- Constructions so far determined
 - 1. Perfective converb + *kása* ‘do ever’ [Experiential perfect]
 - 2a. Perfective converb + *kam-* ‘refuse to give, forbid, protect from, deprive of’ [**Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive**] – transitive clause
 - 2b. Perfective converb + *fad-* ‘go away’ [**Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive**] – intransitive clause
 - 3. Perfective converb + *agur-* ‘leave’ [?] – Function still unclear, not discussed further.
 - 4. Perfective converb + *ba’-* ‘be lost, disappear, go bad, be broken etc.’ [Positively extreme degree]

3.3. Perfective converb + X

- Constructions so far determined
 - 1. Perfective converb + *kása* ‘do ever’ [Experiential perfect]
 - 2a. Perfective converb + *kam-* ‘refuse to give, forbid, protect from, deprive of’ [Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive] – transitive clause
 - 2b. Perfective converb + *fad-* ‘go away’ [Irreversible, speaker-directed malefactive] – intransitive clause
 - 3. Perfective converb + *agur-* ‘leave’ [?] – Function still unclear, not discussed further.
 - 4. Perfective converb + *ba’-* ‘be lost, disappear, go bad, be broken etc.’ [**Positively extreme degree**]

3.3.4. Positively extreme degree

- Perfective converb + *ba'*- 'be lost, disappear, go bad, be broken etc.'
- V2 *ba'*- has a negative connotation outside the complex predicate

Relative clause with
a complex predicate

(5) (...) *mat-íta* *culú=át-t* *bá'-ée* *dist-íta*
one-F.ACC beautiful.IDEO=do-3F.PFV.CVB disappear-3F.PRF.REL pot-F.ACC

wecc-ée'u
produce.MID-3M.PFV

'(...) he produced an extremely beautiful cooking pot for his own benefit.' (Kambaatissata 1989: 4.59-65)

3.4. Negative converb + X

- Negative converb + ‘exist’ [**Phasal polarity**, ‘not yet’]
- Outside of complex predicates: negative converb expresses ‘without VERB-ing; before VERB-ing’

(8) *Ikkodáa j-éechch-u-s* *iill-itu’nnáachch* *yóo=tannée*
but time-SGV-F.NOM-3M.POSS arrive-3F.NEG.CVB exist.3.REL=REAS

ay-í-i *af-im-bá-s.*
who-M.NOM-ADD seize-3M.NIPFV-NEG1-3M.OBJ

(Lit. translation from Kambaata Bible) ‘But no one seized him, because his time had not yet come (lit. his time was before/without arriving).’ (John 8:20)

3.4. Negative converb + X

- Negative converb + negative of *fa'* - 'remain' [**High likelihood**] – cf. Meyer (this conference) on Amharic
- 'to very likely VERB' ('to surely VERB'?) expressed lit. as 'not remain without VERB-ing'

(10) (...) *loom-í-s* *líushsh* *arrab-í-s* *ga'mm-aqq-u'nnáan*
lemon-F.ACC-DEF miss.3M.PFV.CVB tongue-F.ACC-3M.POSS bite-MID-NEG.CVB

fa'-áno-ba'a

remain-3M.IPFV-NEG1

'(...) if he misses the lemon he will very likely bite his tongue (lit. he will not remain without having bitten his tongue).'

3.5. Purposive converb + copula

- SS-Purposive converb + superordinate copula (cf. Treis 2011) [**Imminent/intentional future**]
- (Non-verbal) copula: -Vt

(11) *Kul-toonte-’é* *j-eechch-ú<n>ta* *isú* *has-íi*
tell-2SG.PFV-1SG.OBJ.REL time-SGV-F.ACC<EMP> 3M.ACC look.for-M.DAT
mar-óta-at *ikke-be.*
go-1SG.PURP.SS-COP3 PAST-?

‘I was just going to look for it when you spoke to me.’

- Why consider this construction? The non-verbal copulas are replaced by the regular verb *ih-* ‘be(come)’, e.g. in subordinate clauses.

4. Summary and open questions

Summary

- So far 8 verb-based complex predicates determined in Kambaata
- No connectors between V1 and V2 and (very likely) no arguments, adverbials etc.
- V1 is always the lexical verb, marked as converb
- V2 usually also used as full verb in the language - exceptions: *kas-* ‘(do) ever’ (highly defective verb) and non-verbal copula *-Vt* (i.e. constructions do not fit (neatly) into the definition of verb-based complex predicates of the ComPLETE-project).
- Usually, both V1 and V2 index the subject; aspect (dep. on the construction) marked on both or only on V2; mood and tense only marked on V2.
- Complex predicates have, through Kambaata’s history, fused into one-word main verb forms – recall verbs with bi-partite subject indexing.
- Today’s progressive construction found at the fuzzy boundary between synchronic one-word main verb forms and multi-word complex predicates.

To be explored in the course of ComPLETE

- Inventory is most likely incomplete!
- To be examined:
 - Semantics of converb + *kam-* ‘forbid’ / *fad-* ‘go away’
 - Semantics of converb + *agur-* ‘leave’
 - Negatability and scope of negation in complex predicates
 - Position of pragmatically determined morphology (e.g. attitude markers)
 - ...

Bottom line:

Kambaata complex predicates – a
construction site



References

- Alemu Banta Atara [Alamu Banta Ataara]. 2016. *Kookaata: Kambaatissa-Amaarsa-Ingiliizissa laaga doonnuta [Kambaata-Amharic-English dictionary]*. Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing.
- Maatewoos Shagana. 1992. *Kambaatissata xifati seerrata [Kambaata writing rules]*. (Ed.) Liiranso Wotango & Tiitoos Heegana. Duuraame: Education Department of the Kambaata-Alaaba-Xambaaro Zone.
- Treis, Yvonne. 2011. Expressing future time reference in Kambaata. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 20(2). 132–149.
- Treis, Yvonne. 2012. Switch-reference and Omotic-Cushitic language contact in Southwest Ethiopia. *Journal of Language Contact* 5(1). 80–116.
- Treis, Yvonne. 2021. The expression of phasal polarity in Kambaata (Cushitic). In Raija Kramer (ed.), *The expression of phasal polarity in African languages* (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 63), 309–332. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Treis, Yvonne. Forthcoming-a. Kambaata. In Ronny Meyer, Bedilu Wakjira & Zelealem Leyew (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Ethiopian languages*, xxx–xxx. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Treis, Yvonne. Forthcoming-b. The apprehensive in Kambaata (Cushitic): Form, meaning and origin. In Martina Faller, Eva Schultze-Berndt & Marine Vuillermet (eds.), *Apprehensional constructions in a cross-linguistic perspective* (Research on Comparative Grammar). Berlin: Language Science Press.

Abbreviations

ACC accusative, ADD additive, COP copula, CVB converb, DEF definite, DS different subject, EMP emphasis, F feminine, GEN genitive, ICP instrumental-comitative-perlative, IDEO ideophone, IMP imperative, IPFV imperfective, M masculine, MID middle, MULT multiplicative, NEG negation, NIPFV non-imperfective, NOM nominative, Q question, OBJ object, PASS passive, PFV perfective, POSS possessive, PRF perfect, PURP purposive, REAS reason clause marker, RED reduplication, REL relative, SGV singulative, SIM similative, SS same subject