

Research report

A Sketch Grammar of Wolaytta

MOTOMICHI WAKASA

Japan Association for Nilo-Ethiopian Studies

Wolaytta is an Omotic language of the Afroasiatic family (or phylum) spoken in southwestern Ethiopia. The aim of this paper was to create a grammatical sketch of the language. After offering basic background information on Wolaytta, I report that the language has 29 consonant phonemes and 5 vowel phonemes, the latter of which can be combined to form a long vowel or diphthong. I also briefly describe the notation employed by natives and an accentual system of Wolaytta. Most words in Wolaytta consist of a lexical stem and a grammatical ending. This paper lists the endings of each word class and mentions their uses. Suffixes that are used in word formation are also discussed. As for syntax, Wolaytta is a typical OV language, although its appositive construction may obscure the fact that modifiers precede their modified heads. The agreement between the subject and the predicate verb is generally determined by the form, not by the meaning, although there are some exceptions. Wolaytta prefers quotations in which direct and indirect speech is mixed. A nominalizer can be the head of a relative clause in which the substituted noun occurs. Finally, this paper touches on honorifics, rhymes, and oral literature in Wolaytta.

Key words: Wolaytta language, phonology, morphology, syntax, rhyme

1. INTRODUCTION

Wolaytta⁽¹⁾ is a language of the Ometo group, which belongs to the Omotic branch of the Afroasiatic family (or phylum). It is spoken in the Wolaytta zone, the administrative unit northwest of Lake Abaya in southwestern Ethiopia, about 400 km from the capital city of Addis Ababa. Although the language has also been called Wolamo, among other names, the autonym has been Wolaytta.

It seems that almost all native Wolaytta people of the Wolaytta zone speak the Wolaytta language. According to the census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia in 2007, there are 1,627,955 “mother tongue” speakers of the language. Thus, Wolaytta is not a minority language. On the other hand, we should also note that this figure represents only slightly over 2% of the total population of the country, 73,750,932 people.⁽²⁾

The Wolaytta language is spoken very widely in the Wolaytta zone. Some school textbooks have been written in the language, and pop songs sung in Wolaytta are recorded and sold. However, the language is apparently seldom used outside the Wolaytta zone, except by Wolaytta people.

The Wolaytta zone is a multilingual society. Amharic, which functions as a lingua franca in Ethiopia, is widely understood there. Indeed, Wolaytta has borrowed many elements from Amharic. However, education in English or by English-speaking teachers is very popular, as English seems to have become a must for advancement in life.

The Wolaytta language is genetically close to Gamo, Gofa, Dawro, and other languages spoken around the Wolaytta zone. An artificial mixed language based on these called Wogagoda (acronym of Wolaytta, Gamo, Gofa, and Dawro), was created for school education in the late 1990s. Wolaytta people, however, feel that these languages are completely separate, and popularization of Wogagoda largely failed as a result.

2. PHONOLOGY AND NOTATION

Wolaytta has the following phonemes. In this paper, I principally adopt the notation of Latin alphabets used in Wolaytta school textbooks. Exceptions will be mentioned later. Letters that have a different value from that of IPA are followed by the IPA symbol in brackets or an explanation.

(1) Wolaytta phonemes

Vowels i e a o u

Consonants

voiceless stops:	p	t		k	'[ʔ]
voiceless fricatives:		s	sh [ʃ]		h, nh [ħ]
voiceless affricate:			ch [tʃ]		
voiced stops:	b	d		g	
voiced fricatives:		z	zh [ʒ]		
voiced affricate:			j [dʒ]		
voiced nasals:	m	n			
voiced liquids:		r [ɾ], l			
voiced approximates:	w		y [j]		
voiceless glottalized consonants:	ph [pʰ]	x [tʰ]	c [tʃʰ]	q [kʰ]	
voiced glottalized consonants:	m ^h	dh, n ^h , l ^h			
		(glottalized [m], [d], [n], and [l], respectively)			

The five vowel phonemes can be combined to form the following vowels.

(2) long vowels: ii [i:] ee [e:] aa [a:] oo [o:] uu [u:]
 diphthongs: ay [ai] aw [au] oy [oi] uy [ui]

The consonant *p* has an allophone, *f*, as a free variant. The occurrence of *nh* and *zh* is very rare.

The gemination of a consonant is expressed by the repetition of the consonantal letter in question as in *ss* (in the case of digraphs, both letters are repeated, as in *shsh*). The gemination is phonologically distinctive: e.g., *cimiis* 'he has become old,' *cimmiis* 'he deceived.' The voiced glottalized consonants *m^h*, *n^h*, and *l^h* always occur as geminated consonants (these spellings indicate the geminated consonants). Consonant clusters can be found frequently in Wolaytta. In this case, the second consonants are not geminated, but are often written as if they were. I follow the convention in this paper too: e.g., *qanxxiis* [kʰantʰi:s] 'he cut,' *birshshiiis* [birʃi:s] 'he untied.'

Pitch can be used distinctively. There are minimal pairs distinguished only by pitch, such as *dooriis* 'he chose' and *dóoriis* 'he piled up,' where high pitch is indicated by an acute accent. Where the high pitch is allocated in the word is determined for each conjugated (inflected) form of each word, and the place is not completely predictable. Furthermore, several successive words can be combined to form an intonation group in a sentence, in which the high pitch is not realized and the whole word is pronounced at a low level pitch, except for the first word. Thus, minimal pairs distinguished only by pitch lose their phonological distinction if the words in question do not appear at the beginning of the group. The same conjugated (inflected) forms of the same word may show slightly different pitch patterns, perhaps partly because of sentential intonation. It is not well understood how the boundary

of intonation groups is determined. It seems that a sentence can be segmented into different intonation groups. Because further studies are needed to understand the phonological pitch in Wolaytta, the pitch is not indicated in this paper.

3. MORPHOLOGY

Most words in Wolaytta consist of a lexical stem and a grammatical ending.

3.1. Common nouns

Common nouns in Wolaytta are morphologically divided into four subclasses, three of which are masculine and one of which is feminine. Their endings are the following.⁽³⁾ A hyphen “-” may be inserted to show morphological boundaries in this paper, although it is not present in the notation used by native Wolaytta people. As for the actual notation of the concrete endings, variants such as *-uwaa* ~ *-uwa*, *-iyaa* ~ *-iya* can be observed. Although the former of each pair, with a long final vowel, seems to be normative, the latter, with a short final vowel, is adopted in this paper, with the phonological interpretation and very frequent fluctuations in actual writing taken into consideration.

(3) Endings of common nouns⁽⁴⁾

Non-concrete

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
M. Class A	-a	-a	-i	-ee	-oo
M. Class E	-e	-e	-ee	-ee	-oo, -ee
M. Class O	-o	-o	-oy	-oo	-oo
F	-o	-e, -i	-a	-oo	-oo

Concrete singular

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
M. Class A	-aa	-aa	-ay	-ay	-aw
M. Class E	-iya	-iya	-ee	-ee	-iyaw
M. Class O	-uwa	-uwa	-oy	-oy	-uwaw
F	-iyo	-ee	-iya	-ii	-ee

Concrete plural

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
M. Class A	-ata	-atu	-ati	-atee	-atoo
M. Class E	-eta	-etu	-eti	-etee	-etoo
M. Class O	-ota	-otu	-oti	-otee	-otoo
F	-eta	-etu	-eti	-etee	-etoo
	-ota	-otu	-oti	-otee	-otoo

The term “singular” is actually misleading, because “singular” forms are unmarked for number, i.e., they can refer to either one or more than one referent. Thus, both of the following are possible:

(4) *dar-o* *keett-aa*
 many-OBL house-ABS.SG.M ‘many houses’

(5) *dar-o* *keett-ata*
 many-OBL house-ABS.PL ‘many houses’

The oblique case is used when the noun modifies its following nominal (including postpositions),

(12) Endings of person-name nouns

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
M. Class A	-a	-a	-i	-ee	-aa
M. Class E	-a	-e	-ee	-ee	-ee
M. Class O	-a	-o	-oy	-ee	-oo
M. Class U	-a	-u	-u	-ee	-oo
F	-o	-i	-a	-ii	-ee

Roughly speaking, these endings of proper nouns resemble non-concrete endings of common nouns. This is strange because proper nouns, especially person-name nouns, inherently refer to concrete objects. This enigma can be explained by considering that both common and proper nouns used to have only one unmarked series of endings, i.e., the present non-concrete endings, and then common nouns derived concrete endings based on non-concrete endings. Proper nouns, however, have not changed in this respect because they do not have to distinguish concrete and non-concrete meanings.⁽⁵⁾

As for pitch, both place-name and person-name nouns are divided into two classes: Tone Class I, whose absolutive forms have a high pitch only on the ending, and Tone Class II, whose absolutive forms have a high pitch on both the stem and the ending. There are restrictions on the combination of tone and morphological classes: as for place names found outside of Wolaytta, all Class A place-name nouns belong to Tone Class I, and as for traditional person names, all Class U person-name nouns belong to Tone Class I and all Class O and Feminine person-name nouns belong to Tone Class II.

The etymologies of almost all Wolaytta place names are unknown.

3.3. Numerals

Numerals are morphologically divided into four subclasses. They inflect according to the case, and concrete forms (singular and plural) of the common noun can be derived from them. For example:

(13) Numerals

	For counting	ABS	OBL	INTER
1	istt-a	iss-uwa	iss-i	iss-oo
2	naa"-a	naa"-a	naa"-u	naa"-ee
6	usuppun-a	usuppun-a	usuppun	usuppun-ee
11 ⁽⁶⁾	isiin-o	isiin-e / -o	isiin-i / -e	isiin-ee

(14) *naa"-aa* 'two things (common noun, SG),' *naa"-ata* 'two things (common noun, PL)'

In addition, the language has the expression of frequency (or the number of times) and two series of ordinals; one expresses the number of repetitions of a given action and the other expresses the rank, position, grade, level, and so forth, among different objects: e.g., *naa"-utoo* 'two times,' *naa"-antturwa* 'second (repetition),' and *naa"-anttaa* 'second (rank).' Incidentally, *miliyon-iya* 'million' is a common noun while *aappun-a* 'how many' is a numeral in terms of morphology.

3.4. Personal Pronouns

First, second, and reflexive third person pronouns are inflected as follows:

(15) Personal pronouns (I)

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
1SG	tana	ta(a) ~ tana(a)	ta(a) ~ ta(a)n(i)	tanee	tanoo
1PL	nuna	nu(u) ~ nuna(a)	nu(u) ~ nu(u)n(i)	nunee	nunoo

2SG	na	ne(e) ~ nena(a)	ne(e) ~ ne(e)n(i)	nenee	nenoo
2PL	inttena	intte(e) ~ inttena(a)	intte	inttenee	inttenoo
3REFL.SG	bana	ba(a) ~ bana(a)		banee	
3REFL.PL	banttana	bantta(a) ~ banttana(a)		banttanee	

As can be seen from the above table, there are forms with and without *-n-* on the last syllable. This *n* element would go back to the accusative marker, which is attested in many North Omotic languages, and further to the oblique case of the proto Omotic (see Hayward and Tsuge 1998).

Non-reflexive third person pronouns are as follows:

(16) Personal pronouns (II)

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER
3SG.M	a	a(a)	i	ee
3SG.F	o	i(i)	a	ii
3PL	eta	eta(a)	eti	etee

3.5. Nominalizers

Wolaytta has nominalizers that are always accompanied by a modifier and function as substitutes of a concrete common noun. The forms are shown below.

(17) Nominalizers

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
SG.M	-gaa	-gaa	-gee	-gee	-goo
PL	-geeta	-geetu	-geeti	-geetee	-geetoo
SG.F	-ro	-ri	-ra	-rii	-ree

- (18) *Naag-iya-g-ee* watch-REL.IPFV.SBJ-NMLZ-NOM.SG.M *pengg-iya* door-ABS.SG.M *dooy-iis*. open-PFV.3SG.M
 ‘The one who watches (i.e., the gatekeeper) opened the door.’

- (19) *Ha* PROX *maxaaf-ati* book-NOM.PL *nee-g-eet-ee?* your (OBL)-NMLZ-PL-INTER
 ‘Are these books yours?’

3.6. Postpositions

Wolaytta uses postpositions for various purposes. It should be noted that it has three dative postpositions, *-ssi*, *-yyo*, and *-wu*, although the phonological and semantic environments in which these can be used are slightly different. The other postpositions are *-kko* ‘toward,’ *-ppe* ‘from, than,’ *-ra* ‘with,’ *-n(i)* ‘in, at, by,’ and *-da(a)n(i)* ‘like.’ Some postpositions are inflected when they are used as predicates: e.g., *Anjullo-ni* ‘by Anjulo (male person name),’ *Anjullo-na* ‘it is by Anjulo,’ *Anjullo-nee* ‘is it by Anjulo?’

3.7. Verbs

3.7.1. Imperfective

Endings of imperfective forms of the verb are as follows:

(20) Endings of the imperfective

1SG	-ays	2SG	-aasa	3SG.M	-ees	3SG.F	-awsu
1PL	-oos, -eettees	2PL	-eeta	3PL	-oosona		

Each of these endings can basically be analyzed as “inner agreement element + outer agreement

element + indicative mood marker (+ outer agreement element)” (see Hayward 1998). The inner agreement elements are considered to be endings of the converb, *a* and *i*, which are used to form semantically nearly colorless subordinate forms as discussed below. The outer agreement elements correspond to personal pronouns of South Omotic languages: *-i* (1SG), *-a* (2SG), *-e* (3SG.M), *-u* (3SG.F), *-o* (1PL), and *-eta* (2PL). The indicative mood marker is represented by *s*. According to this analysis, the endings of the imperfective originally expressed almost nothing except the person, number, and gender of the subject. This historical background is also supported by the fact that the imperfective can be used for various purposes, for example, to express a continuous aspect of the past or the present, the future tense, or a general truth.

- (21) *Zin-o* *neeni* *y-iyo-d-e*
 yesterday-ABS you (NOM.SG) come-REL.IPFV.NSBJ-time-ABS
taani *katt-aa* *m-ays.*
 I (NOM) food-ABS.SG.M eat-IPFV.1SG
 ‘When you came yesterday, I was eating food.’

- (22) *Ane* *iss-i* *guutt-a* *yett-iyō* *yexxx-ays.*
 so then one-OBL small-OBL song-ABS.SG.F sing-IPFV.1SG
 ‘So then, I will sing a small song.’

There are also negative (declarative) imperfective endings and both affirmative and negative interrogative imperfective endings. The forms are the following.

- (23) Endings of the negative imperfective
 1SG -ikke 2SG -akka 3SG.M -enna 3SG.F -ukku
 1PL -okko, -ettenna 2PL -ekketa 3PL -okkona
- (24) Endings of the interrogative imperfective
 1SG -iyanaa 2SG -ay 3SG.M -ii 3SG.F -ay
 1PL -iyō(nii) 2PL -eetii 3PL -iyōnaa
- (25) Endings of the negative interrogative imperfective
 1SG -ikkinaa 2SG -ikkii 3SG.M -ennee 3SG.F -ekkee
 1PL -okkonii, -ettennee 2PL -ekketii 3PL -okkonaa
- (26) *Nenoo* *siy-ikkii?* *Nena* *g-ays.*
 you (VOC.SG) hear-NEG.IPFV.2SG you (ABS.SG) say-IPFV.1SG
 ‘You, don’t you hear? I’m talking to you.’

3.7.2. Perfective

The perfective form of the verb expresses a past event without explicit reference to its internal temporal constituency. In other words, it is used to describe a past event as a single complete whole. The endings are:

- (27) Endings of the perfective
 1SG -aas(i) 2SG -adasa 3SG.M -iis(i) 3SG.F -aasu
 1PL -ida 2PL -ideta 3PL -idosona
- (28) Endings of the negative perfective
 1SG -abeikke 2SG -abeakka 3SG.M -ibeenna 3SG.F -abeukku
 1PL -ibeokko, -ibeettenna 2PL -ibeekketa 3PL -ibeokkona

the converbs of the verb *d-* ‘to exist, to live, to be.’

- (35) *Keett-ay* *pit-ett-i* *geey-idi*
 house-NOM.SG.M sweep-PASS-CVB.3SG.M become clean-CVB.3SG.M
lo"-iis.
 become good-PFV.3SG.M
 ‘The house was swept, and became clean, and became good.’

Converbs may be followed by a verb used as an auxiliary verb.

- (36) *Zaar-uwa* *giig-iss-i* *wott-iis.*
 answer-ABS.SG.M be prepared-CAUS-CVB.3SG.M put-PFV.3SG.M
 ‘He had prepared an answer (lit. he made an answer be prepared, and put).’

Endings of the simultaneous form are *-aydda* (1SG, 2SG, and 3SG.F) and *-iiddi* (3SG.M and PLs). Roughly speaking, they express ‘while.’

- (37) *Qum-aa* *m-aydda* *haasay-oppa.*
 food-ABS.SG.M eat-SIM.2SG talk-NEG.OPT.2SG
 ‘Don’t talk while you are eating food!’

Basic endings of the relative (adnominal) form of the verb are as follows.

- (38) Basic endings of the relative (adnominal)

	IPFV	PFV
SBJ	-iya	-(id)a
NSBJ	-iyo	-(id)o

A subject oriented (SBJ) form is used when a head nominal of a relative clause would function as a subject in the relative clause, and a non-subject oriented (NSBJ) form is used elsewhere.

- (39) *hargg-ida* *na'-aa*
 become sick-REL.PFV.SBJ child-ABS.SG.M ‘a boy who became sick’
- (40) *i* *uy-iyo* *eess-aa*
 he (NOM) drink-REL.IPFV.NSBJ mead-ABS.SG.M ‘mead that he drinks’

There are also derivative relative endings in this language: *-ana* (FUT), *-enna* (unmarked NEG), *-abeenna* (NEG.PFV.1SG, 2SG. and 3SG.F), and *-ibeenna* (NEG.PFV.3SG.M and PLs). The first one is derived from the future infinitive *-an-aa*, and the second one is from the negative infinitive *-enn-aa*. The last two are also derived from the negative infinitive, but are prefixed by an inner agreement element plus *be* to express the perfectiveness (cf. (28) above). Note that the relative form is used in various subordinate clauses.

- (41) *haatt-ay* *kixx-ido* *gishsb-a-wu*
 water-NOM.SG.M swell (vi)-REL.PFV.NSBJ reason-OBL.SG.M-DAT
 ‘because the river is swollen (lit. for the reason that the water swelled)’
- (42) *tam-aa* *oytt-iyog-aa-ni*
 fire-ABS.SG.M make seize-REL.IPFV.NSBJ-NMLZ-ABS.SG.M-LOC
 ‘when (he) set fire (lit. in the [action] in which someone makes seize fire)’

Subordinate forms other than those mentioned above in this section are not conjugated. Most of them contain the subordination marker *-i*, as in *-i-kko* ‘if’ and *-i-n(i)* ‘when.’

The first vowels of some of the above endings are lengthened when they are suffixed to a monoconsonantal verb: *m-iidi* (eat-CVB.3SG.M) ‘he eats and.’

3.7.7. Verb Infixes

Wolaytta has three infixes that occur between a verb stem and a verb ending: *-shsb-* (continuous aspect), *-ichcb-* (completive aspect whose attention is focused on a change of the referent of the subject), and *-rgg-* (completive aspect whose attention is focused on a change of something other than the referent of the subject). All of these are preceded by an inner agreement element when they are used.

- (43) *Hargganchcb-ay* *qum-aa* *m-iichcb-iis.*
 patient-NOM.SG.M food-ABS.M.SG eat-COMP-PFV.3SG.M
 ‘The patient ate the food (so the patient is going to get better).’

- (44) *Hargganchcb-ay* *qum-aa* *m-irgg-iis.*
 patient-NOM.SG.M food-ABS.M.SG eat-COMP-PFV.3SG.M
 ‘The patient ate the food (thus there is no food now).’

3.8. Indeclinables

Wolaytta has indeclinables that do not contain a lexical stem and a grammatical ending. They include, for example, interjections such as *chii* ‘no,’ conjunctives such as *woy* ‘or,’ phrase-final particles such as *-rkka* ‘only,’ and sentence-final particles such as *-ttenne* ‘indeed.’ The systems of demonstratives and some interrogatives are rather complex. They are based on indeclinables such as *ha* (PROX), *he* (DIST), and *ay* ‘what.’

3.9. Preverbs

Like many Ethiopian languages, Wolaytta has “preverbs,” which resemble more or less onomatopoeia. They are used in combination with the verb *g-* ‘to say’ or *oott-* ‘to do.’ In most cases, however, these verbs lose their original meanings: e.g., *kirqqi g-* ‘not to be remembered by any means,’ *xoqqu g-* ‘to be elevated,’ *xoqqu oott-* ‘to elevate.’ Most preverbs can be analyzed as a lexical stem and a grammatical ending: *xoqq-* and *-u*, for instance (cf. *xoqq-aa* ‘elevated one, height’).

3.10. Derivation

A lexical stem in Wolaytta may be analyzed into smaller elements. In other words, a common noun stem may be derived from a common noun stem or a verb stem by adding a suffix that has a particular function. In the same way, a verb stem may be derived from a common noun stem. It is also possible to add one or more voice suffixes such as *-iss-* (CAUS) and *-ett-* (PASS, reciprocal, iterative) to a verb stem: *zor-* ‘to give advice,’ *zor-ett-* ‘to consult with each other,’ *zor-et-iss-* ‘to make people consult with each other (causative of *zor-ett-*).’

3.11. Final Comments on Grammatical Endings

In many cases, a grammatical ending in this language can be analyzed into smaller elements, and there are grammatical elements that are observed across more than one word class, as evident from the above data. From a historical linguistic point of view, it would be interesting but quite difficult to explain all of them completely coherently.

4. SYNTAX

4.1. Constituent Order

Wolaytta is a typical OV language, as can be seen from the above examples. Modifiers precede their modified heads, but the use of appositive construction may obscure that. In the following, the second word *lo"-uwa* is appositive to the first one *boyn-aa*.

- (45) *Boyn-aa* *lo"-uwa* *shamm-ada* *katt-aasu*.
 taro-ABS.SG.M good-ABS.SG.M buy-CVB.3SG.F cook-PFV.3SG.F
 'She bought taros, good ones (i.e., she bought good taros), and cooked them.'

4.2. Agreement

The predicate verb in Wolaytta agrees with the subject in terms of person, number, and gender. Generally speaking, the form, not the meaning, determines the agreement. Thus, a singular verb agrees with a singular (or rather, unmarked for number, as outlined under (3) in 3.1.) subject that refers to more than one referent, as in the following.

- (46) *Heezz-u* *tuumm-oy* *d-ees*.
 three-OBL garlic-NOM.SG.M exist-IPFV.3SG.M
 'There are three bulbs of garlic.'

The meaning, however, may determine the agreement in some cases, which causes a "disagreement" between the subject and the predicate verb as follows.

- (47) *Naa"-ay* *gaytt-idi* *sarot-ett-idosona*.
 two-NOM.SG.M meet-CVB.3PL greet-PASS-PFV.3PL
 'The two met and greeted each other.' (singular subject and plural verb)

- (48) *I* *xall-ay* *y-aasu*.
 her (OBL) only-NOM.SG.M come-PFV.3SG.F
 'Only she came.' (masculine subject [*xall-ay* 'only'] and feminine verb)

4.3. Reflexive and Non-reflexive Pronouns

In simple sentences, the third person reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns are used distinctively.

- (49) *Baass-i* *ba* *keett-aa* *b-iis*.
 (person name)-NOM.M REFL.OBL.3SG house-ABS.SG.M go-PFV.3SG.M
 'Basa went to his (=Basa's) house.'

- (50) *Baass-i* *a* *keett-aa* *b-iis*.
 (person name)-NOM.M his (OBL) house-ABS.SG.M go-PFV.3SG.M
 'Basa went to his (=other than Basa's) house.'

If a third person pronoun refers to the same referent as that of a subject of a superordinate clause and if the subjects of the clauses are different, both of the reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns can be used, as follows.

- (51) *Kuuss-i* *as-a* *ubb-ay*
 (person name)-NOM.M people-OBL all-NOM.SG.M
bana / a *maadd-i-n* *galat-iis*.
 REFL.ABS.3SG / him (ABS) help-SUBOR-LOC thank-PFV.3SG.M

'Kusa thanked all the people who helped him (= Kusa) (lit. Kusa thanked when all the people helped him (= Kusa)).' (However, the non-reflexive can also refer to a person other than Kusa in this sentence. Thus (51) is ambiguous.)

4.4. Quotation

Wolaytta prefers direct-indirect mixed quotations, in which a finite predicate verb at the end of the quotation (and its subject, if any) is reported from the viewpoint of the speaker of the original utterance and the rest of the quotation is reported from the viewpoint of the reporter.

(52) *Tanaa-ra* *oott-ikke* *g-iis.*
 me (OBL)-COM work-NEG.IPFV.1SG say-PFV.3SG.M
 'He said that he does not work with me' 'He said "I don't work with you." (lit. He said I do not work with me.)

Note that the following two sentences, which contain quotations, have different meanings, as do (49) and (50), which are simple sentences. For further discussion, see Wakasa (2013b).

(53) *Ombbosh-a* *bana* *maadd-adasa* *yaag-aasu.*
 (person name)-NOM.F REFL.ABS.3SG help-PFV.2SG say so-PFV.3SG.F
 'Omboshe said, "You helped me (= Omboshe)." (lit. Omboshe said you helped herself.)

(54) *Ombbosh-a* *o* *maadd-adasa* *yaag-aasu.*
 (person name)-NOM.F her (ABS) help-PFV.2SG say so-PFV.3SG.F
 'Omboshe said, "You helped her (= other than Omboshe)." (lit. Omboshe said you helped her.)

4.5. Relative Clause + Nominalizer Construction

A nominalizer modified by a relative (adnominal) form of a verb can co-occur with the noun it substitutes if the latter can semantically function as the subject of the relative verb. In the following example, the nominalizer *-g-aa* is an anaphor for *as-ay* 'people,' and the noun can semantically function as a subject of the relative verb *guj-ett-* 'to be added.' Partly because of the differences in their cases, the sentence is puzzling initially. This sort of use of the relative form may be regarded as a device for clause conjuncture peculiar to Wolaytta.

(55) *Shoor-o-ppe* *as-ay*
 neighbor-OBL-ABL people-NOM.SG.M
guj-ett-idaa-g-aa-ssi *tukk-iya*
 add-PASS-REL.PFV.SBJ-NMLZ-OBL.SG.M-DAT coffee-ABS.SG.M
ess-ana.
 stand (vt)-FUT

'I will make coffee for the people who came from the neighborhood (lit. for the one who people were added from the neighbor).'

Acceptability of the co-occurrence of a nominalizer as a head of a relative clause and the substituted noun in the clause seems to be extremely low if the nominalizer does not function as a subject of the relative verb, which is interesting from a typological point of view.

5. OTHER MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

Second and third person plural forms of verbs and pronouns are also used as second and third person singular honorific forms, respectively.

Rhyme is preferred in Wolaytta. For example, a male child may be alliteratively named *Gujuuba* if his father's name is *Guttulla*. Rhyming is also found in modern pop songs and *qan'ish-iyā* 'riddles.' *Qan'ish-iyā* is actually a kind of sophisticated oral literature, in which the question and the answer rhyme and often also match semantically. Thus, the translation 'riddle' may be misleading. Below is an example.

(56)

Question:	<i>Giy-a</i> market-OBL	<i>gidd-oo-ni</i> inside-OBL-LOC	<i>gitigit-a.</i> roam-OPT.2SG
	'Hang around in the market!'		
Answer:	<i>Og-iyā</i> road-OBL.SG.M	<i>doon-aa-ni</i> mouth-OBL-LOC	<i>batibat-a.</i> fidget-OPT.2SG
	'Fidget by the roadside!' (an insult to an insult)		

For further examples, see Wakasa (2013a). It should be noted that language in *qan'ish-iyā* sometimes differs from that of modern Wolaytta.

NOTES

- (1) For the details of the language, see Wakasa (2008).
- (2) The data, which do not seem to be available as of September 1, 2013, were downloaded from the website of the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia (<http://www.csa.gov.et/>) on January 13, 2013.
- (3) The abbreviations used in this paper follow: ABL (ablative postposition), ABS (absolute), ADV (adverbial), CAUS (causative), COM (comitative postposition), CNCR (concrete), COMP (completive), CVB (converb), DAT (dative postposition), DIST (distal), F (feminine), FUT (future), INF (infinitive), INTER (interrogative), IPFV (imperfective), LOC (locative postposition), M (masculine), NCNCR (non-concrete), NEG (negative), NMLZ (nominalizer), NOM (nominative), NSBJ (non-subject oriented), OBL (oblique), OPT (optative), PASS (passive), PFV (perfective), PL (plural), PROX (proximal), REFL (reflexive), REL (relative), SBJ (subject oriented), SG (singular), SIM (simultaneous), SUBOR (subordination marker), vi (intransitive verb), VOC (vocative), vt (transitive verb), 1 (first person), 2 (second person), 3 (third person).
- (4) The concrete and non-concrete nominative forms of M. Class E and O can be distinguished by pitch. The details are not discussed in this paper.
- (5) If there exists two series of endings from the beginning, we cannot explain why proper nouns do not choose concrete endings. If there exists only concrete endings for both common and proper nouns, we cannot explain why the endings of the latter have changed from concrete to non-concrete.
- (6) This numeral originally seems to have meant, and still means, 'one' in compound numerical expressions such as *tamm-a-nne* (ten-ABS-and) *isiin-o* 'eleven.'
- (7) The relative future infinitive is a kind of nominal derived from a verb. It is composed of a verb stem followed by *-an-aa*, which is conjugated as M. Class A common noun (see 3.1.). It expresses a situation that takes place in the relative future. The following is an example:

<i>Qum-aa</i> food-ABS.SG.M	<i>m-aan-aa-ppe</i> eat-INF-ABS.SG.M-ABL	<i>kaset-ada</i> precede-CVB.2SG
<i>kush-iyā</i> hand-ABS.SG.M	<i>meec-ett-a.</i> wash-PASS-OPT.2SG	
'Before you eat food, wash your hands!'		

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