

1. Overview

§1-3: Investigating the *-oo/-(h)ee* suffix in Gorwaa (South Cushitic; Afroasiatic). Corpus study carried out to show distribution. **§4:** Results; evidence that it is a nominal suffix (D-type) with sensitivity to **non-specific** environments. **§5-7** Linking this to crosslinguistic work about specificity marking and abstract Case.

2. The South Cushitic picture

Gorwaa within **Iraqw cluster** of South Cushitic (Tosco 2000). Endangered and understudied; Harvey (2018) as first major work. **Iraqw:** cognate suffix *-oo/-ee* as “enigmatic” “scope marking suffix” glossed PRED (Mous & Qorro 2010); lack of a formal account of which operations mark scope this way. Harvey (2018): glosses Gorwaa *-oo/-(h)ee* as TOP but says term “not particularly satisfactory”. For both: marker “occurs in several, seemingly disparate morphosyntactic environments” (ibid:179). **RQ:** Can we give a formal account?

4. The *-oo/-(h)ee* suffix in Gorwaa

Results from corpus study (*-oo/-(h)ee* suffix glossed as ‘X’):

A. Nominal and adjectival negation

- (1) Niingaheeká sleeme [20151021 249.1]
niingá-ó-**hee-eká** sleeme
sp.of.bird-L.Mo-**X-NEG** also
‘[...] though it is not a *niingá* [type of bird]’

B. Nominal polar questions

- (2) a /Orundiyeê? [20150726 58.1]
∅ /Orundi-**ee-^**
AUX /Orundi-**X-Q**
‘Is it /Orundi?’

C. After universal quantification

- (3) Ba’aari umoqó /ayitoo ngin nuunuu’ [20131108 9.1]
ba’aari-r’ **umó=qó** /ayi-tá-**oo** ng-a-∅ nuunuu’-LPA
bees-L.Fr **every=EMPH** flower-L.Ft-**X** A.3-P.F-AUX suck-SUBJ
‘Bees suck every flower’

D. On adverbials derived from nouns

- (4) matlatlee*(roo) ya ta /a/amiín [20160927 6.1]
matlatlee(-r’-**oo**) ya t-∅ -m-/aá/-ín-^
morning(-L.Fr-**X**) thus MP-AUX EXT-cry-EXT-PST
‘In the morning there was crying’

E. On verbal nouns

- (5) Ana da’ayumiít huriingwoo [20150727 19.1]
∅-∅ m-da’ayuút-iít-^ huriingw-ó-**oo**
S.P-AUX EXT-fear-EXT-PST cooking-L.Mo-**X**
‘I fear cooking’

F. On the object of comparison (if no demonstrative *-qá’* ‘that’)

- (6) Inós ka tleer ta garmawoo [20160927 m.1]
inós t-ng-a-∅ tleer ta garma-ó-**oo**
PRO.3SG MP-A.3-P.F-AUX long ? boy-L.Mo-**X**
‘She is tall compared to the boy’

G. For regions

- (7) Bará Gorwaawoo iringeéd i deer [20191203 1]
bará Gorwaa-**oo** iringeéd i=∅ deer
in Gorwaa-**X** sin S.3=AUX be.present
‘There is sin in Gorwaaland’

Without the suffix, can be a person (8) or name of a town:

- (8) Bará Gorwaa iringeéd i deer [20191203 2]
bará Gorwaa iringeéd i=∅ deer
in Gorwaa sin S.3=AUX be.present
‘There is sin in Gorwaa people’

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3. Methodology

Gorwaa data from Andrew Harvey’s ELDP-funded corpus (Harvey 2017):

- Natural speech
 - Elicitation
 - Mostly transcribed (interlinearised) and time-aligned
- FLEX used to search corpus uses concordances
+ follow-up data collected in 2020 (in progress)



5. Analysis

Option 1: The suffix is an indefinite determiner

Gorwaa uses *-ko* as an indefinite determiner (can’t appear with demonstrative *-qá’*). This doesn’t take a **linker** (unlike *-oo/-(h)ee*):

- (9) xa’ano{∅|ko} I bará qaaymoo [20191203 28]
xa’anó{∅|ko} i=∅ bará qaaymoo
tree{-∅|INDEF} S.3=Aux in field
‘The tree is in the field’ [without *-ko*]; ‘Some tree is in the field’ [with *-ko*]

→ Suffix patterns differently from indefinite determiner *-ko*; evidence against Option 1

Option 2: Marks non-specificity (downward entailing/non-veridical contexts)

Compare with **augment drop** in Bantu (Niger-Congo) when nominal pre-prefix is dropped, e.g. *o-mu-piira* vs *∅-mu-piira* ‘ball’. In Runyakore-Rukiga, obligatory for:

- Object nouns after negative verbs cf Gorwaa A
- After *buli/ibara* ‘every’ cf Gorwaa C
- In interrogatives with the question word *ki* cf Gorwaa B
- After the prepositions *omu/aha* ‘inside’/‘at’ cf Gorwaa G
- On adjectives as complements to main verbs
- Nouns following the absolute pronoun
- Vocative nouns (Asiimwe 2014:122)

The pattern: “[Bantu] languages with a default augmented form are most likely to lose the augment in nonspecific and indefinite environments.” (Halpert, to appear)

→ contexts such as negation are robust cross-linguistically (and match the Gorwaa data)

Analysis? Asiimwe (2014): augment is a D element with a [+specific] feature

Implications for Gorwaa: *-oo/-(h)ee* as D with [-specific] feature. Challenge: why is the linker (glossed L) required? Harvey (2018) analyses linker as D; would require recursion

Implications for theory: Gorwaa as language marking **more** for **non-specificity**

Option 3: Relation to Case. E.g. Halpert (2012) for Zulu (Bantu) augment drop: augmentless nouns in vP and licensed by Licensor phrase LP between vP and TP

Implications for Gorwaa: Suggests abstract Case is active (versus previous treatments as discourse-configurational language without Case effects; Sasse 1984)
Challenge: Discourse-configurationality of Gorwaa doesn’t match vP restrictions for Zulu

Implications for theory: The Case debate: is the Visibility Condition (Chomsky 1981, 1986) universal? Widely discussed for Bantu (e.g. Halpert 2012, Diercks 2012), less so for South Cushitic. Q: **Is specificity marking tied to Case?** For differential object marking (DOM) patterns familiar within specificity literature (e.g. Enç 1991), specificity marked on objects by ACC morphology, i.e. Case restricts marking (Ormazabal & Ronero 2013). Not apparent that Gorwaa has similar restrictions (against option 3); further study required.

6. Conclusion

- Corpus study of Gorwaa identified distribution of the *-oo/-(h)ee* nominal suffix
- Empirical parallels between South Cushitic suffix and Bantu augment drop
- Model the two language families by D heads using [\pm specific] features
- Is there a relation to Case? Gorwaa distribution seems broader than Bantu augment drop/DOM patterns. Implications for universality of Case theory

7. Questions

- Q1.** Why is the **linker** required between the N and the *-oo/-(h)ee* suffix? (cf the indefinite determiner *-ko*). Harvey (2018): linker is itself a D head; requires recursion of D
Q2. Do other languages mark **non-specificity** (vs specificity)?
Q3. How can we test whether the Gorwaa *-oo/-(h)ee* suffix is sensitive to **Case**?

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Glossing

3 = 3rd person, A = agent of transitive clause, AUX = auxiliary, EMPH = emphatic suffix, EXT = expectative aspect, F = feminine gender, Fr = feminine gender type, INDEF = indefinite, L = linker, Mo = masculine gender type, MP = mediopassive voice, NEG = negation, P = patient of transitive clause, PST = past, Q = question, S = selector, ^ = rising-falling pitch accent, SUBJ = subjunctive

References

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