
The verb *k'ab-* in Oromo¹

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Abstract

The verb *k'ab-* in Oromo is a transitive verb with fully inflectional property; it agrees with the subject in person, number, gender and TAM categories. In its semantic nature, the verb lexically works in possession and transitive action. It also conveys obligation occurring as an auxiliary which is hypothetically considered as the grammaticalized function of the possessive verb as in many languages of the world. A homophonous lexical item shows a transitive action of 'holding', 'grabbing' or 'carrying' in a different morphosyntactic structure. The verb of possession *k'ab-* which is homophonous with that of the non-possessive transitive action has several semantic peculiarities in the discourse specific uses. The functional distinction is understood from the syntagmatic and paradigmatic structures of the verb. Hence, this paper aims to explore morphosyntactic and semantic features of the possessive verb in Oromo along with some pragmatic grounds. Some homophonous patterns vis-à-vis the respective functional distinctions are also identified and characterized as well.

Key words : possession, semantics, morphosyntax, action, homophonous

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In the predicative possessions where the verbal arguments are possessor (henceforth POSR) and possessum (henceforth POSM), different patterns are typologically distinguished as existential verbs and possessive verbs as in the Cushitic languages. It seems that the typical verbs of possession are dominant over using of the existential verbs for the concept of possession in these languages, and the possessive verb occurs with varieties of notional as well as functional peculiarities. Stassen (2009:324) states that locational (or existential) and ‘have’ possessives exist in the Cushitic languages depending on the language’s preference, but many of the languages tend to employ the ‘have’ possession in their inherent linguistic features. In Oromo, the possessive verb is used in the sentences along with some peripheral and situational forms of copular and existential verbs. Heine's (1997) schematic notions of possessive patterns along with temporal nature (temporary or permanent) and representational nature (concrete or abstract) of possession indications, and the four structural typology for possessive constructions in Stassen (2009) are the major approaches considered for characterizing possession in Oromo.

The possessive verb, as in Heine (1997), is considered as an action schema where the actions like ‘holding/grabbing/carrying’ are the sources for possessive notion through grammaticalization process. This verb is in line with the ‘have’ possessive of Stassen's (2009) typology.

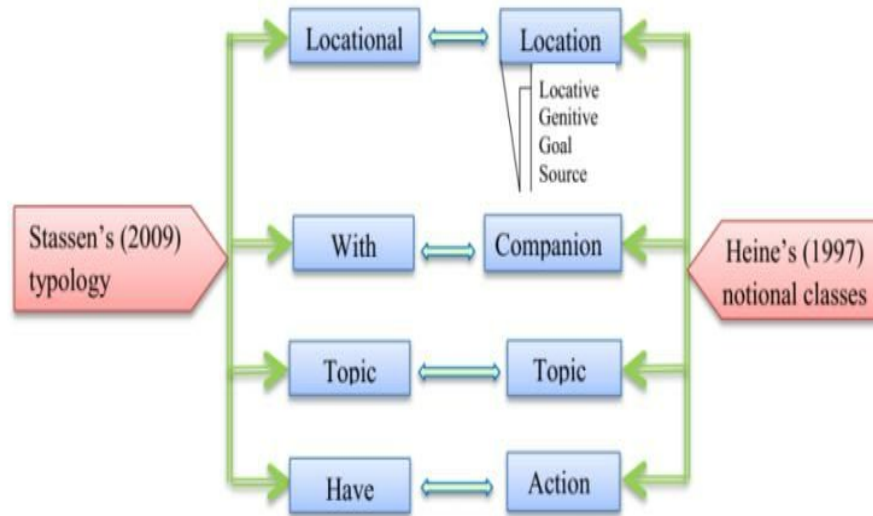


Figure 1: Stassen's typology and Heine's schema in possession

Oromo (a member of lowland east branch in the Cushitic family) has the verb *k'ab-* 'have' that's one of the most frequently used verbs with a lot of roles in the language; these roles are realized in the morphosyntactically and pragmatically derived functionalities. The verb is a transitive inflectional word with the lexico-semantic use mainly for the ownership sense in the possessive relation.

In fact, predicative possession basically focuses on the ownership sense with the POSR's physical control or disposal over the POSM in the sentence. The associated meanings are subject to pragmatic categories of possessive relations that involve all the possessive classes of kinship, body-part and ownership. Within the category of predicative possession in Oromo, the specific verb 'have' shows peculiar morphosyntax in correlation with different grammatical functions and semantic spaces. These meanings may relate to Heine's (1997:34) sub-notions of using the verb 'to have' across languages.

Considering the complex nature of possession encoding for the varied semantic indications, Heine (1997:34, 89) lists sub-notions of possession as physical, temporary, permanent, inalienable, abstract, inanimate inalienable, inanimate alienable possession. Here are few types of semantic contents in the clausal forms of possession with the examples from English language given in Heine (1997:34) as cross-linguistic features:

Physical possession: represents the immediate and observable type of possession which is expressed in relation with something else as shown in example (a) below (Heine 1997:34).

(a) *I want to fill in this form, do you have a pen?*

Temporary possession: encodes the short time disposal or control of some POSM that conveys using of something for a time being as the thing is owned by someone else in the permanent sense. No legal owning by the POSR as in (b) (Heine 1997:34).

(b) *I have a car that I use to go to office but it belongs to Judy.*

Permanent Possession: refers to the owning of something for a long time that is legally and inherently guaranteed as the property under control and disposal. Legal and official possession as encoded by (c) below (Heine 1997:34).

(c) *Judy has a car but I use it all the time.*

Inalienable Possession: is possession type that is inherent and inseparable type as the possessive relation is natural (includes body-part and kinship relations) as shown in (d) (Heine 1997:34).

(d) *I have blue eyes/I have two sisters.*

Abstract Possession: expresses mental state in the form of possession that is not tangible in the physical world but just expressed in the form of feeling or some invisible or conceptual POSM in the possessive clause. The POSM as in (e) is an invisible object (Heine 1997:34).

(e) *He has no time/no mercy.*

Inanimate Possession: shows the possession structure with inanimate POSR nouns with either inseparable (inalienable) POSM or with the

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separable (alienable) POSM nouns in the possessive clause. The part-whole relation in the possessive structure is under this category as in (f) and (g) below having inanimate POSRs with inalienable and alienable POSMs respectively (Heine 1997:34).

- (f) *The tree has branches.* (Inanimate inalienable)
(g) *The tree has crows on it.* (Inanimate alienable)

Few of these notional types explicate the prototypical possession which involves control or disposal by the human POSR in the possessive relation. Besides the concrete possessive relations, the abstract possession (no concrete relation between the POSR and POSM nominals) may have several extensions of representations in languages.

1.2. The Gap

Possession is less studied in the Ethiopian languages except in some genitive case related categories of grammar descriptions. Especially, the predicative possession remained not given due attention in those descriptions. Baye (1997) and Leslau (1995) consider the verb ‘to have’ in Amharic (Ethiosemitic); these can be raised among the few relevant studies in Ethiopian language. The former one examines the structural peculiarities focusing on inflectional variations of the existential predication in terms of its underlying and surface structures of possession in Amharic while the latter one describes the morphosyntactic structure of possession expression with existential verb, and it agrees with person, number gender and tense-aspect-mood. Ahland (2009) also illustrates the grammaticalization related explanation of possessive notion with theta-roles in Amharic as synchronic and diachronic analysis. As stated in Serzisko (1984), Somali (member of Lowland East Cushitic) uses the existential/locational verb *leh-yahay* ‘be with’ for expressing possession. However, the earlier studies of Somali like Kirk (1905) and Saeed (1953) indicate that the language employs the verb to have in its predicative possession.

Most of the studies indicated above are, in fact, from Amharic (Ethiosemitic) while Oromo is from a different family (Cushitic) but these

studies could be the basic ones for the present study. The possessive predication has not been a prominent topic even in the grammar descriptions of Oromo; however, the possessive verb shows several morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic peculiarities as used in different contexts. Therefore, this paper attempts to examine the patterns of possessive verb *k'ab-* 'have' together with its semantic and pragmatic properties.

1.3. Objective

The main objective of this study is describing the possessive verb *k'ab-* 'have' in Oromo with its morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic features under which the specific objectives stated below are also considered:

- Describing structural realizations of the verb.
- Identifying and classifying the verb in its functional characteristics.
- Explaining semantic and pragmatic peculiarities with the verb.

1.4. Methodology

Three different tools of collecting the data have been employed in steps and procedures necessary for effectiveness of the data. These tools are consulting informants, online corpora and introspection. Some digital text analysis and published grammars were also considered as sources of some data for authenticity, and these are supportive of the online available corpus data. The most important data were taken from informants and online corpora of NORHED while the introspective data items were for confirmation along with provision of limited data items. Hence, the major heuristic devices of the data were informants and the online corpora. The data from informants was carried out using 5 (five) native individuals of Oromo speakers around Nekemt (western Oromia) by recording their free speech supported by probing. The procedure of collecting data occurs in a semi-guided interview that was used for the informants so that they could provide relevant data items. The corpus-data is just searched online considering the recently developed web corpora and obtained in the form of concordance and frequency examining activities. The data types are mainly clausal items that encode possession for examining the relevant

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morphosyntactic structures in the language. These data items were analyzed in three line system where the first lines make up the phonemically transcribed version of the data items whereas the second lines consist of glossing each structural component in the data items. The third lines provide the English equivalents of the data items. Then, interpretations and discussions of the data were given as they occur in the language in connection with some semantic and pragmatic functions.

2. Results and Discussions

Since the language uses the transitive possessive verb *k'ab-* 'have' that agrees with the subject in person, gender and number categories, the language is taken as a member of the languages with 'have' verbs in their predicative possession. The verb 'to have' has prominent conceptual and functional features in Oromo in relation with the situational variations in which it's used. The verb *k'ab-* as a root is the same with the verb for actions of 'holding', 'carrying', 'grasping' and others with distinct inflectional characteristics. It also functions as an auxiliary for obligation co-occurring with other verbs in infinitive forms. As a member of the SOV word order typology that correlates with the post-verbal auxiliary, Oromo has the verb *k'ab-* 'have to' as deontic modality that follows the infinitival verb.

2.1. The Verb *k'ab-* 'have'

Verb 'to have' is an explicit way of encoding possessive relation between the POSM and the POSR constituents in the clausal structure. The rise of this verb as an expression of possessive construction in many languages is believed to have emerged from the action meanings like 'take', 'seize', 'hold', 'grasp' etc. as stated in Heine (1997:48) and Heine & Kuteva (2002:291). The verb *k'ab-* 'have' in Oromo is directly related with the meanings like 'to hold/to grasp' that it tends to have been derived from the meanings 'hold'/'grasp/carry' whose physical control and disposal can be construable from the structure. This possessive verb occurs clause finally as a finite verb in agreement inflection with the subject (POSR) of the object

(POSM) in the possessive sentence. Considering the verb ‘to have’ as a typological feature of the Cushitic, Mous (2003:41) states that there is a tendency that the ancient Oromo or other Cushitic languages like Dahalo have given their features to the Bantu languages in Tanzania. Other languages in their earlier structures like Somali as studied by Kirk (1905) state that they utilize the verb ‘to have’ in their possessive predication. Therefore, the possessive verb seems to be Oromo’s inherent and typological feature though many Cushitic languages encode possession through existential verb lacking (or perhaps losing) their verb ‘to have’ through contact.

In the morphosyntactic structure, the verb *k’ab-* ‘have’ agrees with the POSR subject in person, number and gender categories in the imperfective aspect only. The POSR occurs with nominative case marking and the POSM object (citation form).

- [1] (a) *namitfi saʔawwan bayʔee k’ab-Ø-a*
 man:Def:Nom cow:Pl many have-3SgM-Ipfv
 ‘the man has many cows’
- (b) *ifeen k’arfi k’ab-t-i [k’abdi]*
 she:Nom money have-3SgF-Ipfv
 ‘she has money’

The syntactically transitive and fully inflectional verb of possession *k’ab-* ‘have’ as in [1] has the POSR as subject and the POSM as object. These predicative possession expressions mainly refer to the alienable possessive meanings as established relations between the constituents of the verb (Heine, 1997; Seiler, 1981; Stassen, 2009). This verb involves close control and disposal of the POSR over the POSM in the sentential forms of possessive constructions. The possessive verb *k’af-* ‘have’ in Burji is typologically the same with the Oromo *k’ab-* ‘have’ in its inflectional nature that marks agreement of all person types with the POSR subject in the imperfective aspect (Tsfaye, 2015:257).

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Within the imperfective aspect of the possessive meaning, the verb *k'ab-* attaches the person, number and gender markers followed by the aspect markers. The agreement markers initiate voice assimilations for the voiceless agreement marker [-*t-*] of the 2Sg/Pl and 3SgF that overlaps in the agreement system of Oromo where the 2Sg/Pl and 3SgF are realized similarly.

Table 1 Inflection of verb *k'ab-* ‘have’

Subject	<i>k'ab-</i> ‘have’	Meaning
1Sg	<i>k'ab-Ø-a</i>	‘I have’
1Pl	<i>k'ab-n-a</i>	‘we have’
2Sg	<i>k'ab-t-a</i> [<i>k'abda</i>]	‘you(Sg) have’
2Pl	<i>k'ab-t-u</i> [<i>k'abdu</i>]	‘you(Pl) have’
3SgM	<i>k'ab-Ø-a</i>	‘he has’
3SgF	<i>k'ab-t-i</i> [<i>k'abdi</i>]	‘she has’
3Pl	<i>k'ab-Ø-u</i>	‘they have’

The root of the possessive verb *k'ab-* ‘have’ appends the person, number and gender markers [-*Ø-*] for 1Sg, 3SgM and 3Pl subjects; [-*n-*] for 1Pl subject and [-*t-*] for 2Sg/Pl and 3SgF subjects in the possessive predication. These allomorphic markers of agreement are followed by the final vowels [-*a*], [-*u*] and [-*i*] as allomorphs for imperfective aspect with their respective subjects as shown in table 1.

The inflected form of the verb *k'ab-* ‘have’ is often realized in the non-past tenses while the past tense is expressed by additional auxiliary *tur-* after the verb ‘to have’ in the sentence. The verb *tur-* is an auxiliary functioning in the past tense in the form of suppletive inflection for the past of the verb ‘to have’ in Oromo.

[2] *inni midaan k'aba ture*
 he:Nom cereal has:3Sg:Ipfv Aux:3SgM:Ipfv
 ‘he had cereals’

Without the auxiliary *ture*, the sentence, in [2], remains in the imperfective aspect where the auxiliary is the one that makes the sentence in the past tense. The perfective aspect inflection *k'abe* makes a special sense 'held/grasped' that is distinct from the possession encoding.

In the uncertainty indication, some helping verbs are used along with the verb *k'ab-* 'have' where the uncertain possession is conveyed. The possessive verb precedes those helping verbs in such functionalities, and the helping verbs are optional where their absence results in meaning change from uncertainty notion to certainty indication.

[3] (a) *nam-itfs saawwan k'aba taʔa*
 man-Sing-Nom cow:Pl has:3SgM:Ipfv be:3SgM:Ipfv
 'the man may have cows'

(b) *Diribaa-n mana k'aba fakkaata*
 Diriba-Nom house has:3SgM:Ipfv seem:3SgM:Ipfv
 'Diriba seems to have a house'

The auxiliary verbs in [3] make the two sentences semantically the same that they both express uncertain possessive meanings. These are realized in present time possession expression along with the uncertainty sense wrapped in the verbs like *taʔa* 'happen' in (a) and *fakkaata* 'seem' in (b) as discourse-functional verbal elements.

The possessive verb *k'ab-* 'have' is prominent in Oromo that it's used in varied contexts with multiple of functional representations with different pragmatically oriented patterns. It can also be nominalized in different forms like *k'abeeɲa* 'wealth', *k'abiyee* 'holding/owning', *k'abeeyyii* 'wealthy', *k'abaatfuu* 'having/to have' and others in which the derivation of the possessive verb is sufficiently used in different situations.

[4] (a) *inni k'abeeɲa k'aba*
 he:Nom wealth have:3SgM:Ipfv
 'he has wealth'

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(b) *imaammata k'abiyyee lafa-a haarom-s-e*
policy holding land-Poss renew-Caus-3SgM:Pfv
'he renewed the policy of land owning'

(c) *barsiis-ot-ni buʔaa k'abeeyyii ta'u*
teacher-Pl-Nom effect have:VN become:Ipfv
'teachers will be effective'/'Lit. teachers will be having result'

(d) *kaayyo k'abaatfiu-n gaarii-dha*
aim have:VN-Nom good-Cop
'it's good to have aim'

All the expressions in [4] involve derived nominals from the possessive verb root *k'ab-* 'have' that indicate possession in different discourse situations. The noun *k'abeeyya* 'wealth' is derived from the possessive verb and it co-occurs with the verb itself as in (a) where they occur in the tautologous concordance. Its communicative frequency is high in such co-occurrence as long as the discourse-functional situation demands. The verbal noun *k'abiyyee* 'holding' in (b) is more associated with the legal guarantee for [+human] POSR's holding of something mainly referring to 'land' as POSM. In such usages, the POSM noun usually follows this verbal noun as a phrasal constituent in the genitive paradigm. The verbal noun in this expression conveys 'content' in the sound and more frequent contexts referring to speeches, books and other writings. The derived word *k'abeeyyii* 'wealthy' in (c) is an adjective that modifies the plural [+human] POSR where the notion of wealth is represented by nominal derivation from possessive verb. It occurs as *k'abeessa* 'wealthy' referring to singular antecedent in the sentence. The infinitive *k'abaatfiu* 'to have' as in (d) is a nominal member indicating the POSR's owning of some POSM.

Several idiomatic expressions are used with the possessive verb *k'ab-* in Oromo, and these meanings are different from possession expression. In these cases, varied meanings are conveyed in which the meaning of the

entire clause is different from its independent constituent words. The speech community mutually understands the addressed meanings.

[5] (a) *k'uba k'ab-t-i [k'abdi]* (c) *idzaa fi gurra hin k'ab-Ø-u*
 finger have-3SgF-Ip fv eye and ear Neg have-3SgM-
 Neg:Ip fv
 'she knows'/'Lit.: she has finger' 'very complicated'/'Lit.
 has no eye and ear'

(b) *garaa k'ab-Ø-a* (d) *gurra k'ab-Ø-a*
 stomach have-3SgM-Ip fv ear have-3SgM-Ip fv
 'he is hero'/'Lit.: he has stomach' 'he is graceful'/'Lit. he has ear'

The expressions in [5] involve the possessive verb *k'ab-* 'have' that is quite unrelated with the denotational meaning of possession encoding. These are idioms whose relational properties as observable are involving body-part POSM and [\pm human] POSRs as understood subjects and the body-part POSM nouns as objects of the possessive verb. Hence, 'knowing/being aware' notion in (a), the 'bravery' content in (b) and the gracefulness sense in (c) are functional in the typically natural languages for the idiomatic nature of the expressions in Oromo. In (c), the verb *k'ab-* 'have' with [-human] POSR indicates that something is very complicated or unreachable. These possessive clauses involving the verb *k'ab-* 'have' in their surface forms encode non-possessive meanings in the language community.

The body-part as an inalienable possession in the predicative construction does not address the direct ownership relation between the whole (POSR) and the part (POSM); instead, it shows the meaning that is associated with the POSM noun (part of the body). These meanings are related with health and being free of any disability in terms of the particular possessive relations of the constituents in the clausal structure. These possessive relations have extended meanings under some emphasis in the discourse.

[6] *harkaafi miila k'ab-Ø-a*
 hands:Conj leg have-3SgM-Ip fv
 'he is not disabled'/'Lit.: he has hands and legs'

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Sentence [6] has the meaning that is different from the literal representation; it rather conveys associated meaning like work engagement possibility. Such meanings have some socially established manifestations with the literal connection between the POSR and the POSM. Hence, the body parts *harka* ‘hands’ and *miila* ‘legs’ as POSM nouns in the sentence is related to mobility and work capabilities. These sentences encode the meanings according to the social associations with specific body-parts in Oromo.

In other situations, the body-parts as POSM nouns in the predicative possession indicate some attribution (admiring notion) whether they are used along with the respective adjectives or not. They are often followed by adjectives; however, the adjectival notions are sometimes there as understood attributes without mentioning in the sentence.

- [7] (a) *intal-ni* [*intalli*] *morma* *k'ab-t-i* [*k'abdi*]
girl-Nom neck have-3SgF-Ip fv
‘a girl has a long neck’/‘Lit.: a girl has neck’
- (b) *gurb-it-fi* *fuppaan* *k'ab-Ø-a*
boy-Def-Nom nose have-3SgM-Ip fv
‘the boy has pointed nose’/‘Lit.: the boy has nose’
- (c) *ifée-n* *idza* *gurguddaa* *k'ab-t-i* [*k'abdi*]
she-Nom eye big:P1 have-3SgF-Ip fv
‘she has big eyes’

As in [7], the POSM nouns (body-parts) are with some quality indicators covertly noted as in (a) and (b) or overtly observed as in (c). Since the beauty/quality indicators of the body-parts in the earlier two sentences *morma* ‘neck’ and *fuppaan* ‘nose’ are obvious, their encoded qualities are understood without mentioning. Therefore, the possessive relation involves the POSR noun or pronoun (body) along with not only the POSM noun (part) but also its quality indicator. The sentence in (c) has the POSM noun (body-part) *idza* ‘eye’ along with the overtly mentioned modifier in the form of admiring.

The possessive predications involving body-part POSM is patterned by using the verb of possession, and it corresponds with the predicate adjective construction with the copular verb that has the body-part possession in the genitive case.

- [8] (a) [POSR_{Nom} [POSM Adj] HAVE
 (b) [[POSM_{Nom} POSR_{Gen}] Adj Cop]

The notation in [8] (a) represents predicative possession using the verb *k'ab-* 'have' where the POSM phrase (POSM noun + Adjective) is an object constituent. In (b), the genitive structure (POSM and POSR) as phrasal subject constituent occurs with predicate adjective. The former notation can be best exemplified by the possessive sentence on [6] (c), and it can be restructured in the form of predicate adjective as *id zi ifee gurguddaada* 'her eyes are big' that corresponds the notation on [8] (b) where possession is encoded by the nominal phrase as subject constituent.

Social relations are also expressed by using the verb *k'ab-* 'have' in the possessive predicates in the alienable and inalienable relations between the POSR and POSM constituents. These relational categories are not distinctly marked in the morphosyntax of Oromo but conceptual connection between the two prototypical constituents determine the (in) alienability sense.

- [9] (a) *inni obbolaa hedduu k'aba* (inalienable)
 he:Nom brother:P1 many have:3SgM:Ipfv
 'He has several siblings'
- (b) *inni barsiisaa bayeessa k'aba* (alienable)
 he:Nom teacher good have:3SgM:Ipfv
 'He has a good teacher'
- (c) *inni obbolaa k'aba* (inalienable)
 he:Nom sibling:P1 have:3SgM:Ipfv
 'He is not alone'/'he has siblings'

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- (d) *inni nama k'aba* (alienable)
he:Nom house have:3SgM:Ipfv
'He has someone to help'/'Lit. he has a man'

As in [9], the verb *k'ab-* 'have' showing social relations (kinship and other loose relations) express either possession or some extended meanings in the discourse-functional understandings. The former sentences (a) and (b) encode mere relations in the form of possession whereas the latter ones (c) and (d) have special meanings in their extended senses. Their structural realizations are the same but the meanings they convey differ in the context-specific ways.

In the possessive predications with the verb *k'ab-* 'have', abstract relations have different realizations with abstract POSMs or POSRs in the language. The [+animate] POSR nouns especially the human POSR subjects have different forms of abstract POSMs in order to encode some relational meanings. The abstract nouns as POSMs can be the characteristics (attributes) of some animate POSR nouns in the sentence.

- [10] (a) *inni obsa k'aba*
he:Nom patience have:3SgM:Ipfv
'He has patience'

- (b) *inni amala k'aba*
He:Nom behavior have:3SgM:Ipfv
'He is virtuous'

- (c) *inni gorsa k'aba*
he:Nom advice have:3SgM:Ipfv
'someone advised him'/'Lit. he has advice'

The POSM nouns in [10] *obsa* 'patience' in (a) and *amala* 'behavior' in (b) represent the personality trait for someone [+human] POSR noun. They are usually used with human POSR; however, the latter one (b) can be patterned with [–human, +animate] POSRs. During this, the abstract POSM *amala*

‘behavior’ represents negative characteristics of the animate POSR. For instance, *fardittiin amala k’abti [abdi]* ‘the horse has behavior’ shows that the horse is not easy for galloping. The other sentence in (c) has an abstract noun *gorsa* ‘advice’ as a POSM that involves some action performed by another person.

The negative relational manifestations between the POSR and POSM can also be conveyed in some contexts where the POSM nouns refer to unpleasant things. For example, the nouns like *seet’ana* ‘demon’, *ፈukkuba* ‘disease’, *gowwummaa* ‘foolishness’, etc can take the position of POSMs in the sentence for their negative senses.

[11] (a) *inni seet’ana k’aba*
 he:Nom demon have:3Sg:Ipfv
 ‘He is possessed by demon’/‘Lit. He has demon’

(b) *inni gowwummaa k’aba*
 he:Nom advice have:3SgM:Ipfv
 ‘he is foolish’/‘Lit. He has foolishness’

The sentences in [11] above involve unpleasant POSM nouns with negative relations between the two constituents of the verb *k’ab-* ‘have’. The former sentence (a) has a passive notion with the active surface structure, and the latter one (b) has a predicative adjective structure in its semantic content having the main verb in the surface predication.

With possessive verb *k’ab-* ‘have’ in a sentence with abstract relations, special relational patterns with the socially construable message using the parental kinship terms. These meanings are different from the kinship relations in their connotations. Unlike the other abstract relations, this one contains the abstract POSR subject in its surface form.

[12] (a) *obsi daangaa k’ab-Ø-a*
 patience boundary have-3SgM-Ipfv
 ‘no more patience’/‘Lit. patience has boundary’

- (b) *halkan abbaa hin k'ab-Ø-u*
night:Nom father Neg have-3SgM-Neg:Ipfv
'don't dare walking out during night'/'Lit.: night does not have owner'

The two sentences in [12] show abstract POSRs that are supposed to have something. The POSR subject *obsi* 'patience' in (a) controls the agreement marking on the verb having the POSM *daangaa* 'boundary' with the given meaning. The kinship term *abbaa* 'father' is considered as if it's related with abstract and inanimate POSR noun *halkan* 'night' in (b). The possessive relation is analogous that's aimed at communicating the abstract connection between those nominal constituents. This relation between the verbal arguments is construable mainly from the [- human] feature of the POSR noun, and the meaning is metaphoric with its special predicative surface form for the morphosyntactic and semantic peculiarities in the natural language.

2.2. The Verb *k'ab-* 'hold/carry'

The dynamic action verb *k'ab-* 'hold/carry' happens in the imperfective or perfective aspect markers with situational meaning variations. These verbs often work in non-possessive usages as mere action representations that also function as transitive verbs of possession in the language. Since it mainly indicates physical action, the imperative expression is okay with the hold/grasp sense of the verb.

- [13] (a) *kitaaba kana k'ab-i*
book this hold-2Sg:Imp
'hold this book'

- (b) *harka mut'faa k'ab-Ø-e*
hand child:Gen hold-3sm-Pfv
'he held the child's hand'

It's a sense of holding expressed by the verb *k'abi* 'hold' in [13] that the meanings in (a) and (b) are physical holding with their metaphoric expressions. In these expressions, the verb is for the temporary usage in connection with sense of 'holding'. Majority of the data items in the web corpora and informant data turns out to the possessive notion of the verb *k'ab-* 'have' with its associated senses in Oromo.

Many more specific concepts such as 'arrest', 'conceive', 'seize', 'carry', 'start', 'point', 'protect', 'respond', 'collect', 'against', 'hinder', 'beg', 'help', 'contain' are often the situational meanings with the same lexical item *k'ab-* in Oromo. The meanings are the mere discourse oriented expressions and idiomatic representations in the language. As the multifunctional entity, the possessive verb conveys all the aforementioned meanings as the concomitant points embodied in the verb.

Though the pragmatic specificity is predominant in determining the meaning encoded by the verb *k'ab-*, structural and semantic peculiarities may have effects on the meanings in the given situation. These meanings are often conveyed with the involvement of the control phenomenon for the [+human] subject over the concrete object.

- [14] (a) *poolisii-n isa k'abe*
 police-Nom 3SgM catch:3SgM:Pfv
 'police arrested him'
- (b) *walitti k'abe*
 eachother:to catch:3SgM:Pfv 'collected'
- (c) *walpaansoo na k'abe*
 wrestle 1Sg:Dat catch:3SgM:Pfv
 'wrestled me'
- (d) *irraa k'abe*
 above:Abl catch:3SgM:Pfv
 'protected him'

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- (e) *isa-tti* *k'abe*
he-Dat catch:3SgM:Pfv
'pointed to him'

As the physical action representation, the verb *k'ab-* exerts the meanings in [14] as the bivalent or trivalent verbal constituencies. Communicated senses seem to be special along with the context salience in each of the distinct usage of the same verb. The crime related report in (a), putting things together in (b), the wrestle setting in (c), the conflict settlement in (d) and deictic reference in (e) are the main determinants for the given meanings with the verb *k'ab-* in each scenario. In these cases, the verbal expressions are literal ones as they directly represent the action in the pragmatically functional concrete messages.

In other situational peculiarities, the lexicalized meanings can be addressed perhaps through grammaticalization in the language. The verb *k'ab-* can be used as the expressions where the meanings encoded are different from the constituent words. In the form of transitive verb most often with [+human] agents whereby the object constituent is also usually [+human], the natural meanings in the native speakers are indicated:

- [15] (a) *harka* *k'abe*
hark catch:3SgM:Pfv "helped"
- (b) *miila* *k'abe*
leg catch:3SgM:Pfv "begged"
- (c) *na* *ɕalaa* *k'abe*
1Sg:Obl under:Abl catch:SgM:Pfv 'responded to me'
- (d) *na* *k'abe*
1Sg catch:3SgM:Pfv 'became against me'

It can be understood from the data items in [15] that the given meanings in each syntactic item is different from the meanings of the constituting words. Usage of the verb *k'ab-* in Oromo different semantic extensions is frequent

so that several day-to-day communications involve these idiomatic expressions in the language communities.

For the non-human agents/subjects with [- control] feature, the verb *k'ab-* may have some polysemous meanings like ‘conceive’, ‘fire’, and ‘start’ in their specific morphosyntactic realizations in the language. Semantic representations of the middle marker [-at-] and the converb marker [-ee-] can be significant in some expressions as in the items below:

- [16] (a) *saʔittii-n* *k'ab-at-t-e*
 cow-Sing-Nom catch-Mid-3SgF-Pfv
 ‘the cow conceived’
- (b) *t'ilaa* *k'ab-at-e*
 umbrella hold-Mid:3SgM-Pfv
 ‘he used umbrella for protection’/‘Lit. he held an umbrella’

Using the middle marker [-at-] with the verb *k'ab-* ‘hold’, the POSR subjects in [16] as animate ones express the meanings ‘conceive’ and ‘protect’. Conceiving in the animal’s pregnancy as in (a) is attributed to the female’s catching of the male’s sperm cells in the societal discourse. The tendency of semantic extension is from the concrete action ‘catching’ [+control] towards that of the abstract notion ‘conceiving’ [-control] with the same verb as a form of grammaticalization [*k'ab-* ‘catch’ > *k'ab-* ‘conceive’]. It looks intransitive but the covert POSM object is socially understood. In the latter example (b), the nature of the subject *t'ilaa* ‘umbrella’ determines the meaning of the verb *k'ab-* whose original meaning would still be ‘catch’ that develops into contextual meaning ‘protect from sunlight/rain’. This needs the middle marker [-at-] for the meaning addressed here. Temporal and locative notions are expressed just by the adpositional phrase that involves the verb *k'ab-*.

As portions of special meaning representations, many idioms that involve the verb *k'ab-* ‘hold’ may happen with their social meanings. These expressions may have body-parts as their surface constituents.

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- [17] (a) *gurbitfa dak'na k'ab-Ø-e*
body:Def body catch-Mid-3SgM-Pfv
'he circumcised the boy'/'Lit.: he caught on the body'
- (b) *na k'abaa gad na diisaa*
1Sg hold:2Pl down 1Sg:Dat leave:2Pl:Pfv
'being very quarrelsome'/'Lit.: hold me and leave me'

The idiomatic expressions in [17] have the verb *k'ab-* 'hold' mainly conveying the meaning that differs from denotational manifestations. Hence, the clause with the transitive structure in (a) conveys 'circumcision' while the clause in (b) expresses the notion of 'quarreling with someone' both of which have understood subjects.

The verb *k'ab-* 'hold' is also functional in the discourse where locational meanings are encoded mainly in the forms of starting point. As an action representation whose meaning is beyond the mere 'holding/carrying', it expresses physical locations where something starts.

- [18] (a) *asii k'abee hanga attfitti*
here:Abl hold:Conv until there:Goal
'from here to there'/'Lit. holding from here up to there'
- (b) *karaa k'adzeelaa k'abate*
track straight hold:Mid:3SgM:Pfv
'he took the right track'/'Lit. he held the right track'

The expressions in [18] have the verb *k'ab-* that shows location where something begins. The adpositional phrase on (a) uses the verb in the converbal pattern to indicate a certain place in the deictic notion of the phrase. The sentence on (b) has the verb *k'abate* 'held' to mean 'took', and this represents the physical location related with the momentary discourse.

In the physical possession encoding, the verb *k'ab-* 'hold/carry' of action is used where the transitive action is an exponent of possession. In other

words, the verb of action encodes possession in the context driven use where some locational sense is also involved.

[19] (a) *ፊላፊፍ ካ'አባቴ ደገረታል?*
 change carry:Mid:2Sg:Conv Aux:2Sg:Ipfv
 'You have a change?'/ 'Lit. You have carried a change?'

(b) *ኮቤ ካ'አባቴ ደገረታል?*
 pen carry:Mid:2Sg:Conv Aux:2Sg:Ipfv
 'You have a pen?'/ 'Lit. You carry a pen?'

The converbial verb *k'abattee* 'carry' in the sentences [19] (a) and (b) are the action verbs whose encoded meanings are physical possession. The situation in which these expressions used is the determining factor for such communicated meanings; the context free meaning of the verb is a mere transitive action 'hold/carry/grab/etc' in the language. According to Stassen (2009:63), the physical possession that's meaningful in certain location and situation develops into the normal ownership sense in languages. Hence, the physical possession expressed through the action verb *k'ab-* 'hold/carry' in Oromo may have some relation with the verb *k'ab-* 'have' of possession that calls for further study especially in the diachronic perspective.

With a sense of holding that inflects for perfective aspect, the verb *k'ab-* in its abstract semantic relation between the POSR noun/pronoun and the POSM noun in the possessive predication. The semantic nature of the verbal arguments determines their relational properties in the clause so that the possession is well encoded accordingly.

20] (a) *ገረብ-ከፊ ሰይጣን-ከ ካ'አባቴ-ይ*
 boy-Def demon-Nom catch-3SgM-Pfv
 'the boy is possessed by demon'/ 'Lit.: demon caught the boy'

(b) *ገረብ-ከፊ ሰይጣን ካ'አባቴ-አ*
 boy-Def-Nom demon have-3SGM-IPfv
 'the boy is possessed by demon'/ 'Lit.: the boy has demon'

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As in [20], the varied predicative possession structure in (a) and (b) shows a related concept in the distinct thematic roles. In the former sentence, the topicalized object constituent *gurbitfa* ‘the boy’ is semantically the patient with the temporally inflected verb *k'abe* ‘caught’ though the meaning is not physical action. The abstraction of the ‘catching’ notion is an instance of demon’s possession in such discourse situations. The latter example (b) uses the transitive possessive verb *k'aba* ‘have’ with the grammatical subject *gurbitfi* ‘the boy’ whose semantic role is as the patient (POSM), and the object *seet'ana* ‘demon’ is semantically considered as the controlling agent (POSR noun) in the sentence. As a special possessive relation, this exchanged understanding is probably specific to the given POSR noun due to its evil nature.

A lot of concomitant conceptual realizations are situational with distinct meanings in Oromo verb *k'ab-*, and the main ones constitute ‘hold’, ‘grasp’ and ‘carry’ that are believed as explications of possessive basis with some leading features as metalinguistic specifications. As an action source considered in the conceptual grammaticalization, the verb with the basic meaning ‘to hold’ develops into possession as a presumed process of ‘to take’ > ‘to have’ chain of the change in languages (Heine & Kuteva, 2002:186). The verb *k'ab-* ‘hold/grasp’ which is basically an action with concrete POSM also seems to have developed into possession encoding in the diachronic change of meaning. The meaning extension includes the inalienable (body-part and kinship) types and several abstract possession senses.

2.3. The Verb *k'ab-* in Possession and Action Schemas

These two homophonous verbs *k'ab-* ‘hold/grasp’ and *k'ab-* ‘have’ are semantically distinct in their inflectional and even some derivational properties based on discourse related modifications. A case in point, the infinitivized forms of the verb with both senses happens in the nominal phrases having the noun features in the syntax.

- [21] (a) *Waak'-ni harka na k'aba*
 God-Nom hand 1Sg:Dat hold:Ipfv
 'God holds my hand'
- (b) *nam-itfi mana guddaa k'aba*
 man-Def-Nom house big have-3SgM:Ipfv
 'the man has a big house'
- (c) *muk-itfa k'ab-at-tfuu siif wayya*
 tree-Def hold-Mid-VN 2Sg:Dat bebetter
 'It's better for you to hold the tree'
- (d) *fira k'aba-at-tfuu-n bayeessa*
 relative have-Mid-VN-Nom good:Cop
 'It's good to have relatives'

In the discourse specific situations, the verb *k'ab-* shows different functional and structural realizations as in [21]. The verb *k'aba* for physical holding/grasping sense in (a) and for the notion of possession in (b) is just distinguished in the co-textual considerations for their homophonous nature. Unlike for the holding/grasping sense as can be seen in (c), the verb *k'ab* 'have' for the possession sense is followed by vowel length as in (d) that involve middle voice marker. This happens in many inflectional and derivational structures including nominalization, jussive formation and wish/conditional expressions with the verb *k'ab-* in the language. For instance, the dependent clause *otoo k'abaate* 'if he has' is expression of wish/condition with a sense of possession, and it needs main clause. In such word forms, the verb mainly shows future possession ending in the low vowel [-a]. The verb occurs in agreement with the given subject in person, number and gender categories, but the perfective aspect and focus marker (*h*)*in* are not applicable along with the verb *k'ab-* in the possessive constructions.

Although the verb *k'ab-* can occur in similar paradigmatic structure with discourse related difference in function as possession and action, the two

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functional realizations make the verb have distinct forms in many ways. Considering some of the differences in their situational uses lead to the semantic differences where the verb *k'ab-* ‘hold/grasp’ in action:

- i) inflects for the perfective aspect paradigm.
- ii) occurs as converb before other verbs.
- iii) directly appends the middle marker [-at-] forming the stem *k'abat-*.

These features refer to the verb *k'ab-* for the meaning ‘to hold/grasp’ only whereas the same verb with the possessive meaning is manifested in reverse forms of all the above mentioned features in the discourse specific use. For the last feature (iv), the verb *k'ab-* ‘have’ takes the final low vowel [-a-] before appending the middle marker so that the stem will be *k'abaat-* in the possessive sense for different inflectional and derivational functions.

In negating the possession, the verb *k'ab-* ‘have’ is preceded by the negative preverbal particle *hin* with the suffix [-u] whose allomorph [-i] occurs with 2Pl and 3Pl subjects. The person, number and gender agreement on the verb is still there; the final vowel functionally changes itself from aspect marking to negative marking. The aspect is also addressed by the final vowel which emerges in harmony with the preverbal particle *hin* for negation in Oromo.

The verb *k'ab-* as main verb functions in two different situations as explained above: these are semantically distinct indicating ‘hold/grasp’ in action representation and expressing ‘have’ in possession encoding. The concept of ‘holding’ develops into possession encoding as in the literature. The data of Khimtanga (north-eastern part of central Cushitic) may support this point because it uses the verb *s'ay-* ‘to hold’ for possession expression as stated in (Teshome, 2015:245). Besides the notions of ‘holding’ and possession expressions, the verb *k'ab-* also functions as a modal verb in Oromo whereby obligation is encoded.

2.4. The Verb *k'ab-* 'have to' in Obligation

Occurring after an infinitive form of a certain main verb, the affirmative or negative form of the verb *k'ab-* expresses obligation in Oromo whereby it is a modal verb in this pattern. Structural items of this kind overwhelmingly exist in the NORHED corpora, and the recent discourse in Oromo is full of the verb with deontic modality function.

[22] (a) *fuula dik'atfuu k'ab-t-a*
 face wash:VN have-2Sg:Ipfv
 'you have to wash your'

(b) *t'alayaa barrees-sis-uu ka'b-t-a*
 letter write-CAUS-VN have-2Sg:Ipfv
 'you have to make them write'

(c) *nam-ittfi dafee fayyuu k'ab-Ø-a*
 man-Def-Nom fast:Conv heal:VN have-3SgM:Ipfv
 'the man has to be fine soon'

(d) *yaad-ittfi ifa tañuu k'ab-Ø-a*
 idea-Def-Nom clear be:VN have-3SgM:Ipfv
 'the idea has to be clear'

The derivational marker [-uu] infinitivizes the verb that the examples in [22] indicate and the infinitivizer may follow other morphemes of the middle as in (a), the causative as in (b); or it may just follow the roots as in (c) and (d) in the sentences above. The verb *k'ab-* 'have to' as the modal verb is more exceedingly used than as possessive predicate in the language. With the possibility to occur after the infinitive possessive verb *k'abaattfuu* 'to have', the deontic modality often occurs sentence finally.

[23] *nama k'aba-at-tfuu k'ab-t-i [k'abdi]*
 man have-Mid-VN have-3SgF:Ipfv
 'she has to have someone'

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In its surface form, the expression in [23] seems to show tautologous ideas for the related verbs in it. In fact, the repeated verbs are paradigmatically and semantically distinct that the sentence is grammatically okay. The infinitive verb *k'abaattfuu* 'to have' conveys possessive meaning while the next verb *k'abdi* 'have to' functions as the deontic modality. The modal verb occurs in agreement with the subject in person, number and gender.

In fact, the first person singular subject may peculiarly have a subject co-reference [-*n*] appended to the infinitive verb as a mandatory morphosyntactic feature. The pronoun *ani* 'I' may or may not take the subject position because the subject is construable from the suffixal element on the infinitive even in its absence. The presence of both the first person singular subject and the suffix [-*n*] on the infinitive communicates some emphasis on the subject.

[24] (a) *dafee* *dufuu-n* *k'ab-Ø-a*
fast:Conv come:VN-1Sg have-3Sg-Ip fv
'I have to come fast'

(b) *an-i* *dafee* *dufuu-n* *k'ab-Ø-a*
1Sg-Nom fast:Conv come:VN-1Sg have-3Sg-Ip fv
'I have to come fast'

In [24], the morpheme [-*n*] is co-referential with the first person singular subject whether the subject position is empty as in (a) or taken by the subject as in (b). The former one expresses normal and canonical form of obligation encoding with the absence of the subject for its optionality feature while the latter one has both the suffixal element on the infinitive as a subject co-referential suffix along with the subject itself. During this, the subject constituent is under contrastive emphasis for responsibility of infinitival action and the deontic modality.

This deontic modality can also follow the affirmative copula *da* as an alternative concordance structure; the copula tends to convey some emphasis on obligatoriness of the infinitival concept. This function is

believed to have developed from the have-possession in many languages which may also be true for the grammaticalization process in Oromo seems indicative.

[25] (a) *hodz-ittfi* *tfimee* *ittifufuu* *dā* *k'ab-a*
 work-Def.-Nom strong:Conv continue:VN Cop have-3SgM:Ipfv
 'the work have to continue in strength'

(b) *inni* *garraamii* *taʎuu* *dā* *k'ab-a*
 he:Nom generous become:VN Cop have-3SgM:Ipfv
 'he has to become generous'

The infinitival concepts, as in [25], are under discourse-related emphasis when they are followed by the invariant affirmative copula with the ultimate deontic modal verb *k'ab-* 'have' in the language. With the verbs showing action (a) and state (b) expressions in the infinitival word structure, the invariant copula *dā* and the modal verb *k'ab-* 'have to' co-occur for the meaning necessity in the relevant social communications. The intransitive and being verbs are in the infinives that the sentences have arguments not more than one.

Using the verb *k'ab-* as deontic modality may show the grammaticalized function of the inherently possession encoding verb because the languages having a typical possessive verb tend to develop the verb into modal notion for obligation. The best example can be the English 'to have' verb as in *John has a book* with possession expression and 'have to' as in *John has to go* with obligation encoding structures. Heine & Kuteva (2002:243f) illustrate the change from have-possession to obligation with the cases in point from different European language structures; it's believed that other possessive verbs like 'belong construction' is also viable for the grammaticalization to expressing obligation.

Have-possession > Obligation (deontic modality)

Mainly, the historical change is from the possessive verb to modal auxiliary with obligation expressing function. As can be understood from the relevant

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literature like Heine and others, the grammaticalization process involves several results in languages. In Oromo, the verb *k'ab-* 'have' as obligation encoding modal auxiliary tends to be the phenomenon that supports the diachronic change direction in the literature. As in many languages of the world, the change characteristics perceivable in Oromo involve:

- i) Lessening the grammatical status of the possessive verb to auxiliary for obligation,
- ii) Characterizing concordance structure of the modal verb *k'ab-* 'have to' with infinitive and copula, or with infinitive only.
- iii) Placing a nominal argument as object of the infinitive, not as object of the verb *k'ab-* 'have to' in obligation expression.
- iv) Including the verbs as infinitives where their objects are, probably, considered as oblique arguments in the language.
- v) Suffixing the first person singular morpheme [-*n*] as suffix of the infinitive so that it codes the subject as co-referential element in the presence/absence of the subject as shown in example number [24].

The transitive verb *k'ab-* of possession is very pervasive in Oromo; it's used in many different forms syntagmatic and paradigmatic slots with truth meanings. The predicative patterns with this verb are also known for multiple discourse-related functions that are realized as notional spaces in the natural language.

3. Conclusion

Several semantic extensions are communicated through grammaticalization, lexicalization, idiomatization and other pragmatic uses of the verb *k'ab-* in Oromo. Besides, the other function of the verb being a transitive action as a homophonous lexical item is also significant. Using the verb as a modality indicator in the grammatical functions also makes it prominent in the language's lexicon. Under the possessive notions, nature of the POSR and the POSM determines the meaning encoded in terms of the relation between the two prototypical constituents of the possessive clauses. For instance,

abstract POSR noun like *halkan* ‘night’ can have some POSM noun like *abbaa* ‘father’ in the possessive sentence in order to encode a moral value in the speech community. In addition, alienation based relational categories in the predicative possession make different possessive notions. The body-part relations in the predicative possession represent peculiar pragmatic messages rather than the truth meanings of owning the inalienably related POSM noun. The verb *k’ab-* is functionally rich being one of the most frequent verbs in Oromo. The homophonous lexical item *k’ab-* for the varied functions that are possession, action and obligation may support the grammaticalization chain [action > possession > obligation] as in many languages of the world.

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