# Spatial Deictics in Oromo

## Shimelis Mazengia[1]

**Abstract**
This paper investigates the forms and functions of linguistic structures in Oromo[2] that are employed for making reference in space, i.e. spatial deictics. Three principal types viz demonstrative, adverbial and directional deictics are examined. Of the three types, the first is the most productive. In the category of nominal deictics, simple and complex demonstrative deictics (the latter ones involving case and focus marking) as well as contrastive and reduplicative demonstrative deictics are apparent. A class of deictics termed presentative has also been found to be morphologically and semantically related to the nominal category of deictics although it has predicative grammatical functions. In the adverbial category are place and manner deictics. From directionality viewpoint, adverbial and verbal deictics are in use. All of the preceding deictics of the spatial type are scrutinized from the perspectives of their pragmatic structuring and interpretation since specified interpretations of linguistic structures can only be secured taking into account the contexts within which they are uttered.

**Keywords:** Oromo, spatial, deictic, contrastive, reduplicative, presentative.

## 1. Introduction
The proper interpretations of utterances are better construed when contexts in which they are delivered are taken into account from the perspective of the participants in the speech act, i.e. a specific speaker and addressee as well as a specific place and time. The relationship between language structure and the context in which it makes reference to something is termed *deixis*—a borrowed Greek word meaning 'pointing' (Lyons 1977, 690). In other words, deixis is the

---

[1] Department of Linguistics and Philology, Addis Ababa University.
[2] Oromo is the commonly used name in the literature for the language of the Oromo people. Otherwise, the people call their language *Afaan Oromoo* 'the language of the Oromo people'; literally 'mouth of Oromo'.

linguistic pointing aspect of an utterance which is characteristically associated with where, when and by whom it was uttered. Unlike the semantic meaning of a word or an expression which is normally fixed, deictic meaning represents what is referred to in a particular context. Deixis is also a psychological concern which acknowledges the significance of epistemic basis, i.e. the importance of the participants' knowledge for the interpretation of expressions (Brisard 2002, xii-xiii). This paper is concerned with investigating how deictic expressions are structured and are made to function in relation to space in the Oromo language. In other words, of the three major factors that determine the reference of certain elements in a sentence—person, space and time—the paper will deal with space, i.e. it will identify and describe the form and meaning of spatial deictics in the language.

The Oromo language is a member of the Lowland East Cushitic group which is spoken extensively in Ethiopia and also in northern and central Kenya (Owens 1985, 8). Typologically, it is an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) as well as a head-modifier-specifier language[3] (e.g. *gurbaa deeraa san* boy tall that 'that tall boy'). It is a language which marks subject agreement (assigns the nominative case) on the verb (e.g. *deem-n-e* go-1PL-PFV 'we went'). Generally, Oromo is a suffixing language.

There does not seem to be any independent study on Oromo deixis so far. There are of course studies which tangentially touch upon the topic. Debela (2011) examines the semantics of frontal adpositions and Mi'eessaa et al. (2012) investigates locative expressions in the language. However, both studies treat their data from locational perspective and do not deal with deixis per se. Various studies, which are generally concerned with the grammar of the language, i.e. Moreno (1939), Bender and Mulugeta (1976), Gragg (1976), Owens (1985), Mohammed, Zaborski (1990), Griefenow-Mewis (2001) and Banti (2010), among others, present what are potentially deictic, especially personal pronouns and demonstratives. However, they too, do not deal with deixis, i.e. making reference to an entity in relation to a speaker and addressee in a specific place and time of utterance.

---

[3] Baye Yimam, personal communication.

The present study specifically approaches spatial deixis in Oromo from the perspective of dealing with demonstrative deictics[4], presentative deictics, adverbial deictics and directional deictics. The study attempts to provide morphosyntactic descriptions and explanations as well as interpretations of deictics in the language. In sections two to five, we shall look at how Oromo spatial deictics are structured and function. More specifically, section two deals with the various aspects of nominal demonstrative deictics of the language in their simple and complex (inflected) forms. Traditionally, demonstratives are referred to as adjectives (or adnominals) in their occurrence as modifiers of nouns and pronouns in their occurrence with their head nouns not realized phonetically. However, since their role is limiting the referent of a noun phrase which might be with or without the phonetic realization of its head noun, I prefer to consider them determiners. The section further deals with contrastive demonstrative deictics and reduplicative demonstrative deictics. Section three handles a separate class of demonstrative deictics which are termed as presentatives and whose functions are predicative. Section four is concerned with adverbial deictics from the perspectives of place and manner while section five focuses on directional deictics which are of adverbial and verbal nature. Finally, a brief conclusion will be drawn. The data that are examined in the study are from the Eastern (Hararghe) variety of the Oromo language based on consultation and introspection. The data were obtained through assistance from two school teachers who are native speakers of the variety. In addition to providing data, the two consultants helped in identifying particular utterances against specific contexts. The researcher, himself a native speaker of the variety, also got utterances verified by the consultants[5].

---

[4]Both d*emonstrative* and *deictic* signify linguistic elements that are used for locating referents. However, while the meaning of the former is in a general sense that of the latter is related to the utterance of a specific speaker, place and time.

[5]Thanks to Ahmed T'aha and Bahir Abdi, teachers at Aboker Mut'i and Mume Sargis Elementary Schools respectively in the vicinity of Harar town, for their cooperation in providing useful data and verifying data from introspection. The researcher is also grateful to Baye Yimam for his constructive comments, to

## 2. Demonstrative deictics

A demonstrative deictic may refer to an object, person, place, time or any other phenomenon. Like the first and second person pronouns and unlike the third person pronouns which are potentially *anaphoric*[6], demonstrative deictics refer to entities directly. Third person pronouns, on the other hand, refer to an entity mentioned in a portion of a sentence or a discourse that precedes (*anaphoric* reference) or to an entity that would be mentioned in the portion that follows (*cataphoric* reference). Deictics that are employed for reference to extra-linguistic entities are sometimes referred to as *exophoric* and those employed within a sentence or discourse as *endophoric* (cf. Diessel 1999, 93). The former, which is the concern of this paper, serves the pragmatic function of drawing the attention of an addressee towards an entity of the real world in a speech situation.

As manifested by the Oromo data, demonstrative deictics are of two types: nominal and adverbial. In the former case, as we shall see later, a demonstrative is a determiner which occurs with a head noun that may also be absent. On the other hand, adverbial demonstratives are place adverbs with the sense of pointing to a place that is related to a referent; hence place adverbial demonstrative. In the traditional approach, a determiner demonstrative with an empty head is considered a pronoun and with a noun a modifier or adnominal. On a distance scale, Oromo deictics are of two levels—proximal or distal.

### 2.1 Simple demonstrative deictics

Generally, demonstrative deictics in Oromo refer to entities from proximal or distal perspectives. In the Hararghe variety of Oromo, apart from indicating the location of the referent relative to the deictic center, they distinguish the gender of the singular proximal entity. Table 1 below presents the simple demonstrative deictics in the nominative case. At the distal singular level, gender distinction is neutralized. As regards number, the proximal plural is expressed

[6]A third person pronoun which refers to a previously mentioned entity in a sentence or a discourse is anaphoric whereas in a situation where the entity referred to (verbally pointed at) is visible at the time of the utterance, the pronoun is deictic.

simply by the masculine singular form; and the distal plural, by that of the distal singular form which does not distinguish gender.

**Table 1. Subject demonstrative deictics**

| Number | Gender | Proximal | Distal |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Singular** | m.[7] | *kun* 'this' | *sun*[8] 'that' |
| | f. | *tun* 'this' | |
| **Plural** | | *kun* 'these' | *sun* 'those'[9] |

The examples in [1] below, which are from the perspective of the speaker who is at the deictic center, illustrate the function of the demonstrative deictics in the subject role and the nominative case. The uttered demonstrative deictics may be accompanied by a pointing gesture with such body parts as the index finger or the head.

**[1]    Masc.**
        **Proximal**
    (a)    *sar-i-cc-ø-i*[10]            ***kun***        *ham-aa-ɗa*
           dog-ep-SGV.ms-NOM-ep    this.m.NOM    bad-3ms-COP
           'This dog is bad.'

---

[7]A list of abbreviations and symbols is available at the end of the paper before References.

[8] In this paper, transcription of data is in IPA (The International Phonetic Alphabet).

[9] Currently, for the plural number, the following late comers seem to be competing to some extent: Subject (proximal) *kunniin* 'these', distal *sunniin* 'those'; Object (proximal) *kanneen* 'these', distal *sanneen* 'those'.

[10] The Oromo Nominative marker is *-n* and occurs as such after a long word-final vowel (*gurbaa→gurbaa-n* '(the) boy'); after a consonant where the word-final vowel is dropped, *-n-i* (-i is epenthetic) (*mana→man-n-i* '(the) house'); after a geminate or consonant cluster where the word-final vowel is deleted, the occurrence is zero but with the epenthetic vowel *–i* in place (*farda→fard-ø-i* '(the) horse'); after a feminine noun whose final vowel is dropped the nominative marker assumes the form of the feminine morpheme *-t* followed by the epenthetic vowel, *haaɗ→haaɗ-t-i* [*haati*] ' (the) mother'; and after a word-final consonant, zero (*biʃaan→biʃaan-ø* '(the) water').

**Distal**

(b) *sar-i-cc-ø-i*                  ***sun***      *ham-aa-ɗa*
dog-ep-SGV.m-NOM-ep    that.NOM  bad-3ms-COP
'That dog is bad.'

**Proximal**

**Fem.** (c) *sar-i-ttii-n*              ***tun***        *ham-tuu-ɗa*
dog-ep-SGV.f-NOM       this.f.NOM  bad-3fs-COP
'This bitch is bad.'

**Distal**

(d) *sar-i-ttii-n*              ***sun***       *ham-tuu-ɗa*
dog-ep-SGV.f-NOM       that.NOM   bad-3fs-COP
'That bitch is bad.'

Note that the demonstrative deictics have a postmodifier status. In [1b &d] the distal demonstrative deictic *sun* 'that' does not distinguish gender. Rather, the gender distinction is supplied by the noun (*saricci* (m) and *sarittii* (f)) and by the agreement on the predicate adjective -*aa* (m.) and -*tuu* (f.), respectively. In the case of the proximal examples, the referent may be near the speaker or it might be near both the speaker as well as the addressee. With respect to the distal examples, the referent might be away either from the speaker or from both the speaker and the addressee. The stops in the proximal demonstrative deictics, /k-/ in the masculine singular and /t-/in the feminine singular are manifestations of Cushitic gender opposition (Tosco 2000, 92).

Below, in example [2] the same proximal masculine singular and distal singular deictic forms used in [1] are employed for plural function. The plural number could be signaled by the nominal heads in parentheses. Otherwise, the plural function of a demonstrative deictic whose referent is not mentioned is supplied by the real world (context) in which it is uttered.

[2]  a)  (*hool-ot-n-i*) [*hoolonni*] **kun**          *kijja*
        (sheep-PL-NOM-ep.)     these.NOM   mine
        'These (sheep) are mine.'

     b)  (*ʔisaan*)  **kun**          *bar-siis-ota*
        (they)     these.NOM   learn-CS-PL
        'These (ones) (are) teachers.'

     c)  (*ʔusmaanii-fii juusuf*)  **sun**          *bar-siis-ota*
        (Usman and Yusuf)      those.NOM    learn-CS-PL
        'Those (Usman and Yusuf) (are) teachers.'

In [2c], depending on who the speaker wants to emphasize, the distal deictic, *sun*, might be interpreted only in association with Yusuf as singular, 'Usman and that Yusuf (are) teachers'.

Notice that the constructions above, which are aspectually imperfective, are without a verb and are hence nominal sentences. However, as seen in [3] below, the perfective counterparts require *tur-* 'stayed' which conflates the perfective aspect and past tense.

[3]  (*ʔisaan*)  **kun**          *bar-siis-ota*    *tur- ø-an-ø*
     (They)     these.NOM   learn-CS-PL     stay-3-PL-PFV
     'These (ones) were teachers.'

The plurality of a demonstrative deictic may also be realized from a collocating plural predicative attribute as seen in the copular construction below.

[4]  **kun**          *gurguddd-aa-ɗa*
     These.NOM   big.PL-m-COP
     'These are big.'

In the Eastern variety of Oromo, as also observed by Owens (1985, 95), nouns ending in a non-low long vowel normally imply the feminine gender, though not without exception. This is illustrated by the following example.

[5] *manguddoo-n*    *ɗuf-t-e*
   elderly.persons-NOM   come-3fs-PFV
   '(The) elderly persons have come.'[11]

Unlike the Hararghe variety, the central variety, Tulamaa, would assign the collective noun a plural verb—*ɗuf-an* 'they came'.

In the Hararghe variety, the feminine singular demonstrative deictic *tun* may also agree with the phonologically governed collective noun as in example [6].

[6] *manguddoo-n*    ***tun***    *hifat-t-e*
   elderly.persons-NOM   this.f.NOM   fed up-3fs-PFV
   '(The) elderly persons are fed up.'

The fact that the Hararghe variety of Oromo employs phonology for a grammatical purpose is not a unique phenomenon. In fact, as pointed out by Sidhu and Pexman (2018, 1620), sound symbolism is a mechanism of none arbitrariness unlike the generally held view that arbitrariness, the absence of relationship between words and what they denote, is one of the characterizing features of language. Ohala (1994, 325) also stated earlier that it is normal to encounter a degree of 'acoustic iconism' in language. In view of the preceding assumption, the speakers of the Hararghe variety of Oromo seem to prefer determining gender phonologically by assigning masculine to the low vowel –*a* and feminine to the non-low vowels. This tallies, for instance, with the finding of Biemans (2000, 165) that female speakers have higher pitch than male speakers; a conclusion one would expect.

So far, we have looked at the forms and functions of the simple nominative (subject) demonstrative deictics. Now, we will deal with the simple absolute (object) demonstrative deictics which

---

[11]In the eastern variety, the perfective form of a verb may be translated either as past or present perfect depending on context. On the contrary, in the Western dialect, for instance, there are distinct forms, e.g. *ɗuf-t-e* 'she came' (perfective/past) and [*ɗuf-t-ee-tti*] ← /*ɗuf-t-ee ɟir-t-i*/ 'she has come' (present perfect).

correspond to the nominative (subject) demonstratives. In the table below are the absolute (object) demonstrative deictics which are in citation form.

**Table 2. Object demonstrative deictics**

| Number | Gender | Proximal | Distal |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Singular** | m. | *kana* 'this' | *san* 'that' |
| | f. | *tana* 'this' | |
| **Plural** | | *kana* 'these' | *san* 'those' |

The examples below provide contexts for the occurrence of the object demonstrative deictics. In each case, the deictic is optionally supplied with a head in parentheses.

[7]　a)　*Ɂintal-t-i*[12]　　(*Ɂisa*)　**kana**　　*jaam-t-e*
　　　　girl-NOM-ep.　(3ms)　this.m.ABS　call-3fs-PFV
　　　　'(The) girl called this (m.) (one)'

　　b)　*Ɂintal-t-i*　　(*Ɂisii*) **tana**　　*jaam-t-e*
　　　　girl-NOM-ep.　(3fs)　this.f.ABS　call-3fs-PFV
　　　　'(The) girl called this (f.) (one).'

　　c)　*Ɂintal-t-i*　　(*Ɂisa/ Ɂisii*)　**san**　　*jaam-t-e*
　　　　girl-NOM-ep　(3ms/3fs)　that.ABS　call-3fs-PFV
　　　　'(The) girl called that (one).' (m/f.)

In [7a] and [7b] gender distinction of the object (absolutive) deicitics is apparent (*kana* vs *tana*); but in [7c] the distal singular deictic *san* could be interpreted as either masculine or feminine, depending on the situation. In the same way as in the case of the nominative deictic,

---

[12] The nominative marking procedures in Oromo are outlined in footnote 9. The form *Ɂintal-t-i* in the Hararghe variety is irregular. Instead of –*n*- and assimilation as, for instance in the western variety, *Ɂintal-n-i* [*Ɂintalli*], the form *Ɂintal-t-i* (probably to conflate the feminine gender) is in use.

there is no gender distinction in the distal form of the absolutive deictic.

As in the case of the nominative plural deictics, the proximal masculine singular form and the common distal singular form are used for the plural absolutive deictics ([8a, b, d]). In [8c], the collective noun takes the feminine singular deictic form for the phonological reason discussed above (the non-low vowel ending).

[8] a)  mejram    (*hool-ota*)    ***kana***       *bit-t-e*
        Meyram    (sheep-PL.)    this.m.ABS    buy-3fs-PFV
        'Meyram bought these (sheep).'

    b)  mejram    (*hool-ota*)    ***san***       *bit-t-e*
        Meyram    (sheep-PL.)    that.ABS    buy-3fs-PFV
        'Meyram bought those (sheep).'

    c)  *ʔisii-n*      (*reʔee*)    ***tana***       *bit-t-e*
        she-NOM    (goat.COL)    this.f.ABS    buy-3fs-PFV
        'She bought these (goats).'

    d)  *ʔisii-n*      (*reʔee*)    ***san***       *bit-t-e*
        she-NOM    (goat.COL)    those.ABS    buy-3fs-PFV
        'She bought those (goats).'

Each of the demonstrative deictics in [8] is postmodifier of the object noun which refers to the sheep and the goats. In each case, with the head noun omitted, the referent is understood from the context.

Structurally, the subject (nominative) and object (absolutive) deictics share the same stem consonants but are distinguished by their vowels, *kun/kana*, *tun/tana*, *sun/san*.    While the vowel of the subject (nominative) forms is –*u*- (*kun*, *tun*, *sun*) that of the object (absolutive) is –*a*- (*kana*, *tana, san*). In the next section, we will see how demonstrative deictics inflect to imply various meanings.

**2.2 Complex demonstrative deictics**

In 2.1, we looked at the formal and functional aspects of the simple (uninflected) demonstrative deictics. In this section, we will examine how simple forms, which bear a structural case (nominative or absolutive) are inflected for semantic case and focus for specific meanings. First, we shall examine case marking operations and the resulting meanings.

**2.2.1 Case marking**

In Oromo, where a noun is accompanied with a modifier or an attribute, the structural case (nominative or absolutive) of the noun is also assumed by the modifier or the attribute. Accordingly, demonstrative deictics, as nominal post-modifiers, assume either the nominative or the absolutive form depending on the subject or object function of their noun head, respectively. However, in the case of inflecting for a semantic case (instrumental, dative, etc.), it is only the modifier and not the noun head that is inflected. Of course, in the absence of a modifier, the noun itself is inflected. In the subsections that follow, we shall deal with case inflection and function of the demonstrative deictics.

**2.2.1.1 Instrumental**

This is the inflection of a nominal element to indicate its role as an instrument in relation to the other parts of a sentence. Where the noun ends in a vowel, it will be lengthened as the result of the suffixation of the case marker. In [9a] the demonstrative deictic which is inflected for the instrumental case is with empty head while in [9b] the head is provided and the case marker is on the modifier demonstrative but the scope being the noun phrase (the noun head plus the modifier).

[9]  a)  *mejram    foon   kanaa-**n**         mur-t-i*
            mejram     meat   this-INST       cut-3fs-IPFV
            'Meyram cuts meat with this.'

| b) | *mejram* | *foon* | *ʔablee* | *kanaa-n* | | *mur-t-i* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Meyram | meat | knife | this-INST | | cut-3fs-IPFV |

'*Meyram* cuts meat with this knife.'

## 2.2.1.2 Dative

The dative case marker in Oromo, as also identified by Gragg (1976,183), Owens (1985, 103) and Griefenow-Mewis (2001, 45), is -*f*. The example below incorporates a dative-marked noun phrase whose modifier is a demonstrative deictic. The demonstrative deictic to which the dative marker is suffixed and that has its final vowel lengthened as the result of the suffixation was in its absolute form (the structural case for object function of a noun).

[10] *ʔintal-t-i maallak'a gurbaa kanaa-f kenn-i-t-e*
   girl-NOM-ep. money.ABS boy this-DAT give-ep.-3fs-PFV
   '(The) girl has given (the) money to this boy.'

## 2.2.1.3 Locative

The locative case is marked by encliticizeing the postposition *ʔitti.* Functionally, *ʔitti* may also have a dative role. However, as Owens (1985, 111) argues, it still retains its locative feature. In his example that is repeated below, the dative interpretation 'He gave me' is augmented with 'for keeping'. That is to show that the locative in the dative function still retains its basic feature.

[11] *xennaa na=tti xenne* ([*x*] = spirantized/ fricativized /*k*/)
   present me-LOC gave [he gave]
   'He gave me a present for keeping.'

In example [12], the interpretation of the locative, whose scope is the noun phrase, is not ambiguous as when it is in the dative function.

[12] *nuti maallak'a mana kana=tti ɗiis-n-e* [*ɗiifne*]
   1PL money.ABS house This.m-LOC leave-1PL-PFV
   'We left (the) money in this house.'

## 2.2.1.4 Genitive

The genitive case, involves the dependence of one noun on another as in [13], where the demonstrative deictic which modifies a noun head is marked for genitive with the terminal vowel lengthened.

[13]  *mana*         *nam-icca*         *kanaa*
  house.ABS    man-SGV.ABS    this.m.GEN
  'This man's house'

In [14], where the genitive marking has shifted to the noun head with lengthening its terminal vowel, the scope of the case marking is leftward and does not cover the demonstrative deictic.  In fact, both *nam-iccaa* and *kana* are dependent of the head noun *mana.*

[14]  *mana*         *nam-iccaa*         *kana*
  house.ABS       man-SGV.GEN   this.m.ABS
  'This house of (the) man'

In the constructions below, it is only in [15a] that the deictic demonstrative is marked for the genitive case. Otherwise, in [15b,c] the case has shifted to the other components.  In [15a], the scope of the genitive case marking is that of the whole noun phrase with *mana* being the head. On the contrary, in [15b] the scope of the genitive marker on the attributive adjective includes only the head of the adjective, *nam-icca*. In [15c], the scope of the genitive marker includes the head of the noun phrase to the left, *mana*.  Of the three constructions, it is only [15a] that corresponds to the concern of the sub-section—marking the demonstrative deictic for the genitive case.

[15]  a)  *mana*             *nam-icca*         *gurraacca*   *kanaa*
      house.ABS         man-SGV.ABS   black.ABS    this.m.GEN
      '(The) house of this black man.'

   b)  *mana*         *nam-icca*         *gurraaccaa*   *kana*
      house.ABS    man-SGV.ABS   black.GEN      this.m.ABS
      'This house of (the) black man.'

c) *mana      nam-iccaa      gurraacca      kana*
house.ABS   man-SGV.GEN   black.ABS      this.m.ABS
'This black house of the man.'

## 2.2.1.5 Superessive

This case marks a noun or a noun phrase to show that an object is on top of something. Accordingly, a demonstrative deictic, whether with its head noun present or absent, may be inflected for the superessive case in a situation requiring it. The marker of this case in Oromo is drawn from the postposition *ʔirra* 'on, over' in its reduced form and encliticized on its host in citation form. In the example below, it is seen encliticized to the demonstrative deictic.

[16]   *kitaaba     barc'uma     kana=rra        kaaj-i*
book.ABS   stool.ABS   this.m.ABS=SUP   put-2s.IMPV
'Put (the) book on this (m.) stool.'

The postposition *ʔitti* 'at, to', from which the locative [=*tti*] that we have seen above has been drawn, could be encliticized to superessive marker =*rra* which is itself, as seen above, encliticizes to a demonstrative deictic.

[17]   *mejram    foon      muka     kana=rra=tti      c'ir-t-e*
Meyram    meat.ABS   wood    this.m= SUP=LOC   chop-3fs-PFV
'Meyram chopped (the) meat on this (m.) wood.'

In the example, if the second enclitic, =*tti*, is omitted, the construction would be ungrammatical, ***kana=rra c'ir-t-e*. The locative marker =*tti* should appear with the superessive case marker =*rra* if the verb requires its active action to be continued at the location. That is, possibly, why the verb in [17] qualifies for additionally taking the locative marker =*tti* whereas the verb in [16] does not.

Mohammed (2008), which deals with *ʔirra* 'on, over' from the perspective of its extended metaphorical meanings, considers it a postposition even when suffixing it in its phonetically reduced form to a host. On the contrary, the present study, as seen above, considers the reduced appended form an enclitic case marker. In other words, it

is considered a postposition undergoing grammaticalization via cliticization rendering a case function.

**2.2.1.6 Ablative**
The ablative case indicates movement away from some location. The form of the ablative case marker is the same one as that of the superessive, *ʔirra* but with the final vowel lengthened *ʔirraa*. As in the superessive case, its occurrence involves encliticization, *=rraa*, as in the example below.

［18］ *barc'uma*　　*sani=**rraa**　kaa-t-e*　/kaʔ-t-e/
　　　stool.ABS　　that=ABL　rise-3fs-PFV
　　　'She rose from that stool.'

The demonstrative deictics may also get inflected with various kinds of focus markers, just as they took on various case markers. The next sub-section deals with the morphological operations involving focus marking and the resulting meanings.

**2.2.2 Focus marking**
Focus is a grammatical category for indicating the part of a sentence providing new information or to which attention is to be drawn. The demonstrative deictics, both in their nominative and absolutive forms, may be inflected with nominal focus markers as in 2.2.2.1 as well as in their forms inflected for semantic cases as in 2.2.2.2. The nominal focus markers, *-tu*, *-uma*, and *-llee* commonly figure in such studies as Gragg (1976), Owens (1985) and Griefenow-Mewis (2001) while –*uu* is encountered in Gragg (1976). In the present study, the form *-huu* is additionally introduced and its occurrence along with that of the rest with deictics will be investigated.

**2.2.2.1 Focusing simple demonstrative deictics**
Simple demonstrative deictics are those with no prior inflection. They can be focused both in their subject and object positions as demonstrated below in 2.2.2.1.1 and 2.2.2.1.2, respectively.

**2.2.2.1.1 Focused subject demonstrative deictics**
The typical focus markers which may be suffixed to the subject demonstrative deictics are: -*uu* and –*tu*. The occurrence of the latter, though for subject function, is with an object stem. Moreover, the focus marker –*llee*, which normally occurs with object nouns and deictics, also occurs with subject demonstrative deictics but is further marked for the nominative case. All the preceding three focus markers may be suffixed to both the proximal as well as distal stems of the demonstrative deictics. Here are examples for focusing subject demonstratives with –*uu*.

[19]  a)  *gurbaa-n*      *kun-**uu***          *katab-ø-e*
       boy-NOM      this.m.NOM-FOC    write-3ms-PFV
       'Even this boy has written.'

      b)  *ʔintal-n-i* [*ʔintal-t-i*]   *tun-**uu***        *katab-t-e* [*katabde*]
       girl-NOM-ep.            this.f. ABS **-**FOC write-3fs-PFV
       'Even this girl has written.'

Unlike the above subject focus marker which occurs with a nominative stem (*kun*, *tun*), the focus marker –*tu* occurs with an object stem (*kana*, *tana*) but for a subject interpretation. After the focused deictic, the form of the verb is that of the third person masculine which occurs with the subject of any person, gender and number depending on context. In example [20a], the focused demonstrative deictic is masculine singular. In [20b] it is the same masculine singular form that is employed for the third person plural. In the case of [20c] the reference is unambiguously to a singular female person. Observe that the English translation of the construction with –*tu* is clefted. Hence, the focus marker may be considered as a cleft focus marker.

 [20]   a)  *ʔisa*   ***kanaa-tu***        *kofl-ø-e*
        he/it   this.m.ABS-FOC    laugh-3ms-PFV
        'It is this (one) (m.) who laughed.'

       b)  *ʔisaan*   ***kanaa-tu***        *kofl-ø-e*
        they      this.m.ABS-FOC    laugh-3ms-PFV
        'It is these (ones) who laughed.'

    c)  *ʔisii*    ***tanaa-tu***       *kofl-ø-e*
        she/it   this.f.ABS-FOC    laugh-3ms-PFV
        'It is this (one) (f.) who laughed.'

Following the subject focus marker *-tu*, the verb is that of the unmarked first person singular and third person masculine singular with zero person-gender-number agreement. The same is true for both the perfective and imperfective forms of the verb.

For a sense of more emphatic identification of a referent, the subject focus marker, *-tu*, may be preceded by *–uma*, which normally focuses object hosts as we shall see later. Note in the example below how *–uma* occurs with the subject focus *–tu* for a more emphatic subject interpretation. Its final vowel is lengthened due to suffixation that followed.

[21]  *ʔisa*  *kan-****umaa-tu***       *kofl-ø-e*
      he/it  this.m.ABS-FOC-FOC   Laugh-3ms-PFV
      'It is just this (one) (m.) who laughed.'

As suggested by Taha (1990, 49), the focus marker *–tu* has an assertive implication in that the verbal action is associated with the focused subject with certainty.

The focus marker *–llee*, in its association with a nominal or pronominal subject, is followed by further nominative marking. Thus, its function is like that of *–uu* which we have seen above.

[22]  a)  *gurbaa-n*  *kuni-****llee-n***         *katab-ø-e*
          boy-NOM   this.NOM.m-FOC-NOM   write-3ms-PFV
          'Even this boy has written.'

      b)  *ʔani-****llee-n***       *katab-ø-e*
          I-FOC-NOM      write-1ms-PFV
          'Even I have written.'

**2.2.2.1.2 Focused object demonstrative deictics**

The object focus marker that is usually encountered is *–uma*. However, *-huu* is also in use. While the former gives the sense 'just the one(s) mentioned; not any other', the latter implies 'Even which is/are not expected'. In addition, as with subject focus marking seen above, *–llee* also occurs here. As regards *-uma*, although it is an object focus marker, we have seen how it also associates with the subject focus marker *–tu*. It suffixes to the object form of a nominal or pronominal host that ends in a consonant. If the host ends in a vowel, that vowel is dropped. Observe in the example below where the demonstrative deictic *kana* 'this' has dropped its final vowel.

[23]   ***kan-uma***          *bit-t-e*
        this.m.ABS-FOC        buy-3fs-PFV
        'She bought just this (one) (m.).'

The occurrence of the focus marker *–huu* is simply with stems ending in a long vowel. A host that ends in a short vowel gets it lengthened. That is what is observed in the case of the demonstrative deictic in [24].

[24]   ***kanaa-huu***        *bit-t-e*
        this.m.ABS-FOC        buy-3fs-PFV
        'She has bought even this (one).'

Where a host ends in a consonant, the counterpart focus marker that would be employed is *–uu*, possibly with *h* dropped from *-huu*, resulting in the same sense as *–huu.*

[25]   ***san-uu***           *bit-t-e*
        that.ABS-FOC          buy-3fs-PFV
        'She has bought even that (one).'

The example below shows how the focus marker *–llee*, which occurs with subject deictics, is also employed for object focusing.

[26]   *Ɂisiin*        *kana-**llee***        *ɗiis-t-e*   [*ɗiifte*]
        She.NOM         this.m.ABS-FOC         left-3fs-PFV
        'She has left even this one.'

For a more emphatic interpretation, *-uma* may be followed by *–huu* or *–llee*.

[27]  a)  mejram   *ʔisii*   **tan-umaa-huu**       *ɗiis-t-e*   [*ɗiifte*]
        Meyram   3fs    this.f.ABS-FOC-FOC   abandon-3fs-PFV
        'Meyram has abandoned even this (f.) one.'

     b)  mejyram  *ʔisii*   **tan-uma-llee**       *ɗiis-t-e*   [*ɗiifte*]
        Meyram   3fs    this.f-FOC-FOC     abandon-3fs-PFV
        'Meyram has abandoned even this (f.) only one.'

**2.2.2.2 Focusing case-marked demonstrative deictics**

In 2.2.2.1 above, we dealt with the focusing of simple (uninflected) demonstrative deictics. Here, we will look at the focusing of demonstrative deictics inflected for semantic case. A case-marked demonstrative deictic may be further marked with one or more focus markers. A focus marker may precede or follow a case marker. Of the focus markers we have seen above, *-tu* does not co-occur with a case marker while *-uma* always suffixes directly to the deictic stem. The other one that may directly suffix to the deictic stem is *–llee*. While *–uu* is suffixed to the consonantal case markers, *-huu* suffixes to the case markers ending in a vowel. The focus marking of case-marked deictics may involve one or more focus markers. In the examples below those in (a) are with a single focus marker whereas those in (b) with more than one. Both in (a) and (b), a deictic takes on a focus marker with initial vowel after having dropped its own final vowel. On the contrary, a deictic takes on a focus marker with initial consonant without dropping its final vowel. In (b), the form of the focus marker that follows a case marker is phonologically determined. If the case marker is a consonant (or ends in a consonant), the focus marker that follows is vowel initial (e.g. [28] **INSTRUMENTAL** (b)). On the other hand, if the case marker is vowel final, the focus marker that follows is consonant initial (e.g. **SUPERESSIVE** (a, b)).

Spatial Diectics in Oromo

[28] **INSTRUMENTAL**
a) *tan-**umaa**-n*       b) *tan-**uma-llee**-n-**uu***
   this.f,ABS-FOC-INST      this.f.ABS-FOC-FOC-INST-FOC
   'just with this one (f.)'     'even with just this one (f.)'

**DATIVE**
a) *kana-**llee**-f*      b) *kana-**llee**-f-**uu***
   this.m.ABS-FOC-DAT     this.m.ABS-FOC-DAT-FOC
   'even for this one (m.)'    'even to/for just this one(m.)'

**SUPERESSIVE**
a) *kana=rraa-**huu***     b) *kan-**uma**=rraa-**huu***
   this.m.ABS=SUP-FOC    this.m.ABS-FOC=SUP-FOC
   'even on this one(m.)'    'even just on this one(m.)'

**ABLATIVE**
a) *kana-**llee**=rraa*     b) *kana-**llee**=rraa-**huu***
   this.m-FOC=ABL      this.m-FOC=ABL-FOC
   'even from this one(m.)'    'even just from this one(m.)'

The superessive case marker is normally *=rra* 'on'; but in the example, the terminal vowel is lengthened as a result of the suffixation following it. Consequently, it has assumed the same form as that of the ablative which is characteristically with a long terminal vowel.

## 2.3 Contrastive deictics

The deictic type which I term *contrastive* and discuss in this section identifies or selects an entity or a group of entities against another referent or other referents. It has various forms that are seen in the table below which are derived from the simple proximal demonstrative deictics in both subject and object functions.

**Table 3. Contrastive demonstrative deictics**

| Number | Gender | Subject | Object |
|---|---|---|---|
| Singular | m. | ***kuun*** 'the other one' | ***kaan*** 'the other one' |
| | f. | ***tuun*** 'the other one' | ***taan*** 'the other one' |
| Plural | | ***kuun*** 'the other ones' | ***kaan*** 'the other ones' |

The subject forms *kuun* (m.) and *tuun* (f.) are derived from the proximal deictics *kun* 'this (m.)' and *tun* 'this (f.)', respectively. Similarly, the object forms *kaan* (m.) and *taan* (f.) are derived from *kana* 'this (m.)' and *tana* 'this (f.)'. In relation to the deictic center, both the subject and object forms of the contrastive deictics have a distal sense. Note that the epicene distal form *san* 'that/those' is not a base here.

Below, in [29a] the singular contrastive deictic *tuun* (f.) refers to a particular female individual subject while in [29b] the masculine singular deictic refers either to a single-entity or to more than one entities depending on context.

[29] a) **tuun**       *gaarii-ɗa*    b) **kuun**       *gaarii-ɗa*
     The.other.one.f   good-COP     the.other.one.m   good-COP
     'The other one is good.' (f.)       'The other one/ones is/are
                                             good.' (m.)

The contrastive deictics may be inflected for focus. The example below is that of a focused feminine singular contrastive deictic.

[30] **tuun-uu**           *ni=taa-t-i*[13]
     the.other.one.f-FOC    FOC=fit-3fs-IPFV
     'Even the other one will fit.' (f.)

As seen in Table 3 above, like the subject contrastive deictics, the object contrastive ones are also distinguished by lengthening the internal vowel; this time that of the absolutive proximal simple stems: *kana* (m.) → *kaan*; *tana* (f.) → *taan* (f). In both cases, the final vowel of *kana* and *tana* is dropped before the internal vowel lengthening takes place. The interpretation of the contrastive deictic below could be singular or plural depending on context.

---

[13][*taa-*] ← /*tah-*/; the long –*aa*- is a result of compensatory lengthening as the result of the deletion of –*h*-..

[31]  **kaan**              *fid-i*
      the.other.one/ones    bring-2s.IMPV
      'Bring the other one(s).'

Like the subject contrastive deictics, the object ones may also be inflected for focus as well as for case. The object (indirect) deictic in [32a] is inflected for the dative case while in [32b] for both case and focus. As the examples demonstrate, the subject of the negative perfective verb could refer to any person unless retrievable from the situation in which the statements are uttered.

[32]  a)  **taanii-f**              *hin-kenn-i-n-e*
          the.other.one.f-DAT     NEG-give-ep-CM-PFV
          '(Any subject) did not give to the other one (f).'

b) **kaan-umaa-n-uu**              *mur-uu*   *ni=dandaj-n-a* [*ni=dandeeŋŋa*]
   the.other.one-FOC INST-FOC  cut-GER     FOC=able-1PL-IPFV
   'We can cut even (just) with the other one.'

## 2.4 Reduplicative demonstrative deictics

In reduplicative demonstrative deictics, the proximal or distal forms in their subject or object function repeat once with an accent (manifested in a form of high pitch) on the second element. As Oromo is considered to be a pitch-accent language (Banti 1988; Hayward and Gemetchu 1996; Shimelis 2015) where accent occurs once per word, the pattern is observed in the case of demonstrative deictics, too. Like the citation form of a simple demonstrative deictic the reduplicated counterpart takes one accent. This indicates that each of the reduplicated form is a unit like an independent simple word. As seen in the examples given below, the interpretation of the reduplicated form is plural with a partitive sense. In the case of [33a], the interpretation is masculine plural partitive while in [33b] feminine plural partitive. As pointed out earlier, the difference in gender agreement is triggered by the phonological difference. In [33c], the demonstrative deictic which can be used for singular or plural, here in its reduplicated form gives a plural partitive sense.

[33]

a)  *harr-oot-n-i* [*harroonni*]   **kunkún** /          *ni=tah-ø-a*
    donkey-PL-NOM-ep        these.ones.NOM   FOC=suitable-3ms-IPFV
    'These donkeys are suitable.'

b)  *harree-n*              **tuntún**              *ni=taa-t-i*
    donkey.COL-NOM  these.ones.NOM   FOC=suitable-3fs-IPFV
    'These donkeys are suitable.'

c)  *harr-oot-n-i* [*harroonni*]        **sunsún**              *ni=tah-ø-a*
    donkey-PL-NOM-ep        those.ones.NOM     FOC=suitable-3ms-IPFV
    'Those donkeys are suitable.'

Pronouncing a reduplicated deictic is quite different from pronouncing the simple counterpart in a sequence. In the former case, the elements are pronounced without a pause between them and only the second one is marked with high pitch; hence a single prosodic unit. On the contrary, the simple demonstrative deictics in a sequence are pronounced with a pause between them and each one of them marked with high pitch; hence each being a prosodic unit identifying an entity or a group of entities in turn. As indicated above, the sense in the former case is partitive while in the latter the sense is that each is a deictic unit. Paradoxically, in the eastern variety of Oromo, the number agreement of the plural deictics is singular. Nonetheless, currently, a change to the plural agreement is underway. For instance, [33c] is gaining currency as in [34].

[34]  *harr-oot-n-i* [*harroonni*]    **sunsún**              *ni=tah-ø-an-ø*
      donkey-PL-NOM-ep        those.ones.NOM     FOC=suitable-3-PL-IPFV
      'Those donkeys could do.'

The reduplicative demonstrative deictics in [33] may be inflected for focus as in [35]. In [35a], the masculine nominative form is inflected with the focus marker –*uu* while in [35b] it is the feminine nominative form that is inflected for focus. Unlike in [35a, b], in

[35c], it is the absolute form that is inflected for focus. Nonetheless, its interpretation is that of a subject due to the focus marker –*tu* which has a subject implication.

[35]

a) *harr-oot-n-i* [*harroonni*] **kukún-úu**[14]　　　　*ni=tah-ø-a*
　　donkey-PL-NOM-ep　　these.ones.m.NOM-FOC FOC=suitable-3ms-IPFV
　　'Even these donkeys could be suitable.'

b) *harree-n*　　　　　　**tuntún-úu**　　　　　*ni=taa-t-i*
　　donkey.COL-NOM　these.ones.f.NOM-FOC　FOC=suitable-3fs-IPFV
　　'Even these donkeys could be suitable.'

c) *harree*　　　　**tanatánáa-tú**　　　　*tah-ø-a*
　　donkey.COL　these.ones.f.ABS-FOC　suitable-3ms-IPFV
　　'It is these donkeys that are suitable.'

Observe also that the verb is that of a third person masculine singular subject due to the focus marker. With the focus marker, the verb, whether in the perfective or imperfective aspect, is third person, masculine singular. The interpretation of the sentence is also that of a cleft one. In all three instances of example [35], the High tone, which spread to the next syllable (the focus marker), implies the prosodic scope over the whole reduplicated word.

The reduplicative absolute forms of the demonstrative deictics may occur only with a case marker or with both focus and case markers at the same time. The inflection in [36a] is for case while in [36b] it is for both case and focus. The focus elements could be more than one with hues of meanings.

[36]　a)　*Ɂablee-ww-an*　**kanakánaa-n**　　*mur-i*
　　　　　knife-ep-PL　these.ones.m.ABS-INST　cut-2s.IMPV
　　　　　'Cut with these knives.'

---

[14]As observed by Owens (1985), a pitch that falls on the penultimate syllable spreads to the right. Detailed investigation is required concerning the spread of pitch in the language.

b) ʝoollee     **tana-táná-llée-f-úu**     *kenn-i-n-e*
children     this.f-this.f-FOC-DAT-FOC     give-ep-1PL-PFV
'We have given even to these children.'

Depending on context, the examples may also be translated, respectively, as 'Cut these knives with these (ones)' and 'We have given children even to these (ones)'.

## 3. Presentative deictics

These are a type of demonstratives that are used to draw the attention of an addressee towards something. If that 'something' is extra-linguistic, it is termed, as, for instance, in Diessel (1999, 6), *exophoric* and if intra-linguistic, *endophoric*. In Oromo, the presentative deictics are derived from the masculine proximal determiner demonstrative *kun* 'this'. Like the determiner demonstratives (*this*/*that* and *these*/*those*) and the adverbial demonstratives (*here*, *there*), they are of two distance dimensions—proximal and distal. The language is different, for instance from Kambaata (Highland East Cushitic), whose presentative demonstratives inflect for gender and number and demonstrate three-level distance—proximal, medial and distal (Treis (Forthcoming).

For the formation of the proximal presentative, the proximal masculine demonstrative deictic of the nominative case, *kun*, is suffixed with –*oo* resulting in *kunoo* 'Here (referent(s)) is/are'. As a result of the suffixation of –*oo*, the sense of the demonstrative deictic 'this' is altered to 'here is/are' (The actual adverbial deictic for 'here' is *ʔas*). If the first vowel of the proximal presentative is lengthened, *kuunoo*, the sense would become distal, 'There (the referent(s)) is/are'. The entity/entities to be presented could be of any gender or number. Hence, presentative deictics are not inflected for the latter grammatical properties. The Oromo presentatives *kunoo* and *kuunoo* are similar to the French *voici* and *voilà* with the senses 'here is/are' and 'there is/are', respectively.

In both proximal and distal Oromo presentatives, the intonational pattern is High Low. However, for a sense of surprise, the proximal form may assume Low High pattern while the distal form does not. Morphologically, the two presentative deictics differ only in the length of their first vowel. Iconically, while that of the proximal is short that of the distal is long. In the distal form, some speakers additionally geminate the second consonant—*kúunnóo*. The exophoric presentative deictics in the examples below are respectively proximal and distal.

[37]   a)   *falʔaan-n-i*          ***kúnoo***
            spoon-NOM-ep       PRST.PRX
            'Here is (the) spoon.'


       b)   *falʔaan-n-i*          ***kúunoo***
            spoon-NOM-ep       PRST.DST
            'There is (the) spoon.'


In a presentative construction, the referent may precede or follow the presentative deictic. For more emphasis in drawing attention toward a location, the pattern in [37a] may be reversed as in [38], putting the presentative in the initial position.

[38]   ***kúnoo***        *falʔaan-n-i*
       PRST.PRX   spoon-NOM-ep
       'Here is (the) spoon.'


In a syntactic construction, presentatives may or may not occur with a copula[15]. The presence or absence of the latter does not seem to have

---

[15] The copula form which goes with nouns and adjectives ending in a long vowel is -*ɗa* (e.g. *gurbaa-ɗa* boy-is '(It) is (a/the) boy'; *ɗeertuu-ɗa* tall.she-is 'She is tall') while nouns and adjectives ending in a short vowel are zero marked e.g. , *mana* '(It's a) house', *gurraacca* '(It's) black (m.)'. On the other hand, a host ending in a consonant takes –*i* e.g. *ʔafaan-i* mouth-is '(It) is (a) mouth'. In the case of possessive constructions, the copula form is –*ti* which is suffixed to a host ending in a long vowel or its final short vowel lengthened or its final consonant followed by –*ii* (e.g. *gurbaa* 'boy'→ *mana gurbaa-ti* house boy.of-is '(It) is (the) boy's house'; *farda* 'horse' →*ʔeegee fardaa-ti* tail horse.of-is '(It) is (a/the) horse's tail'; *ʔafaan* 'mouth'→*dawaa ʔafaanii-ti* medicine mouth.of-is 'medicine of (a/the) mouth') (cf.

bearing on the proposition. Example [39a] is the counterpart of [37a] while [39b] is that of [38]. In both cases, the proposition remains the same.

[39] a) *fal?aan-n-i*   ***kúnoo-ti***   b) ***kúnoo-ti***   *fal?aan-n-i*
　　　spoon-NOM-ep   PRST-COP　　　　PRST-COP   spoon-NOM-ep
　　　'Here is (the) spoon.'　　　　　　'Here is (the) spoon.'

Note that the presentative derived from the simple masculine deictic form, *kun* 'this', is also employed for the feminine and plural constructions as in [40a, b], respectively.

[40]　a)　*?intal-n-i* [*?intalti*]　　***kúnoo-ti***
　　　　　girl-NOM-ep　　　　　　　PRST-COP
　　　　　'Here is (the) girl.'

　　　b)　*hool-ot-n-i* [*hoolonni*]　***kúnoo-ti***
　　　　　sheep-PL-NOM-ep　　　　　PRST-COP
　　　　　'Here are (the) sheep.'

Using the copula marker *-ɗa* with the presentative construction is not acceptable, **kunoo-ɗa*.

The Oromo presentative deictics may be employed for endophoric use. Especially, the proximal one can be used to refer back or forward to a portion of a discourse. Below, in [41], the speaker refers back to what the interlocutor said. By so doing, s/he claims that what s/he had predicted earlier has come true.

[41]　***kúnoo***　*?ani*　*hin-ɟe?-n-ee* [*?aniɲɟennee*]
　　　　here is　　I　　NEG-say-CM-PFV.ITGV
　　　　'Here it is, didn't I say?'

---

Griefenow-Mewis 2001, 108-109.). The presentative construction takes the copula form *-ti* which normally goes with possessive constructions, *kunoo-ti* 'Here it is'.

In [42], the speaker refers forward to a portion of her/his discourse that is to follow.

[42] **kúnoo**     *ɗaga-i* [*ɗagaji*]  *waan ʔinni*   *ɟeʔ-ø-e*
     here is       hear-2IMPV          thing  he      say-3ms-PFV
     'Here it is, listen to what he said.'

## 4. Adverbial deictics

While the nominal demonstrative deictics are used for pointing at an object, person, place, time or any other phenomenon, the adverbial deictics in Oromo are used to indicate a place or a manner of verbal action or state. Let us examine each in turn.

### 4.1 Place adverbial deictics

The Oromo place adverbial deictics are *ʔas* 'here' and *ʔacci* 'there'. The examples below indicate where the referent is at the time of the utterance or encoding in relation to the deictic center (the speaker).

[43]  a) **ʔas**  *ɟir-t-i*              b) **ʔacci**  *ɟir-t-i*
         here  exist-3fs-IPFV             there  exist-3fs-IPFV
         'She is here.'                    'She is there.'

In each example, the location of the subject that is known to both the speaker and the addressee has been identified by the speaker. The location of something may also be expressed in a more emphatic way. Thus, in [44], the place adverbial deictic is inflected for focus. The referents are the speaker and those on whose behalf the latter speaks.

[44] **ʔas-uma**   *taaʔ-n-e*[16]
     here-FOC    sit--PFV
     'We sat just here.'

### 4.2 Manner adverbial deictics

This category involves adverbial deictic constructions which point to the way proximal or distal verbal actions are done or happen. Manner deictics are spatial insofar as they point to actions or occurrences in

---

[16]In Hararghe Oromo, the replacement of the guttural /ʔ/ by the palatal approximant /j/ is not uncommon— *taaʔ-n-e* →*taaj-n-e* →*teej-n-e* →*teeɲ-ɲ-e*→[*teeɲɲe*].

space. The two Oromo manner adverbial deictics are: *ʔakkana* 'like this' and *ʔakkas* 'like that'; each of them resulting from blending a preposition and a demonstrative.

**Table 4. Derivation of manner adverbial deictics**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i) | *ʔakka* | 'like' | + | *kana* | 'this' | → | *ʔakka(ka)na* | → | **ʔakkana** | 'like this' |
| ii) | *ʔakka* | 'like' | + | *san* | 'that' | → | *ʔakkas(an)* | → | **ʔakkas** | 'like that' |

In the derivation of the proximal manner deictic in (i), when what started as *ʔakka* + kana [*ʔakka kana*] blended into **ʔakkana**, the deletion of the first CV syllable (*ka*) of *kana* is, possibly, for a dissimilatory effect; i.e. for a relative clarity of pronunciation of the word. Otherwise, deleting the second CV syllable (*na*) of *kana* would have resulted in *ʔakka* + *ka*(*na*) [**ʔakkaka**], involving a repeated velaric articulation of /k/ which would smother the pronunciation of the word.

The derivation of the distal manner deictic in (ii) is also based on dissimilation; but this time to keep distance from the proximal **ʔakkana** 'like this'. If *ʔakka* 'like' + *san* 'that' also involved deletion of the first CV, the result would have been *ʔakka* + (*s*)*an* [**ʔakkaan**], which is almost repeating the form of the proximal, **ʔakkana** 'like this'. Therefore, the blending of distal, *ʔakka* 'like' + *san* 'that', opted for deleting the final VC of *san* and resulting in *ʔakkas*(*an*) [**ʔakkas**] 'like that'.

Like the place adverbial deictics in 3.1, the manner adverbials may occur in a sentence independently or with focus and/or case markers.

[45]  a)  **ʔakkana**   *goɗ-i*
        like.this    do-2s.IMPV
        'Do like this.'

    b)  ***ʔakkan-uma***    *goɗ-i*
         like.this-FOC   do-2s.IMPV
         'Do/Make just like this.'

    c)  ***ʔakkas-uma*=tti**        *ɗiis-i*
         like.that-FOC=LOC       leave-2s.IMPV
         'Leave just like that!'

The three types of spatial deictics I have dealt with are demonstrative, presentative and adverbial deictics. The next class of deictics we are going to examine is the type that is concerned with direction.

## 5. Directional deictics
The deictics in this category, whose function is identifying the direction of a referent from the perspective of the deictic center, are of two types: adverbial directional deictics and verbal directional deictics.

### 5.1 Adverbial directional deictics
The deictics of this category are *gamana* 'this side' and *gamas* 'that side' which are dervatives of the nominal base *gama* 'side'. The derivation is similar to that of the manner adverbial deictics in 3.2. Like the manner adverbial deictics, adverbial directional deictics are results of blending the nominal element *gama* 'side' with the demonstratives *kana* 'this' and *san* 'that' as seen below.

**Table 5. Derivation of the adverbial directional deictics**

| i) | ***gama*** | 'side' | + | ***kana*** | 'this' | → | ***gama*(*ka*)*na*** | → | ***gamana*** | 'this side' ('this way) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ii) | ***gama*** | 'side' | + | ***san*** | 'that' | → | ***gamas*(*an*)** | → | ***gamas*** | 'that side' ('that way' /'yonder') |

As in Table 4, here too, the blending derivational processes are based on dissimilation. The examples below demonstrate the adverbial directional deictics in function.

[46] a) *gurbaa-n*   ***gamana***   *deem-ø-a*
      boy-NOM   this.side   go-3ms-IPFV
      'The boy is going this way.'

   b) *gurbaa-n*   ***gamas***   *taaʔ-ø-a*
      boy-NOM   that.side   sit-3ms-IPFV
      'The boy is sitting on that side/over there'.

The adverbial directional deictics may undergo inflection for case and focus. Accordingly, in [47a] for case and in [47b] for case as well as focus . The lengthening of the final vowel of the stem in [47a] and that of the focus marker in [47b] is due to the suffixation.

 [47] a) ***gamanaa-n***       *seen-i*
      this.way-INST    enter-2s.IMPV
      'Enter/Come in this way.'

   b) ***gamas-umaa-n***       *seen-i*
      that.side-FOC-INST       enter-2s.IMPV
      'Enter/Come in just that way.'

The form *gara* is the alternant of *gama*. It replaces *gama* without causing meaning difference. Accordingly, the sense in [47b] could be obtained with *gara* as in [48].

 [48] ***garas-umaa-n***       *seen-i*
      that.side-FOC-INST    enter-2s.IMPV
      'Enter/Come in just that way.'

## 5.2 Verbal directional deictics

These deictics are expressed through motion verbs one of the meaning components of which is directionality. Motion may be bounded in such a way that it has an origin (source) and a destination or goal (Fillmore 1971, 52).  In Oromo, motion verbs may be used in a manner in which either both the origin and destination or only one of the two may be implied.  Concerning path of motion in Oromo, Debela (2007, 74-81) says that it is indicated by path-oriented motion

verbs (e.g. *ɗuf-e* he come-3SM:PV 'He came.'), and by incorporating preverbs (e.g. *ol-ba'-e* up-exit-3SM:PV 'He moved up') as well as by adpositions (e.g. *gara laga-a deem-e* towards river-ABL he went 'He went towards the river'). Talmy (2007) treats motion verbs as expressing motion and co-events (manner and cause of the motion). Of motion and co-events, the discussion here is concerned only with the former as it is related to deixis in the sense of direction. As identified by Talmy (2007, 70), there are four components in a situation containing motion, that is, in a motion event, *viz* Figure, Ground, Path and Motion. The components correspond to a moving entity, a deictic center, direction and movement, respectively. Of the four components, the point of interest here is the direction of the verbal action. Among the various meanings the verb in the sentence below incorporates, one is deictic in the sense of direction.

[49]  *mejram   gama   manaa       deem-t-e*
      Meyram   side    house.GEN   go-3fs-PFV
      'Meyram has gone home.'  Lit. Meyram has gone to (the)
                                                    house's side.

The verb *deemte* 'she has gone' implies that Meyram went away from where the speaker (the deictic center) is to (or in the direction of) her home. Hence, the verb embodies a deictic meaning in the sense of indicating direction. Apart from being directionally deictic, the action of the verb is bounded in the given syntactic context. At one end, there is the point of departure (the deictic center) and at the other, the destination or goal; the home. Note that in the sentence the components *gama manaa* are in a genitive relationship where the final long vowel of the second component marks the genitive case. Functionally, the noun phrase has an adverbial role specifying the goal of the motion event expressed by the verb.

In [50] below, the deictic situation is opposite to the above one. While the verb in [49] implies movement away from the deictic center, the one below implies movement towards the deictic center.

[50] *boru*      ***koott-u***[17]
     tomorrow    come-2s.IMPV
     'Come tomorrow!'

Unlike in [49], the verbal action in [50] is not bounded. While the goal is the deictic center, the point of departure is unknown. The deictic directionality of the verb may be further emphasized by adding an adverb of direction as in [51].

[51] *gamana*    ***koott-u***
     this.way    come-2s.IMPV
     'Come this way.'

In speech acts, deictic expressions may not be as direct as in those we have seen in the foregoing discussions where reference is made directly to visible entities or situations. There are cases where senses of place deictic are construed via the common knowledge of the interlocutors; hence epistemic. For instance, adapting Fillmore's (1971, 57) exemplification mode: at point A, a person might utter the statement below to another one who would be going immediately to point B.

[52] *Boru*      *anii-s*     ***Ɂacci*** *ni=Ɂan* [*nii=n*]   ***ɗuf-ɵ-a***
     tomorrow   1s-also     there   FOC=1s        come-1s-IPFV
     'Tomorrow, I too will come there.'

At the time of the speech act, the destination 'there' is away from the interlocutors. As regards 'come', it is oriented towards 'there'. The situation is such that 'there' would be the deictic center where the interlocutor would also be and to where the speaker would come in the reference time, tomorrow.

---

[17]As observed by Owens (1985, 67), *ɗuf-* 'come' has an irregular imperative root *xoot-* (actually *koott-*) which in the singular takes *-uu* (*-u*) instead of the regular singular imperative marker *–i* as in, for instance, *deem-i* go-2sIMPV 'Go!'.

In another situation, a speaker may convey the same message by using two different constructions employing opposite motion verbs 'come' and 'go'. In [53a], the deictic center (the speaker) would be at the market place in the reference time. That is where the speaker would be as the verb 'come' indicates. On the contrary, in [53b], the speaker utters the statement from the perspective of where s/he is at the time of the speech act—here, away from the market. That is what 'go' implies.

[53]   a)   *boru*          *magaalaa*   ***ni=ɗuf-t-i***
         tomorrow   market        FOC=come-3fs-IPFV
         'Tomorrow, she will come to the market.'

       b)   *boru*          *magaalaa*   ***ni=deem-t-i***
         tomorrow   market        FOC=go-3fs-IPFV
         'Tomorrow, she will go to the market.'

## 6. Conclusion

In their utterances, Oromo speakers determine reference in using demonstrative, presentative, adverbial and directional deictics which are subsumed under spatial deictics. Of the four spatial deictic types, the class of the demonstrative deictics is comparatively more productive. The demonstrative deictics are classified in the study into simple, complex (inflected), contrastive and reduplicative. Unlike the preceding nominal ones, the formally related class of presentatives is functionally predicative. The third major type of deictics is adverbial comprising place and manner deictics while the fourth type is the class of directional deictics which consists of verbal as well as adverbial sub-types.

As regards the use of spatial deictics in relation to distance, Oromo is one of the two-level languages—proximal and distal. In relation to the most dynamic type of the spatial deictics—demonstratives—the citation masculine form, *kana* 'this,' appears to be basic from which the various sub-types of the demonstrative deictics are derived. At the proximal level, the eastern variety of Oromo distinguishes gender, i.e. masculine and feminine. As regards number, there is no overt plural form of the demonstrative in the eastern variety. It is the nominative and absolutive masculine singular proximal forms that are also used

for plural. Similarly, it is the distal singular nominative and absolutive forms that are used for distal plural. Another feature worth noting is the singular agreement of the compound demonstrative deictics. To generalize, supplementing this study, which is focused on examining deictics from the perspective of space, with research on person and time deictic expressions would provide a complete picture of deictics in the eastern variety. That, in turn, would contribute to a comprehensive study of deicitics in Oromo.

**Abbreviations and symbols**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | first person | ep. | epenthesis | NOM | nominative |
| 2 | second person | f/Fem. | feminine | NEG | negative |
| 3 | third perso | FOC | focus | PFV | perfective |
| ABL | ablative | GEN | genitive | PL | plural |
| ABS | absolutive | GER | gerundive | PRST | presentative |
| CM | clause marker | IMPV | imperative | PRX | proximal |
| COL | collective | INST | instrumental | s | singular |
| COP | copula | ITGV | interrogative | SGV | singulative |
| CS | causative | IPFV | imperfective | SUP | superessive |
| DAT | dative | LOC | locative | ø | zero/absent |
| DST | distal | m/Masc. | masculine | = | clitic |

## References

Banti, Giorgio. 1988. Two Cushitic Systems: Somali and Oromo. In Harry Van der Hulst and Norval Smith (eds.), *Autosegmental Studies on Pitch Accent*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 11-49.

_____. 2010. Oromiffa. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica,* Vol. 4, O-X. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 54-59.

Bender, M. Lionel and Mulugeta Eteffa. 1976. [Galla]. In M. L. Bender, J. D. Bowen, R. L. Cooper and C. A. Ferguson (eds.), *Language in Ethiopia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 130-148.

Biemans, Monique Adriana Johanna. 2000. Gender variation in voice quality. http://www.let.uu.nl/LOT/.

Brisard, Frank. 2002. The Epistemic Basis of Deixis and Reference. In Frank Brisard (ed.) *Grounding: The Epistemic Footing of Deixis and Reference* (*Cognitive Linguistics Research 21*). Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, xi-xxxiv.

Debela Goshu. 2007. Path in Oromo motion construction. *Annual Publication in African Linguistics* 5, 73-88.

Debela Goshu Amente. 2011. *The Semantics of Oromo Frontal Adpositions*. PhD dissertation, University of Oslo.

Diessel, Holger. 1999. *Demonstratives: Form, Function, and Grammaticalization.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Fillmore, Charles J. 1971. Santa Cruz Lectures on Deixis. University of California, Berkeley. Reproduced by the Indiana University Linguistics Club, November 1975.

Gragg, Gene B. 1976. Oromo of Wellegga. In M. L. Bender (ed.), *The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia*. East Lansing, MI: African Studies Center, Michigan State University, 166-195.

Griefenow-Mewis, Catherine. 2001. *A Grammatical Sketch of Written Oromo*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.

Hayward, R. J. and Gemetchu Megerssa. 1996. Nominal Tone in Western Oromo. In R. J. Hayward and I.M Lewis (eds.), *Voice and Power: The Culture of Language in North East Africa.* African Languages and Cultures. Supplement 3, SOAS, University of London, 21-36.

Lyons, John. 1977. *Semantics*, Vol. 2. London: Cambridge University Press.

Mi'eessaa Yaachis, Lenief Heimstead and Roggin Clamons. 2012. Locationals in Oromo. *Studies in African Linguistics* 41, 2, 253-279.

Mohammed Ali, Andrzej Zaborski. 1990. Handbook of the Oromo language. (Äthiopistische Forschungen, 30.) Stuttgart and Warsaw: Franz Steiner Verlag and Ossolineum – Polska Akademia Nauk.

Mohammed Tahir Abduselam. 2008. The Semantics of an Oromo Adposition of Verticality: The Case of *irra* 'on/over'. MA Thesis. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.

Moreno, M. M. 1939. *Grammaticadella Lingua Galla*. A Curadell'UfficioStudi del Ministro dell Africa Italia.

Ohala, John J. 1994. The frequency code underlies the sound-symbolic use of voice pitch. In Leanne Hinton, Johanna Nichols, and John J. Ohala (eds.) *Sound Symbolism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 325-347.

Owens, Jonathan. 1985. *A Grammar of Harar Oromo*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

Shimelis Mazengia. 2015. *Nominalization via Verbal Derivation: Amharic, Tigrinya and Oromo* (*A Contrastive Study*). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Sidhu, David M. and Penny M. Pexman. 2018. Five mechanisms of sound symbolic association. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 25,1619–1643.

Taha Yassin. 1990. The Focus System in Oromo: A Functional Grammar Approach. MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University.

Talmy, Leonard. 2007. Lexical typologies. In Timothy Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, 2nd ed., vol. III. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 66-168.

Tosco, Mauro. 2000. Cushitic Overview. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, vol. XXXIII, No 2, 87-121.

Treis, Yvonne. Forthcoming. Presentative demonstratives in Kambaata from a Cushitic perspective, in *Du terrain à la théorie. Les 40 ans du LACITO,* Villejuif, LACITO.