

SYMBOLIC INDEXING IN OROMO*

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This paper identifies a general phonic pattern of indexing on referential, spatiotemporal, and logical structures in Oromo. Final $-n(V)$ marking across these different grammatical forms correlates with assumed accessibility of referents and of other information in discourse across a range of syntactic and semantic elements. The primary data for this study are from a spontaneous Guji narrative. Previous research on the form of referring expressions and the cognitive status of their referents in other Oromo dialects is extended through the consideration of the nominal constructions in this narrative. Furthermore, by the examination of other constructions, this $-n(V)$ indexical is identified as a general pragmeme that functions to mark expressions for accessible referents and information on a range of forms across a discourse in Oromo.

Oromo, a Lowland Eastern Cushitic language of the Afro-asiatic phylum, and the majority language of Ethiopia, exhibits sound patterns in speech that reliably index the status of information across the conceptual space of a discourse. Eligible expressions in Oromo that index referents or other information that may be assumed by a speaker to be accessible to the addressee, i.e., activated in consciousness to some degree, are marked $-n(V)$ on the right edge. By exploring the relationship between the structures of referring expressions and other information marking forms, and the status of referents and other information in Oromo discourse, this study identifies a consistent phonic pattern that is used to create a reliable map of the domain of a discourse for the interlocutors. In this

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study, the forms of subjects and objects and the cognitive status of their referents in a discourse are examined first, and then other indexical expressions are identified and the status of information encoded in them is explored.

Peirce (1974) explicates a theoretical framework in which three cardinal sign types are recognized. An iconic sign bears a physical resemblance to its referent. For example, the onomatopoeic word *meow* signifies the sound a cat makes and also sounds like the sound a cat makes. An indexical sign establishes an existential relationship with interlocutors and a referent in time and space. For example, pronouns and demonstratives depend on discourse or real world context to successfully refer. A symbolic sign expresses conventionalized meaning, as recognized within a speech community. Burkes (1949) considers the original Peircean notion of index and analyzes indexical symbols that are deictic in the immediate domain. He argues that while each token of a non-indexical symbol, e.g., *red*, has the same conventional meaning regardless of its spatiotemporal location, an indexical symbol, e.g., *now*, has a unique value depending upon the spatiotemporal location of each token. Although each token of an indexical symbol has the same conventional meaning as its type, e.g., *now* means the time at which this *now* is uttered, each token carries additional information since it stands in a unique existential relationship with the interlocutors. In Oromo, each token of referring, temporal, spatial, or logical expressions that bears $-n(V)$ marking functions to index referents, times, places, or logical relationships that are accessible to the interlocutors within a domain of discourse, while also encoding a conventional meaning.

The primary data for this study are from a near death experience narrative by a Lowland Guji Oromo, who also provides native judgments about interpretations and acceptable, appropriate alternative constructions and felicitous expressions.¹ Claims about the status of information indexed by certain expressions are made throughout this paper, and therefore the transcription of the complete narrative is provided in an appendix to allow the reader full consideration of the data within the context of the discourse.²

¹ This narrative was elicited on 10/29/99, shortly after his arrival in America. He responded to a request to recount, in Guji Oromo, an incident in his childhood when he was terrified. The narrative was recorded on video and audio tape, and subsequently transcribed. Our intention was to collect the most genuine sample of uninterrupted Guji Oromo possible.

² The data are represented phonemically. Long vowels and consonants are represented with double letters or digraphs, the intermediate length vowel with an acute accent, the dental ejective with *x*, the retroflex implosive is represented with *dh*, the alveopalatal fricative with *sh*, alveopalatal affricate with *c*, the alveopalatal affricate ejective with *ch*, the velar ejective with *q*, and the palatal nasal with *ny*. Abbreviations are: Amh ‘Amharic’, F ‘feminine’, far

Although this is a small corpus, a rich sample of expressions emerges that exhibits a characteristic sound pattern that maps accessible information in Oromo discourse. Where natural examples of grammatical constructions do not occur, conventional elicitation methods have been used to explore appropriate pragmatic marking in extended contexts. Equivalences, as well as differences, between the Guji data and attested data from other dialects of Oromo are indicated throughout.

1. Referring Expressions

Givenness, i.e., a speaker's assumptions about how conscious the addressee is of a referent at any given moment in the discourse, is a critical factor in the choice of appropriate forms. The Guji data from the narrative are examined to investigate and extend the analysis proposed for Oromo in Clamons, Mulkern, & Sanders (1993), which is based on the framework presented in Gundel, Hedberg, & Zacharski (1993). The Givenness Hierarchy for Oromo that is introduced in Clamons et al. (1993) is based on conversations constructed by a speaker of Harar Oromo. This present study tests and extends the suggested analysis to include both the Guji data and another genre, the narrative.

Chafe (1976) asserts that givenness, topicality, subjecthood, definiteness, and contrastiveness are all relevant to the speaker's evaluation of how the addressee is able to process what is being said against a particular discourse and real world context. Although the exploration of givenness and the selection of expressions by the speaker is central in this study, topicality, subjecthood, definiteness, and contrastiveness must also be taken into consideration, because each of these is shown to influence the speaker's choices. Throughout the narrative, topicality is found to be crucial in choosing subject forms. Indefiniteness, definiteness, and contrastiveness are also signaled formally. Sasse (1984b:245) has pointed out that Eastern Cushitic languages "... are more or less discourse oriented ...", that topicality, focus, definiteness, etc. shape the syntactic form in these languages more than syntactic relations. In Oromo, both grammatical relations and pragmatic status are extensively marked.

The hierarchy proposed in Gundel et al. (1993) posits six cognitive statuses, where each status reflects a necessary and sufficient condition for the

dem 'distal demonstrative', EMPH 'emphasis marker', IMP 'imperfective', INDEF 'indefinite marker', M 'masculine', near dem 'proximal demonstrative', N 'noun', OBJ 'object', PL 'plural', pro 'pronoun', PST 'past', SUBJ 'subject', T 'topic', TB 'topic boundary marker', Som 'Somali', 3 'third person'. Only analysis relevant to this discussion is included in interlinear glosses.

appropriate choice of forms. If a referent is type identifiable, the lowest cognitive status, the speaker need only assume that the addressee can identify what kind of entity the referent is. If the referent is referential, the speaker assumes that the addressee can both identify the kind of entity the referent is and understand that the speaker can identify that referent uniquely. If the referent is uniquely identifiable, the speaker assumes that the addressee can also pick out the exact referent, either from the immediate real world context, the discourse context, or because the referent can be reasonably inferred from either context. If the referent is familiar, the speaker assumes that the referent is not only identifiable, but is immediately recognizable to the addressee. If the referent is activated, the speaker assumes that the referent is currently in the awareness of the interlocutors. If the referent is in focus, the highest status, the speaker assumes that the participants' attention is centered on the referent.³ In Figure 1, a set of examples is given to illustrate the forms chosen in English, depending on the cognitive status of the referent of *dog*.

Figure 1. English Illustrations of the Givenness Hierarchy

I couldn't sleep at all last night.

In Focus >	... <u>She</u> was barking all night.
Activated >	... <u>THIS dog</u> was barking all night.
Familiar >	... <u>That dog</u> was barking all night.
Uniquely Identifiable >	... <u>The dog</u> was barking all night.
Referential >	... <u>This DOG</u> was barking all night.
Type Identifiable >	... <u>A / Some dog</u> was barking all night.

Clamons et al. (1993) explores the relationship of five cognitive statuses and referring expressions in constructed conversations in Harar Oromo and identifies formal distinctions between topic and non-topic subjects, as well as subjects and objects. The Givenness Hierarchy for Oromo that the authors propose is reproduced in Figure 2.

³ The term *focus* is only used in this cognitive sense to avoid the confusion described in Hajičová (1986) in the use of the term. These statuses are hierarchical, not discrete categories. The lower statuses are implied by the higher statuses, and speakers choose among expressions depending on the status of a referent and other considerations, sometimes selecting forms appropriate for lower statuses because of factors such as definiteness, contrastiveness, or relevance. Gundel et al. (1993) argue that the interaction of the Givenness Hierarchy and Grice's maxim of quantity interact to account for the frequent choice of lower status forms in discourses where a higher status form could be chosen.

Figure 2. Givenness Hierarchy for Oromo (Clamons, Mulkern & Sanders 1993)

	In Focus >	Activated >	Familiar >	Uniquely > Identifiable	Type Identifiable
topic subject	∅	pronoun + <i>n</i> N+ <i>n</i> +near dem far dem	N+ <i>n</i> +far dem	N + <i>n</i>	--
non-topic subject	--	pronoun N+near dem far dem	N+far dem	N	N (<i>takka</i>)
object	∅	pronoun far dem	N+far dem N+near dem	N	N (<i>takka</i>)

By considering subject and object noun phrases from this study's Guji narrative and comparing the correlation between the forms that have been chosen and the status of the discourse referents, the generalizations that hold across the dialects are identified and the hierarchy is expanded to include further data. Figure 3 represents an extended Givenness Hierarchy for Oromo, expanded to include the data in this study.

Figure 3. Givenness Hierarchy for Oromo⁴

	In Focus >	Activated >	Familiar >	Uniquely Identifiable >	Referential >	Type Identifiable
topic subject	Ø	pro + <i>ni</i> N+ <i>ni+tun/kun</i> <i>kun</i>	N+ <i>ni+sun</i> N+ <i>ni+tuun/kuun</i> <i>sun</i>	N+ <i>ni</i>		--
non-topic subject	--	pro N+ <i>tana/kana</i>	N+ <i>san</i>	N		N (<i>takká/tokkó</i>) ((t)ti)
object	pro(- <i>n</i>)	N+ <i>tana/kana</i>	N+ <i>san</i> N+ <i>taan/kaan</i>	N		N (<i>takka/tokko</i>)
oblique	pro- <i>n</i> + <i>n(v)</i>	N + <i>tani/kani</i> N+ <i>taanii/kaanii</i>	N+ <i>sani</i>	N		N (<i>takka/tokko</i>)

This Givenness Hierarchy represents the cognitive statuses that are minimally necessary for choice of the forms given for all dialects of Oromo. The forms are given, rather than the grammatical descriptions, so that the general pattern of *-n(V)* marking, uniform across higher statuses and grammatical categories, can be clearly seen. The *-n(V)* index is always found on all appropriate overt referring expressions: on all eligible elements of the subject for a referent that is at least referential, and on every noun phrase for any referent that is familiar.

1.1 Type Identifiable. If a referent is type identifiable, the speaker assumes that the addressee can identify what kind of thing the referent is. In Guji, as in Harar and the other Oromo dialects, subjects for type identifiable referents, have a higher toned final vowel on the final eligible element of the noun phrase. Example (1) exemplifies the form of expression used for such referents from the narrative.

- (1) Gizee hedduu ammoo... .. lolá-tti ka'a.
time (Amh) many but war-SUBJ.EMPH get up
‘Often ... a war breaks out.’ (7)⁵

⁴ The indefinite markers M/F are: *takka/tokko*. The far demonstrative forms are subject: *sun*, object: *san*, and oblique: *sani*. The near demonstrative forms are subject M/F: *tun/kun*, object M/F: *tana/kana*, and oblique M/F: *tani/kani*. The ‘other’ demonstrative forms are subject M/F: *tuun/kuun*, object M/F: *taan/kaan*, and oblique M/F: *taanii(i)/kaanii(i)*.

The form chosen for ‘a war’ is *lolá-tti*. This form, characteristic of non-topic subjects, is chosen because the referent cannot be a topic because it does not refer to a unique entity that can be picked out by the interlocutors. A war has not been previously referenced in the discourse, nor does it occur in the immediate realm of the narrative, and no specific war can be inferred from the context. Thus the narrator can only assume that the audience is able to identify the referent of *lolá-tti* as a kind of thing, ‘a war’.⁶

The longer high toned final vowel on the nominal stem is characteristic of non-topic subjects, and contrasts with both the short and voiceless final vowel found on citation, direct object, and predicate nominal forms, and the long final vowel of oblique forms, as illustrated in (2a), (2b), and (2c).⁷

- (2) a. Tanaaf,... lola gara garaa,... baana.
 Therefore... war different kind... escape 3PL
 ‘Therefore, ... we escape different kinds of war ...’ (29)

⁵ The numbers to the right of the data in the examples in this paper correspond to the numbers used for the sentences from the full narrative in the Appendix.

⁶ The *-(t)ti*, an emphasis marker, is found optionally on eligible non-topic subject forms in Guji and corresponds to the markers: *-tu*, *-ti*, and *-titu* in Harar Oromo, *-tu* in Wolleggan Oromo, and *-(t)ti* in Boraana Oromo. This optional emphasis marker is found on other forms, e.g., *achi* ‘there’ to create *achi-tti* ‘right there’ in our narrative. Goshu and Meyer (2003:165) identify this as *-tu*, focus marker on subjects, objects and oblique objects in Wellegan Oromo. Stroomer (1995:113-144) characterizes this marker as an indicator of the scope of the verb that ‘...may emphasize the noun phrase to which it is attached...’ in Boraana Oromo. Clamons et al. (1993) discusses the Harar Oromo forms and claim that this emphatic marker appears only on subject forms that are non-topical. Kebede (1989) argues that this form is one of three unique copular forms. Bender (1986) puts forward arguments explicitly rejecting Kebede’s analysis of the genitive *-ti* as copular. Moreover, Kebede (1989:88) himself provides facts that support the analysis of the *-ti* marker considered here as a non-topic subject emphasis marker rather than a copula. He reports that it “...is purely focusing the subject ...to which it is suffixed,” and it is never found at the end of the sentence as is the other copular form.

⁷ This intermediate length vowel is discernable to the native speaker. We thank Sarah Dart for helping us establish the physical characteristics of the intermediate length vowel in the experimental phonetics laboratory of Macalester College. Stroomer (1995:94) identifies the phonetic quality of this vowel in Boraana as a fully voiced vowel and voiceless vowel combination. The strengthening of the final vowel in this subject form applies vacuously to the long vowel in the stem. Strengthening also applies vacuously to final long vowels. Sasse (1984b:246) points out that Konso, a closely related language, also has a lengthened vowel on the focused subject, as in *án-aa toóye* ‘I am the one who saw’.

b. Garuu kun lola dhuga'aatii moti...'
 but this war real not.be
 'But this was not a real war...' (30)

c. ... yennaa lolaa tana keessa...
 ... during war this in
 '... during this war...' (10)

Even though, the 'person' in (3) has been an important player within the discourse, first mentioned in (11) in the narrative and persisting throughout, the identity of this person in the real world is unknown to the interlocutors. The only possible assumption is that the everyone knows that this is some person from the community; therefore the subject nominal *namumá-tti* 'just someone' is the appropriate choice. All subject noun phrases in the narrative are so marked.

(3) ... nam -umá -tti achuma keessaa bayee nu sobe.
 person just SUBJ EMPH there.right from.in came us tricked
 '...just someone from within came out and tricked us.' (30)

In Guji, as in the Harar dialect, type identifiable subjects and objects may be followed by *takka/tokko*, the (F/M) indefinite marker. The subject phrase *muka tokkó-tti* 'one tree' in (4) and the object phrase *ulee dheertuu takka* 'a long stick' in (5) both have the overt indefinite form.⁸

(4) ...muka tokk-ó -tti ... qabu jigee ...
 ...tree INDEF SUBJ EMPH... had fallen
 '... one tree... had fallen...' (19)

(5) ...ka ulee dheertuu takka harkattiqabatee ...
 ...who stick long INDEF hand.by had ...
 '...[who] had a long stick in his hand...' (11)

1.2 Uniquely Identifiable. If a referent is uniquely identifiable, the speaker assumes that the addressee will be able to identify the unique entity referred to. All eligible elements of subjects that index referents that are assumed to be at least uniquely identifiable to both speaker and addressee are marked with *-ni* in addition to the higher toned subject marker that is also found on non-topical subjects.⁹

⁸ Notice that the case marking is found only on the final eligible element of a non-topical subject phrase, e.g., only on *tokkó*, not on *muka*, in (4).

⁹ The *-ni* marking has been identified across dialects as a 'subject' or 'nominative' form by many scholars; however, the difference in inflectional marking on topic and non-topic

Our Guji story begins, as in (6), with the narrator referring to himself with *ani* ‘I’. This is appropriate, as he can assume the audience can uniquely identify him at once, as he is directly before them.

- (6) Gaafa ani diqqeenna keessa jiru tokko...
 time I+ni childhood in be INDEF
 ‘Once when I was a child...’ (1)

As expected, first person reference is the most frequent throughout the narrative, with the topic subject form *ani* and object forms as well as null subject forms chosen throughout. (See the discussion on in focus referents in section 1.6.)

In (7), a new topic is introduced in the Guji narrative. The expression chosen to introduce this new topic is the subject form appropriate for a type identifiable referent, *muka tokkó-tti* ‘a tree’, but at next mention, in the following clause, the expression chosen is the topic subject form with N+ni, *muki* ‘the tree’.

- (7) ...muka tokkó -tti, muki qoree qabu jigee... gogee jira.
 tree INDEF SUBJ EMPH tree+ni thorn have fell dried exists
 ‘... there was one tree, a thorn tree, that had fallen ... and dried up.’ (19)

Another example of this form occurs in (8). The ‘person’ in this example is generic.¹⁰

subjects has also been observed in descriptions across the Oromo dialects: in Gragg (1976:193) and Goshu and Meyer (2003:165) for Wellegga, Moreno (1939:110-11) for Tulama, Andrzejewski (1978:351-352) and Stroomer (1995: 94,105-6) for Boraana, and Owens (1985:108) and Clamons et al. (1991,1993,1999) for Harar. Clamons et al. (1991, 1992, 1993, 1999) argue that this is a topic marker that is found on eligible subjects.

¹⁰ In a cross-linguistic study Lee (1996) argues that generic noun phrases reference uniquely identifiable referents, because they denote things familiar to both interlocutors, and points out that in article-less languages like Oromo, as in Korean and Japanese, generic phrases are marked as topics. Gundel (1988:231) finds in her study of topic and comment structure that an expression referring to a topic is typically definite or generic.

- (8) Obbaan kundaggala marraa gudda'aa , nami keessaa hin
 reeds this bulrushes grass high person+ni in not
 mudhdhatu.
 be seen

‘These reeds, the bulrushes are so high you can’t be seen.’ (18)

Verbs associated with topic subjects exhibit agreement marking for gender, person, and number, while verbs associated with non-topic subjects lack agreement marking.¹¹ There are no examples in the narrative that show this lack of agreement, as all of the non-topic subjects in the narrative are singular and masculine and therefore the verbs associated with them have no overt gender or number marker. In Guji Oromo, however, as in the other Oromo dialects, there is in fact no inflection for gender, person, or number on the verb when the referent of the subject is only type identifiable. This is illustrated in the directly comparable constructed conversations in (9) and (10).¹² Consider the first example pair in (9).

- (9) S1: Adaadaa-n abuyyaa dhagg-it -e?
 aunt +ni uncle see F PST?
 ‘Did auntie see uncle?’

S2: Ee, adaadaa-n abuyyaa dhagg-it -e. or Ee, dhagg-it-e.
 yes aunt +ni uncle see F PST yes see F PST
 ‘Yes, auntie saw uncle.’ ‘Yes, she saw him.’

¹¹ Hetzron (1974), Gragg (1976), Andrzejewski (1978), Owens (1985), Clamons et al. (1991, 1993, 1999), and Goshu and Meyer (2003) observe this difference in formal marking on non-topic and topic subjects. Hetzron (1974) assumes that Proto-Cushitic had subject verb agreement with all subject types and that agreement paradigms were impoverished as a result of a leveling of morphological distinctions. Sasse (1984a and 1984b) suggests that the only plausible explanation for the existence of limited agreement in Cushitic languages is that it is the result of fossilization of cleft constructions, where the subjects that do not trigger verb agreement are those which were originally heads of cleft constructions. Clamons et al. (1992) have argued that the agreement system of modern Oromo is conservative rather than innovative, and that the origin of subject verb agreement in all languages of the Afroasiatic family stems from a pattern of the Oromo type, from which some languages have generalized topic subject verb agreement to subject verb agreement.

¹² Compare these with the Harar Oromo examples (2) and (3) in Clamons et al. (1993:523), which show the same agreement facts, although the lexical items are different.

In the pair in (9) *adaadaa-n* ‘aunt’, is topical, and the verb must be marked feminine in agreement with subject. In the following question and answer pair in (10), however, the subject, *adaadaa* ‘aunt’, is non-topical, only type identifiable for the first speaker, who is actually seeking the information about ‘who’ it was who has done the seeing. The verb, therefore, is not marked for agreement.

(10) S1: Eennú -(tti) abuyyaa dhagg -e?
 who SUBJ EMPH uncle see -PST?
 ‘Who saw uncle?’

S2: Adaadaa -(tii) abuyyaa dhagg -e.
 aunt SUBJ EMPH uncle see -PST
 ‘Auntie saw uncle.’

These Guji examples of a topical subject with a uniquely identifiable referent, and a non-topical subject with a type identifiable referent display the same formal characteristics that the Harar data in Clamons et al. (1993) exhibit. If the subject is topical, it is marked with *-ni*. If topic subject verb agreement is assumed, then no special exception for non-topical subjects is necessary, as verbs are marked for agreement only with subjects that are topical.

1.3 Referential. In Guji, expressions for referents that are uniquely identifiable to the speaker and that the speaker may want to introduce as topics into the discourse may be marked with the *-ni* form and simultaneously carry the indefinite *takka / tokko* marker to signify that they are not uniquely identifiable to the addressee at this point in the discourse.¹³ The form chosen in (11) to

¹³ The classic example in English is *She wants to marry a Norwegian*. If ‘she’ll’ settle for any Norwegian, the referent is not referential, if she wants a particular one, it is. Lambrecht (1994:131ff) points out that although subjects are the most likely candidates as topics, and subject and topic are strongly correlated in discourse, grammatical subject and discourse topic cannot be equated. As seen in the previous examples, subjects that are only type identifiable do not have the *-ni* marking. But subjects with referential referents do have this marker and they also have the indefinite marker *takka/tokko*. Using these seemingly contradictory markers, the topic marker that indicates the referent is uniquely identifiable, and at the same time the indefinite marker that signifies that the referent is not, expresses perfectly the dual cognitive status of the referent. The speaker assumes that the referent is only type identifiable to the other interlocutors, but simultaneously signals that the referent is uniquely identifiable for him, that he has a particular referent in mind. In the English translation, the interpreter has chosen ‘a problem’, but ‘this problem’, with unstressed ‘this’ would also be acceptable in informal spoken English.

reference *rakkin-ni tokko* ‘a problem’ has the *-ni* topic subject marking on the noun, but also *tokko*, an indefinite marker.¹⁴

- (11) ...rakkin-ni tokko teessoo biyya teennaatti... dhalate.
 problem +*ni* INDF area country our.in ... was born
 ‘... a problem arose back in our home country.’ (4)

Another referent, specific for the narrator at the point of mention in the narrative, while only type identifiable for the audience, is identified as *nami tokko*, ‘this guy’ in (12). Again, this referential status of the referent is indicated with both the *-ni* marker and the indefinite marker.

- (12) ...gaafa tokko ... nami tokko... fulla’ee... nu yaame.
 day one man+*ni* INDEF appeared to.us called
 ‘..one day..this guy ... appeared ..and called out to us...’ (11)

In both of these examples, the referent that is introduced becomes a new topic of the discourse at this point and persists as a topic in the following discourse. This form is also selected for newly introduced topics in narratives of Boraana Oromo, as in (13) from Stroomer (1995:124:1) from Andrzejewski (1962:126).

- (13) Durii, namii tokko, horii gosa c’ufa k’aba.
 once man +*ni* INDEF cattle kind all has
 ‘Once upon a time, a man had domestic animals of every kind.’

Another form for a referential referent is found in (14) from a narrative in Harar Oromo from Clamons et al. (1993: 527).

- (14) Intala takká magaalaa dhuf-e.
 Girl INDEF.SUBJ market come-PST
 ‘A girl came to the market.’

This form, [*i*]ntala takká ‘a girl’, which is the non-topical subject form plus the indefinite marker, may be used for either a type identifiable or a referential referent. As in English, where *a girl* or *this girl* (with unstressed *this*) may be appropriately chosen in informal English to reference a girl who is uniquely identifiable to the speaker but not the addressee; in Oromo, a speaker

¹⁴ Equivalent forms are also attested in the Boraana dialect. The occurrence of these forms in the other dialects could be investigated further.

also has a choice between two forms. Thus a speaker could use *rakkinnaa tokkó*, as in (15) instead of *rakkin-ni tokko* chosen above in example (11), or *namá-tii*, as in (16), instead of *nami tokko* from example (12).¹⁵

(15) ...rakkinnaa tokkó teessoo biyya teennaatti... dhalate.
 problem INDF area country our.in was born
 ‘... a problem arose back in our home country.’ cf. (4)

(16) ... gaafa tokko... namá -tii... fulla’ee... nu yaame.
 day one man SUBJ EMPH appeared to.us called
 ‘... one day ... a guy ... appeared ... and called out to us...’ cf. (11)

Grammatical expressions that would not be appropriate alternate choices in the context of the narrative are given in (17) and (18). These forms are inappropriate because the referents are not uniquely identifiable to the audience at this point in the narrative.

(17) ??...rakkin-ni teessoo biyya teennaatti... dhalate.
 problem +*ni* area country our.in was born
 ‘... the problem arose back in our home country.’ cf. (4)

(18) ??...gaafa tokko... nami... fulla’ee... nu yaame.
 day one man+*ni* appeared to.us called
 ‘one day..the guy ... appeared ..and called out to us...’ cf. (11)

Using the topic subject form with no indefinite marker signals that the referents should be uniquely identifiable for all interlocutors, but the referents have not been previously mentioned, are not in the immediate domain, the physical context of the speech event, and are not inferable.

¹⁵ If these forms were chosen, however, it would not be clear that the ‘problem’ and the ‘person’ referred to in these instances were referential and not just type identifiable. Similarly, for English, Gundel et al. (1993) identify the unstressed *this* N as a form appropriate for referential referents in informal spoken English. The status associated with this form is unambiguous, unlike that associated with the form *a* N, which may be chosen for a type identifiable or a referential referent. Wright and Givón (1987) explore the occurrence of these forms in English discourses. In their study, the choice of the *this* N form correlates strongly with the persistence of topics, especially when the expression is the subject. In this Oromo narrative, the non-topic subjects with the referential form are also persistent in the following discourse.

1.4 Familiar. If the referent is familiar, the speaker assumes that the referent is not only uniquely identifiable, but is immediately recognizable to the addressee, who is already aware of it. Noun phrases used for referents that are at least familiar are always $-n(V)$ marked on the right edge, regardless of the other information they encode. All eligible elements of the subject phrase are marked, with the $-n(V)$ iterated across the subject phrase. The demonstrative, which is found in final position, bears the marker in all cases. This is attested in all dialects of Oromo. To signal an expectation of familiarity, the distal demonstrative, *sun* or *san*, may be used, following the noun, as in (19b).

(19) a. ...ani... mana barumsaakeessa ture.
 I+ni... house teaching in was
 ‘...I was... in school.’ (1)

b. Mani barumsaasun...
 house+ni teaching that ...
 ‘That school’ (2)

Oromo has another demonstrative with a range of symbolic meanings that may be chosen with nominals for familiar referents, *tuun/kuun* or *taan/kaan*, ‘this or that, this other, that other, this or that not here or unseen.’ After ‘he’ is introduced, the antihero, the classic ‘other’ of the narrative, is frequently referred to with this form. In (20), ‘he’ has been the topic of the narrative and an expression signaling a higher status could have been selected, but *kuun* is selected in (14) in the narrative, and again in (22), (23) and (25). In example (21), the whereabouts of the referent are not known and this is, in fact, a source of concern.

(20) Nami kuun, ‘Woriyaa dhaabadhdhu!..’ jedhaa nu gula fiige.
 man+ni that you.guys (Som) stop saying us after ran
 ‘That guy ran after us calling ‘Stop you guys!...’ (14)

(21) Nami kuun haalaan ifirratti caqasaa turee...
 person+ni this anticipating in.myself.onto listen was
 ‘I was on pins and needles because of that guy...’ (22)

The unseen thorn tree into which the protagonist jumps without looking in (22a) as well as its thorns are referenced in (22b) with expressions of this form, *muka kaan* ‘that tree’ and *qoreetiin tuun* ‘those thorns’.

(22) a. ...muki qoree qabu jigee achitti gogee jira.
 tree +*ni* thorn have fell there dried exists
 ‘... a thorn tree that had fallen in there and dried up.’ (19)

b. Ani waan ifi jala hin laallatiniif utaalee,muka kaan
 I+*ni* since myself under not look.self jump tree that

gubbaa yoo bu’u; qoreettiin tuun akkuma jirtuun nafa
 on when land thorn these as.even exist body

kiyya, addee ani qabu mara na woraante.
 my place I+*ni* had whole me pierced

‘Since I didn’t look under myself when I jumped, I landed right on
 that tree; those thorns all stuck me all over the place.’ (20)

1.5 Activated. If the referent is activated, the speaker assumes that the referent is currently in the awareness of the other participants. A noun phrase for activated referents always has the $-n(V)$ final marker on the near demonstrative and the subject case $-ni$ is iterated on all other eligible elements of the subject phrase as well. These forms are consistent with the data attested in the other Oromo dialects. In (23a), the narrator jumps into ‘reeds’ and at this first mention, the form is *obbaa*, the oblique form for a type identifiable referent. As the subject of the following clause, and a topic that is continued, the narrator can assume that the reeds are now in the immediate awareness of his audience. Thus in (23b), the reeds are indexed with the proximal demonstrative as [*o*]bbaan kun ‘these reeds’.

(23) a. ...utaalee obbaa keessaa bu’e.
 jump reeds into dropped
 ‘... jumped and dropped into the reeds.’ (17)

b. Obbaan kun... nami keessaahin mudhdhatu.
 reeds this person+*ni* in not be.seen
 ‘These reeds ... you can’t be seen.’ (18)

Similarly, in the examples in (24), once the ‘war’ is introduced in (24a), it is indexed in (24b) and (24c) with the near demonstrative forms in both the subject and oblique cases.

(24) a. Gizee hedduu ammoo... lolá -tti ka'a.
 time (Amh) many but war SUBJ EMPH get up
 'Often ... a war breaks out.' (7)

b. Loli kun... ka'e.
 war+ni this... got.up
 'This war broke out ...' (8)

c. ...yennaa lolaa tana keessa irra caalaa bidhdhaan ...
 while war this in above all suspicion
 '...during this war, very often there was a different kind of
 suspicion...' (10)

1.6 In Focus. If the referent is in focus, the speaker assumes that the participants' attention is centered on the referent. At the beginning of his story, our narrator introduces himself and sets the scene in his childhood, choosing the topic subject form of the pronoun, *ani* 'I', appropriate for the referent in the center of the audience's attention, himself.¹⁶ Having established himself as the central figure of the discourse, the narrator then continues to index himself with a null subject in the following clause. He assumes that he is the referent that is fixed in the center of the minds of his audience, and that therefore, an overt index is no longer necessary.

(25) Gaafa ani diqqeenna keessa jiru tokko Ø... mana barumsaa
 time I+ni childhood in be INDEF I house teaching
 keessa ture.
 in was

'Once when I was a child, I was... in school.' (1)

Similarly, in the portion from the narrative in example (26), the narrator has been established as central at this point in of the discourse. Thus, all subsequent self-reference in the immediately following segment of the narrative is null.

¹⁶ This form, with *-n(V)*, signals that the audience is expected to be able to identify him as the referent. The prominence of the speaker in a discourse is well recognized. Langacker (1985:113) remarks that "[a]mong the elements of the ground [the speech event, its setting and its participants], the speaker can be regarded as central, and reference to the ground can often be interpreted as reference to the speaker."

(26) Tanaaf, Ø akka dheedhdhee... bayee hin dandeenne marroo beekeef,
therefore I like fleeing escape not be.able.to since know.for

Ø adumaa ijoollee tana faana fiigiisatti jiruu, isaan biraa utaaalee
I even.as children this after running was them from jumped

dhokatiisaaf gara laga bisaanii,... Ø... gadi caafamee, Ø utaaalee
hide.for.to toward gully water I down turn I jump

Ø obbaa keessaa bu'e.
I reeds into dropped

‘Therefore since I knew I couldn’t flee and escape... as long as I was running after the children, I jumped away from them to hide, ... I turned down..., jumped and dropped into the reeds.’ (17)

Again, in (27), the subject is null. ‘We’ has been the persistent topic for several previous clauses in (9) in the narrative, and the narrator can assume that ‘we’ is in the central awareness of the audience and no overt index is necessary.

(27) Eega worratti Ø galleen duuba...
after home.at we got.in after
‘After we got home...’ (10)

Goshu and Meyer (2003:174) report that object pronouns in Wellegan Oromo may also be *-n* marked, and that “[the] difference between pronouns with and without the suffixed *-(V)n* is that the former are more specific than the latter...those pronouns marked by the morpheme *-Vn* are more prominent in the discourse than pronouns without it.” The example in (28) illustrates this.

(28) Caalaa-n isin(-iin) rukut-e.
Caalaa +niyou PL OBJ (+Vn) beat PST
‘Caalaa beat you.’ cf. (Goshu and Meyer 2003:174 (28))¹⁷

¹⁷ Goshu and Meyer (2003:165) provide slightly different glossing, as discussed in the text. I use the glosses that are consistent with those in this paper to avoid confusion.

This sentence means that Caalaa beat two or more of you, with or without the final marker, but if the object pronoun is marked with the $-Vn$ index, the speaker signals that the referents are specific, known to speaker and hearers.¹⁸

In Guji, oblique objects for referents that are in focus, that is, that are in the central awareness of the interlocutors, are also indexed on expressions that are marked finally with $-n$. This is shown in (29).

- (29) a. isaa -n bira Ø jira.
 him T with I exist
 'I am with him.'
- b. Isaan-iin bira Ø jira.
 them T with I exist
 'I am with them.'

Furthermore, the instrumental object form for an in focus referent may be an anaphoric $-n$ that appears as a clitic on the right edge of the adposition, as in (30).

- (30) isa biraa-n Ø jira.
 Him with it I exist
 'I am with him with it.'

In Harar Oromo, the direct object for an in focus referent may be indexed with $-n$ cliticized on the right edge of the verb, as in (31), from a narrative.

- (31) Intal -ti-in magaalaa'rraa deem-ti. Tokko arka-n.
 girl SUBJ F+ni market.from goes F one M sees OBJ
 'The girl leaves the market. A man sees her.'

2. Indexical Marking of Information

Chafe (1996:37) points out that while “[g]iveness, newness, and accessibility are properties of referents ... they apply to ideas of events and states as well.” In

¹⁸ In the Wellegan and Harar varieties, a first person agreement marker is found to the right of topical elements. The form and privilege of occurrence of this marker varies slightly across dialects, but it always has a final n . Goshu and Meyer (2003:191) point out that this marker always precedes the most prominent information, thus it follows that it always attaches to the right edge of more topical information.

- b. Isí-tu dhufa.
 she-EMPH come
 ‘SHE comes/will come.’ cf. (Goshu and Meyer 2003:165 (2))

Goshu and Meyer (2003:166ff) assume that the *hín* marker in sentences of this type is a verb focus marker and that it is syntactically obligatory in intransitive imperfective sentences in the main clause, unless the subject is focused, but pragmatically motivated in clauses of all other types. If this marker is analyzed as a topic boundary marker, it follows straightforwardly that the following verb contains new information, since the referents of the subject and object are necessarily indexed as accessible for the interlocutors. Thus the *hín* marker would only occur in the main clause of intransitive imperfective sentences when the subject was marked as topical. Furthermore, Goshu and Meyer observe that “... [w]hen the verb is focused, it is very common to have a specific object which is marked with the singulative marker *-icca*.” (2003:168) This observation provides further evidence that the marker is, in fact, used by a speaker to index the preceding, at least familiar, referents of a predication, and that hence the new information can only be expected to be carried by the verb.²¹

The *hín* marker is also found following those propositions that lead up to a final conclusion as in (33), where it occurs on the right edge of the expressions that detail the events explaining the final comment: *hokkola ture* ‘I was limping’.

- (33) Ani ammo taphadhduu qoreen miila na woraantee,
 I+ni but playing thorn foot me pierced
 Ø rukkisee hin dande’u, Ø fiigee hin dande’u, Ø hín hokkola ture.
 I running not could I hurrying not could I TB limping was
 ‘But I had... been stuck with a thorn and I couldn’t run, I couldn’t
 hurry, I was limping.’ (16)

²¹ The Goshu and Meyer syntactic analysis requires both an ad hoc stipulation cancelling the ‘obligatory’ *hín* in intransitive imperfective sentences with non-topical subjects, and an additional ad hoc stipulation cancelling subject verb agreement in sentences with non-topical subjects. If this marker is analyzed as a topic boundary marker, it simply occurs after topical information, and if agreement in Oromo is recognized as topic subject verb agreement, it simply does not apply when the subject is non-topical. The *hín* marker is also conventionally analyzed as morphologically annealed to the verb, although there is no evidence for this analysis. Oromo is a right edge marking language, with inflections and phonopragmatic markers occurring in word final and phrase final positions.

Hin is located structurally on the right edge of background information, information now held in the consciousness of the interlocutors, that provides context for the proposition introduced in the following verb phrase. This formal analysis conforms to the general formal $-n(V)$ phonopragmemic structure that has been identified across the full range of expressions for accessible referents in Oromo.

2.2 Spatiotemporal Indexes. Gundel (1988:216) notes that topic markers not only mark a range of nominal constructions across languages, but ‘[t]hey also mark time and space expressions...’ Chafe (1994:128) claims that orientation of a narrative is critical, especially with respect to orientation of time and space. Just as expected, our narrator begins by orienting his story in time and place. In (34) he establishes both initial time and place, with *Gaafa...tokko...* ‘once...’ and *...fagaadhee... mana barumsaa keessa...* ‘...far away... in school.’

- (34) Gaafa... tokko... fagaadhee... mana barumsaa keessa .
 time INDEF far away house teaching in
 ‘Once ..., I was far way ... in school.’ (1)

As the narrative progresses, as time and events unfold, as the narrator and the audience co-create a conceptual domain, temporal and spatial orientation are maintained. Just as expressions for referents that are familiar to interlocutors are marked with $-n(V)$ in discourse to locate them on the common map, so too are temporal and spatial expressions marked with this same pragrameme in order to maintain a common orientation. After the main action of the story has been recounted, the narrator uses the spatiotemporal *achii-n duuba* ‘after that’ in (35) to reorient his audience.

- (35) Achii-n duuba... yoo bayu, name kuun bakka san hin dhaabatu.
 there+n behind when came.out person+ni that place that not stood.up
 ‘After that, when I came...out..., that guy was gone.’ (25)

The $-n$ mark is used again at the close of the second episode of the narrative in (36) to locate the point in time from which the story, now held in common by narrator and audience, shifts to the conclusion in (28)-(30) in the narrative.

- (36) Achii-n duuba fuudhanii gara hori’ii na deebisanii,
 ...there +n behind they.took to cattle me return
 ‘Afterwards they took and returned me to the cows, ...’ (28)

2.3 Indexical Connectives. Logical connectives marked with $-n(V)$ are also found on the right edge of accessible information. The disjunctive *yokiin* ‘or’, follows a first disjunct, the truth value of which determines the value of a following disjunct. This is illustrated in (37). The narrator identifies the language of the villain as ‘Mariyaana’ in the first disjunct, but if it is not ‘Mariyaana’, it is ‘Digoodi’ of the next disjunct, if neither ‘Mariyaana’ and nor ‘Digoodi’, then it is ‘...some [other] language that sounds like Somali’.

- (37) Afaan Mariyaanaatiin, yokiin Digoodi’iitiin, yokiin afaan gara
 mouth Mariyaana.of or Digoodi.of or mouth towards
 Somaale’eetti riiqatuutti, ...
 Somali.of rub.against

‘He called to us in the language of Mariyaana, or Digoodi, or a
 language sounded just like Somali, ...’ (12)

The truth value of a disjunct following *yokiin*, can be determined, based on the truth value of the disjunct that precede this *n* final connective.

Goshu and Meyer (2003:189) point out that the position of the causal subordinator *waan* ‘since, because’ is related to the status of information in the clause, with emphasis given to the information following *waan*. In (38), the subordinator is not at the beginning of the sentence, but follows *ani*, the topic subject form of the first person pronoun, thus iterating a right edged $-n(V)$ index. The subordinator follows the subject that refers to the narrator, who is in the central awareness of the audience, indexing the preceding information on the shared discourse map.

- (38) Ani waan ifi jala hin laallatiniif utaalee, muka kaan gubbaa
 I+ni since myself under not look.self jump tree this on
 yoo bu’u; qoreettiin tuun akkuma jirtuun nafa kiyya, addee ani
 when land thorn these as.even exist body my place I+ni
 qabu mara na woraante.
 Had whole me pierced

‘Since I didn’t look under myself when I jumped, I landed right on
 that tree; those thorns all stuck me all over the place.’ (20)

In (39), *waan* follows the subject noun phrase that identifies the activated villain of the narrative, through which right edged $-n(V)$ markers iterate on the subject noun and on the demonstrative. It occurs once more, following the propositions that provide the background for the following *sodaanneef* ‘fear of’.

(39) Nuutiille name kun waan (?) qabee nu ijjeessaa jira,
we also man+ni this because (something) had us kill is

yokiin qalaa jira jennee waan sodaanneef haga dandeenne
or slaughter is said because fear.of as.far could

fiinnee jalaa bayiisaaf wodhdhaannee turre.
ran under escape try were

‘So because we were afraid (something ?) this guy would kill us or slaughter us, we tried to escape to as far away as we could run.’ (15)

The *waan* subordinator follows the background information leading to the final proposition in (27) in the narrative also. As with the topic boundary marker *hin*, the spatiotemporal marker *achii-n duuba* ‘after that’, the disjunctive *yokiin*, the subordinator *waan* ‘because’ is located to the right of the information that is accessible to the interlocutors at this point in the discourse, and that contributes to a common understanding of what follows.

The topic boundary marker, the spatiotemporal marker, the disjunctive and the subordinator are all patterned with $-n(V)$ and follow information that is assumed to be accessible to the interlocutors at this point in the discourse, and information that is further elaborated for the audience and addressee invariably follows. These markers reflect the same phonopragmemic patterning found on expressions for referents that are accessible. They repeat the phonic pattern and consistently mark the right edge of topical expressions.

3. Conclusion

This study identifies a critical pragmatic structural generalization across grammatical categories. In all of the dialects of Oromo, the final $-n(V)$ marker is found on all eligible overt expressions used to signify referents that are at least familiar for the interlocutors, no matter what other semantic or grammatical information is encoded. These markers are portmanteaux. The conventional morphological, syntactic, and semantic information varies, but they always reliably index accessible referents in the discourse. The $-n(V)$ marker is

sometimes iterated on the right edges of topical forms, as for example, on all eligible elements of a subject noun phrase for a uniquely identifiable referent, on subject phrases with demonstratives, and on object pronouns for referents that are in focus.

This *-n(V)* index is phonopragmemic. It is a phonic marker that consistently signals the accessibility of preceding information in a discourse regardless of the grammatical category or role of the form bearing it in a sentence. Every expression with this right edge sign is an indexical symbol, identifying referents, spatiotemporal orientation, or logical relationships as accessible within the conceptual domain that is shared by the interlocutors, while at the same time carrying the conventionalized morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic meaning unique to each. This is a significant generalization about the formal structure of Oromo discourse. If this generality is ignored, important aspects of Oromo discourse structure are obscured.

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Appendix

1. Gaafa ani diqqeenna keessa jiru tokko worra keennarraa
 time I+ni childhood in be INDEF family our.from

fagaadhee mana barumsaa keessa ture.
 far.away house teaching in was

‘Once when I was a child, I was far way from our family in school.’

2. Mani barumsaa sun miilaan adoo deemanii gara saatii afurii
 house+ni teaching that foot while going about hours four

fudhata.
 take

‘That school is about four hours away by foot.’

3. Tanaaf worri keenna diqqeennuma keessa biyya teessoo
 so family+ni our childhood in country residence

teennaatii fuudhee mana barumsaatitti na lakkisee; ani...jia
 our.in took house teaching.of .from me left I+ni moon

lamaa fi sadi keessatti dhufanii achitti na ilaalan.
 two and three between come there me see

‘So while I was still little, our family took me from our homeland and left me at school; I...they came to see me there every two or three months.’

4. Maarre gaafasi adoo ani manuma barumsaa san keessa
thus time and.as.if I+ni right.house teaching that in

jiruu, rakkinni tokko teessoo biyya teennaatti yokiin ardaa
be problem+ni INDEF area country our.in or ranch

keennaatti dhalate.
our.at was.born

‘And then it happened this one time that while I was at that school,
a problem arose back in our home country, or back at the ranch.’

5. Akuma beekamu, ollaa keenna san, gara teessoo teennaatti,
as known village our that in area our.in

gosa adda addaatti jira.
groups face face.to be

‘As is known, in that village of ours, in our area, there are diverse
ethnicgroups.’

6. Fakkeennaaf gochi Oromo’oo-Arsi’ii, Booranaa fi Guji’ii-
for example groups+ni Oromo.of Arsi.of Boraana.of and Guji.of

gochi dhibiin ammoo, gosa Sidaamoo jedhamtuu, Daraasa’aa
groups+ni other+ni but group Sidamo called Daraasa.of

fi Maryaanaa, Digoodi’ii, ta yokiin dhaloonni isaanii gadi
and Maryaana.of Digoodi.of that or descendants their down

deemee Somale’een wolta ejju ta akkasii san.
came Somali together joined that like that

‘For example, groups of Oromo- of Arsi, of Boraana, of Guji- but also
other groups, called Sidamo, and of Daraasa and of Maryaana, of
Digoodi, whose descendants come down from Somali groups all mixed up
together with each other.’

7. Gizee hedduu ammoo wodhakkaa Oromo'ootii fi yokiin
time (Amh) many but between Oromo and or

Guji'iitii fi wodhakkaa Somale'ee yokiin Digoodi'ii, Maryaana
Guji and between Somali or Digoodi Maryaana

worra jedhanu kana wodhakkaa lolá -tti ka'a.
people called this between fight SUBJ EMPH get up

'Often between Oromo and or Guji and Somali or those people
who are called Digoodi or Maryaana, a war breaks out.'

8. Loli kun gaafa ani mana barumsaa jiru san adoo ani
war+ni this time I+ni house teaching was that while I+ni

quba hin qabaatin; adoo ani manuma barumsaa jiruu, ardaa
finger not have while I+ni house.right at.teaching was ranch

keennatti yokiin teessoo worri keenna jiraatutti ka'e.
our.at or place family+ni our being.at got up

'This war broke out while I was at school, when I didn't even have a clue;
while I was still at the school, it broke out in the living area of my family.'

9. Adoo nuu -ti hin dhageinuu, isaan baqatanii gara badda'aa
Before we SUBJ EMPH not heard.even they fled to forest.area

gosa dhibiirraa fagaatanii qubatanii jiran, jechaa oduun nu geettee,
other from far.away settled were say news+ni us got

mana barumsaa kaanii nulle eegee duubarra miilumaan
house teaching this.from we.also tail behind by.foot

baaddiyaa keessa worratti galle.
country through family.to left

'Before we even had heard anything about it, we got the news that they
had fled to the highland area far away from the others and settled; finally
we also left the school and went behind on foot through the countryside to
our family.'

10. Eega worratti galleen duuba, yennaa lolaa tana keessa irra caalaa
 after home.at we.get.in after during war this in above all

bidhdhaan... yokiin sodaan, mama adda addatti biyya keessa jira.
 suspicion or fear doubt face face.to country in be

‘After we got home, during this war, very often there was a different kind of suspicion, fear, or doubt in the country.’

11. Nuuti gaafa tokko ani ijoollee obboleeyyan tiyyaa woliin loon
 we time INDEF I+ni children siblings my together cattle

keessa kama tisiisatti jirru, nami tokko ka woyaa adii
 in while pasturing were man+ni INDEF who cloth white

uuffatee jiru, ka ulee dheertuu takka harkatti qabatee jiru,
 dressed.up was who stick long INDEF hand.by had was

adoo nuuti itti hin seynuu [kama] loon keessa jirruu, nuun
 while we at not expect as cattle in were to.us

gamaan fulla’ee, ‘Woriyaa dhaabadhdhu, woriyaa!’
 across appeared hey you guys (Som) stop you guys (Som)

jedhee nu yaame.
 say uscalled

‘One time, the children, me and my brothers and sisters, were pasturing the cattle, this guy who was dressed in white clothes and had a long stick in his hand, when we weren’t even expecting it, appeared across from us while we were among the cattle, and called out to us ‘Hey, you guys! Stop you guys!’

12. Afaan Mariyaanaatiin, yokiin Digoodi'iitiin, yokiin afaan gara
 mouth Mariyaana.of or Digoodi.of or mouth towards
- Somaale'eetti riiqatuutti, 'Woriyaa!' jechuun, 'Abboo, namana,
 Somali .of rub against you guys (Som) mean mister you.guys
- yokiin gurbaa - intalaa,' jechuu.
 or boys girls mean

'He called to us in the language of Mariyaana, or Digoodi, or a language that sounded just like Somali, what 'Woriyaa' means is 'Hey mister, guys, boys and girls!'

13. Tanaaf, 'Woriya!' jecha kaan dhageennee jennaan, akka malee
 therefore you guys word this heard when like except
- sodaanee, rifanee, nama Mariyaanaatti yokiin Digoodi'ii
 terrified stunned person Mariyaana.of or Digoodi.of
- tokkó-tti dhufee nu ijjeecha'aaf nu yaame seenaa
 INDEF.SUBJ- EMPH came us for.to.kill us called assuming
- rifanee,lafaa kaanee rukkinne.
 stunned ground got.up ran

'Therefore, having heard this word , 'Woriya!', we were totally terrified, stunned, assuming a Mariyaana or Digoodi guy came in order to kill us; we were stunned and got up off the ground and ran.'

14. Nami kuun, 'Woriyaa dhaabadhdhu! Woriyaa dhaabadhdhu!
 man+ni that you guys (Som) stop you guys stop
- Woriyaa dhabaadhdhu!' jedhaa nu gula fiige.
 you guys (Som) stop saying us after ran

'That guy ran after us calling 'Stop you guys! Stop you guys! Stop you guys!'

15. Nuutiille nami kun waan (?) qabee nu ijjeessaa jira
 we.also man+ni this because (something) had us kill is
 yokiin qalaa jira jennee waan sodaanneef haga dandeenne
 or slaughter is said because fear.of as.far could
 finnee jalaa bayiisaaf wodhdhaannee turre.
 ran under escape try were

‘So because we were afraid something(?) this guy would kill us or slaughter us, we tried to escape to as far away as we could run.’

16. Ani ammoo gara bulii sadii-afuriitiin duratti, adumaa ijoollee
 I+ni but before night three-four first while children
 obboleeyyan tiyyaatiin woliin taphadhdhuu qoreen miila na
 siblings my together playing thorn foot me
 woraantee,rukkisee hin dandeu, fiigee hin dande’u, hin hokkola
 pierced running not could hurrying not could TB limping
 ture.
 was

‘But I had, just three or four nights before, while playing together with my brothers and sisters, been stuck with a thorn and I couldn’t run, I couldn’t hurry, I was limping.’

17. Tanaaf, akka dheedhdhee nama kana jalaa bayee hin dandeenne
 therefore like fleeing person this from escape not be.able.to
 marroo beekeef, adumaa ijoollee tana faana fiigiisatti jiruu, isaan
 since know.for even.as childre this after running was them
 biraa utaalee dhokatiisaaf gara laga bisaanii, ka bisaan
 from jumped hide.for.to toward gully water which water

galaana... bisaan Sokoraa jedhanu, ka yaa'u tokkó -tti
 river water Sokoraa call which flow INDEF SUBJ EMPH

jiraa, gara laga kaanii gadi caafamee, utaalee obbaa keessaa
 exists toward gully that down turn jump reeds into

bu'e.
 dropped

'Therefore since I knew I couldn't flee and escape from this guy as long as I was running after the children, I jumped away from them to hide, toward a creek, that flows with river water, that waters called the Sokoraa River, I turned down towards that gully, jumped and dropped into the reeds.'

18. Obbaan kun daggala marraa gudda'aa, nami keessaa hin
 reeds this bulrushes grass high person+ni in not

mudhdhatu.
 be.seen

'These reeds, the bulrushes are so high you can't be seen.'

19. Tanaaf ani achi keessa utaalee yoo ani bu'u, ammoo muka
 therefore I+ni there in jump if I+ni land but tree

tokkó -tti, muki qoree qabu jigee achitti gogee jira.
 INDEF SUBJ EMPH tree+ni thorn had fallen there dried exists

'But when I jumped and landed in there, there was one tree, a thorn tree, that had fallen in there and dried up.'

20. Ani waan ifi jala hin lallaatiniif utaalee, mukakaan gubbaa
 I+ni since myself under not look.self jump tree this on

yoo bu'u; qoreettiin tuun akkuma jirtuun nafa kiyya, addee ani
 when land thorn these as.even exists body my place I+ni

qabu mara na woraante.
had whole me pierced

‘Since I didn’t look under myself when I jumped, I landed right on that tree; those thorns all stuck me all over the place.’

21. Ani ammoo nama nyaapha [ifirratti eegatiisatti] jiru marroo
I+ni but person enemy myself.onto to.wait.upon exist because

tee’ef, qoree taan laaleffadhdhee yokiin miidhame jedhee
to.be thorn this felt.the.pain or I.am.hurt say

ifirraa buqqifatiisa hin dandeennee achumatti cadhdhi jedhee
myself.out.from pull not can right.there silenced said

riphe.
snuck

‘Because I was afraid of the enemy sneaking up on me, I could not feel the pain or admit to myself that I was hurt or pull the thorns out; I hid in silence.’

22. Nami kuun haalaan ifirratti caqasaa turee, akka inni
person+ni this anticipating in.myself.onto listen was like he+ni

karaa san dhufee natta gadi goru yokiin ijoollee obboleeyyan
road that came me.to down veered or children siblings

tiyyaa taan ari’u.
my this chase

‘I was on pins and needles because of that guy, did he veer off down that way towards me, or did he chase after my brothers and sisters?’

23. Ammoo nami kuun na faana hin dhunnee, nu hin ariinee
but person+ni that me after not came us not chase

ifirrumatti eegaa dhaqee gara saati lamaatiin duubatti, ‘Malaaf
upon.myself wait go for hour two.after said maybe

nami kunuu nu faana hin jiruu, yokiin numa sobiisaaf
 person+ni that.very us after not exist or us.just trick

'Woriyaa!'

Woriyaa

'But that guy wasn't coming after me, he didn't chase us, about two hours after waiting for him to come and get me, I said Maybe that guy hadn't been after us, or was just tricking us by saying 'Woriya!'

24. Jedheen yaaamejedheen eega yadeen duubatti, laanumaan chacho'ee
 said us called said after think said really.slowly to.stir

harka mumunyuufadheen, qoree taan nafarraa bubuqqifadhdhe.
 hand maneuver.reflex thorn this me.from pull.out

'I said after I thought of that, I stirred and maneuvered my hand very slowly and pulled thorn after thorn out of myself.'

25. Achiin duuba laanaan obbaa kaan keessaa yoo bayu, nami
 there+n behind slowly reed this in when came.out person+ni

kuun bakka san hin dhaabatu.
 that place that not stood.up

'After that, when I came slowly out of those reeds, that guy was gone.'

26. Laanumaan ammo hokkolaa gara worra keennaa galee waan te'e
 very.slowly or limping toward famil your go since be

kaan, waan nutta galee kaan worra keennatti odeessee jennaan,
 this since us.to get.in this family ours.to story tell

worri keenna ammoo nutta kollee.
 family our but us.to laugh

'Limping slowly, going towards home, whatever happened, whatever happened to us when I told the story to our family they laughed at us.'

27. (?)nama maan, nyaapha maan -ti biyya tana jiraa
 person what SUBJ enemy what SUBJ EMPH country this exist
- nyaaphi dhufee addee tanatti isin qabu, yokiin, isin qalu
 enemy came place this.at you catch or you slaughter
- yokiin isin ijjeesuu hin dandeu; tun namuma biyyaatitti isin
 or you kill not can this person.just country.of SUBJ you
- rifachissiisaaf ‘Woriyaa!’ jedhee isin sobe, nuun jedhanii, naan
 to.make.terrified woriyaa saying you.to lied to .us they.said to.me
- jedhanii, akkanumatti natta murganmale womaayyuu waan
 they.said like.exactly us.at mocked except absolutely.nothing since
- guddootti hin laakkonne isaan.
 thing.big.of not measure they

‘Who could you be talking about? What enemy could be in this country that could come to this place and catch you, and slaughter you? No one is able to kill you. Someone from around here pretended; ‘Woriyaa?’ is what they said to fool you; they just mocked us; they didn’t think it was any big deal.

28. Achiin duuba fuudhanii gara hori’ii na deebisanii, ijoolleen
 there+n behind they.took to cattle me return children
- obboleeyyan tiyyaalleen horii kaan keessaa baqattee bakka bakkatti
 siblings my.even cattle this from flee place place.at
- dhokattee turtee, ijoollee taan mara guuranii gara horiii deebisan.
 hide were children this all gather to cattle return

‘Afterwards they took and returned me to the cows. My brothers and sisters had also fled from the cattle and were hidden in different places, they gathered all those kids and returned them to the cows.’

29. Tanaaf, diqqeenna keessa yennaa hedduu akkuma kana lola
 therefore childhood in when much like.just this war
- gara garaa, bineensa gara garaa baqataatuma, makaraa adda
 different.kind wild.animals different.kind fleeing.just hardship front

addaa waan hedduu jalaa baana.
front since many under escape

‘Therefore, during childhood, just like this many times we escape, fleeing from different kinds of war and different kinds of wild animals, and many different kinds of hardship.’

30. Garuu kun loladhuga’aatii moti, yokiin nyaapha dhuga’aatti
but this war real not or enemy real

dhufee nu ari’e jechaa adoo hin te’in nam-umá-tti
came us chase mean and.as not be person-just-SUBJ EMPH

ach-uma keessaa bayee nu sobe.
there-right from came us tricked

‘But this was not a for real war, or a for real enemy that came and chased us, it wasn’t like that, it was just someone from within came out and tricked us.’