Chapter 1 Segmental Phonology

Consonants

labial	dental (alveolar)	alveo-palatal	palatal	velar	guttural
b	d	j (dʒ)		g	
	t	c (tʃ)		(k)	
	d'				
p'	t'	c' (tʃ')		k'	'
ɓ	s	sh (ʃ)		x (k)	h
	z				
m	n		ny (ɲ)		
	l, r				
w			y		

d, t, t', n = dental; d' = alveolar, may be slightly retroflexed; s, z, l, r = alveolar

Vowels

i u

e o

a

Tone Two tones, high and low (see chapter 2)

1.1 Vowels

Vowels can be long or short, short vowels tending to be more centralized and laxer than long ones.

borúu	tomorrow	*boorúu*	dirty (of water)
dubbíi	word, matter	*dúubá*	behind
k'otamtu	you dig (dependent form)	*k'otámtúu*	dug (adj) f.
bállíi	feather	*baallíi*	leaf (nominative)
jálá	below	*jaalá*	friend
dib	paint	*d'iib*	push
k'ale	he slaughtered	*xálée*	liver

The only sequence of non-identical vowels within a morpheme I have recorded occurs in *duiddá* 'back' (and this derives historically from *dugda* 1.5.3.6), though sequences of non-identical vowels arise by the morphophonological processes discussed in 1.5.[1]

Final vowels. Before pause both long and short final vowels are closed by a glottal stop (except in the genitive), which tends to even out the length difference between them,

though there is a slight difference between them (though far less than word medially).

(1) *innii náma'*
he man — He is a man.

sun mágaɬa·' (*a·* = half long vowel)
that market — That is a market.

If not before pause, in connected speech, I get the impression that there is not a great difference in length between final long and short vowels. Moreover, a short vowel with a high tone is longer than a short vowel with a low one. One can thus have a three-way length contrast at the phonetic level, *V*, *V·*, *VV*.

(2) *eerúu k'otam-t-u hin-k'ábu*
field dig f dep neg have
He doesn't have a field to be cultivated.

eerúu k'otam-t-ú· k'aba
field dig f dep have — He has a field to be cultivated.

eerúu k'otam-tuú k'aba
field dig f have
He has a cultivated field (passive adjective form, 8.3.2)

If suffixes are added to final vowels, one finds that some suffixes tend to shorten long vowels to the length of short ones, while others lengthen short ones to the length of long ones. A fairly complete list of the shortening and lengthening suffixes is the following.[2]

	Shortening	Lengthening
(3)	*-ɬɬée* emphasis (15.3)	*'-:miti/mihi* negative (4.6.1)
	'-n I (9.5)	case suffixes, *-ni* instrumental
	'-tti locative (6.4.2.2)	*-ɓi* dative (on both noun and verb)
		-ɓi and (6.5, 6.6, 11.1)
		emphatic subject (6.4.2.1)

Shortening

(4) *namá-n arke* (*namá*)
man I saw — I saw a man.

magaɬá-n arke (*magaɬáa*)
market I saw — I saw a market.

ɬoɬá-ɬɬée arke (*ɬuɬá*)
battle even saw — He saw even a battle.

huɬá-ɬɬée arke (*huɬáa*)
door even saw — He saw even a door.

Lengthening

(5) *innií* *namáa-mihi* (*namá*)
he man neg
He is not a man.

sun magaɬáa-mihi (*magaɬáa*)
that market neg
That is not a market.

ɬoɬaa-ʃ nagayá ʃeed'a (*ɬoɬá*)
battle and peace likes
He likes war and peace.

huɬaa-ʃ maná ʃeed'a (*huɬáa*)
door and house likes
He likes the door and the house.

In one case I recorded no difference in vowel length, but a difference in tenseness between the underlying long and short vowel in a shortening context.

(6) *suní-n arke* (*suni*) (i = laxer high front vowel)
that I saw
I saw that.

horí́-n arke (*horíi*)
cattle I saw
I saw the cattle.

In general for final vowel length, instrumental data, preferably taken from textual examples, would help clarify the issues here, because such contrasts as exist are not great.

About the only place where the length difference in final vowels is fairly well maintained is in rather slow, careful speech, where the 'correct' length can be identified. The underlying length of the final vowel is also apparent in the different forms which certain affixes take depending on whether they are attached to long or short-final vowel forms (cf. 6.2. on nominative, for example).

In fact, short and long vowels are to a large extent in complementary distribution word finally. Only one nominal ends in short /*o*/, *takko* or *tokko* 'one f'; short /*e*/ and /*u*/ occur only on verbs and long /*ii*/, /*ee*/, /*oo*/, and /*uu*/ occur only in nominals. Furthermore, short /*i*/ is nearly always dropped in connected speech when it occurs word finally (as I will discuss presently), so that the only place where a contrast really exists is with *-a* , which occurs long and short on nominals and long in verbs with only two suffixes (3.2.3) (7.6). The contrastive function of final vowel length is thus considerably limited.

Short /*i*/ at the end of a word is almost always dropped.

(7) *-ani* verb plural --→ *d'uʃ-an* They came.
iʃi reflexive pronoun *íʃ arke* He saw himself.

The only time the short vowel appears is when a consenant-initial suffix is added, or if it receives a high tone for some reason.

(8) *d'uʃ-t-anée-ʃ*
come 2 pl dat — You pl came for someone.
d'uʃtáné-i
Q — Did you pl come? (final high tone for yes-no Q)

Unlike other Oromo dialects (eg. Booran, Waata) final short /*a*/ is generally maintained. In the text there are some examples of final *-a* deleted before a numeral modifier.

(9) *mán takko, bal'íná - sá d'und'úmá kud'án* (< *maná*)
house one wideness its lengths ten
Some houses, they are ten arms' lengths (four meters) wide.

In direct questioning, *a-* deleted-forms were not generally accepted, being associated with other dialects, like Arussi.

Initial /*i*/ is also frequently elided in close juncture with a preceding vowel, except for the forms *iʃi*, 'reflexive pronoun', and *írrá* 'modal marker' (4.3, eg. (27)).

(10) *na írrá* --→ *ná rrá*
me on — on me
riʃens-íi isá — *riʃens-íi sá*
hair nom his — his hair

Note also elision of initial *hin-* in the negative (3.2.3, eg. (27)).[3]

(11) *namá hin-arraabsín-i* --→ *namá n-arraabsín*
person neg insult ipr — Don't insult a person.
horíi hin-hátu — *horíi n-hátu*
cattle neg steal — He doesn't steal cattle.

This elision seems to be more restricted to 'grammatical forms' -- possessive pronouns, postpositions, the negative prefix *hin-*. I have not recorded the initial /*i*/ of *ibiddá* 'fire' as elided, for example, though perhaps a study of texts would reveal elision here as well.

In the rest of the book I will write all underlying long vowels as long when they occur word finally. When they occur before suffixes I write them as long or short according to which type of suffix it is (shortening or lengthening). When citing forms in isolation I write them with short final /*i*/ ; in the examples I drop them (i.e., in examples I write /*i*/ the way it is normally given. Initial /*i*/ is either written

or not according to the way it is pronounced.

1.2 Consonants

All consonants except /h, '/ occur geminate.

gubah burn	*gubbáa* on top
ɬagá river	*moggá* side
haad'á mother	*hodd'a* he sews
c'ap'e it broke	*ɬápp'ée* heart
hak'e he wiped	*hakk'is* vomit
harɾá lake	*hárrée* donkey
baaɬá leaf	*bálɬáa* wide
deema he goes	*deemmáa* honey
xoɸɸa he falls	*eessúmá* mother's brother
hojjáa ciffee	*addá* forehead
ónnée heart	*móyyée* mortar (= /*mójjée*/fric.)

I have no examples of geminate /w/ within a morpheme, though it occurs across morpheme boundaries.

hiw-wáadu he does not bake

The following spelling conventions are used.

pp' = p'p', *tt' = t't'*, *cc' = c'c'*, *kk' = k'k'*,
dd' = d'd', *ʃʃh = ʃhʃh*, *nny = nyny*

/'/ and /h/ may be voiced intervocalically.

/*taa^{c}a*/ he sits /*baɦa*/ he leaves

/p'/ and /c/ do not occur word initially.

The phonemes /ʃh/ and /ny/ are of rare occurrence, though they occur in words which clearly are not loans.[4]

bishaani water	*ʃhani* five
nyaat eat	*d'eeréenyá* tallness

Non-geminate /c/ is extremely rare.

nyaacá crocodile

Geminate /cc/ is fairly common, though in nearly all cases it arises from morphophonological alternations.

bit + S --→ bicci-siis make someone buy (/t/ + causative)

bit + at + uu --→ bit-ácc-úu buying for self (7.7.1.1)

gurraa-ccá black m (no specific synchronic rule can be invoked here, though the /cc/is clearly a formative which alternates with the feminine -*ttii* (.5.7.1.5).

/z/ occurs only in loan words.

míizá table *heezab* prescribe (<Ar ?)

/k/ with a very few exceptions occurs only geminate, or as the second C of a consonant cluster.

muxá tree *mukkéení* trees, forest *ark* see *tokko* one f

The exceptions are (1) various derived forms based on the verb *beex* 'know', *beek-am* 'be known', *beekomínná* 'knowledge', and a few other odd words, *komá* '1,000', (2) It occurs in loan words, *kúrsíi* 'chair', *kitáabá* 'book' (both < Ar.). The minimal pair, *kóttée* 'hoof', *xóttée* 'claw' was given, though I think this must be treated with caution.

In general Harar O. has undergone the shift, (V)kV --> (V)xV in virtually all contexts, with the exceptions noted.[5]

1.3 Consonant clusters

The consonant clusters within a morpheme (in non-loan words) nearly all involve at least a sonorant, /l, n/or a nasal.[6] All nasal clusters, where the nasal is the first consonant, are homoorganic.

bímbée mosquito , *d'amʃá* soup , *gandiddúu* shadow,
injírrée lice, *leenyc'á* lion *k'óoŋk'óo* voice, food

l/r + C

(12)	m	b	ʃ	d	t	j	k	g	k'
r	*moormá*	*hirbá*		*ʃúrdá*	*hamártíi*	*xórjóo*	*ark*	*erg*	*k'ork'odd*
	neck	heel		thick	ring	sack	see	send	economize
l	*ilmáani*	*jilbá*	*ulʃáatáa*				*c'itta* *mílkíi*		*bál'áa*
	son	knee	heavy m				lizard		blind

/l, r/ occur after labials

dubrá girl, *áblée* knife, *xoʃl* laugh

Clusters in loan words I have recorded are the following. *báxtíi* rotten' (<Am), *xúdráa* 'fruit', *kúrsíi* 'chair', *miskíiná* 'poor', (<Ar) *kítlíi* 'kettle' (also *kíllíi*)

1.4 Syllable structure

Roots (cf. 16.1-16.3 for discussion of what constitutes a root) have the following basic shape (after Gragg, 1976, I exclude loans from this section).

(13) (C)VC, (C)VCVCV, where V may be long or short and the non-initial consonants non-geminate, geminate, or in a cluster (1.3).

Chapter 2 Tone

Harar Oromo, like Booran, has a tone system which consists of three main parts: a classification of roots and affixes in terms of basic tone; a specification of the contexts where these basic tones may/must occur; and rules altering the tone on certain morphemes in certain contexts. The tone system I describe here is one with both a lexical and syntactic basis (Palmer, 1970: 580[1]) and sketched in its basic outline by Andrzejewski (1957, 1966). I should note that I have found no lexical minimal pairs distinguished by tone alone in Harar Oromo.

2.1 Basic tone

All nominals (= nouns and non-phrasal noun modifiers) have a basic tone. This basic tone can be identified as the basic tone on the penultimate vowel of the word[2]. Operationally the basic tone can be identified as the tone which a nominal has as object of an imperative verb (basic tone vowel is underlined in following examples).

(1) *joollée d'ík'-i*
children wash ipr — Wash the children!

hárrée gálc-i
donkey return ipr — Return the donkey home!

The significance of this context is that the noun can have no other tone pattern here, unlike other contexts where, for example, it can be all low toned.

(2) *joollee sún d'ik'-e*
those wash pst — He washed those children.

harree táná galc-a
this return imp — He will return this donkey.

In (2) both nouns are low toned, and whereas a rule can be given predicting when the basic tone can be turned into low tones, none can be given to tell which tone the low toned nouns of (2) should take in the context of (1) -- no rule can be given to show that *joollée* should be LH and *hárrée* HH.

Examples of the tone classes are as follows.

2.1.1 Nominals

2.1.1.1 Nouns

LH short final vowel *namá* man, person, *addá* forehead
long final vowel *horíi* wealth, *abdíi* hope, *garáa* stomach

muc'áa child *eerúu* field, farm

HH *hárrée* donkey *málláa* cheek *híd'íi* lip *húcc'úu* clothes

LLH short final vowel *intalá* girl , *dummeesá* cloud *ibiddá* fire

long final vowel *hangaasúu* lightening , *sagalée* sound *makiináa* car , *magaláa* market, city

LHH short final *eessúmá* mother's brother, *angáʃáá* eldest sibling *areédá* chin

long final *xeesúmmáa* guest, *okkótée* pan, *k'uttúmíi* fish

All words longer than three syllables, like *obbol-éettíi* 'sister' and *xeesumm-óotá* 'guests', can be considered bimorphemic, and the overall tone pattern on the word linked to the constituent morphemes (cf. 2.2).

2.1.1.2 Adjectives

LH *guutúu* full, *gaaríi* nice, good, *boorúu* dirty (of water)

HH *gúddáa* big m *gúddóo* big f *díimáa* red m *díimóo* red pl

LLH *duresá* rich *hiyesá* poor m

LHH *k'ulk'úllúu* clear, *hiyéettíi* poor f, *gabbáabáa* short m

2.1.1.3 Pronouns (6.1, 6.2, absolutive, nominative)

L *na* me, *si* you, *nu* we, us

LL *ani* I, *ati* you, *iʃi* reflexive, *wali* reciprocal

LH *isá* him, *síi* her, *innîi* he

LLL *isini* you pl

LHH *isáanî* they, them

2.1.1.4 Demonstratives (5.5.2)

LL *xana/tana* this, these, *sana* that, *suni* that

xuni/tuni this, these (nom)

HH *xáanî/táanî* the other

2.1.1.5 Possessive pronouns (6.4.1.1)

L (L) (L) *xe/te* your, *xiyya/tiyya* my, *xennya/tennya* our

xeesani/teesani your pl

2.1.1.6 Numerals. Numerals have two classifications (cf. 2.7.2, eg. (52) for contexts of each). They are either (1) all low tone, or (2) as follows,

LL *tokko/takka* one f/m , HH *shánî* five

LH *lamá* two, *sedî'* three *jahá* six, *torba* seven

LHH *saddéetî* eight, *sagálî* nine, *xud'ánî* ten

2.1.1.7 Others

heddúu many, *c'úɬá* all, *k'óɬáa* only, alone, *xámî/támî* which ?

Postpositions ending in final short vowels tend to have HH patterns. *bîrá* near, *îrrá* on, than, *dúrá* in front, *dúubá* behind

2.1.2 Verb. The verb is inherently low-toned, though if certain tense/mode suffixes are added to it it may acquire a fixed high tone. These cases are described more completely in the chapters they are introduced in (cf. especially chapters 3, 4), though I can give some examples here. The jussive (4.5) always has a high tone on the first syllable.

(3a) *ha nyáatu* Let him eat.

The negative imperative (3.2.3) has a high tone on the penultimate syllable, all others low.

(3b) *hinnyaatîni* Don't eat!

2.1.3 Affixes. Every affix has a basic tone. Again, a few examples will suffice here, as the basic tones are mentioned where the morphemes are introduced.

The nominative suffix (6.2), which is added to nouns, adjectives, and various other modifiers, has a fixed tone.

(4a) *namicc-îi gúddáa-n sun him-béexu*
man nom gib nom that neg know
That old man doesn't know.

The emphasis morpheme *-ɬéé* , which is suffixed phrase finally is invariably HH (it induces a high tone on the vowel it is suffixed to).

(4b) *namiccá-ɬéé himbéexu*
man eph neg know He doesn't know even that man.

The instrumental and dative case markers, when suffixed to nouns (6.5) have a basic low tone.

(4c) *áblee-n nî mur-e*
knife inst fc cut He cut with the knife.

It should be pointed out that in a series of affixes, it is the one to the right which determines the tone. Thus, *áblée* 'knife' is HH, but when the instrumental suffix is added (4c) the tone on the final vowel changes to low. Similarly, if the instrumental is added to the emphasis morpheme *-ɬéé* , the final syllable of *-ɬéé* will be low.

(4d) *ablé-llee-n ná mur-e*
knife even inst fc cut He cut even with the knife.

2.2 Predictability of basic tone

I said above that the basic tone on a nominal is unpredictable, though this statement is only partly correct. In fact, in a great many instances the tone on a word is predictable to a greater or lesser extent from its segmental shape and/or grammatical class.

1. First of all, only the penultimate or final syllable of a root can have a high tone, and all nominals except a few pronouns, demonstratives, and numerals (2.1.1) have at least one high tone. Moreover, if the penultimate is high-toned, the final must also be high. It is for this reason that only the penultimate syllable (the syllable before the final consonant) needs to have its tone marked in underlying form -- if it is high, then the following syllable must be high; if it is low, then the final syllable must be high.

2. The basic tone is associated with syllabic and segmental shape as follows.

a. *CVCá* (final *-a* = short) all have a LH tone pattern (though cf. 2.5 for qualifications, and also 2.1.1.7 for exceptions) *namá* 'person', *maná* 'house'.

b. Morphemes ending in final *-aa* overwhelmingly have a low tone on the penultimate syllable. In a sample of 26 *-aa* final nominals, 19 have penultimate low. *gurbáa* 'boy', *magaláa* 'market', but *málláa* 'cheek'.

Morphemes ending in a long, non-low vowel overwhelmingly have a high penultimate tone. *hárrée* 'donkey', *hanc'ábbíi* 'ice, sleet', Again, however, the rule is not absolute. *sagalée* 'sound', *horíi* 'wealth'. One nearly predictable class of exceptions is that of invariable adjectives (5.7.1.1) which end in a long vowel. These nearly always have a low basic tone. *adíi* 'white', *guutúu* 'full' (but *k'ulk'úllúu* 'clear', *ɓágóo* 'far').

c. Finally, almost all suffixes which end in a long vowel induce a high tone on the syllable preceding them:

'-áa	adj m	*gúdd-áa*	big m
'-túu	adj f	*díim-túu*	red f

'-óo	adj f	*gúdd-óo*	big f
'-ɬɬée	emphasis	*namicá-ɬɬé*	even the man
'-úu	verbal noun	*déem-úu*	going

There are four exceptions here.

-áa	verbal noun	*deem-áa*	going
-áa	participial	*boy-áa*	crying
-úu	concurrent	*deem-úu*	while going

(also, nominative, 6.2 eg. (15))

Derivational and number suffixes on nouns have their own tone, and they count as part of the word as far as the 'penultimate or final vowel high' rule goes (2.2, 1, above). Thus *xeesúmmáa* is LHH, but if the plural suffix *-óotá* is added it becomes *xeesumm-óotá* LLHH -- the basic high tone on */u/* must shift to low because it is antepenultimate.[3]

It will be clear from the preceding that although the possible basic tone patterns for nominals and affixes are quite limited, for the most part one cannot treat them as entirely predictable.

In the following chapters, when a form is cited in isolation, it will always be given in its basic tone.

2.3 Context

There are three tone patterns a nominal can take:[4] its basic tone, all low tones, and the tone in predicate nominals (4.6). Each of these tone patterns is restricted to certain contexts.

2.3.1 Basic tone (fixed tone)

If a noun in absolutive case form, which is the unmarked case form (6.1), should occur in the following contexts it must have its basic tone. This will be called the basic or fixed (or modally unmarked, 2.9) tone context:[5]

(5) dependent clauses (except verbal nouns), negative verb, imperative, jussive, verb focus (*ní*), emphatic subject, emphatic past verb, *-n* first person, genitive, equative (eg. 11) below), nominative[6]

If a noun occurs in the absolutive case in a clause with any of these morphemes, it must have its basic tone. In the following examples, *halkánï* and *obbolléttïi* must have their basic tone.