

# THE ANALYSIS OF MORPHOLOGICAL PROPERTIES OF ARSI-BALE WORD CLASSES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARSI-BALE NOUN MORPHOLOGY

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## Abstract

*This study was conducted to analyze morphological properties of Arsi-Bale word classes with special reference to Arsi-Bale noun morphology. The qualitative research design was used to collect and analyze the data from the dialect under study. The data were collected from written sources, like textbooks, short stories books, newsletters, brochures, written reports, sayings, proverbs, riddles, and from spoken sources during focussed group discussion from the mouth of native speakers of the dialect, and thorough introspection by the researcher himself since he is a native speaker of the Arsi-Bale dialect. The study depicts that the Arsi-Bale noun word class shows different morphological properties which a little bit varies from other Oromo dialects. In this regard, Arsi-Bale noun word class was checked against the three criteria. i.e. the morphological criteria, syntactic criteria, and semantic criteria. The results found indicate that Arsi-Bale noun inflects for number, gender, definiteness, case. Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo words morphologically inflect for number by attaching morphemes that other Oromo dialects attach; it has also a unique morpheme that marks grammatical functions. Similarly, Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo noun word class inflects for definiteness and gender by using the same morpheme such as -icha/-ittii which are attached to noun to mark two different types of grammatical functions; the morpheme -icha attaches to the noun to mark both definiteness and masculine gender. For example, in the noun *harricha*/the donkey, the morpheme -icha marks that the donkey we are talking about is the known or the definite one; in the same noun the same morpheme indicates masculine gender of the donkey. Similarly, the morpheme -ittii attaches to the noun in Arsi-Bale dialect to mark definiteness and feminine gender. For instance, in the noun *namittii*/the woman, the morpheme -ittii marks the woman we talk about is the known or the definite one; in the same noun the same morpheme indicates feminine gender. Thirdly, Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo noun inflects for case by attaching different morphemes. Similarly, the noun in the dialect under study fulfills the other criteria for classification like syntactic criteria; The nouns take the position of the subject of the sentence and object of the sentence. Finally, Arsi-Bale noun fulfills semantic criteria. For instance, a noun is a name given to something, person or place.*

*Keywords: Arsi-Bale, noun, morphology, morphemes*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Oromo People

The speakers of Oromo Language/Afan Oromo are called Oromo People. According to Gragg (1982), Oromo people live on a huge area of land sharing boundaries with Sudan in the west, Addis Ababa in the center, Harar in the east, northern Kenya in the south, and Wallo in the north. Different researchers state the number of speakers of Oromo differently. For example, Ton (1995) in his reports reveals that the population of Oromo language speakers ranges from 15 to 25 million, and this number accounts almost 50% of the total people living in Ethiopia. On his part, Malbaa (1988) reported that the number of speakers of Oromo language was 23 million from the total 46 million Ethiopian population of that time. According to CSA (2007), from the total population of 53, 132, 276, the Oromo language speakers are 17,706,456; this indicates the number of Oromo language speakers increase to (32%). However, a report from Hamid (1995) depicts that the speakers of Oromo language in Ethiopia are nearly 30 million. As Woliyie (2004) has indicated the Oromo people are the largest single ethno-nation in Eastern Africa; consisting of at least 40% of the Ethiopian population. Similarly, Asafa (2001:2) indicates that Oromo is estimated between 40 and 60 percent of the Ethiopian population of 60 million.

### 1.2 The Geographical Location of the Study

Ethiopia comprises of nine national regional states among which Oromia is the biggest region, covering 375,000 sq miles (600,000 sq km), and consisting of about 50% of the Ethiopian population (De Salviac 1901:7). Geographically, the region extends from 3°24'20"–10°23'26"N latitude and 34°07'37"- 42°58'51"E longitude sharing borders with all regions of Ethiopia, except Tigray, and across the internationally recognized boundaries adjacent to its territory (Fayisa 1997). Fayisa (1997) further states that the region shares borders with the Republic of Sudan (with 66 km borderline) from the west and with Republic Kenya (with 21km) in the south. It also shares the boundary with Somalia in the south-east part.

### 1.3 The Oromo Language

According to Woliyie (2004), Oromo language (Afan Oromo) belongs to the Eastern Cushitic, a family of Afro-Asiatic phylum. As Woliyie (2004) indicated, Oromo language is one of the most widely spoken languages in Africa surpassed only by Arabic and Hawusa. Similarly, as Bender and Mulugeta (1976); Gragg (1982), and Yimam (1986) point out, Oromo language is one of the language of lowland East Cushitic, which is the category of Afro-Asiatic Phylum. As Kebede (2005) mentions, the speakers of Oromo language live in the eastern part of Africa such as Ethiopia, especially Oromia regional state, and in countries like Kenya and Somalia.

Furthermore, Abebe (2002:1) argues that the Oromo language is one of the two most dominantly spoken languages in Ethiopia. He further clarifies that the Oromo language along with the Amharic language is the most important language of Ethiopia because it is used not only as a national language spoken by the Oromo people but also used as a lingua franca by several million speakers of other languages. As Alemyehu (2007) indicated, currently Afan Oromo has different official functions in the Oromiya regional state and also in Oromiya zone of the Amhara region. She further explains that "... The Oromo language is being used as the official language of the regional government, as a medium of instructions in primary schools, teacher training institutions, and colleges, and it is also a field of study in higher educational institutions such as Addis Ababa University; similarly, the Oromo language also serves as language of the courts, religions, and mass media."

#### **1.4 The Oromo Dialects**

As it was mentioned earlier, the Oromo language is the most dominantly spoken language in the country, both in terms of the number of speakers and size of the geographical area. Different scholars classify Oromo dialects differently; for example, Gragg (1976), Dame (2010), and Kebede (2005) argue that the Oromo language contains five dialects such as Raayyaa (spoken in the North), Borana (spoken in the South), Tulama (spoken in the Central region), Harar (spoken in the Eastern), and Macha (which is Spoken in the Western Part of the country).

However, Negesse (2015) recently classified dialects of Oromo into six clusters. These are Western dialect (Wollega, Illuababor, and Jimma), Central dialect (Tulama, or Shewa), Northern dialects (Rayya and Wollo), Southern dialects (Borana and Guji), Southeastern dialect (Arsi -Bale), and Eastern dialect (Harar). Even though the current study is not about the classification of dialects of Oromo, it deals with documentation and morphological analysis of one of the dialects of Oromo i.e. Southeastern (Arsi-Bale) dialect of Oromo. Thus, it is important to see the number of speakers of the dialect and the domains in which the dialect under study is spoken.

##### **1.4.1 The Southeastern (Arsi-Bale) Dialect**

The Southeastern (Arsi-Bale) dialect is spoken in Arsi and Bale zones of Oromia regional state. According to Negash (2015) Arsi Oromo is one of the speakers of Oromo language and they mainly live in Arsi and Bale zones of Oromia regional state, which is found at the southeastern part of Ethiopia. He adds that one group of Arsi-Bale Oromo dialect speakers is the Arsi Oromo people. As the census made in 2007 by the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (CSA) indicates, the population of Arsi-Bale dialect speakers is 2,637,657. These people live over the area of 19,825.22 care meter squares. Out of 2,637,657 people living in the area, 1,323,424 were men and 1,314,233 were women. As Woliyie (2004), cited in Negash (2015),

indicates “The two main branches of Arsi Oromo are *Mando* and *Siko*. *Mando* refers to the Arsis living in the Arsi and northern Bale, while *Siko* refers to those Arsi Oromo people who mainly live in Bale zone of Oromia regional state”.

### 1.5 Statement of the Problem

Even though the Oromo language is spoken by a large number of people over large areas of land with various dialects, sufficient studies have not been conducted on morphological properties of Arsi-Bale word classes with special reference to Arsi-Bale noun morphology. Since the Arsi-Bale dialect is spoken by a large number population, it is necessary to study the morphology of the language word class. So far, only a few works have analysed regarding the morphology of Oromo language. For example, Abeshu (2010) has conducted the research titled “An Automatic Morphological Synthesizer for Afan Oromo”. He conducted a research on morphological synthesizer of noun and verb of Macha dialect of Oromo, which is different in variety and setting.

Another research was conducted by Olani (2008). His study focuses on inflectional morphology of Wollega dialect. Thus, his work is different from the current research both in terms of emphasis and the setting in which the research has been conducted. More specifically, his emphasis was on inflectional morphology, which is only one aspect of morphology. He did not include derivational morphology, which is very large and complex in nature. Secondly, he conducted his work on Wollega Oromo (Western) dialect, but the current work intends to describe the Southeastern (Arsi-Bale) dialect. Thus, the current study is quite different from his work. Goshu D. and M. Ronny (2003) also conducted research on focus phenomena in Wollega Oromo (Mecha) variety and published an article. They described the distribution and function of focus morphemes and constructions in the Wollega dialect of Oromo

### 1.6 The Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to analyze the morphological properties of Arsi-Bale word classes with special reference to Arsi-Bale noun morphology. The specific objectives of the study are the following:

- ❖ To study morphological properties and grammatical functions of Arsi-Bale noun.
- ❖ To discover special characteristics of Arsi-Bale noun morphology.

### 1.7 The Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the analysis of morphological properties of Arsi-Bale word classes with special reference to Arsi-Bale noun morphology, and it is limited to only morphological aspect of noun word class.

### 1.8 Significance of the Study

The result of this study may play a significant role in the development of the Oromo language in general and Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo in particular. For example, it may help to document the noun morphology of the Arsi-Bale dialect. In addition, the study is important in that it shows noun morphological properties of Arsi-Bale dialect, and how it is used to indicate different grammatical functions like number, definiteness, gender, and case. It may also contribute for the researchers who would like to conduct further study on related topics.

## **1.9 Limitations**

This research would have been exhaustive and meaningful if all noun morphologies of all dialects of Oromo are studied. Due to time and financial constraints during data collection, data enumeration, and data administration, an extensive investigation was not made.

## **1.10 Research Methodology**

### **1.10.1 Research design, data collection and analysis.**

In this research, the qualitative research design was used because the qualitative research design involves the use of qualitative data which are collected using interviews, documents, and observation, in order to understand and explain a social phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Moreover, this type of research design is helpful to describe certain linguistic properties that the dialect of language owns. Thus, I employed descriptive research methodology because it can describe the states of affairs as it exists in terms of kind and quality. I began collecting the available data from written materials which are written by native speakers of the dialect under study and reviewed thoroughly. After that, I have collected and analysed the data through the following three main ways:

Firstly, the corpus data were collected; this includes the collection of data from written texts written by native speakers of the Southeastern (Arsi-Bale) dialect. In addition to the above major books, the data were also collected from the written sources like short stories books, newsletters, brochures, written reports, sayings, proverbs, and riddles in order to fill the gap found in collecting the data from the above two published books.

Secondly, introspection way of data generation was employed because as a researcher, I am a native speaker of the dialect under study i.e. Arsi-Bale dialect. Therefore, I have generated number of data in order to triangulate the data collected from the written sources and the data collected from the mouth of native speakers of Arsi-Bale dialect when different ceremonies and occasions were taking place.

The third data collection method that has been used is focussed group discussion. The focussed group discussion was done by making discussion with native speakers of the dialect. The data were recorded when

discussions were held among the speakers of Arsi-Bale dialect. The data were recorded during the occasions of different ceremonies such as Marriage Ceremony; the speech made by elderly persons during marriage ceremony was recorded using mobile and transcribed for analysis. Similarly, there is a celebration of birth ceremonies among Arsi-Bale dialect speakers of Oromo when the woman gives birth to a child. On this occasion, the friends of the husband and wife, the relatives of both husband and wife visit the house of the woman who gives birth. They make ceremonies like blessing the women, the husband and the newly born baby. The speech made during this occasion was recorded and used for the comprehensive discussion of this paper. On the other hand, when somebody dies, there are different ceremonies that take place at the house of the dead person. The researcher has recorded data from this ceremony when a mother of my neighbor died and incorporated into his report during the discussion.

Another occasion from which data was gathered is during '*jaarsummaa*' (the traditional way of solving conflict among Oromo). During this occasion, elderly men, who are famous and know the culture, are selected. These men have oral skills that enable them to speak in a socially appropriate and acceptable way. They made a speech by taking a turn. The researcher has collected the data from spoken words of the elder men called '*jaarsota*' in the process of '*jaarsummaa*'.

In the same way, Oromo people do their jobs in cooperation called '*jigii*' (where a group of farmers work together as a unity during farming, harvesting, threshing). In addition, meeting is also held in their environment and a group of people sit together and have the discussion on different issues in different social association: '*uqqubii*' (traditional way of saving money) and '*afoosha*' (traditional funeral cooperation), in the market where buying and selling take place, etc. Thus, the data from the native speakers who used the words for communication were collected and critically analyzed in relation to the morphological property of Arsi-Bale noun. Finally, I made discussion with linguists (Oromo language specialists) who can confirm the data collected through introspection, discussion and from written sources.

## 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Criteria for Noun Morphology

In Arsi-Bale dialect, words can be classified into various classes based on a set of criterion. In support of this, Radford (2004) explains that traditionally words can be classified into different categories based on different criterion. He further discusses that different categories have different morphological and syntactic properties. Thus, one can use the morphological and syntactic properties of a word to determine what category (word class) the given word belongs to. Poole (1999) also adds that there are criteria that we use to

classify words under different word classes. These are: morphological criteria, syntactic criteria and semantics criteria.

According to Fries (1952), the primary criteria for word classification is grammatical criteria. For him the syntactic and semantic criteria are secondary. As Wierzbicka (2000) indicates the semantic criteria related with the names given to ‘persons’ and ‘things’ are nouns, while, the words ‘do’ and ‘happen’ are verbs. In another words Wierzbicka suggests, in any language, the parts of speech that have been established on grammatical grounds that contain translations of these words can be said to be nouns and verbs respectively. According to Barkesa (2012), there are three criteria i.e. morphological criteria (*ulaagaa xiinjechaa*), syntactic criteria (*ulaagaa xiinhimaa*) and semantic criteria (*ulaagaa xiinhiikaa*). Therefore, let us use the above criteria against the data collected from Arsi-Bale dialect in order to document and do its morphological analysis. Regarding syntactic criteria, Aitcheson (1999) underlines that in a sentence words have their own order that can be judged by the speaker of the language. This means there are words which can be usually used as the subject of the sentences. Similarly, there are word classes which can be used as the complement of the sentence. For example, in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, the noun and pronoun can be used as the subject of the sentence.

a) jamaal mana barumsaa deeme /Jemal went to school.

*Jemal* (nom.) + school go-perf.

b) inni laaqana nyaate /he ate lunch.

*inni* (nom.) lunch – eat - perf.

c) caaltuun kitaaba dubbisti /Chaltu reads a book.

*Chaltu* (Nom) + book read-3sgf imperf.

d) isiin kitaaba dubbisti/She reads a book.

She (nom) book+ read-3sgf imperf.

In the above four sentences, the underlined words such as *jamaal* and *caaltuu* are nouns and the underlined words (*inni* and *isiin*) are pronouns. Consequently, both the nouns and pronouns in Oromo play the role of the subject of the sentence because in Arsi- Bale dialect, in a given sentence, these two word classes play the role of the subject of the sentence.

Semantics refers to the study of word meaning (Matthews, 1974). Thus, semantic criteria have another significant role in assigning words to different word classes. According to O’Grady (1996), semantics is the science that studies the meaning of words. He further explains that words have cultural meaning, referential meaning, and contextual meaning. Sociological and psychological issues also have important role in semantics.

### 2.1.1 Arsi-Bale Noun Morphology

Traditionally noun is defined as a name given to a person or thing, or place. Different writers define nouns in different ways. Nouns are words used to refer to people, objects, creatures, places, qualities, phenomena, and abstract ideas as if they were all things (George Yule 2013). According to Poole (1999), nouns are words which denote something in the world around us, something inanimate, like 'teachers' and 'blackbirds', an attribute like 'strength', and so on. He also describes nouns are generally accompanied by determiners, something which helps to identify what is being referred to e.g. the book, a chair, an egg, etc. possessive adjectives (my book), and numerals (three books).

From the two definitions of a noun mentioned above, the former definition refers to the semantic definition, while the latter one refers to the syntactic criteria that nouns must fulfill. However, in Arsi-Bale this definition is not enough and other criteria must be applied to judge whether the given word is assigned to a noun. In Arsi- Bale dialect also, *maqaa* (noun) is defined as a name Oromo gives a person, a place, and a thing.

Fries (1952) explains that it is difficult to provide enough grounds for classification of word classes on semantic cases because there are many cases in which their applicability or inapplicability is not clear. He further elaborates that the grammatical criteria, on the other hand, is not open to this objection.

He further elaborates that the grammatical properties of a word that must be relevant to its word class include the word's distribution. There are, to be sure, cases that are less clear cut than these cases, for example, involving partial similarities of distribution, functional range, or categorization, which may require dividing a part-of-speech class into subclasses. But, by and large, the grammatical properties in question constitute a serviceable basis for identification of word classes. While it is assumed here that the assignment of words to parts-of-speech classes is based on properties that are grammatical rather than semantic, and often language-particular rather than universal, it is also assumed that the name that is chosen for a particular word class in a language may appropriately reflect universal semantic considerations.

Thus, although the familiar notional definitions of noun mentioned above do not always provide an adequate basis for deciding whether or not a given word is a noun, once the words of a language have been assigned to parts-of-speech classes on grammatical grounds and it is found that one of these classes includes the preponderance of words that are the names of persons, places, and things, then it is perfectly reasonable to call this class the class of nouns, and to compare the class so named with the similarly named classes of other languages (Lyons 1968:317–19). Lyons further elaborates that the words 'boys' and 'girls' are assigned to the same part-of-speech (word class), and the word 'like' to a different class, on language-

particular grammatical grounds, but it is on universal semantic grounds that the class to which boys and girls are assigned is called the class of nouns, while that to which 'like' is assigned is called the class of verbs.

### 2.1.1.1 Gender:

Oromo has a two-gender system. Most nouns are not marked by characteristic gender affixes; the only limited group of nouns differs by using different suffixes for masculine and feminine form (Grifeno Mewis 2001). Catherine explains that the noun in Oromo inflects for gender: *obboleessa* (brother) with the suffix *-ssa*, *obboleettii* (sister) with suffix *-tii*, *ogeessa* (expert) with suffix *-ssa*, (masculine), *ogeettii* (expert) with suffix *-tii* indicate feminine and masculine gender. In some Oromo dialects, geographical terms such as names of towns, countries, rivers, etc are feminine, in other dialects such nouns are masculine nouns (Grifeno- Mewis 2001). She exemplified as follow: *nama*(man) => *namicha* (-*icha*), (masculine) *nama* (man) => *namittii* (-*ittii*) (feminine), *mucaa* (boy) => *mucicha* (-*icha*) (masculine), *muca*(boy) => *mucattii* (-*ittii*) (feminine).

### 2.1.1.2 Number

Oromo Language has different suffixes to form the plural nouns. The use of suffixes differs from dialect to dialect. According to Grifeno- Mewis (2001) the majority of noun plural forms were formed by using the suffixes *-(o)ota* followed by *-lee*, *-wwan*, *-een*, *-olii/-olee*, and *-aan*. She further argues that other suffixes are found seldom.

The finding of Grifeno-Mewis (2001) above seems to make rules which govern the type of morphemes which are suffixed to a noun and the type of root which suffixes a given kind of affix. Thus, according to Grifeno-Mewis, before the plural suffix *-een* consonants may be germinated, as *mukkeen* (trees) from *muka* (tree), *laggeen* (rivers) from *laga* (river), *manneen* (houses) from *mana* (house). Abeshu (2010) stated that noun inflects for four main grammatical functions like number, gender, definiteness, and case. The first grammatical function noun inflects for is number (to show singular and plural number). A singular is marked by zero morphemes whereas a plural noun is marked morphologically by suffixing the morpheme like *-oota*, *-oolii*, *-een*, *-lee*, *-wwan*, *-yyii*, *-eetii*, *-ii*, *-oo* to the base as free alternates. He stated that it is difficult to predict which suffix is for which noun, but there is a possibility of using all these suffixes as plural markers.

### 2.1.1.3. Definiteness

Grifeno- Mewis (2001) discussed that the Oromo language doesn't possess a special word class of articles in order to mark definiteness. However, it uses demonstrative pronouns to express definiteness. She further describes the following phrases below:

a) *namni kun* this/the man                      *kitaabni kun*/this/the book (s)

- b) *nama kana* this/the man                      *kitaaba kana* this/the book(o)  
 c) *afaan sun* that/the language                *kitaabni sun* that/the book(s)  
 d) *guyyaa sana* that/the language        *kitaaba sana* that/the book(o).

Grifenow-Mewis adds that to express indefiniteness emphatically the Oromo speaker may use the numeral tokko/one e.g. *namni tokko/one man/a man*. In some Oromo dialects the suffix *-icha* (masc.), *-ittii* (fem.) which usually has a simulative function is used where other languages would use a definite article.

<u>subject</u>	<u>gloss</u>
❖ <i>otoobisichi</i>	the (certain) bus
❖ <i>afaanichi</i>	the (certain) language
❖ <i>jaarsichi</i>	the (certain) old man
❖ <i>jaartittiin</i>	the (certain) old lady
❖ <i>re?eettiin</i>	the (certain) goat
<u>object</u>	<u>gloss</u>
❖ <i>otoobisicha</i>	the (certain) bus
❖ <i>afaanicha</i>	the (certain) language
❖ <i>jaarsicha</i>	the (certain) old man
❖ <i>jaartittii</i>	the (certain) old lady
❖ <i>re?eettii</i>	the (certain) old lady

According to Abeshu (2010), the Oromo language has no indefinite articles which correspond to English ‘the’, but it indicates definiteness by suffixing the morpheme *-icha/-ittii* to the noun to mark masculine and feminine gender respectively. Vowel endings of nouns are dropped before adding these suffixes: *karaa* (road), *karicha* (the road), *nama* (man), *namicha* (the man), *haroo* (lake), *harittii* (the lake).

#### 2.1.1.4 Case

According to Katamba (1993), a case can be used in two different senses in literature. These are the grammatical case and oblique case. The grammatical case, where a case is used to mark the function of a noun (or rather, more specifically, a noun phrase) as a subject or object depending on the position in relation to the verb in the sentence.

##### 2.1.1.4.1 Nominative Case

The nominative case is used for nouns that are the subjects of clauses (Greifenow 2001). She further explains most nouns ending in short vowels with the preceding single consonant drop the final vowels and add *-ni* to form the nominative. Following certain consonants, assimilation changes either the n or that consonant. E.g. *nama* (man), changed into *namni* (man/nom.). If a final short vowel is preceded by two consonants or a geminated consonant, *-i* is suffixed. For instance, *ibsa* (statement) changes to *ibsi*

(statement/ nom.). If a noun ends in a long vowel, then the morpheme *-n* is suffixed to the noun to indicate nominative case. For instance, *maqaa* (name) changes into *maqaan* (name) (nom.). When a noun ends in *n*, the nominative is identical to the base form. For example, *afaan* (mouth/language) is used as the nominative case without attaching any morpheme.

#### 2.1.1.4.2 Instrumental Case

Katamba (1993) explains the instrumental case, as its name implies, mark noun phrase denoting some entity which is used to perform the action indicated by the verb. In English, the preposition ‘with’ is commonly used for this purpose as in ‘He chopped the tree down *with* an axe.’ i.e. he used an axe to chop the tree down. He further explains that the use of preposition to mark the instrument is common. But also common is the use of inflection. He argues that in some languages, a noun is inflected with an instrumental affix to indicate this role. Even more general is the spatial use of oblique cases to express the location or direction (these are often extended metaphorically to concepts of time, beneficiary etc.).

According to Olani (2008), using instruments or a means of doing something is termed as instrumental case. Olani argues that in Wollega dialect of Oromo, the instrumental case is marked by *-n*. He exemplifies *miila* (leg) is changed into *miilaan* (by leg), and *eeboo* (spear) is changed into *eeboon* (by spear).

#### 2.1.1.4.3 Locative Case

As Grifenow- Mewis (2001) indicates, the locative is used for nouns that represent general locations of events or states, roughly for more specific locations. The Oromo language uses prepositions or postpositions; postpositions may also take the locative suffix; and the locative also seems to overlap somewhat with the instrumental, sometimes having a temporal function; the locative is formed with the suffix *-tti*, for example, *harka* (hand) *harkatti* (in hand); *guyyaa* (day), *guyyaatti* (per day); *jala*, or *jalatti* (under).

#### 2.1.1.4.4 Ablative case

According to Grifenow- Mewis (2001), the ablative is used to represent the source of an event; it corresponds closely to English from; the ablative, applied to postpositions and locative adverbs as well as proper nouns, is formed in the following ways: When a word ends in a short vowel, this vowel is lengthened as in *biyya* (country) is changed in to *biyyaa* (from country); similarly, as in the case of , *keessa* (inside/in) *keessaa* (from inside); when the word ends in a long vowel, *-dhaa* is added (as for one alternative for the dative). For instance, *finfinneedhaa* (from finfinnee), *gabaa* (market), *gabaadhaa* (from the market). When the word ends in a consonant, morpheme *-ii* is added (as for the genitive). For instance, *harar* (harar) changed into *hararii* (from Harar). Following a noun in the genitive, *-tii* is added. For instance, *mana* (house), *buna* (coffee), *mana bunaa* (cafe), *mana bunaatii* (from cafe). An alternative to the ablative is the

postposition *irraa* (from) whose initial vowel may be dropped in the process: For instance, *gabaa* 'market', *gabaa irraa* , *gabaarraa* 'from market'.

### 3. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

#### 3.1. Morphological Properties of Arsi-Bale Noun

The finding of this study depicts that Arsi-Bale noun inflects for different grammatical functions.

##### 3.1.1 Number

Table 1 below indicates the Arsi Bale dialect of Oromo morphemes that attach to noun to mark number in Arsi-Bale noun word class.

Table 1: Morphemes indicating number (plural number) in Arsi-Bale nouns

Noun	Gloss	plural	gloss	plural morphemes
<i>nama</i>	man	<i>namoota</i>	men	<i>-oota/-ota</i>
<i>waggaa</i>	year	<i>waggoota</i>	years	
<i>saba</i>	nation	<i>saboota</i>	nations	
<i>hoolaa</i>	sheep	<i>hoolota</i>	sheep(plr)	
<i>goota</i>	brave	<i>gootota</i>	braves	
<i>laga</i>	River	<i>laggiin</i>	rivers	<i>-iin</i>
<i>muka</i>	tree	<i>mukkiin</i>	trees	
<i>harree</i>	donkey	<i>harriin</i>	donkeys	
<i>gaara</i>	mountain	<i>gaarriin</i>	mountains	
<i>mana</i>	house	<i>manniin</i>	houses	
<i>mala</i>	technique	<i>malliin</i>	techniques	
<i>aadaa</i>	culture	<i>aadaawwan</i>	cultures	<i>-wwan</i>
<i>amantii</i>	religion	<i>amantiwwan</i>	religions	
<i>hujii</i>	job	<i>hujilee</i>	jobs	<i>-lee</i>
<i>meeshaa</i>	instrument	<i>meeshaalee</i>	instruments	
<i>gaangee</i>	mule	<i>gaangeelee</i>	mules	
<i>maqaa</i>	name	<i>maqaaalee</i>	names	
<i>waraabessa</i>	hyena	<i>waraabeyyii</i>	hyenas	<i>-eyyii/eeyyii</i>
<i>hraraamoo</i>	voracious	<i>hraraameyyii</i>	voracious	
<i>bineensa</i>	animal	<i>bineeyyii</i>	animals	
<i>jaldeessa</i>	chimpanzee	<i>jaldeeyyii</i>	chimpanzees	
<i>dargaggeessa</i>	young	<i>dargaggeeyyii</i>	young	

<i>ilma</i>	child	<i>ilmaan</i>	children	<i>-an</i>
<i>eessuma</i>	uncle	<i>eessumman</i>	uncles	

As it is shown in the table 1 above, one can understand that Arsi Bale nouns inflect for number by attaching the morphemes *-oota/ -ota*, *-iin*, *-wwan*, *-lee*, *-eyyii/-eeyyii*, *-an*. In addition, the morpheme *-oota* long form as in (*namoota*, *saboota*) seems to be attached to the noun that has short vowel on the syllable immediately before (precedes) the last syllable. On the other hand, the morpheme *-ota* short form in the nouns like (*hoolota*, *gootota*) seems to be attached to the noun that has long vowel on the syllable coming immediately before (precedes) the last syllable. Olani (2008) also mentions in his works on inflectional morphology of Wollega Oromo that the occurrence of *-oota* and *-ota* is depended on the penultimate syllable of the base noun.

Similarly, in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, the morpheme *-iin* just is attached to the singular noun to mark the plural number. Most of the times, this morpheme seems to be attached to the root noun as suffix morpheme. In this regard, as we can see from the above table, the morpheme *-iin* seems to be suffixed to noun roots which have two syllables and end by *-a/ -ee* and preceded by velar sounds */k/* and */g/*, lateral */l/*, and nasal */n/*; and it makes the consonants geminated as indicated in (*laggiin*, *mukkiin*, *gaarriin*, *harriin* *malliin*, *manniin*) above, the morpheme *-iin* is suffixed to the noun by removing the vowel */-a or -ee/* and by making the consonants geminated.

This study underlines that the number marking morpheme *-iin* is unique to Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo. In other dialects of Oromo like Mecha and Tulema, morpheme *-een* is used in the position of the *-iin* in Arsi-Bale dialect. The morpheme *-wwan* however seems to attach to an abstract nouns ending in long vowels without removing the long vowel. On the other hand, the morpheme *-lee* is attached as a suffix to the nouns that end in long vowel to mark plural number (as in the following words *gaangeelee/mules*, *maqaalee/nouns/names*, *hujjilee/jobs*, *meeshaalee /instruments*) which has been already indicated in above table *-lee* comes next to the long vowel and make plural number.

As it can be seen from the above table 1 above, the Arsi-Bale dialect nouns which add suffix *-eeyyii/-eyyii* as a morpheme to indicate the plural number seem to follow the following rules. The morpheme *-eeyyii* with long */-ee/* form (as in *dargaggeeyyii*, *jaldeeyyii*, *bineeyyii*) seems to be attached to the noun that has short vowel on the syllable that comes immediately before (precedes) the last syllable (they follow the rule of penultimate syllable). This form is most frequently used one to indicate plural number in Arsi-Bale noun morphology. While the morpheme *-eyyii* with short *-e* form (for example in the words like *waraabeyyii/heyneas*, *hararaameeyyii/voracious*) seems to be attached to the noun that has long vowel on the syllable that comes immediately before (precedes) the last syllable. Finally, the morpheme *-an* however, is

attached to the nouns by lengthening the vowel on the one hand, (as in *ilma-an/children*) and by geminating the nasal sound /m/, (as in *eessumm-an*).

### 3.1.2 Definiteness

Table 2: Morphemes indicating definiteness in Arsi- Bale dialect Oromo noun

Noun	Gloss	Definite	Gloss	Morphemes
<i>nama</i>	man	<i>namicha</i>	the man	<i>-icha</i> (masculine)
<i>nama</i>	man	<i>namittii</i>	the woman	<i>-ittii</i> (feminine)
<i>saree</i>	dog	<i>saricha</i>	the male dog	<i>-icha</i> (masculine)
<i>saree</i>	dog	<i>sarittii</i>	the female dog	<i>-ittii</i> (feminine)
<i>harree</i>	the donkey	<i>harricha</i>	the male donkey	<i>-icha</i> (masculine)
<i>harree</i>	the donkey	<i>harrittii</i>	the female donkey	<i>-ittii</i> (feminine)
<i>jaarsa</i>	old man	<i>jaarsicha</i>	the old man	<i>-icha</i> (masculine)
<i>jaartii</i>	old woman	<i>jaartittii</i>	the old woman	<i>-ittii</i> (feminine)
<i>gurbaa</i>	son	<i>gurbicha</i>	the boy	<i>-icha</i> (masculine)
<i>intala</i>	daughter	<i>intalattii</i>	the girl	<i>-ittii</i> (feminine)

As can be seen from table 2 above, Arsi-Bale nouns inflect for definiteness, i.e to indicate whether the noun is definite or indefinite. The morphemes *-icha* and *-ittii* which are used in table above are marker of definiteness. In support of this, Nordfeldt (1947) explains that in Afan Oromo *-icha* and *-itti* mark definiteness. Similarly, Laundhart (1973) and Gragg (1976) discuss that the Oromo language indicates definiteness by suffixing the morphemes *-icha* and *-itti*. Mohammed and Zaboriski (1990) also argue that the morphemes *-icha* and *-ittii* are attached to the noun to mark definiteness.

### 3.1.3 Gender

Table 3: Morphemes indicating gender in Arsi-Bale noun

Masculine	Gloss	Morpheme	Feminine	Gloss	Morpheme
<i>nam-icha</i>	man	<i>-icha</i>	<i>nam-ittii</i>	woman	<i>-ittii</i>
<i>sar-icha</i>	male dog	<i>-icha</i>	<i>sar-ittii</i>	female dog	<i>-ittii</i>
<i>harr-icha</i>	male donkey	<i>-icha</i>	<i>harr-ittii</i>	female donkey	<i>-ittii</i>
<i>garb-icha</i>	male slave	<i>-icha</i>	<i>garb-ittii</i>	female slave	<i>-ittii</i>

As it can be observed from the data indicated in table 3 above, the morphemes *-icha* and *-ittii* mark gender. In the given words (*namicha*, *saricha*, *harricha*, *gabricha*), the suffixed morphemes *-icha* indicates masculine gender whereas the morpheme *-ittii* used in the table with the nouns (*namittii*, *sarittii*, *harrittii*

*and gabrittii*) marks feminine gender in Arsi-Bale Oromo. In support of this Grifenow- Mewis (2001) states that Oromo has two gender systems, feminine (fem.) and masculine (mas.) In this regard, the morphemes – *icha* and –*ittii* are suffixed to the noun and mark masculine and feminine gender respectively.

### 3.2 Case

Arsi-Bale noun inflects for cases. Different writers define case in different ways. According to Katamba (1993), case can be used in two different senses in literature as grammatical case and oblique case. Grammatical case is where case is used to mark the function of a noun (or rather, more specifically, a noun phrase) as a subject or object depending on the position in relation to the verb in the sentence. Similarly, Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo also indicates cases.

- a) *qonnaan bulaan mucattii ilaala*/Farmer sees the girl.

Farmer (nom.), girl (acc.) sees (v)

S (subject) O (object) V (verb). This structure is grammatical in Arsi- Bale dialect of Oromo because the Arsi-Bale Oromo sentence word order is (S-O-V).

- b) \**qonnaan bulaan ilaala mucattii*/The farmer sees the girl.

Farmer (nom.) sees (verb) girl (acc.)

Subject Verb Object.

In Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo however, word order (S-V-O) is ungrammatical because the word order of in Afan Oromo is not free, it follows nominative-accusative system. In English, on the other hand, only pronouns are inflected for nominative case.

Example

- a) He sees her.

He (nom.) sees (v), her (acc.)

The languages where the object of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive verb share the same inflectional marking are called ergative- absolutive. However, in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo sentence does not allow this type of structure. For example, in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, the following sentences are ungrammatical.

Afan Oromo sentences.

- a) \**abbaa haati ilaalte*. ‘Mother saw father.’

Object Subject Verb

- b) \**haadha abbaan ilaale* ‘Father saw mother.’

Object Subject Verb

While, the following sentences of Arsi-Bale dialect sentences are grammatically correct.

- c) *abbaan haadha ilaala* (Father sees mother).

Father +- (nom.) mother see -3sgmascu.imperf.

S (subject) O (object) V (verb)

d) *haati abbaa ilaalti* (Mother sees father).

Mother +- (nom.) father see-3sgfem.imperf.

S (subject) O (object) V (verb).

Different Oromo researchers also have conducted research and the result of their work indicates that Oromo language is rich having markers that indicate different cases. For example, Abeshu (2010) argues that case is a grammatical category of nouns that indicates the nature of their relationship to the verb in sentences. He further argues that the number of cases varies from language to language. In this regard, he depicts that nouns in Oromo language are inflected for nominative, instrumental, ablative and locative cases. Each case is described and summarized as below. However, Olani (2008) classifies cases as nominative, absolutive, dative/oblique, and genitive. The data collected from Arsi-Bale dialect reveals that noun inflects for the cases such as nominative, instrumental, absolutive, genitive, and dative. Let us discuss these one by one.

### 3.2.1 Nominative case

The nominative case is used for nouns that are the subjects of clauses. In Arsi-Bale dialect it is found in various forms.

Table 4: Morphemes that mark nominative case in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo

Noun	Gloss	Noun With Nominative Case Marker	Nominative Case Marker
<i>ummata</i>	people	<i>ummanni</i>	<i>-nni(-n-ni)</i>
<i>uffata</i>	cloth	<i>uffanni</i>	
<i>gaara</i>	mountain	<i>gaarri</i>	<i>-rri(-r-ni)</i>
<i>gaala</i>	camel	<i>gaalli</i>	<i>-lli(-l-ni)</i>
<i>nama</i>	man	<i>namni</i>	<i>-ni</i>
<i>saba</i>	nation	<i>sabni</i>	
<i>farad</i>	horse	<i>fardi</i>	
<i>harma</i>	breast	<i>harmi</i>	<i>-i</i>
<i>soorettii</i>	rich	<i>soorettiin</i>	<i>-n</i>
<i>abbaa</i>	father	<i>abbaan</i>	
<i>ilkaan</i>	teeth	<i>ilkaan∅</i>	
<i>afaan</i>	language	<i>afaan∅</i>	
<i>aanan</i>	milk	<i>aanan∅</i>	

<i>midhaan</i>	crop	<i>midhaan</i> ∅	-∅
<i>bishaan</i>	water	<i>bishaan</i> ∅	

As it has been described above in table 4, in Arsi-Bale dialect, noun marks nominative cases by suffixing different morphemes. For example in the above table, the word *saba* /nation (n), *uffata* (cloth), *ummata* (people), *gaara* (mountain), *gaala* (camel) *farda* (horse), *soorettii* (*soorettii*) *ilkaan* (teeth) are nouns; however the words formed by inflection like *sabni* (nom.) *uffanni* (nom.), *gaarri* (nom), *gaalli* (nom), *fardi* (nom.), *soorettiin* (nom.), *ilkaan* ∅ (nom.) are different in form, and they also have different roles in the sentences depending upon the position they take in the sentence. Since in Oromo Language word order follows S-O-V, nominative case takes the position of subject in a given sentence or phrase.

Rules by which the above case markers are governed are the following. For example, when a noun has the syllable that precedes the last syllable is geminated consonants, after that the noun takes the *-nni/-lli/-rri* and drop the short vowel that comes after the geminated consonant to indicate the nominative case markers. Look at this example the noun ‘*ummata*’ has three syllables in which the consonant before the last syllable is geminated (*um-ma-ta* /people), the nominative form *ummanni* takes the *-nni* form. Similarly, the nominative form *gaala*, and *gaara* take the *-lli* and *-rri* form following the same rule that the above *-nni* form follows because the three forms are different realizations of the same morpheme (nominative case markers). To support this rule more nominative case indicators are stated as follow: *hamoommota* (n) bridegroom *ha-moom-mo-ta* changed into , *hamoommonni* (nom.), *gaala* changed into *gaalli* (nom) *gaara* (*gaal-li*) (nom.) whose syllables are *ha-moom-mon-ni*, *gaal-li*, *gaar-ri* take the *-lli*, *-rri*, and *-nni* respectively to indicate nominative case.

However, when a noun has the syllable that precedes the last syllable is not a geminated consonant, and then the noun takes the *-ni* and drops the short vowel that comes after the ingeminated consonant to indicate the nominative case markers. Look at this example, the noun ‘*saba*’ has two syllables in which the consonant before the last syllable is ingeminated (*sa-ba* /nation), the nominative form *saba* takes the *-ni* form. In order to support this rule, more nominative case markers are stated as follow: *sababa*/ (n) reason = *sa-ba-ba* changed into *sababni* (nom.), whose syllable is *sa-bab-ni*, takes the *-ni* as to indicate the nominative case.

Similarly, from the table 6, one can see that the noun in Arsi-Bale dialect can inflect for nominative case by attaching the morpheme *-i*: the *farda* /horse (n), is changed into the *fardi*/ (nom.), *harma* /breast (n) is changed to *harmi* (nom.).

This nominative case marker seems to come to exist at the end of the noun that ends with short vowel by dropping the short vowel that the word ends with. As it can be seen from table 6 above, the other nominative case marker is *-n*. For example in the words: *soorettii* (n), *soorettiin* (nom.) is formed from the *sabboontuu*

(n). *sabboontuun* (nom.) is formed by suffixing the *-n*. From the above examples we can make the rule in which the nominative case marker follows. It seems that *-n* is suffixed to the nouns that end with long vowels without dropping the vowels. Thus, we can conclude that in Arsi-Bale dialect noun that ends with long vowels suffixes the *-n* morpheme without dropping the vowels. As it is indicated at the end of the table 4, the zero morpheme ( $-\emptyset$ ) is one of the morphemes that mark the nominative case. This means, in this case zero morpheme shows that the noun is used as nominative case (as a subject of the sentence) without adding any other morpheme. In Arsi-Bale dialect this zero morpheme occurs at the end of the indigenous Oromo nouns that end in consonant sound /n/.

Thus, what we can imply from the Oromo origin words which end in consonant n suffix the zero morpheme ( $\emptyset$ ) to mark nominative case. However, it seems that if the nouns are borrowed from other languages, the zero morpheme nominative case markers come at the end of the words ending in consonants.

For example, in the following sentences, the noun *jamaal, kadiir, tamaam* (Arabic origion) , *aaliis, deeviid* (English origion) nouns, *Alam, Tagany* (Amharic Origin) nouns, the nominative case marker ( $-\emptyset$ ) comes at the end of the words ending in consonant sounds.

- a) **jamaal** *barataadha* ‘Jemal is a student.’
- b) **kadiir** *barataa digrii sadaffaa ti* ‘Kedir is a third degree/PhD student.’
- c) **aaliis** *afaan Punjaabii ni barreessiti* ‘Alice writes Punjabi language.’
- d) **tagany** *afaan Amaaraa dubbata* ‘Tagegn speaks Amharic.’

In these sentences, the words written in bold are the subject of the sentences, and they are used as nominative.

### 3.2.2 Instrumental case

Katamba (1993) explains the instrumental case, as its name implies, mark a noun phrase denoting some entity which is used to perform the action indicated by the verb. In English the preposition ‘with’ is commonly used for this purpose as in ‘He chopped the tree down *with* an axe.’ i.e. He used an axe to chop the tree down. The use of preposition to mark the instrument is common in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo. The data collected using different data collection tools is discussed as follows in the table:

Table5: Morphemes marking instrumental case

Noun	Gloss	Words with definite morphemes	Morphemes

<i>muka</i>	wood	<i>mukaan/by wood</i>	
<i>harka</i>	hand	<i>harkaan/by hand</i>	<i>-an</i>
<i>farad</i>	horse	<i>fardaan/by horse back</i>	
<i>bishaan</i>	water	<i>bishaaniin/with water</i>	<i>-iin</i>
<i>ilkaan</i>	teeth/tooth	<i>ilkaaniin/by teeth/tooth</i>	
<i>aanan</i>	milk	<i>aananiin/with milk</i>	
<i>bakakkaa</i>	tender	<i>bakakkaan/dhaan/by tender</i>	
<i>ulee</i>	stick	<i>uleen/dhaan/with stick</i>	<i>-n/-dhaan</i>
<i>dhadhaa</i>	butter	<i>dhadhaan/dhaan/ with butter</i>	

As we can observe from table 5, the first group of nouns like *muka/wood*, *harka/hand*, *farad/horse* are suffixed morpheme *-an* and become *mukaan/with wood*, *harkaan/by hand*, *fardaan/by horse back* and the new nouns indicate the instrument by/with which the action happened. In Arsi-Bale dialect, the morpheme *-an* marks instrumental case by attaching to the nouns. We can observe from table 5, the second group of nouns like *bishaan/water*, *ilkaan/teeth/tooth*, *aanan/milk* suffix morpheme *-iin* and become *bishaaniin/with water*, *ilkaaniin/with teeth/tooth*, *aananiin/with milk* and the new nouns indicate the instrument by/with which the action happened. In the dialect under study, the morpheme *-iin*, marks instrumental case.

In the table 5, the third group of nouns like *bakakkaa*, *ulee*, *dhadhaa* suffix morpheme *-n* or *-dhaan* to become *bakakkaan/bakakkaadhaan/by tender*, *uleen/uleedhaan/with stick*, *dhadhaan/dhadhaadhaan/with butter* and the new nouns indicate the instrument by/with which the action happened. To sum up, in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, the morphemes *-n/dhaan* in this context mark instrumental case.

### 3.2.3 Absolute Case

Owens (1985), in Olani (2008), defines the absolute case as the citation that is used in the object paradigm. According to Olani (2008), absolute case in Wollega Oromo occurs when noun plays the role of 'subject' in the given sentence without using any inflectional suffix. He further elaborates that the nouns which have final long vowels mark the object of the sentence what we call absolute case in this context. Thus, he concludes that Wollega Oromo language is an object marked language. For example, when the noun '*kubbaa*'/ball is used as an object in the sentence, there is no morpheme which is used to mark that noun is the object of the sentence the given sentence. This case is very common in Arsi-Bale dialect also. Look at the following sentences.

- a) tolaan *kubbaa* dhiite/Tola kicked the ball.

tola(nom.) ball kick-perf.

b) *barataan **kitaaba*** (*object*) dubbisa /A student reads the book.

Student-nom+*kitaaba*(object) read-3sgimperf.

In the above two examples, the words written in italics like *kubbaa* and *kitaaba* are used in the position of the object of the sentence without inflectional suffix in the given sentence.

Olani (2008) also discusses that in Wollega Oromo consonant ending nouns that are used in the object position, suffix the morpheme -n to indicate absolutive case; however, this morpheme seems to indicate focus than object of the sentence. In Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, absolutive case is not marked by any morpheme both in written and in spoken form. Thus, Arsi-Bale dialect is unique and different from other dialects because its noun is not inflected for absolutive case.

#### Examples

- a) *mucaan **laaqana** nyaate* /The boy ate lunch.
- b) *barsiisaan **qormaata** kenne*/The teacher gave the exam.
- c) *barataan **kitaaba** dubbisa* ‘The student reads the book.

From these data, one can understand that the nouns which are written in bold play the role of an object in the sentences written above, but there is no morpheme that marks the absolutive case. Therefore, the current study shows that the Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo doesn't have any morpheme that indicate the absolutive case. Thus, we can understand that the nouns that are written in bold are taking the role of object of the sentence from the context. Thus, Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo in its absolutive case is similar with argument of the scholars that say absolutive case doesn't mark grammatical/syntactic function of noun; rather it marks semantics function of nouns. This means the absolutive case marks certain noun as an object of a sentence without being inflected.

#### Example

- a) *barataan **gaaffii** gaafate*/The student asked a question.
- b) *sangaan **marga** dheede*/The ox ate the grass.

As we can observe from the above two sentences, the word '*gaaffii*' and '*margaa*' are used as an object of the sentences; however, they are not inflected to mark absolutive case. Thus, these examples can be justifications for the statement that describes the Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo the nouns are not inflected for absolutive case.

### 3.2.4 Genitive Case

Katamba (1993) argues that genitive case is another common grammatical case and it is used to signal the fact that one noun is subordinate to the other. That is, one noun is the head and the other noun is modifier which adds some further specification to the head.

Katamba (ibidi) further explains that in an English utterance like ‘Mary’s dress’ the genitive is probably used to mark possession. The possessor noun, ‘Mary’ is inflected with ‘s and the head noun ‘dress’ appears after it without any inflection. The presence of the word Mary’s makes the referent dress more specific than saying a dress. According to Olani (2008), genitive case is used to mark possession. Ishetu (1981), in Olani (2008), also indicates that genitive case marker occurs in two different ways in Wollega Oromo dialect. He further explains that the one way is by attaching the prefix *kan* to the noun and the other is by lengthening the final vowel of the word. Arsi-Bale dialect also uses the morpheme to indicate the genitive case.

Example

<u>Base form</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>Inflected Form</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
a) <i>nama</i>	‘man’	<i>kan namaa</i>	‘of man’
b) <i>lafa</i>	‘earth’	<i>kan lafaa</i>	‘of earth’
c) <i>gaala</i>	‘camel’	<i>kan gaalaa</i>	‘of camel’

From the above examples, the word *kan* and the morpheme *-a* are suffixed to the nouns *nama* ‘man’, *lafa* ‘earth’, and *gaala* ‘camel’ to form the inflected form the genitive case.

### 3.2.5 Dative Case

As Olani (2008) indicates, dative case in Wollega dialect of Oromo assigns a noun that takes the position before or after the indirect object to express for whom or to whom the action is done. He further explains that there are two dative case markers in Wollega Oromo such as morpheme *-f* and *-tti*. In Arsi-Bale dialect, there are various morphemes/markers that indicate the dative case. The following data brief the dative case markers and the rule they follow.

Table 6: Morphemes marking dative case

Noun	Gloss	Words with definite morphemes	Morpheme that indicate case marker
<i>farda</i>	horse	<i>fardaa</i> / for the horse	<i>-a</i>
<i>saʔa</i>	cow	<i>saʔaa</i> / for the cow.	
<i>farda</i>	horse	<i>fardaaf</i> / for the horse	<i>-af</i>
<i>saʔa</i>	cow	<i>saʔaaf</i> / for the cow.	
<i>tola</i>	Tola	<i>tolaaf</i> / for tola	<i>-f</i>

<i>re?ee</i>	goat/s	<i>re?eef</i> / for a goat.	
<i>adurree</i>	cat	<i>adurreef</i> / for a cat	
<i>kadiir</i>	Kedir	<i>kadiirii</i> /for Kedir.	<i>-ii</i>
<i>muraad</i>	Murad	<i>muraadii</i> /for Murad.	
<i>mubaarak</i>	Mubarek	<i>mubaarakii</i> /for Mubarek.	

As it is indicated in table 6, the first group of nouns, *sa?aa* is changed to *sa?aa*, *farda* is changed to *fardaa* to indicate dative case. During this process, the noun changes itself into dative case by suffixing *-a*, and lengthening the final vowel. As it is indicated in table 6 under the second group of nouns *sa?aa* is changed to *sa?aaaf*, *farad* is changed to *fardaaaf* to indicate dative case. During this process, the noun changes itself in to dative case by suffixing *-af* and or by lengthening the final vowel and then adding the morpheme *-f*.

As it is indicated in table 6, the third group of nouns, *tolaa* is changed to *tolaaaf*, *re?ee* is changed to *re?eef*, *adurree* is changed to *adurreef* to indicate dative case. During this process, the noun changes itself in to dative case by suffixing *-dhaaf/-f*. In this case the morpheme *-f* is suffixed to the noun with long final vowel. On the other hand, some other Oromo dialects for example in Wollega dialect, the morpheme *-dhaaf* is suffixed to a noun to indicate dative case. However, in Arsi Bale dialect it is not common to use morpheme *-dhaaf* to indicate dative case instead Arsi-Bale dialect speakers use high tone on the word *adurree* and *re?ee* without adding *-dhaaf -f*, as in *adudrree aanan kenni/* give milk for a cat, *re?ee baala fidi/*bring leaf for a goat.

As it is indicated in table 6 under the fourth group of nouns, *kadiir* is changed to *kadiirii*, *muraad* is changed to *muraadii*, *mubaarak* is changed to *mubaarakii* to indicate dative case. During this process, the noun changes itself in to dative case by suffixing *-ii*. In this case, the nouns are suffixed with the morpheme *-ii* to indicate the dative case. This rule is related to suffixing the morpheme *-ii* to the noun terminating in consonants.

In conclusion, even though other Oromo dialects use the morphemes *-af*, and *-f* to mark dative cases, Arsi-bale dialect uses additional morphemes *-a*, and *-ii* which distinguish Arsi-Bale dialect from other Oromo dialects. Thus, the use of morphemes *-a* and *-ii* to mark dative case is the special characteristics of Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo noun word class.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

As it was mentioned earlier, one of the objectives of the study was to analyze morphological properties and grammatical functions of Arsi-Bale noun. The findings of this study are as follows.

Arsi-Bale noun inflects for different grammatical functions such as number, gender definiteness, and case. In Arsi Bale nouns, the morphemes *-oota/-ota*, *-iin*, *-wwan*, *-lee*, *-eyyii/-eeyyii*, *-an* are used to mark number. In addition, Arsi-Bale noun inflects for definiteness and gender. Arsi-Bale nouns which attach the morpheme *-icha* mark definiteness and masculine gender. Similarly, the nouns which attach the morpheme *-tii* mark the definiteness and feminine gender. In Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, in addition to the morpheme *-icha* and *-ittii*, the morphemes *-ssa* and *-ttii* attach to the noun to mark masculine and feminine genders respectively.

It was also identified that the Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo noun inflects for case. The noun inflects for cases such as nominative case, instrumental, genitive case, and dative case. The common morphemes that mark nominative case are *-nni*, *-lli*, *-rri*, *-i*, *-ni*, *-n*, and  $\emptyset$ . Olani (2008) indicated that in Wollega (Macha) dialect the genitive case is reflected by attaching the prefix *kan* to the noun, and by lengthening the final vowel of the word. Arsi-Bale dialect also uses the morpheme to indicate the genitive case by applying the same rule to show the owner of something, as in '*kan sa?aa*' (of cow). It was also observed that in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo noun inflects for instrumental case by attaching the morphemes *-an*, *-iin*, *-n*, *-dhaan* to mark instrumental case. It is also clearly indicated that, in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, the morphemes *-f*, *-af*, *-a*, and *-ii* mark dative cases. In Macha (Wollega) dialect, the morpheme *-dhaaf* is suffixed to a noun to indicate dative case. However, in Arsi Bale dialect, the use of morpheme *-dhaaf* to indicate dative case is not common. Instead, Arsi-Bale dialect speakers use high tone without adding *-dhaaf* as in the sentence:

- a) *adudrree aanan kenni*/Give milk for a cat.
- b) *re?ee baala kenni*/ Give leaf for a goat.

However, in Arsi Bale dialect it is not common to use morpheme *-dhaaf* to indicate dative case; instead, Arsi-Bale dialect speakers use high tone without adding *-dhaaf* *-f*. The morpheme *-dhaaf* in Macha dialect and the high tone in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo suffix to the nouns ending in long vowels.

It was also found that the Arsi-Bale noun morphology reflects special characteristics or grammatical properties in marking number. These special characteristics are as follows: Firstly, Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo uses morpheme *-iin* to mark number while other dialects of Oromo like Macha and Tulema use morpheme *-een* instead of *-ii* to mark number. Secondly, Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo native speakers uses the same morpheme in order to mark two different grammatical functions. In this regard, the morpheme *-icha* attaches to the noun to mark both definiteness and masculine gender. For example, in the noun *harricha*/the donkey, the morpheme *-icha* marks that the donkey we are talking about is the known or the definite one; in the same noun the same morpheme indicates masculine gender of the donkey. In another example *nama*/man when suffixes *-icha* becomes '*namicha*'/the man marks masculine in gender and definiteness (the man that we are talking about is known).

Similarly, the morpheme *-ittii* attaches to the noun in Arsi-Bale dialect to mark definiteness and feminine gender. For instance, in the noun *namittii*/the woman, the morpheme *-ittii* marks the woman we talk/write about is the known or the definite one; in the same noun the same morpheme indicates feminine gender.

Even though the morphemes *-f*, *-af* *-a*, and *-ii* mark dative case in Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo, amongst these morphemes, the latter two morphemes, that is *-a* and *-ii* seems to be unique to Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo. The former two morphemes are common in other Oromo dialects (for example, Macha dialect uses *-dhaaf* to mark dative case); however, in Arsi-Bale dialect we use high tone without adding *-dhaaf* to the nouns that end in long vowels. Similarly, the use of high tone instead of the morpheme *-dhaaf* is unique characteristics of Arsi-Bale dialect of Oromo. To sum up, further investigations which include more data and intensive discussion might be needed to confirm the finding of the current study.

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