

Article

Notes on Afar Verbal Morphology*

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Abstract

This paper discusses some aspects of Afar verbal morphology based on the data we collected. It has obtained several new insights, which were not noticed in Hassan Kamil (2015), the most comprehensive description of Afar grammar. They include a more fusional analysis for all three types of Afar verbs, the unmarked nature of the vowels allegedly marking the perfect aspect, a new morpheme *-h*, and the conditions for the vowel alternation in the 3.sg. of Type III verbs.

1 Introduction

This paper discusses some aspects of Afar verbal morphology based on the data we have collected during a postgraduate course at the University of Tsukuba.

Afar is a language spoken in three countries in the Horn of Africa, i.e. Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. According to Grimes (2003: 407), the total number of the speakers is around 1.6 million, of which a million live in Ethiopia. Afar belongs to the Eastern Cushitic group within the Afro-asiatic phylum. It is closely related to Oromo, Somali, and Saho (Sasse 2003: 405).

The speaker from whom we have collected data is Gebriel Alazar, one of the authors of this article. He is an Eritrean male in his 30s, who speaks Afar besides his parents' languages, Tigrinya and Amharic. He was born in Djibouti and then moved to Assab,

* This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant numbers JP18KK0009 and JP19J10473. The following abbreviations are used in this article: 1./2./3. (the first/second/third person), C (consonant), f. (feminine), ind. (indicative), m. (masculine), pl. (plural), sg. (singular), V (vowel), vi. (intransitive verb), vt. (transitive verb). We are grateful to two anonymous reviewers of our paper, who provided us with a number of valuable comments. All remaining errors are ours.

Eritrea. His knowledge of Afar language is based on this background. He also speaks English fluently; thus, our sessions were conducted in English.

2 Literature review

The most comprehensive description of Afar grammar, to the best of our knowledge, is Hassan Kamil's dissertation submitted in 2015¹. It is based on data collected from nearly 40 speakers from different regions, ages, and sexes of different lifestyles including urban residents, countryside farmers, and pastoralists (Hassan Kamil 2015: 43). In this dissertation, he devotes a full chapter to the verbal system. In his description, he deals with all kinds of verb forms including derived verbs, while our article focuses on basic conjugations of selected verbs.

According to Hassan Kamil, Afar verbs have a binary aspectual contrast between the perfect and imperfect ("accompli" and "inaccompli" in his terminology)². This binary aspectual system forms a temporal and modal system that involves auxiliaries (Hassan Kamil 2015: 258).

Afar verbs are classified into three types according to their conjugation patterns: Type I takes a prefix to indicate the person of the subject, while Type II has a suffix for that purpose; Type III takes a different set of suffixes from Type II for the same purpose (Hassan Kamil 2015: 295).

A Type I verb has a person indicator ("IP" in Hassan Kamil's abbreviation) and an aspect marker before the stem ("radical" in his terminology). The stem is followed by the vowel *e* and the number indicator ("IN" in his abbreviation). In Type II verbs, the stem is followed by an IP, aspect marker, and IN in that order. Type III has the stem, an IP, and IN. It has no aspect marker, since it does not distinguish between perfect and imperfect (Hassan Kamil 2015: 295-296, 298, 307). For all types, IN is present only in the 2nd and 3rd person plural as shown in Table 1. The forms are given in their phonological representations. Afar has 17 consonants (b, d, d̥, g, t, k, m, n, ʃ, f, s, h̄, h, w, y, l, r) and 5 vowels (i, e, a, o, u) (Hassan Kamil 2015: 50-88). The vowel length is phonemic and is indicated by writing a vowel twice.

¹ Bliese 1981 had been consulted as a basic work for a long time. Since Hassan Kamil (2015) builds on it, however, we refer to it only where necessary.

² They are labelled "perfect" and "imperfect" respectively by Bliese (1981: 112).

Table 1: IPs and INs (Hassan Kamil 2015: 296)

	IP			IN
	Type I	Type II	Type III	Types I-II-III
1.sg.	∅	∅	-y	∅
2.sg.	t-	-t	-t	∅
3.sg.m.	y-	∅	-∅	∅
3.sg.f.	t-	-t	-∅	∅
1.pl.	n-	-n	-n	∅ ³
2.pl.	t-	-t	-t	-n/VnV ⁴
3.pl.	y-	∅	-∅	-n/VnV

Aspect is marked differently depending on the types of conjugation. In Type I and II, it is marked by the quality of the vowel after IP. In Type I, the vowel indicating the perfect differs from verb to verb, while the imperfect is always marked by *a*. The quality of the vowel indicating the perfect is decided according to the vowel in the stem. The relation between the initial vowel and the internal vowel of the stem is summarized in Table 2. Type II, on the other hand, always has *e* in the perfect and *a* in the imperfect (Hassan Kamil 2015: 300). The paradigm of these two types is demonstrated in Tables 3 and 4 (cf. Hassan Kamil 2015: 299-300).

Table 2: Apophony and vocalic harmony of Type I verbs⁵

Initial vowels		Internal vowels in the stem	
Perfect	Imperfect	Perfect	Imperfect
e-/ee-	aa-	-ee-	-aa-
i-	a-	-i-/ii-	-i-/ii-
u-	a-	-u-/uu-	-u-/uu-
oo-	aa-	-o-	-u-

³ As the 1.pl. IPs are always distinct from their singular counterparts, there is no need to mark their number in the IN slot.

⁴ According to Hassan Kamil (2015: 297), plural INs has their short and long forms.

⁵ Adopted and translated from Hassan Kamil (2015: 298). Not all examples that follow Table 46 in his dissertation conform to the pattern demonstrated in this table.

Table 3: Paradigm of Type I verb *eedege* “to know”
(cf. Hassan Kamil 2015: 299)⁶

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	eedege	aadige
2.sg.	t-eedege	t-aadige
3.sg.m.	y-eedege	y-aadige
3.sg.f.	t-eedege	t-aadige
1.pl.	n-eedege	n-aadige
2.pl.	t-eedege-n/-eni	t-aadige-n/-eni
3.pl.	y-eedege/e-ni ⁷	y-eedege-n/-eni ⁸

Table 4: Paradigm of Type II verb *abe* “to do, make”
(cf. Hassan Kamil 2015: 300)

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	abe	aba
2.sg.	ab-t-e	ab=t-a ⁹
3.sg.m.	abe	aba
3.sg.f.	ab-t-e	ab-t-a
1.pl.	ab-n-e	ab-n-a
2.pl.	ab-t-e-n/-eni	ab-t-a-n/a-na ¹⁰
3.pl.	abe-n/-eni	aba-n/-ana

Type III does not indicate the gender at all, while the other two distinguish between masculine and feminine in the 3rd person singular as in Table 5. According to Hassan Kamil, verbs in this category are stative verbs (Hassan Kamil 2015: 295).

⁶ We did not indicate the place of the stress in these tables, because it falls consistently on the final syllable in these verbs.

⁷ This should be a typo for *y-eedege-n/-eni* according to our informant.

⁸ This should be a typo for *y-aadige-n/-eni* according to our informant.

⁹ This should be a typo for *ab-t-a*.

¹⁰ This should be a typo for *ab-t-a-n/-ana*.

Table 5: Paradigm of Type III verbs *uma* “be bad” and *meḥe* “be good”
(cf. Hassan Kamil 2015: 305)

	<i>uma</i> “be bad”	<i>meḥe</i> “be good”
1.sg.	umi-yo	miḥ(i)-yo
2.sg.	um(i)-to	miḥ(i)-to
3.sg.m.	uma	meḥe
3.sg.f.		
1.pl.	um(i)-no	miḥ(i)-no
2.pl.	um(i)-to-n/-onu	miḥto-n/-onu
3.pl.	umo-n/-onu	moḥo-n/-onu

3 The Data

We obtained the full conjugation of 51 verbs as well as 1.sg. and 3.sg.m. forms¹¹ of additional 63 verbs in their perfect/imperfect aspects¹² from our informant. Tables 6-8 are the full conjugation of selected verbs of Types I-III respectively. Table 9 is a list of the 1.sg. and 3.sg.m. forms of all 114 verbs arranged alphabetically according to their English translation. We follow Hassan Kamil’s phonological representation. It is to be noted that our informant does not distinguish *r* and *ḍ* and that he uses two additional consonants *y* (see footnote 14) and *x* in his speech. The vowel length is phonemic and is indicated by the symbol :.

All verbs in the following tables are categorized into three types following Hassan Kamil’s classification. Verbs with the prefix *y-* in the 3.sg.m. forms are classified as Type I; those with identical forms in the 1.sg. and 3.sg.m., as Type II, and those with the suffix *-yo* in the 1.sg. forms, as Type III. The perfect and imperfect forms are given in the tables for Type I and II, and only one form for Type III, which does not distinguish between the perfect and imperfect (Hassan Kamil 2015: 295-296, 298, 307).

¹¹ These two forms are sufficient for categorizing conjugation types as explained in the next paragraph.

¹² Since we have not conducted any morphosyntactic analysis of these verbs, we tentatively follow Hassan Kamil’s interpretation of their tense, aspect, and mood.

Table 6a: Paradigm of Type I verb *e:rigeḥ* “to know”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	e:rigeḥ	a:rigeḥ
2.sg.	te:rigeḥ	ta:rigeḥ
3.sg.m.	ye:rigeḥ	ya:rigeḥ
3.sg.f.	te:rigeḥ	ta:rigeḥ
1.pl.	ne:rigeḥ	na:rigeḥ
2.pl.	te:rige:nih	ta:rige:nih
3.pl.	ye:rige:nih	ya:rige:nih

Table 6b: Paradigm of Type I verb *irgiṣeḥ* “to cut”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	irgiṣeḥ	argiṣeḥ
2.sg.	tirgiṣeḥ	targiṣeḥ
3.sg.m.	yirgiṣeḥ	yargiṣeḥ
3.sg.f.	tirgiṣeḥ	targiṣeḥ
1.pl.	nirgiṣeḥ	nargiṣeḥ
2.pl.	tirgiṣe:nih	targiṣe:nih
3.pl.	yirgiṣe:nih	yargiṣe:nih

Table 6c: Paradigm of Type I verb *usu:leḥ* “to laugh”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	usu:leḥ	asu:leḥ
2.sg.	tusu:leḥ	tasu:leḥ
3.sg.m.	yusu:leḥ	yasu:leḥ
3.sg.f.	tusu:leḥ	tasu:leḥ
1.pl.	nusu:leḥ	nasu:leḥ
2.pl.	tusu:le:nih	tasu:le:nih
3.pl.	yusu:le:nih	yasu:le:nih

Table 6d: Paradigm of Type I verb *obbeh* “to hear”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	obbeh	abbeh
2.sg.	tobbeh	tabbeh
3.sg.m.	yobbeh	yabbeh
3.sg.f.	tobbeh	tabbeh
1.pl.	nobbeh	nabbeh
2.pl.	tobbe:nih	tabbe:nih
3.pl.	yobbe:nih	yabbe:nih

Table 7: Paradigm of Type II verb *abeh* “to do, make”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	abeh	abah
2.sg.	abteh	abtah
3.sg.m.	abeh	abah
3.sg.f.	abteh	abtah
1.pl.	abneh	abnah
2.pl.	abte:nih	abta:nah
3.pl.	abe:nih	aba:nah

Table 8: Paradigm of Type III verbs *umah* “be bad” and *meſeh* “be good”

	<i>umah</i> “be bad”	<i>meſeh</i> “be good”
1.sg.	um(i)yoh	miſyoh
2.sg.	um(i)toh	miſtoh
3.sg.m.	umah	meſeh
3.sg.f.		
1.pl.	uminoh	miſnoh
2.pl.	umito:nuh	miſto:nuh
3.pl.	umo:nuh	moſo:nuh

Table 9: List of verbs¹³

Translation	Perfect		Imperfect		Type
	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	
be	sugeh	sugeh	yanih	anyoh	irregular
be bad			umah	um(i)yoh	III
be big			kaddah	kaddiyoh	III
be born	yo:bukeh	o:bukeh	ya:bukeh	a:bukeh	I
be crushed	yidd(i)gilleh	idd(i)gilleh	yadd(i)gilleh	add(i)gilleh	I
be good			meʿeh	miʿyoh	III
be hard			gibdih	gibdiyoh	III
be little			ʿundah	ʿundiyo	III
be startled	wiriggiteh	wiriggiteh	wiriggitah	wiriggitah	II
be thirsty	baka:riteh	baka:riteh	baka:ritah	baka:ritah	II
be tired	taʿbeh	taʿbeh	taʿbah	taʿbah	II
bear (child)	daleh	daleh	dalāh	dalāh	II
become fewer	daggo:weh	daggo:weh	daggo:wah	daggo:wah	II
boil	laʿseh	laʿseh	laʿsah	laʿsah	II
burn	ħarareh	ħarareh	ħararah	ħararah	II
buy	da:meh	da:meh	da:mah	da:mah	II
call	se:ħah	se:ħeh	se:ħeh	se:ħah	II
call out	de:riseh	de:riseh	de:risah	de:risah	II
can	du:deh	du:deh	du:dah	du:dah	II
chase	yeyreddeh	eyreddeh	yayraddeh	ayraddeh	I
climb	koreh	koreh	korah	korah	II
close	alfeh	alfeh	alfah	alfah	II
collect	ga:bo:seh	ga:bo:seh	ga:bo:sah	ga:bo:sah	II
come	yeme:teh	eme:teh	yama:teh	ama:teh	I
come out	yewʿeh	ewʿeh	yawʿeh	awʿeh	I
consider	ħubbuseh	ħubbuseh	ħubbusah	ħubbusah	II
count	lo:weh	lo:weh	lo:wah	lo:wah	II
crush	yigg(i)leh	igg(i)leh	yagg(i)leh	agg(i)leh	I
cut	yirgiʿeh	irgiʿeh	yargiʿeh	argiʿeh	I

¹³ The form common to the perfect and imperfect is given in the column of the imperfect for Type III verbs, since they do not distinguish between them.

Translation	Perfect		Imperfect		Type
	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	
descend	o:beh	o:beh	o:bah	o:bah	II
die	rabeh	rabeh	rabah	rabah	II
dig	dageh	dageh	dagah	dagah	II
do	abeh	abeh	abah	abah	II
drag	gi:teh	gi:teh	gi:tah	gi:tah	II
drink	yo:ʃubeh	o:ʃubeh	ya:ʃubeh	a:ʃubeh	I
dry (vt.)	kafeh	kafeh	kafah	kafah	II
eat	yoxmeh	oxmeh	yaxmeh	axmeh	I
enter	ħuleh	ħuleh	ħulah	ħulah	II
escape	kudeh	kudeh	kudah	kudah	II
exist	sugeh	sugeh	kinnih	kinniyoh	irregular
fall	radeh	radeh	radah	radah	II
fear	mi:siteh	mi:siteh	mi:sitah	mi:sitah	II
fight	yo:meh	o:meh	ya:meh	a:meh	I
fly	ha:deh	ha:deh	ha:dsh	ha:dah	II
forget	hawwe:neh	hawwe:neh	hawwe:nah	hawwe:nah	II
get angry	ħe:reh	ħe:reh	ħe:rah	ħe:rah	II
get fat	gableh	gableh	gablah	gablah	II
get, meet	geh	geh	geyah	geyah	II
give	yeħeh	eħeh	yaħeh	aħeh	I
go	gereh	gereh	gerah	gerah	II
go rotten	yo:meh	o:meh	ya:meh	a:meh	I
grow, grow up	yembeh	embeh	yambeh	ambeh	I
have			leh	liyoh	III
heal	ureh	ureh	urah	urah	II
hear	yobbeh	obbeh	yabbeh	abbeh	I
help	ħateh	ħateh	ħatah	ħatah	II
inform	warseh	warseh	warsah	warsah	II
jump	kaʃteh	kaʃteh	kaʃtah	kaʃtah	II
know	ye:righ	e:righ	ya:righ	a:righ	I
laugh	yusu:leh	usu:leh	yasu:leh	asu:leh	I

Translation	Perfect		Imperfect		Type
	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	
like, desire	fareh	fareh	farah	farah	II
listen	ankaḥiseh	ankaḥiseh	ankaḥisah	ankaḥisah	II
look	wagteḥ	wagteḥ	wagtaḥ	wagtaḥ	II
lose	gaḥeh	gaḥeh	gaḥah	gaḥah	II
make, repair	biḥseh	biḥseh	biḥsah	biḥsah	II
move (vi.)	yengeyyeh	engeyyeh	yangayyeh	angayyeh	I
move (vt.), shake	yesgeyyeh	esgeyyeh	yasgayyeh	asgayyeh	I
play	digreḥ	digreḥ	digraḥ	digraḥ	II
pull	hirgeh	hirgeh	hiraḥ	hiraḥ	II
push	gutṣeh	gutṣeh	gutṣah	gutṣah	II
put	heh	heh	haḥ	haḥ	II
read	yiyriyeh ¹⁴	iyrijeḥ	yaḥriyeh	aḥrijeḥ	I
release, open	fakēh	fakēh	fakaḥ	fakaḥ	II
ride	beh	beyeh	beyah	beyah	II
roast, toast, bake	ḥarriseḥ	ḥarriseḥ	ḥarrisah	ḥarrisah	II
run	yerdeḥ	erdeḥ	yardēḥ	ardeḥ	I
say	iyyeh	erḥeh	iyyah	arḥeh	irregular
search	gonniseḥ	gonniseḥ	gonnisah	gonnisah	II
see	yubleḥ	ubleḥ	yableḥ	ableḥ	I
seize	yibbreḥ	ibbreḥ	yabbreḥ	abbreḥ	I
sell	yeylemmeh	eylemmeh	yaɣlammeh	aylammeh	I
set free	ḥabeh	ḥabeh	ḥabah	ḥabah	II
shout	ka:yeh	ka:yeh	ka:yah	ka:yah	II
show	yeybulleḥ	eybulleḥ	yaɣbulleḥ	aybulleḥ	I
sit (vi.)	daffeyeh	daffeyeh	daffeyah	daffeyah	II
sit (vt.)	daffeyseh	daffeyseh	daffeysah	daffeysah	II
sleep	di:neh	di:neh	di:nah	di:nah	II
smell	suryeh	suryeh	suryah	suryah	II
stand (vi.)	so:leh	so:leh	so:lah	so:lah	II

¹⁴ y occurs only in loan words from Arabic. According to our informant, some people would use g instead of y.

Translation	Perfect		Imperfect		Type
	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	3.sg.m.	1.sg.	
starve	saʕiteh	saʕiteh	saʕitah	saʕitah	II
stay	sugeh	sugeh	sugah	sugah	II
steal	garʕeh	garʕeh	garʕah	garʕah	II
strike	yo:gureh	o:gureh	ya:gureh	a:gureh	I
take	beh	beh	beyah	beyah	II
take a nap	sila:liteh	sila:liteh	sila:litah	sila:litah	II
take off	kaleh	kaleh	kalah	kalah	II
talk	ya:beh	ya:beh	ya:bah	ya:bah	II
teach	barseh	barseh	barsah	barsah	II
tear	ʕandi:seh	ʕandi:seh	ʕandi:sah	ʕandi:sah	II
think	yekkeleh	ekkeleh	yakkaleh	akkaleh	I
thrash	ansariseh	ansariseh	ansarisah	ansarisah	II
throw, kill	ʕideh	ʕideh	ʕidah	ʕidah	II
thrust	kumseh	kumseh	kumsah	kumsah	II
tie	yereh	ereh	yareh	areh	I
touch	dageh	dageh	dagah	dagah	II
tread	ye:ʕiteh	e:ʕiteh	ya:ʕiteh	a:ʕiteh	I
vomit	alliteh	alliteh	allitah	allitah	II
wait	ʕamba:leh	ʕamba:leh	ʕamba:lah	ʕamba:lah	II
wake up	ugteh	ugteh	ugtah	ugtah	II
wash	kaʕliseh	kaʕliseh	kaʕlisah	kaʕlisah	II
win	yeyseh	eyseh	yayseh	ayseh	I
wipe	du:geh	du:geh	du:gah	du:gah	II
work	ta:miteh	ta:miteh	ta:mitah	ta:mitah	II
write	yuxtubeh ¹⁵	uxtubeh	yaxtubeh	axtubeh	I

¹⁵ According to our informant, some people would use *k* instead of *x*.

4 Discussion

4.1 Type I verbs

Figure 1 is the position class chart of Type I verbs.

Slot -1	Slot 0	Slot +1	Slot +2
Subject 1	Stem	Subject 2	Indicative
(Table 10)		(Table 10)	<i>h</i>

Figure 1: Position class chart of Type I verb conjugations

Slot -1 and +1 constitute pronominal circumfixes which agree with the subject of the verb as in the table below. Hassan Kamil analyzed Slot -1 as a morpheme indicating the person of the subject (IP), and Slot +1, as a combination of a formative *-e* and a morpheme indicating the number of the subject (IN). Since Hassan Kamil (2015: 295) does not seem to consider the formative *-e* to be a morpheme and since IN does not apply to the first person and the subject is always marked by the combined set of Slot -1 and +1, however, we propose the following analysis:

Table 10: Pronominal circumfixes of Type I verb

	Slot -1	Slot +1
1.sg.	∅	e
2.sg.	t	e
3.sg.m.	y	e
3.sg.f.	t	e
1.pl.	n	e
2.pl.	t	e:ni ¹⁶
3.pl.	y	e:ni

The stem marks the imperfect aspect by means of alternation of its initial vowel. Hassan Kamil (2015: 295) analyzed that both the perfect and imperfect are marked by the apophony and vocalic harmony as shown in Table 2. The vowels allegedly marking the perfect, however, are identical with those of their imperative counterpart¹⁷. This means that these vowels do not mark a specific grammatical category but the lack of the imperfect aspect marked by *a*. Besides, the quality of the vowel in the perfect is not

¹⁶ The short form mentioned in Footnote 4 above does not exist in our informant's dialect. This applies also to Tables 12 and 14.

¹⁷ The imperative of *e:rigeh* "to know," *irgiŕeh* "to cut," *usu:leh* "to laugh," and *obbeh* "to hear" are *e.rig*, *irgiŕ*, *usu:l*, and *obbi* respectively. A handful of verbs do not conform to this pattern: e.g. *a:ŕub* for *o:ŕubeh* "to drink," *axum* for *oxmeh* "to eat."

predictable as already noticed by Bliese (1981: 111). For these reasons, we confirm the idea of Bliese (1981: 113) that those vowels are a part of the verbal stem rather than a morpheme indicating the perfect aspect.

According to our informant, the suffix *-h* in Slot +2 follows affirmative forms of the perfect and imperfect, but does not follow their negative counterparts (Table 11), the imperative (see Footnote 17) as well as interrogative forms (e.g. *ta:rige:?* “Do you know?,” *te:rige:?* “Did you know?”), conditional forms (e.g. *ta:rigek(i)* “if you know”), relative forms (e.g. *a:rige num* “the person that I know,” *e:rige num* “the person that I knew”). We tentatively call this morpheme *-h* “indicative”. Actually, Hassan Kamil (2015) refers to the conjunctive =*h* and the assertive enclitic =*h*. The former follows the conjugated complement of auxiliaries such as *en* and *suge* in some periphrastic constructions (Hassan Kamil 2015: 312-331). The latter is obligatory when *ímmay* “surely” stands at the end of a sentence, and allows the speaker to assert something with conviction (Hassan Kamil 2015: 382). It can also be used in a sentence consisting solely of a single verb with no explicit subject (Hassan Kamil 2015: 423). According to our informant, however, our “indicative” *-h* in Slot +2 is not necessarily used with auxiliaries or modal adverbs. On the other hand, it can be used with an explicit subject. Moreover, as it can be attached exclusively to a verb, it is a verbal suffix rather than an enclitic. For these reasons, we regard the suffix *-h* in Slot +2 a different morpheme from Hassan Kamil’s conjunctive =*h* and assertive enclitic =*h*.

Table 11: Negative Paradigm of Type I verb *e:rigēh* “to know”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	ma:riginn ^{yo}	ma:riga
2.sg.	ma:riginnito	mata:riga
3.sg.m.	ma:riginna	maya:riga
3.sg.f.	ma:riginna	mata:riga
1.pl.	ma:riginnino	mana:riga
2.pl.	ma:riginnito:nu	mata:riga:na
3.pl.	ma:riginno:nu	maya:riga:na

4.2 Type II verbs

Figure 2 is the position class chart of Type II verbs.

Slot 0	Slot +1	Slot +2
Stem	Subject and Aspect	Indicative
	(Table 12)	<i>h</i>

Figure 2: Position class chart of Type II verb conjugations

Slot +1 is a fusion of pronominal element(s), which agree with the subject of the verb, and aspect marker(s) as in Table 12. Hassan Kamil (2015: 296) divides Slot +1 into IP, an aspect marker, and IN. Since IN does not apply to the first person and the subject is always marked by the combined set of his IP and IN, and since the aspect is marked by two incontiguous vowels (*e-i* in the perfect and *a-a* in the imperfect) in the 2.pl. and 3.pl. forms, however, we propose the following analysis:

Table 12: Fusional affixes of Type II verb (Slot +1)

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	e	a
2.sg.	te	ta
3.sg.m.	e	a
3.sg.f.	te	ta
1.pl.	ne	na
2.pl.	te:ni	ta:na
3.pl.	e:ni	a:na

According to our informant, the statement about the indicative suffix *-h* of Type I also applies to Type II verbs. It follows affirmative forms of the perfect and imperfect, but does not follow their negative counterparts (Table 13), the imperative (e.g. *ab* “Do/Make!”) as well as interrogative forms (e.g. *abta:?* “Do you do/make?,” *abte:?* “Did you do/make?”), conditional forms (e.g. *abtek(i)* “if you do/make”), relative forms (e.g. *aba tiya* “the thing that I do/make,” *abe tiya* “the thing that I did/made”).

Table 13: Negative Paradigm of Type II verb *abeh* “to do, make”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	ma:binno	ma:ba
2.sg.	ma:binno	ma:bta
3.sg.m.	ma:binna	ma:ba
3.sg.f.	ma:binna	ma:bta
1.pl.	ma:binno	ma:bna
2.pl.	ma:binno:nu	ma:bta:na
3.pl.	ma:binno:nu	ma:ba:na

4.3 Type III verbs

In Table 9 above, we have six Type III verbs, i.e. *gibdiyoh* “to be hard,” *kaddiyoh* “to be big,” *liyoh* “to have,” *meŕeyoh* “to be good,” *umah* “to be bad,” and *ŕundiyoh* “to be little.” As Hassan Kamil (2015: 295) mentions, Type III verbs are also called stative verbs. Stative verbs typically do not take a direct object, but *liyoh* does as in (1):

- (1) *anu* *maki:na* *l-iyoh*
 I car have-1.sg.-ind.
 I have a car.

Figure 3 is the position class chart of Type III verbs. It does not have the slot for aspect, since Type III does not distinguish between the perfect and imperfect unlike Type I and II as mentioned above.

Slot 0	Slot +1	Slot +2
Stem	Subject	Indicative
	(Table 14)	<i>h</i>

Figure 3: Position class chart of Type III verb conjugations

Hassan Kamil (2015: 296) divides Slot +1 into IP and IN. As in the case of Type II, IN does not apply to the first person and the subject is always marked by the combined set of his IP and IN. Thus, we propose the following analysis:

Table 14: Pronominal suffixes of Type III verbs

1.sg.	(i)yo
2.sg.	(i)to
3.sg.m.	V
3.sg.f.	
1.pl.	(i)no
2.pl.	(i)to:nu
3.pl.	o:nu

Type III does not indicate the gender at all as mentioned above. These suffixes differ from those of Type II, the reason for which is unclear to us¹⁸. Judging from the data at hand, the V in the 3.sg. tends to be identical to the stem vowel¹⁹ unless the stem vowel is *u*²⁰.

The epenthetic vowel *i* occurs under two conditions. First, it occurs to avoid illegal consonant clusters such as -CCC- and #CC-²¹: e.g. *gibd+yo+h* → *gibdiyoh*, *kadd+to+h* → *kadditoh*, *l+no+h* → *linoh*. Second, it occurs by attraction from the preceding sonorant: e.g. *um+yo+h* → *um(i)yoh*, *um+no+h* → *uminoh*.

According to our informant, the statement about the indicative suffix *-h* of Type I also applies to Type III verbs. It follows affirmative forms, but does not follow their negative counterparts (Table 15) as well as interrogative forms (e.g. *miʃto:?* “Are you good?”), conditional forms (e.g. *miʃtok(u)* “if you are good”), relative forms (e.g. *liyo maki:na* “the car that I have”).

Table 15: Negative Paradigm of Type III verb *miʃyoh* “to be good”

1.sg.	mamiʃyo
2.sg.	mamiʃto
3.sg.m.	mameʃe
3.sg.f.	
1.pl.	mamiʃno
2.pl.	mamiʃto:nu
3.pl.	mamoʃo:nu

¹⁸ For a possible historical account, see Hassan Kamil (2015: 306).

¹⁹ This tendency can be confirmed by additional examples such as *nabah* “he/she/it is great,” *ʃasah* “he/she/it is red,” *datah* “he/she/it is black,” *sissikih* “he/she/it is fast”; but this is not always the case, e.g. *qe:rih* “he/she/it is tall” (additional data). For the stem with no vowel, the V in the 3.sg. appears to be *e* (e.g. *leh* “he/she/it has”), although we have only a single such example at hand.

²⁰ If the stem vowel is *u*, the V tends to be *a*, e.g. *umah* “he/she/it is bad,” *ʃundah* “he/she/it is little,” *ʃusbah* “he/she/it is new” (additional data); but this is not always the case, e.g. *uxxih* “he/she/it is short” (additional data).

²¹ For legal syllable structures in Afar, see Hassan Kamil (2015: 97-103).

Periphrastic construction is used to express perfect states. The construction consists of a form derived from the verb followed by the ending *-uk* and the perfect form of verb *sugeh* “to stay” as in (2).²²

- (2) a. *muʃuk sug-e-h*
 good stay-1/3.sg.m.-ind.
 I/He/It was good.
- b. *anu ʃunduk sug-e-h*
 I young stay-1.sg.m.-ind.
 I was young.

4.3 Irregular verbs

In Table 9 above, we have three irregular verbs, i.e. anyoh “to be,” kinniyoh “to exist,” and erʃeh “to say.”

Table 16: Paradigm of *anyoh* “to be”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	sugeh	anyoh
2.sg.	sugteh	tanitoh
3.sg.m.	sugeh	yanih/yan
3.sg.f.	sugteh	tanih/tan
1.pl.	sugneh	naninoh
2.pl.	sugte:nih	tanito:nuh
3.pl.	suge:nih	yaniyo:nuh

Table 17: Paradigm of *kinniyoh* “to exist”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	sugeh	kinniyoh
2.sg.	sugteh	kinnitoh
3.sg.m.	sugeh	kinnih
3.sg.f.	sugteh	kinnih
1.pl.	sugneh	kinninoh
2.pl.	sugte:nih	kinnito:nuh
3.pl.	suge:nih	kinno:nuh

²² The same periphrastic construction is used to express the past progressive with Type I and II verbs.

Table 18: Paradigm of *erḥeh* “to say”

	Perfect	Imperfect
1.sg.	erḥeh	arḥeh
2.sg.	itteh	ittah
3.sg.m.	iyyeh	iyyah
3.sg.f.	itteh	ittah
1.pl.	inneh	innah
2.pl.	itte:nih	itta:nah
3.pl.	iyye:nih	iyya:nah

These three verbs are irregular in that they have suppletive forms. For *anyoh* and *kinniyoh*, the perfect forms of *sugeh* are used all through their perfect paradigms. *erḥeh* has suppletive forms only in the 1.sg. It is to be noted that the suppletive forms take Type I-like circumfix, while the rest conjugate like Type II verbs. Besides, *kinniyoh* takes Type III suffixes in the imperfect forms, while *anyoh* is characterized by double marking of its subject by means of Type I-like prefixes and Type III suffixes.

4 Conclusions

Based on freshly collected data of 114 verbs, we revised the verbal morphology as proposed by Hassan Kamil (2015) in the following points:

- i. We have proposed a more fusional analysis for all three types of Afar verbs;
- ii. We have confirmed the unmarked nature of the vowels allegedly marking the perfect;
- iii. We have identified a new morpheme *-h*, which differs from Hassan Kamil’s conjunctive *=h* and assertive enclitic *=h*;
- iv. We have noticed a tendency about the realization of the final vowel of the Type III 3.sg. forms.

These contribute towards a more coherent analysis of Afar verbal morphology.

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