

## Survey on the Noun Morphology of ‘Ale\*

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### Abstract

‘Ale is grouped under the Lowland East Cushitic group, and the morphology of the language has not been described in detail, so the main purpose of this article is to describe the different morphological features of the nouns. Nouns in ‘Ale are vowel ending, and the terminal vowels determine the class of the nouns, i.e. they show the feminine and masculine values. In some cases, there are nouns which have feminine form, but they include masculine value. Nouns in ‘Ale neither begin with consonant cluster nor end with a single consonant or a consonant cluster. Consonant cluster is possible at word medial position. In ‘Ale, compound nouns are formed by the combination of NOUN+NOUN, NOUN+VERB and NOUN+ADJECTIVE. In most cases, the semantic nature of compound nouns considers the meaning of parts of the compounds. In compounding, parts of the compound nouns can be interrupted by morphological markers for definiteness and plurality. The compound nouns also receive the locative case marker. Nouns in ‘Ale are inflected for definiteness, number, gender and case. Both singular and plural nouns are morphologically marked for definiteness. The number system has two forms: singular and plural. The singular nouns are not morphologically marked for singularity, and they receive the morphemes {-ko} and {-te} for masculine and feminine forms respectively. Gender in ‘Ale has two forms: lexically and morphologically represented forms for distinguishing between masculine and feminine. There are different cases, such as accusative, dative, ablative, instrumental, etc., which are morphologically represented. Nouns in ‘Ale

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\* The abbreviations in this article: 1 = first person, 3 = third person, ABL = ablative, ACC = accusative, AUX = auxiliary verb, COM = comitative, DAT = dative, DEF = definite, DEM = demonstrative, DIM = diminutive, EP = epenthesis, F = feminine, FOC = focus, GEN = genitive, IMPF = imperfective, INST = instrumental, LINK = linkage, LOC = locative, M = masculine, PF = perfective, PL = plural, REL = relative, SG = singular.

are derived from adjectives, verbs and other nouns. Derived nouns include morphological markers. Some deverbal nouns like instrumental nouns exhibit certain irregularity in the formation. Finally, diminutive is mainly used to express intimacy. Nouns in their diminutive form do not alter their masculine and feminine values.

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 The People**

The ‘Ale people live in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, Peoples’ Region (for short SNNPR). The people came from an original place called *Awgaroo*. As Geniso (2011: 1) indicated, the ‘Ale have settled on both highland and lowland areas bordering Ts’amay to the west and southwest, Konso to the south and southeast, and Derashe to the north and northeast.

According to Geniso (2011: 1), since 1987 following a new administrative division in the region, members of the ethnic group have had been living in seven *kebele* (i.e. village) farmers’ associations in Konso special *woreda* (i.e. district) and ten *kebele* farmers’ associations in Derashe special *woreda*. The seven *kebele* farmers’ associations under Konso special *woreda* called themselves *Gawada* and the ten *kebele* farmers’ associations under Derashe called themselves *Dobase*. ‘Ale is a common name representing the seventeen *kebele* farmers’ associations today.

The ‘Ale people speak ‘Ale language which they call *Pago Alatte*. Most of the ‘Ale people also speak Konso, Amharic and Afaan Oromo as their second languages. According to the official letter written by the SNNPR regional government (Ref. No. 22/000231/3545, 20/05/2002E.C.), the ‘Ale nationality has formed its own administration as ‘Ale Woreda.

### **1.2 The Language**

The ‘Ale language is one of the languages of the Lowland East Cushitic within the Cushitic family of the Afro-Asiatic phylum (Black 1976, Tosco 2007, Zelalem 2013, Dawit 2005 and Geberew 2003). ‘Ale is one of the least studied languages of the Lowland East Cushitic group. In some studies of the language like Geberew (2003), Haregeweyin (2003) and Dawit (2005), the name given to the language is ‘Gawwada’. However, as reported by Zelalem (2013: 1) and Yoshino (2013: 82),

the language came to be named 'Alette or 'Ale (alternatively, 'Alle as in Yoshino 2013) since the people together are called 'Ale, and *Gawwada* should remain to be the name of a place. 'Ale has two different dialect groups: the lowland dialect group in the lowland areas and the highland dialect group in the highland areas, and their dialectical differences include some phonological changes and lexical representations.

Even though scholars agreed that this language belongs to the Lowland East Cushitic group, they have shown some differences on the classification of the language. Bender (1971: 187) in his work attempted to show where the language is classified, and he pointed out that *Gawwada* (currently called 'Ale) is classified in the Werizoid group, which consists of Werize, *Gawwada*, Gobeze, and Tsamai. In addition, he put the group under the Oromoid Lowland East Cushitic classification. On the other hand, Bender et al. (1976: 43) claimed that Gobeze, Werize and *Gawwada* are put under the sub-classification of *Gawwada* languages of the South Oromo of Lowland East Cushitic.

In contrast to the above classification, Black (1976) has come with the Werizoid group as an independent third division of the East Cushitic family, but Dawit (2005) claimed that *Gawwada* should be placed with Konso rather than as a third branch of East Cushitic family. According to Haregeweyin (2003), it was classified Werizoid under the Konsoid group and declared *Gawwada* as a member of Konsoid languages. On the other hand, Tosco (2007: 505) showed that *Gawwada* is part of the Dullay dialect clusters and spoken in the southwest of Ethiopia. The Dullay group is made up of Dullay and Yaaku, which is called the 'Transversal Southern Lowland East Cushitic'. Within the Dullay, two divisions occurred: the western division which includes Ts'ammako and *Gawwada* and the eastern one which comprises Harso and Dobeze. Thus, Tosco reported that the Dullay dialects are not written, and *Gawwada* nowadays is used as a cover term for all the Dullay-speaking groups except the Ts'ammako, who live in the western bank of the Weyto River.

### **1.3 'Ale Woreda**

In the former administration, the 'Ale people were administered in two different *woredas*: Derashe and Konso *woredas*. The Derashe *woreda* administered ten *kebeles*, and the 'Ale people who had been under Derashe and who inhabited the highland areas were called 'Ale *Haparparo*. On the other hand, the seven *kebeles* were administered by the Konso *woreda*, and the 'Ale people who had been part

of the Konso *woreda* were referred to as ‘*Ale Gora*’.

However, the Gawwada society and the Dobase considered themselves one people, and this integration has also been shown in the 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia (Central Agency of Statistics 2007). As Zelalem (2013: 1) showed in his thesis, the Gawwada along with the Dobase, who live in Derashe special *woreda*, which is neighboring Konso, have claimed that they are one people. As a result, in the current administration, because the ‘Ale society got the right to organize self-administration, they finally formed a new *woreda* ‘Ale Woreda’. The two groups of people who had been named differently have decided to be called ‘Ale, and this has been done with the help of elders from both groups of people. Since Wolango is still under construction, which is to be the center of the new *woreda* administration, the biggest town Gawwada is the temporary *woreda* center. The new *woreda* administration has commenced its service since January 2011. It sends representative of ‘Ale to the Ethiopian parliament.

#### 1.4 Literature

There are some researches done on different linguistic features of the language. There are, of course, two important works done on the morphology of ‘Ale, and they are directly related to the work of this article. *The Morphology of Gawwada* by Geberew (2003) is the first attempt to describe the morphological features of ‘Ale. He described the possible consonant clusters, and ‘Ale words neither begin nor end with consonant clusters and the maximum consonant cluster allowed word medially is two. For example: *gando* ‘grass’, *emte* ‘sheep’, *kodampako* ‘worker’ and *talte* ‘goat’. ‘Ale nouns inflect for gender, number, definiteness and case.

Tosco (2007) is another reviewed work, and he has described the derivation of nouns and their inflectional properties. He has also showed that gender and number interact and form a system of three noun classes: masculine, feminine and plural as in the following examples:

- (1) *ano ħo piša*  
I REL:M be.white:M  
‘I am white (M).’
  
- (2) *ano te pišay*  
I REL:F be.white:F  
‘I am white (F).’

- (3) *ine he piŋoma*  
we REL:PL be.white:PL  
'We are white (PL).'

### 1.5 Data Collection

The data on nouns were collected during the fieldwork conducted by the author in 2014. The author had two informants who came from Gawwada village. The first informant is called Gonacho who is a student in civil engineering at Addis Ababa University, and the second informant is called Aschenaki Gebreab who has been working in an office in Gawwada and currently who has moved to Addis Ababa for his masters' program. The data which have been collected are mainly from the lowland dialect. There was also a person called Nigusse Gusse who learned linguistics at Addis Ababa University and who has helped us in checking the data the author collected from the informants.

## 2 The Nature of 'Ale Nouns

Nouns in 'Ale are open class words. They are a class of words which contains the names of persons, places, animals, flowers and plants, and things. Syntactically, nouns in 'Ale can be followed by modifiers like adjectives, quantifiers, numerals and relative clauses, or by various postnominal elements to indicate syntactic roles such as an accusative case.

- (4) A. *mat'afa lakki*  
book two  
'two books' (NOUN+NUMERAL)
- B. *mat'afa-de da?ama / damma*  
book-PL many / many  
'many books'
- C. *fawho-sa koru*  
man-DEM that  
'that man'
- D. *harro pi?a / bi?a*  
dog white / white  
'white dog'

(5) *ǧawhosi harrosisi poǧi*

*ǧawho-si* [harro-si-si poǧ-i]

man-DEM [dog-DEM-ACC kill-3SG.M:PF]

‘The man who killed the dog’

In ‘Ale, nouns of both simple and complex forms are distinguished based on their terminal vowels /a, e, i, o, u/. In other words, the language allows all vowels to act as terminal vowels in the nouns, but their degree of occurrence with nouns greatly varies. For example, nouns which end in the terminal vowel /u/ are very rare, and also those nouns which end in the terminal vowel /i/ are still small in number. There are also nouns which start with vowels. Consider the following examples in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Noun	Terminal vowel	Gloss	Noun	Terminal vowel	Gloss
<i>t’irako</i>	-o	man	<i>monto</i>	-o	sky
<i>pápo</i>	-o	father	<i>horno</i>	-o	foam
<i>fambo</i>	-o	boy	<i>kit’awo</i>	-o	bed bug
<i>warfo</i>	-o	people	<i>soribako</i>	-o	hawk
<i>sigite</i>	-e	pot	<i>ǧaat’e</i>	-e	world
<i>fooxe</i>	-e	urine	<i>loome</i>	-e	lemon
<i>t’irp’e</i>	-e	anus	<i>hante</i>	-e	bride
<i>maama</i>	-a	aunt	<i>pasara</i>	-a	namesake
<i>aaja</i>	-a	lie, false	<i>kaka</i>	-a	maternal grandmother
<i>xafappi</i>	-i	knot	<i>hofabadi</i>	-i	soldier
<i>honaǰakadi</i>	-i	stool	<i>gujju</i>	-u	today

With regard to deverbal nouns, some terminal vowels may also come with verb roots in order to derive nominalized entities. There is a terminal vowel /e/ which is mainly used to form action nouns from verb roots as in *foχ-* ‘to wash’ and *foχ-e* ‘washing’.

In ‘Ale, the occurrence of some terminal vowels with nouns is semantically determined. For example, the terminal vowel /e/ comes with nouns which are semantically feminine as in the noun *ǧet-e* ‘daughter’ and the noun *jajj-e* ‘mother’.

On the other hand, the terminal vowel /o/ comes with nouns which are semantically masculine as in the noun *pap-o* ‘father’ and the noun *ʃamb-o* ‘boy’. Hence, the above data show the link between feminine gender and the terminal vowel /e/ and the relationship between masculine gender and the terminal vowel /o/.

## 2.1 Structure of ‘Ale nouns

In the language, there are both simple and complex nouns. As for simple nouns, disyllabic and trisyllabic nouns are the most common of ‘Ale nouns. They cannot be further broken down into meaningful units. Some examples are given below in Table 2.

**Table 2**

<i>papo</i>	father	<i>jajjite</i>	woman
<i>ʃite</i>	daughter	<i>miʔaje</i>	child
<i>manne</i>	house	<i>ʃaringo</i>	eldest, first born
<i>daamo</i>	flour	<i>pasara</i>	namesake.

Some quadrisyllabic nouns have also been attested in ‘Ale. The following in Table 3 are taken from the corpus.

**Table 3**

<i>akkawane</i>	grandparent
<i>kereʔako</i>	thief
<i>simaabalo</i>	meaning.

Nouns in the ‘Ale lexicon include many loanwords from neighboring languages. They are frequently used in a day-to-day speech. The great majority of the loanwords come from Amharic, Afaan Oromo and Konso. Loanwords from English language have also been attested.

**Table 4**

‘Ale	Amharic	Gloss
<i>kibrite</i>	ክብሪት	match
<i>mat’afa</i>	መጽሀፍ	book

**Table 5**

‘Ale	Afaan Oromo	Gloss
<i>mark’a</i>	mark’aa	porridge
<i>k’orifa</i>	k’orifa	medicine

**Table 6**

‘Ale	Konso	Gloss
<i>tehakko</i>	tahajta	sand
<i>tar?o</i>	tara	ash

**Table 7**

‘Ale	English
<i>isporte</i>	sport
<i>polise</i>	police

Complex nouns are likely to be compound nouns. The meaning of both words, in most cases, is clear to speakers of ‘Ale. In the language, compound words include words which are either from the same word class or from different word classes. For instance, compound nouns in the language may include words from the same class (NOUN+NOUN) (A–C in (6)) and from different word classes (NOUN+ADJECTIVE or NOUN+VERB) (D and E in (6), respectively).

- (6) A. *jaajje* + *bitene* → *jaje bitene*  
 mother injera ‘step mother’
- B. *papo* + *bitene* → *papo bitene*  
 father injera ‘step father’
- C. *jajje* + *mannete* → *jajje mannete*  
 wife house ‘house wife’
- D. *manne* + *fooxete* → *manne fooxete*  
 house peeing.LOC ‘toilet’
- E. *igaahko* + *damma* → *igaahko damma*  
 stone large ‘rock’

In ‘Ale, some grammatical features like definiteness and number can interrupt words in the compound nouns. The leftmost word in the compound nouns receive the morpheme {-si} for definiteness and the morpheme {-de} for plurality. Consider the following examples of compound nouns which are inflected for definiteness.

- (7) A. *manne fooxete*  
 house peeing.LOC  
 ‘a toilet’ (*lit.* a house of peeing)

- B. *manne-si*            *fooxete*  
house-DEF            peeing.LOC  
'the toilet' (*lit.* the house of peeing)
- C. *igaahko damma*  
stone      large  
'a rock' (*lit.* a large stone)
- D. *iggaahko-si*        *damma*  
stone-DEF            large  
'the rock' (*lit.* the large stone)

Compound nouns also show number distinction. The following examples illustrate how compound nouns are inflected for number.

- (8) A. *manne gollangito*  
house      education.LOC  
'a school' (*lit.* a house of education)
- B. *manne-de*            *gollangito*  
house-PL            education.LOC  
'schools' (*lit.* houses of education)

## 2.2 Semantic classes of nouns

Nouns have different semantic properties. There are nouns which refer to human, as in *gawho* 'human', *warfo* 'people', *t'irako* 'man' and *jajjite* 'woman'. There are also personal names as in *malale*, *guja?o* and *kutata* for male, and *kattana*, *tamanafe* and *tawasa* for female. There are nouns referring to professional titles as in *hofabadi* 'soldier', *intawambako* 'leader' and *kodmanbako* 'servant'.

There are also nouns which refer to body parts, as in *minte* 'face', *teme* 'eyebrow', *toomo* 'bridge of nose', *k'amte* 'ear', *buk'?ate* 'head' and *kawkawwe* 'jaw'. Nouns which refer to animals are mainly disyllabic or trisyllabic like *haro* 'dog', *lo?o* 'cow', *ardo* 'ox', *luume* 'pig', *kormo* 'lion', and *tawo* 'snake'.

There are nouns which refer to plants, vegetables and flowers, as in *karko* 'tree', *afko* 'grass', *tuma* 'garlic', *nayya* 'tomato', and *piso* 'flower'. There are also three possible forms of kinship terms: consanguineal kinship terms like *papo* 'father', *jajje* 'mother', and *maama* 'aunt'; filial kinship terms like *t'irako* 'husband', *nahaje* 'wife', and *mi?aje* and *o?o* 'child or son'; affinal kinship terms like *χkins* 'daughter-in-law', *soggite* 'mother-in-law' and *garme* 'brother-in-law'.

In ‘Ale, location nouns have a similar role as the English prepositions like ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘on top of’, etc. They are used to show horizontal or vertical locations and inside or outside of places. In the structure of the language, the location nouns occur following the nouns.

- (9) *k’ajhosi manne kittate i?aga.*  
*k’ajho-si manne kittate i-?ag-a*  
 man-DEF manne in 3-AUX-3SG.M:IMPF  
 ‘The man is in the house.’
- (10) *mat’afasi tarapesa saapete i?aga.*  
*mat’afa-si tarapesa saapete i-?ag-a*  
 book-DEF table on 3-AUX-3SG.M:IMPF  
 ‘The book is on the shelf.’
- (11) *ine manne kittate an?agni.*  
*ine manne kittate an-?ag-ni*  
 we house inside 1-AUX-1PL:PF  
 ‘We are inside the house.’

Time nouns are analyzed as nouns because their distribution is the same as nouns. Most of the time nouns are deictic (also called temporal shifters). The deictic centre is expressed through the time of speaking. The basic time nouns are illustrated in Table 8.

**Table 8**

Basic time nouns	Gloss
<i>singano</i>	morning
<i>guja?ate</i>	day
<i>awne</i>	night or evening
<i>torba</i>	week
<i>le?ajo ~ le?awo</i>	month
<i>perko</i>	year

### 2.3 Inflections of nouns

As found cross-linguistically common, ‘Ale nouns are inflected for different grammatical categories, such as number, gender, definiteness and case. When nouns are inflected for different grammatical features, they exhibit the following possible order of inflectional properties:

NOUN—GENDER—NUMBER—DEFINITENESS—CASE.

With regard to number, ‘Ale has a two-way number marking system: singular and plural. Singularity with nouns is not morphologically marked, and it is expressed by a zero morpheme that contrasts with the plural morphemes. Consider the following sentential examples for singulars.

(12) *gawhosi mat’afa ipitami.*

*gawho-si mat’afa i-pitam-i*  
man-DEF book 3-buy-3SG.M:PF

‘The man bought a book.’

(13) *t’irakosi fetesi ifigadi.*

*t’irako-si fite-si i-ff’igad-i*  
man-DEF girl-DEF 3-love-3SG.M:PF

‘The man loved the girl.’

In ‘Ale, the plurality of nouns is expressed in three different ways. The first way of expressing plurality is suppletion (i.e. by lexical representations where no plural marker is added to the nouns). Most of the time, these nouns are animate [+human] nouns. Consider the following examples in Table 9.

**Table 9**

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
<i>loho</i>	person	<i>koro / warfo</i>	people
<i>fite</i>	girl	<i>ihade</i>	girls
<i>o?o</i>	son	<i>dele</i>	sons

In the second case, there are nouns that lose the final syllable in their plural form, and in most cases, these syllables are morphemes {-ko}, {-to} and {-te}. Thus, these plural forms of nouns have the single vowel morpheme {-e} at word boundaries. Here, we can say that nouns ending with the above final syllables are likely to take the terminal vowel morpheme {-e} for their plural counterparts. Consider the following examples of nouns.

**Table 10**

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
<i>t’irr-a-ko</i>	man	<i>t’ir-e</i>	men
<i>hisk-a-to</i>	woman	<i>hisk-e</i>	women
<i>atturr-i-te</i>	cat	<i>atturr-e</i>	cats

Another way of expressing plurality in ‘Ale is by using morphological markers. There are two morphological markers that are used to form the plural form of nouns: {-ide} or {-ade} or {-ge}. The nouns ending in terminal vowels /e, o, a/ tend to have these morphological markers. When these markers are suffixed to the nouns, the terminal vowel of the nouns gets changed or deleted. Consider the following examples of nouns in Table 11.

**Table 11**

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
<i>famb-o</i>	boy	<i>famb-ide</i>	boys
<i>miʔaj-e</i>	child	<i>miʔaj-ade</i>	children
<i>appatakaj-a</i>	uncle	<i>appatakaj-ade</i>	uncles
<i>karm-o</i>	lion	<i>karm-ide</i>	lions

Consider the following sentential examples that illustrate the use of plural nouns in different positions in the structures.

(14) *karmidesi ifare.*

*karmo-de-si i-far-e*  
 lion-PL-DEF 3-die-3PL:PF  
 ‘The lions died.’

(15) *ano mat’afadesi anpitami.*

*ano mat’afa-de-si an-pitam-i*  
 I book-PL-DEF 1-buy-1SG:PF  
 ‘I bought the books.’

In ‘Ale, it is still possible to express the plural form of countable nouns with the help of numerals and some quantifiers. We have the quantifier *daʔama/damma* ‘many, much’ in order to express a large number or amount of entities. In addition, there is another word *ajako* ‘many’, and this word comes only with countable nouns in ‘Ale. Here, the plural marker can occur optionally with nouns when the nouns come with numerals as in *mat’afa lakki* ‘two books’. Consider the following examples.

- (16) A. *gawho hubin* ‘five men’  
 B. *mat’afa lakki* ‘two books’  
 C. *mat’afade ajako/daʔama* ‘many books’

Uncountable nouns, especially mass nouns, do not have plural form in ‘Ale, so a large amount of an entity is expressed by using the quantifier *daʔama/damma*

‘much’. Let us consider the following examples.

- (17) A. *sukara daʔama* ‘much sugar’  
B. *gunde daʔama* ‘much flour’  
C. *ʔande daʔama* ‘much water’

In ‘Ale, it is not possible to use the quantifier *ajako* with uncountable nouns. Consider the following examples.

- (18) A. *\*sajte ajako* ‘much oil’ (intended meaning)  
B. *\*ande ajako* ‘much water’ (intended meaning)  
C. *\*gunde ajako* ‘much flour’ (intended meaning)

In ‘Ale, there is a quantifier *takkasa* ‘small, a little, a few’, which is used to quantify both a small amount of uncountable and a small number of countable nouns. The following examples illustrate the use of this quantifier with both forms of nouns.

- (19) A. *tale takkasa* ‘few goats’  
B. *gawho takkasa* ‘few men’  
C. *sukara takkasa* ‘little sugar’  
D. *ʔande takkasa* ‘little water’

Gender is expressed in a two-way distinction system: masculine and feminine. Nouns in ‘Ale show gender distinctions with the help of the following five important points: (1) the terminal vowels, (2) use of some syllables at word final position, (3) use of morphological markers, (4) use of different lexemes and (5) the subject agreement marker on the verb stems.

As to the first point on the use of terminal vowels, nouns in the masculine form have the terminal vowel /o/ as in the noun *papo* ‘father’. On the other hand, nouns in the feminine form are supposed to have the terminal vowel /e/ as in the noun *jajje* ‘mother’.

With regard to the second point, in most cases, many of the nouns end with syllabic morphemes {-ko} and {-te}. The first syllable, i.e. {-ko} is used to express the masculine form whereas the syllable {-te} is used to express the feminine form.

**Table 12**

<i>t'irako</i>	man	<i>hajriko</i>	bamboo
<i>garingo</i>	brother	<i>hamako</i>	light
<i>fambo</i>	boy	<i>kapurako</i>	wolf
<i>χolfr</i>	daughter-in-law	<i>bineete</i>	mosquito
<i>garumte</i>	sister-in-law	<i>kara?ate</i>	belly
<i>fete</i>	daughter	<i>jajite</i>	woman

The third point is that gender is morphologically represented for some animate and inanimate nouns. The morpheme {-ko} is attached to nouns to mark masculine form, and the morpheme {-te} is used to mark feminine form of nouns. The morpheme {-ko} can be realized as {-ho}, {-to} and {-o} due to phonotactic constraints. Consider the following examples in Table 13.

**Table 13**

Masculine noun	Gloss	Feminine noun	Gloss
<i>karm-o</i>	lion	<i>karm-i-te</i>	lion
<i>lukk-al-a-ko</i>	cock/rooster	<i>lukk-al-i-te</i>	hen
<i>kollisamb-a-ko</i>	teacher	<i>kollisamb-a-te</i>	teacher
<i>doctorr-i-to</i>	doctor	<i>doctorr-i-te</i>	doctor
<i>alaw-ho</i>	brother	<i>alaw-te</i>	sister

The fourth point is about the use of different lexemes. In ‘Ale, some nouns have independent lexical representations for both masculine and feminine nouns. Here, there is natural gender distinction between male and female, so these nouns do not receive any gender marker in order to describe gender. This way of expressing gender is common among animate nouns. Consider the following examples of lexically represented nouns in Table 14.

**Table 14**

Masculine noun	Gloss	Feminine noun	Gloss
<i>χloss</i>	husband	<i>nasban</i>	wife
<i>fambo</i>	boy	<i>fete</i>	girl
<i>papo</i>	father	<i>jaajje</i>	mother
<i>gobolho</i>	goat	<i>talte</i>	goat
<i>ardo</i>	ox	<i>lo?o</i>	cow

The fifth point shows how feminine and masculine genders are expressed through subject agreement marker. As common in Cushitic languages, ‘Ale indicates gender agreement in the subject inflection on the verb. Consider the following sentential examples.

(20) *o?osi irafi.*

*o?o-si*            *i-raf-i*  
son.M-DEF    3-sleep-3SG.M:PF  
‘The son slept.’

(21) *o?esi irafti.*

*o?e-si*                            *i-raf-t-i*  
daughter.F-DEF            3-sleep-3SG.F-PF  
‘The daughter slept.’

On the other hand, since the third person plural nouns do not show gender distinction, those plural nouns with feminine form do not take the third person gender agreement marker {-t}. In a different description, plural nouns with feminine form semantically do not add the third person agreement marker {-t} on the verb roots.

(22) *korosi mat’afa ipitame.*

*koro-si*            *mat’afa*    *i-pitam-e*  
man.PL-DEF    book        3-buy-3PL:PF  
‘The men bought a book.’

(23) *hiskesi mat’afa ipitame.*

*hiske-si*                            *mat’afa*    *i-pitam-e*  
woman.PL-DEF            book        3-buy-3PL:PF  
‘The women bought a book.’

Furthermore, there are nouns that are masculine in form but are used in the sense of feminine form. These nouns receive the same gender agreement as third person masculine value.

(24) *lo?osi ifari.*

*lo?o-si*            *i-far-i*  
cow.M-DEF    3-die-3SG.M:PF  
‘The cow died.’

On the other hand, there are nouns which have feminine form and are used in the sense of masculine form. These nouns receive the same gender marker as third

person masculine value.

(25) *miʔajesi irafi.*

*miʔaje-si i-raf-i*

child.F-DEF 3-sleep-3SG.M:PF

‘The child slept.’

Definiteness in ‘Ale denotes familiarity of the referent expressed by the noun to both the speaker as well as the hearer. In the language, indefiniteness of nouns is not morphologically marked whereas definiteness of nouns is morphologically represented by the suffix {-si}. This morpheme is not sensitive to gender distinction, i.e. it does not make any difference when it comes with both morphologically marked feminine and masculine nouns.

**Table 15**

<i>ɣawho</i>	man	<i>ɣawho-si</i>	the man
<i>fete</i>	girl	<i>fete-si</i>	the girl
<i>taltite</i>	goat	<i>taltite-si</i>	the goat
<i>mat’afa</i>	book	<i>mat’afa-si</i>	the book
<i>manne</i>	house	<i>manne-si</i>	the house

Definiteness and case can be expressed in the same noun phrase. When these inflectional forms come together, the definite marker comes first followed by the case markers.

(26) *ano karmosisi anpoɣi.*

*ano karmo-si-si an-poɣ-i*

I lion-DEF-ACC 1-kill-1SG:PF

‘I killed the lion.’

(27) *iso kollisambakosisi ifoɣi.*

*iso kollisamba-ko-si-si i-foɣ-i*

he teacher-M-DEF-ACC 3-hit-3SG.M:PF

‘He hit the teacher (M).’

(28) *iso kollisambatesisi ifoɣi.*

*iso kollisamba-te-si-si i-foɣ-i*

he teacher-F-DEF-ACC 3-hit-3SG.M:PF

‘He hit the teacher (F).’

In ‘Ale, it is also possible to identify the definiteness of the nouns with the use of a spatial deixis or with the help of genitive pronouns. Consider the following

examples.

- (29) A. *ƒawho-si*            *goru*  
           man-DEF            that  
           ‘that man’  
       B. *manne*    *tani*  
           house    our  
           ‘our house’

With regard to cases, ‘Ale nouns are inflected for genitive case. Accordingly, in ‘Ale genitive structure, the possessed entity comes first followed by the possessor, and the possessor receives the locative case markers.

- (30) A. *kasu*    *jajj-i-te*  
           hair    mother-EP-LOC.F  
           ‘woman’s hair’  
       B. *situ*    *harr-i-to*  
           tail    dog-EP-LOC.M  
           ‘dog’s tail’  
       C. *orhe*    *atturr-a-te*  
           milk    cow-EP-LOC.F  
           ‘cow’s milk’  
       D. *kasu*    *jaajje-de-te*  
           hair    woman-PL-LOC.F  
           ‘women’s hair’  
       E. *manne*    *nigusse*  
           house    Nigusse  
           ‘Nigusse’s house’

In ‘Ale, double genitive is possible. In double genitive, the relationship is expressed in the same way. In double genitive, the morpheme {-na} is used to express the link, and it means ‘for’. Consider the following example.

- (31) *manne*            [*jajje*    [*appa*    *k-ajju*]-na]  
       house            [mother [father    REL.M-1SG.GEN]-LINK]  
       ‘my father’s mother’s house’ (*lit.* a house of mother (who is) for my father)

It is also possible to express genitive using possessive pronouns. The possessive pronouns follow the possessed entity.

- (32) A. *harr-o k-ajju*  
 dog-M REL.M-1SG.GEN  
 ‘my dog’
- B. *harr-o t-ajju*  
 dog-M REL.F-1SG.GEN  
 ‘my dog’
- C. *harr-o k-ani*  
 dog-M REL.M-1PL.GEN  
 ‘our dog’
- D. *harr-o t-ani*  
 dog-M REL.F-1PL.GEN  
 ‘our dog’

The language also allows the presence of the morphological markers for gender with both the possessive pronouns and the possessed entities.

- (33) A. *harr-i-te t-ajju*  
 dog-EP-F REL.F-1SG.GEN  
 ‘my female dog’
- B. *kollisamb-a-ko k-ajju*  
 teacher-EP-M REL.M-1SG.GEN  
 ‘my teacher’

The dative case in the language is morphologically represented by the morpheme {-nu}. Consider the following examples.

- (34) *ano fetenusi mat’afa anteaf.*  
*ano fete-nu-si mat’afa an-te-i*  
 I girl-DAT-DEF book 1-give-3SG.M:PF  
 ‘I gave the book to the girl.’
- (35) *taltesi nugussenu ilase.*  
*talte-si nugusse-nu i-las-e*  
 goat-ACC Nugusse-DAT 3-sell-3PL:PF  
 ‘They sold a goat to Nugusse.’

In the case of the ablative case, there is a morphological marker {-nu} or {-na}, which is attached to nouns in order to express the source of entities.

(36) *ise gawwadanuki i?ogajti.*

<i>ise</i>	<i>gawwada-nu-ki</i>	<i>i-?ogaj-t-i</i>
she	Gawwada-ABL-FOC	3-come-3SG.F-PF

‘She came from Gawwada.’

(37) *nahajesi halgosina tehakosisi ina?akti.*

<i>nahaje-si</i>	<i>halgo-si-na</i>	<i>tehako-si-si</i>
wife-DEF	husband-DEF-ABL	gift-DEF-ACC

*i-na-?ak-t-i*  
3-ABL-get-3SG.F-PF

‘The wife got the gift from the husband.’

The instrumental case denotes an entity or a tool by which or with which an action is done. This grammatical case is expressed with the morpheme {-tta} or {-ttaj}, which is attached to the instrumental nouns. The focus marker {-ki} follows the morpheme {-tta} or {-ttaj} in the structure. The {-ttaj} may be used when the instrumental nouns are not marked for focus.

(38) *gawhosi harrosi iggaahkottaki ipogfi.*

<i>gawho-si</i>	<i>harro-si</i>	<i>iggaahko-tta-ki</i>	<i>i-pogfi</i>
man-DEF	dog-ACC	stone-INST-FOC	3-kill-3SG.M:PF

‘The man killed the dog with a stone.’

(39) *nigusse a?kosisi pilawattaj imee?i.*

<i>nigusse</i>	<i>aigussea?kosisi</i>	<i>pilawattaj</i>	<i>imee?i</i>
Nigusse	grass-DEF-ACC	knife-INST	3SG-cut-3SG.M:PF

‘Nigusse cut the grass with a knife.’

The Locative case expresses spatial locations and other semantically related relations. It is expressed by the morphological marker {-te} or {-ite} which is attached to the nouns. In addition, there are still location nouns with equal importance. The location nouns follow the nouns which include the morpheme {-te} or {-ite} in the structure. The vowels -a- and -i- in the above morphemes are epenthetic vowels.

(40) A. *manne-te*                      *kitt-a-te*  
house-LOC.F                      inside-EP-LOC.F  
‘in a house’

- B. *butul-a-te*                      *kitt-a-te*  
 bottle-EP-LOC.F    inside-EP-LOC.F  
 ‘in a bottle’

The following sentential examples illustrate the use of nouns in locative case.

- (41) *orhete kittate sukara ?aga.*

*orhe-te*                      *kitt-a-te*                      *sukara*    *?aga*  
 milk-LOC            inside-EP-LOC.F    sugar            exist.IMPF  
 ‘There is sugar in the milk.’

- (42) *orhe-te kittate sukara je?aga.*

*orhe-te*                      *kitt-a-te*                      *sukara*    *je-?aga*  
 milk-LOC            inside-EP-LOC.F    sugar            NEG-exist.IMPF  
 ‘There is no sugar in the milk.’

The comitative case indicates the notion of ‘with’ or ‘accompanied by’. The morpheme {?ale} ‘with’ is used to mark the comitative case. This morpheme is independent except for second person singular and comes next to the nouns. If there is possessive form in the structure, the morpheme {?ale} comes next to the possessor.

- (43) A. *jajjite ?ale*  
 woman    COM  
 ‘with a woman’

- B. *mi?aje jajje-si-na*                      *?ale*  
 child            woman-DEF-LINK                      COM  
 ‘with the woman’s child’

- C. *he-?ale*  
 you(SG.F)-COMM  
 ‘with you (FS)’

- D. *papo h-ajju*                      *?ale*  
 father            REL.M-1SG.GEN    COM  
 ‘with my father’

- E. *ho-?ale*  
 you(SG.M)-COM  
 ‘with you (MS)’

- F. *hune ?ale*  
 you (PL) COM  
 ‘with you (PL)’

The following sentential examples show the use of commutative case in sentences.

(44) *ise alawho hisi ?ale irafti.*

*ise alawho hisi ?ale i-raf-t-i*  
 she brother her COM 3-sleep-3SG.F-PF  
 ‘She slept with her brother.’

(45) *ano ho?ale anrafi.*

*ano ho-?ale an-raf-i*  
 I you(SG.M)-COM 1-sleep-1SG:PF  
 ‘I slept with you.’

## 2.4 Derivation of nouns

In ‘Ale, nouns can be derived from nouns, verbs or adjectives. Abstract nouns are derived from concrete nouns by using the morpheme {-ingo}. This morpheme does not show any difference when it comes with both masculine and feminine nouns.

**Table 16**

<i>pap-o</i>	father	<i>pap-i-ngo</i>	fatherhood
<i>jajj-e</i>	mother	<i>jajj-i-ngo</i>	motherhood
<i>del-e</i>	child	<i>del-i-ngo</i>	childhood
<i>alaw-h-o</i>	brother	<i>alaw-h-i-ngo</i>	brotherhood
<i>alaw-t-e</i>	sister	<i>alaw-t-ingo</i>	sisterhood

On the other hand, Geberew (2003: 45) showed the formation of abstract nouns from concrete nouns by using the morphemes {-um-} for masculine and the morpheme {-un-} for feminine

**Table 17**

<i>appa</i>	father	<i>app-um-ko</i>	fatherhood
<i>jaajje</i>	mother	<i>jajj-un-te</i>	motherhood
<i>alawte</i>	sister	<i>alaww-un-te</i>	sisterhood
<i>alawho</i>	brother	<i>alaww-um-ko</i>	brotherhood

In addition, it is possible to derive nouns that denote a name of a particular linguistic group by attaching the same morpheme {-ingo} to the nouns. Consider the following examples in Table 18.

**Table 18**

<i>ʕale</i>	‘Ale	<i>ʕalingo/ʕalunte</i>	being ‘Ale
<i>dīlo</i>	Amhara	<i>dīlingo</i>	being Amhara
<i>oromo</i>	Oromo	<i>oromingo</i>	being Oromo

There are also nouns that are derived from adjectives by using the morphemes {-ingo} for masculine, {-inte} for feminine and {-de} for plural.

**Table 19**

<i>ida</i>	red	<i>id-ingo</i>	redness
<i>sigaba</i>	tall	<i>sigab-ingo</i>	tallness
<i>xafada</i>	thick	<i>χhicknte</i>	thickness
<i>piʔa</i>	white	<i>piʔ-inte</i>	whiteness

There are also adjectives taking the morpheme {-de} in order to derive the abstract nouns. The gender markers do not follow this morpheme.

**Table 20**

<i>xaaso</i>	happy	<i>xaaso-de</i>	happiness
<i>miira</i>	sad	<i>miiro-de</i>	sadness

On the other hand, Geberew (2003: 45-46) showed how abstract nouns are derived from adjectives by using {-un-} for feminine and {-um-} for masculine.

**Table 21**

<i>piʔa</i>	white	<i>kumma</i>	black
<i>piʔ-un-te</i>	whiteness (fem)	<i>kumm-un-te</i>	blackness (fem)
<i>piʔ-um-ko</i>	whiteness (masc)	<i>kumm-um-ko</i>	blackness (masc)

There are also nouns that are derived from verbs. Agentive nouns are formed from verbs by using the morpheme {-amba}, and sometimes this morpheme is realized as {-ampa} by the speakers of the language. The gender markers for both masculine and feminine follow the morphological marker {-amba}.

**Table 22**

Verb	Gloss	Derived noun (m.)	Derived noun (f.)	Gloss
<i>kodm-</i>	work	<i>kodm-amba-ko</i>	<i>kodm-amba-te</i>	worker
<i>kollis-</i>	teach	<i>kollis-amba-ko</i>	<i>kollis-amba-te</i>	teacher
<i>hermat-</i>	run	<i>herm-amba-ko</i>	<i>herm-amba-te</i>	runner
<i>pogf-</i>	kill	<i>pogf-amba-ko</i>	<i>pogf-amba-te</i>	killer

Action nouns are also derived from verbs by using the morpheme {-e}, which has to be attached to the verb roots. Below are some examples of actions nouns that are attested in ‘Ale.

**Table 23**

<i>jiʔ-</i>	eat	<i>jiʔ-e</i>	eating
<i>fox-</i>	wash	<i>fox-e</i>	washing
<i>pogf-</i>	kill	<i>pogf-e</i>	killing

In ‘Ale, in the derivation of result nouns, most of the verbs which denote the action do not receive any morphological marker in order to form the result nouns rather they exhibit certain phonological changes like deletion of final syllable and change of vowel. After deletion and vowel change, affixation of certain syllable follows.

**Table 24**

<i>jiʔ-</i>	to eat	<i>jiʔito</i>	food
<i>hood-</i>	to create	<i>hoodi</i>	creation
<i>kass-</i>	to ask	<i>kaasuma</i>	question
<i>fat-is-</i>	to vomit	<i>fato</i>	vomit
<i>kod-ad-</i>	to work	<i>kodmo</i>	work
<i>fooh-</i>	to urinate	<i>foohe</i>	urine

In addition, there is also irregularity for some verb roots. There are verb roots that necessarily change their lexical form when result nouns are derived from them. Consider the following examples in Table 25.

**Table 25**

<i>fuut’-</i>	to milk	<i>orhe</i>	milk
<i>tuf-</i>	to spit	<i>waaje</i>	saliva
<i>hik’ad-</i>	to brush	<i>rik’ambako</i>	tooth brush

There are also some verb roots that receive the morphological marker {-no} in order to form result nouns. Consider the following examples in Table 26.

**Table 26**

<i>aar-</i>	know	<i>aar-no</i>	knowledge
<i>fʼig-ad-</i>	love	<i>fʼig-no</i>	love
<i>her-</i>	run	<i>her-no</i>	running

In addition, here are some nouns that are derived from adjectives using the morpheme {-no}. The following examples have been attested in the language.

**Table 27**

<i>heet'a</i>	good	<i>heet'-no</i>	being good
<i>homage</i>	bad/rude	<i>mag-no</i>	being bad/rude

In 'Ale, the gerundive or infinitival nouns are formed by attaching the morpheme {-e}, on the verb roots, which is homophonous (and probably identical) to the morpheme used to form action nouns.

**Table 28**

<i>her-</i>	run	<i>her-e</i>	running/to run
<i>fox-</i>	wash	<i>fox-e</i>	washing/to wash
<i>pogf-</i>	kill	<i>pogf-e</i>	killing/to kill

With regard to manner nominals, which are used to show how an action or an event takes place, in the formation of nouns from the verb roots in 'Ale, the manner nominals receive the morpheme {-e}, which is homophonous to the formation of the action nouns, at word final position.

**Table 29**

<i>akkad-</i>	sit	<i>akkad-e</i>	manner of sitting
<i>her-</i>	run	<i>her-e</i>	manner of running
<i>samar-</i>	sing	<i>samar-e</i>	manner of singing
<i>?allad-</i>	talk	<i>?allad-e</i>	manner of talking
<i>pogf-</i>	kill	<i>pogf-e</i>	manner of killing

In 'Ale, most commonly, instrumental nouns are not formed with the help of morphological marker rather they are lexically represented. The instrumental nouns take the instrumental case marker, which is used to show the nature of the nouns in which the action is done with.

**Table 30**

<i>filad-</i>	comb	<i>silmako</i>	comb
<i>patis-/of-</i>	erase	<i>ofambate</i>	eraser
<i>tug-</i>	pierce	<i>orhango</i>	spear

## 2.5 Diminutives in ‘Ale

In ‘Ale, even though the diminutive form of nouns is not widely used among the native speakers of ‘Ale in order to express the smallness or intimacy of an entity, there are some attempts of using nouns in their diminutive form, especially when the speakers need to express their intimacy. In addition, the diminutive form shows that the addresser has a low opinion of the entity. The diminutive form is expressed by means of suffixes {-ite} and {-ita}. The choice of these diminutive-marking morphemes depends on the gender of the base noun. In other words, the diminutive morpheme {-ite} is used with feminine nouns, and the diminutive morpheme {-ita} is used with masculine nouns.

(46) A. *atturesi ifarti.*

*atture-si*                      *i-far-t-i*  
 cat.F-DEF                      3-die-3SG.F-PF  
 ‘The cat died.’

B. *atturitesi ifarti.*

*atture-ite-si*                      *i-far-t-i*  
 cat.F-DIM-DEF                      3-die-3SG.F-PF  
 ‘The little cat died.’

(47) A. *gawhosi ifari.*

*gawho-si*                      *i-far-i*  
 man-DEF                      3-die-3SG.M:PF  
 ‘The man died.’

B. *gawhitakosi ifari.*

*gawho-ita-ko-si*                      *i-far -i*  
 man-DIM-M-DEF                      3-die-3SG.M:PF  
 ‘The small man died.’

(48) A. *ardosi i?ogaji.*

*ardo-si*    *i-?ogaj-i*  
 ox-DEF    3-come-3SG.M:PF  
 ‘The ox came.’

B. *ardítakosi i?ogaji.*

*ardó-ita-ko-si i-?ogaj-i*

ox-DIM-M-DEF 3-come-3SG.M:PF

‘The little ox came.’

In ‘Ale, both feminine and masculine nouns have their diminutive form. The diminutive form of the [+human] nouns is mainly used when the speakers need to express their intimacy. Inanimate nouns have also diminutive form that shows the smallness of entities. Consider the above examples.

When masculine nouns are presented in their diminutive form in the sentences, they do not have third feminine value, and the verbs do not include the feminine gender agreement marker rather the same masculine gender agreement is employed.

### 3 Conclusion

The noun morphology of ‘Ale has a number of systematic features. The nouns in the language do not have a consonant cluster at word initial position. The consonant cluster is possible at the word medial position. Nouns begin with either a consonant or a vowel, and they end with a vowel. The use of terminal vowels seems systematic, i.e. some terminal vowels are associated with the forms of the nouns in terms of gender.

Nouns in the language are inflected for number, gender, definiteness and case, and there are different morphological representations for the inflectional properties of nouns. The language makes singular and plural distinctions, where the singularity is not morphologically expressed. There are both natural and morphological ways of expressing gender, and there are masculine and feminine gender distinctions. Indefinite nouns are not morphologically marked, whereas there is a morphological marker that is used to show the definiteness of the nouns in the language. There are different grammatical properties of nouns, such as genitive, accusative, dative, locative, ablative, instrumental and commutative case.

In ‘Ale, nouns can be derived from other nouns, adjectives and verbs. In the derivation, nouns receive different morphemes, and in some cases, the derivation may not be morphologically represented. The derivation of nouns includes abstract nouns, agentive nouns, result nouns, gerundives or infinitival nouns, manner nouns and instrumental nouns. The diminutive form of nouns includes morphological representations that are sensitive to gender.

Eventually, since the previous works done on noun morphology are not comprehensive, this survey would cover several things regarding the noun morphology of the language, and more data is required for describing the nouns of the language in detail.

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