

**Sociolinguistic Survey Report of the Mesketo Language of Ethiopia**

**Alemayehu Abebe**

**SIL International  
2002**

## Contents

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Nouns
  - 1.1 Personal pronouns
  - 1.2 Demonstrative pronouns
  - 1.3 Reflexive pronouns
  - 1.4 Wh- pronouns
  - 1.5 Possesive pronouns
- 2 Plural Formation
  - 2.1 Noun modifiers
  - 2.2 Definite markers
  - 2.3 Verbs
    - 2.3.1 The verb “to be”
    - 2.3.2 The verb “to have”
    - 2.3.3 Main verbs
- 3 Prepositions (Postpositions)
  - 3.1 At
  - 3.2 From
  - 3.3 In
  - 3.4 With
  - 3.5 To, for
- 4 Adverbs
- References

**Abbreviations**

1PL	first person plural
1S	first person singular
2FS	second person feminine singular
2MS	second person masculine singular
2PL	second person plural
3FS	third person feminine singular
3MS	third person masculine singular
3PL	third person plural
COMP	complementizer
F	feminine
IMPF	imperfect marker
IMPM	imperative marker
M	masculine
NM	nominal marker
PF	perfect marker
PL	plural

## 0 Introduction

“Mesketo” is part of the West Ometo group. (cf. Hayward 1990:xxii). Bender, in one of the first notes on this language, uses the names “Basketo” and “Mesketo”, and he gives the names of two dialects: “Doko” (Doqo, Dokko, Dokka), and “Dollo” (1975:236).\*

“Basketo” is the name given by the neighbours of the Mesketo speakers. The speakers themselves use the term Mesketo to refer to their language and their own ethnic group. According to Ato Abayneh Tesfaye, Administrator of Mesketo town, the Mesketo area comprises more than twenty Peasant Associations. Around seventy-five thousand people live within these areas, and most of them are bilingual.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to their mother tongue, i.e., Mesketo, most of them also speak Melo, Oyda, Galila, or Gofa. There are, however, areas where we find only Mesketo speakers. They include Tatta, Laha, S’inakare, Marintsa, Yista, Gergeda, Koc’a, Mashara, Opc’a, Mendita, Oballanna Toga, and Borada Kaksha.

The following is a sketch of the Mesketo grammar. The data were collected at the time of the field work conducted from March 26, 1993 until April 1, 1993.

The place where I gathered the data was Bulk’i, which is in the Gofa Awraja, Gamogofa Administrative Region.

I would like to thank Ato Daniel Dejenie, Ato Derbe Milze, and Ato Tigo Bure for assisting me in supplying linguistic data.

It should be noted that this analysis is not exhaustive but preliminary. A similar attempt, entitled “Basketo: A Survey Report”, has been undertaken by Éva Hompó (1987).

## 1 Nouns

### 1.1 Personal pronouns

Mesketo distinguishes independent and other personal pronouns. The following are the independent personal pronouns:

- (1)
- |             |           |              |            |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| <i>tani</i> | ‘I’       | <i>nuni</i>  | ‘we’       |
| <i>neni</i> | ‘you (M)’ |              |            |
| <i>neni</i> | ‘you (F)’ | <i>?inti</i> | ‘you (PL)’ |
| <i>ʔi</i>   | ‘he’      |              |            |
| <i>ʔizi</i> | ‘she’     | <i>?inti</i> | ‘they’     |

Instead of *izi*, Mesketo speakers also use *naʔin* ‘she’. The form *neni* ‘you (F)’ can also be substituted for *ʔiyo*.

### 1.2 Demonstrative pronouns

- (2)
- |                 |                |                            |                |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| <i>yi</i>       | ‘this’, e.g.,  | <i>yi ketsi</i>            | ‘this house’   |
| <i>xantsi</i>   | ‘these’, e.g., | <i>xantsi kets -ansi</i>   | ‘these houses’ |
| <i>yita</i>     | ‘that’, e.g.,  | <i>yita ketsi</i>          | ‘that house’   |
| <i>sekantsi</i> | ‘those’, e.g., | <i>sekantsi kets -ansi</i> | ‘those houses’ |

The suffix *-ansi* is a plural morpheme which we will discuss in section 2.

### 1.3 Reflexive pronouns

- (3)
- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <i>ta -k’ommabo</i>   | ‘I myself’         |
| <i>neni -k’ommabo</i> | ‘you (M) yourself’ |

---

\*An earlier version of this report appeared as “A Sketch of the Mesketo Grammar,” Survey of Little-known Languages of Ethiopia (S.L.L.E.). Linguistic Report 8. June/July 1993. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies and Summer Institute of Linguistics.

<sup>1</sup>In the Awraja Governor’s office, the number of speakers of Mesketo was estimated at 82,800 in 1974.

<i>nena -k'ommabo</i>	'you (F) yourself'
<i>?ifa -k'ommabo</i>	'he himself'
<i>?izifa -k'ommabo</i>	'she herself'
<i>nuna -k'ommabo</i>	'we ourselves'
<i>?intinti -k'ommabo</i>	'you (PL) yourselves'
<i>?intinti -k'ommabo</i>	'they themselves'

One can further split *k'ommabo* into *k'omma* and *-bo*, the meanings of which are 'head' and 'for', respectively. The form *k'omma* also has the meaning 'only'. The following is an illustrative example.

(4)

<i>ta ta -k'omma ?uuf moy -ide</i>
I, I-only injera eat -PF -1S
'I only (only me) ate injera'

#### 1.4 Wh- pronouns

(5)

<i>?anti</i>	'when'
<i>?anti lukke?</i>	'when did he go?'
<i>?o</i>	'who'
<i>?o zinab yeye?</i>	'who came yesterday?'
<i>?a</i>	'what'
<i>?a ?otsi?</i>	'what did you do?'
<i>?aba</i>	'why'
<i>?aba bey?</i>	'why did you come?'
<i>?apina</i>	'how much'
<i>?apina yi?</i>	'how much is this?'
<i>?oni (?)</i>	'whom' <sup>2</sup>
<i>wozare</i>	'how'
<i>wozare ?otsi?</i>	'how did you make it?'
<i>woy</i>	'where'
<i>woy lukke?</i>	'where did he go?'

#### 1.5 Possessive pronouns

Mesketo has possessive pronominal prefixes. The noun *?if* 'brother' will be used to illustrate this. The suffixes *-i* and *-adi* in the illustrative examples are nominal and definite markers, respectively. (The syntactic status of these morphemes will be discussed later on.)

(6)

<i>ta -?if -i</i>	'my brother'
<i>ne -?if -adi</i>	'your (M) brother'
<i>ne -?if -adi</i>	'your (F) brother'
<i>?i -?if -i</i>	'his brother'
<i>?izi -?if -adi</i>	'her brother'
<i>nu -?if -adi</i>	'our brother'

---

<sup>2</sup>No example was elicited.

*?inti - ?if - adi* ‘your brother’

*?inti - ?if - adi* ‘their brother’

It should be noted that most Mesketo nouns end in *-i*. Even borrowed nouns which end with another vowel or consonant will receive an *-i* sound to function as part of the Mesketo lexicon. Because of this, I assume that *-i* is a nominal marker. This does not mean, however, that all nouns in Mesketo end with the sound *-i*. I have found a few nouns which do end in a nominal marker *-e*. Examples of this follow.

(7)

*miiz - e* ‘cow’

*tamar - e* ‘student’

## 2 Plural Formation

As mentioned in section 1.2, the general plural marker in Mesketo is the morpheme *-ansi*. It will be suffixed to a countable singular noun to make it plural. Examples follow.

(8)

*?asi* ‘woman’      *?as - ansi* ‘women’

*dori* ‘sheep’      *dor - ansi* ‘sheep (PL)’

*defi* ‘goat’      *def - ansi* ‘goats’

*na?i* ‘child’      *na? - ansi* ‘children’

*miize* ‘cow’      *miiz - ansi* ‘cows’

*tamare* ‘student’      *tamar - ansi* ‘students’

As can be seen in the previous examples, the final vowels of the singular nouns will be elided when they are changed into their plural forms. This seems to indicate that vowel clusters are impermissible in the language—a point which needs further investigation.

As mentioned formerly, the morpheme *-ansi* will be suffixed to a singular noun to change it into its plural form. But there are cases where this plural morpheme is suffixed to demonstratives like in section 1. The examples are repeated in the following phrases.

(9)

*x - ansi kets - ansi* ‘these houses’

*sek - ansi kets - ansi* ‘those houses’

### 2.1 Noun modifiers<sup>3</sup>

As shown formerly, demonstrative pronouns are possible modifiers of nouns. They are not, however, the only modifiers. Adjectives, for instance, can modify nouns as the following examples show.

(10)

*gentse* ‘ox’      *karts gentse* ‘black ox’

*miize* ‘cow’      *p’acc miize* ‘big cow’

*mac’c* ‘woman’      *p’arents mac’c* ‘long woman’

More than one adjective can be used to modify a noun as in the following examples.

(11)

*gentse* - *p’acc karts gentse*

‘ox’ - ‘big black ox’

*miize* - *p’acc karts miize*

‘cow’ - ‘big black cow’

*mac’c* - *p’arents zokats mac’c*

‘woman’ - ‘long red woman’

---

<sup>3</sup>Derived nominals are not treated in this work. We expect to address this topic in further work.

As illustrated formerly, a modified noun occurs after its adjectival modifiers. But the adjectival modifiers can exchange their places, as shown in the following phrases.

(12)

*p'acc karts gentse*

big black ox

'big black ox'

(13)

*karts p'acc miize*

black big cow

'big black cow'

(14)

*zokats p'arents mac'c'*

red long woman

'long red woman'

Another modifier of nouns is the clausal modifier. Consider the following example.

(15)

*tamiru wong -ino apil -inda*

Tamiru buy -COMP -PF -3MS cloth -the

'The cloth which Tamiru bought'

In the previous example the clausal modifier *tamiru wongino* 'which Tamiru bought' precedes the noun *apilinda* 'the cloth'. The structure would be ungrammatical if the clausal modifier would follow the noun, as in the following example.

(16)

*apil-inda tamiru wong-ino<sup>4</sup>*

cloth -the Tamiru buy -COMP -PF -3MS

'The cloth which Tamiru bought'

The foregoing example shows that a noun follows its modifiers. Numerals also follow this pattern.

(17)

*petten p'acc dora*

one big sheep

'one big sheep'

## 2.2 Definite markers

There are no independent definite markers in Mesketo. They are always found as suffixed to nouns which then are definite. The Mesketo definite markers distinguish gender; cf., the following examples.

(18)

*demill -i gents wong -ide*

Demillew -NM ox buy -PF -3MS

'Demillew bought (an) ox'

(19)

*demill -i gents -adi wong -ide*

'Demill -NM ox -the (M) buy -PF -3MS

'Demillew bought the ox'

---

<sup>4</sup>Structures with asterisks (\*) are ungrammatical.

(20)

*tamir -i miiz wong -ide*

Tamiru cow buy -PF -3MS

‘Tamiru bought (a) cow’

(21)

*tamir -i miiz -indo wong -ide*

Tamiru cow -the (F) buy -PF -3MS

‘Tamiru bought the cow’

In the foregoing examples two things can be observed: (1) Mesketo has more than one definite marker, and (2) these definite markers are divided into two: masculine definite markers and feminine definite markers.

The masculine definite marker is the suffix *-adi*, while the feminine definite marker is *-indo*. Moreover, both of them are suffixed to their nominal stems in these structures.

On the basis of examples such as the following, I also suspect that objects have gender in Mesketo.

(22)

*tani dabb -i moy -ide*

I bread -NM eat -PF -1S

‘I ate bread’

(23)

*tani dabb -indo moy -ide*

I bread -the (F) eat -PF -1S

‘I ate the bread’

The feminine definite marker *-indo* (see the preceding) is suffixed to the noun *dabi/dabbi* ‘bread’. That is why I suspect that Mesketo objects have gender. This also needs further research.

## 2.3 Verbs

### 2.3.1 The verb “to be”

#### 2.3.1.1 Present of the verb “to be”

In Mesketo, there is no phonetic realization of a present tense verb corresponding to the English “to be”. Observe the following sentences.

(24)

<i>tani tamare</i>	‘I am a student’
<i>neni tamare</i>	‘you (M) are a student’
<i>neni tamare</i>	‘you (F) are a student’
<i>?i tamare</i>	‘he is a student’
<i>?izi tamare</i>	‘she is a student’
<i>nuni tamarena?ansi</i>	‘we are students’
<i>?inti tamarena?ansi</i>	‘you (PL) are students’
<i>?inti tamarena?ansi</i>	‘they are students’

To negate the above sentences, the morpheme ‘not’ is inserted. In other words, the negative form of the present verb “to be” will be formed by the morpheme *base*.

(25)

<i>tani tamare base</i>	‘I am not a student’
<i>neni tamare base</i>	‘you (M) are not a student’
<i>neni tamare base</i>	‘you (F) are not a student’
<i>?i tamare base</i>	‘he is not a student’

<i>?izi tamare base</i>	‘she is not a student’
<i>nuni tamare base</i>	‘we are not students’
<i>?inti tamare base</i>	‘you (PL) are not students’
<i>?inti tamare base</i>	‘they are not students’

### 2.3.1.2 Past tense of the verb “to be”

The past tense of the verb “to be” in Mesketo is the morpheme *dori* which has the meanings ‘was’ and ‘were’. The following are the past tense forms of the foregoing sentences. First their affirmative forms will be given.

(26)

*tani tin tamare dori*

I before student was

‘I was a student before’

(27)

*neni tin tamare dori*

you (M) before student were

‘you (M) were a student before’

(28)

*neni tin tamare dori*

you (F) before student were

‘you (F) were a student before’

(29)

*?i tin tamare dori*

he before student was

‘he was a student before’

(30)

*?izi tin tamare dori*

she before student was

‘she was a student before’

(31)

*nuni tin tamare dori*

we before student were

‘we were students before’

(32)

*?inti tin tamare dori*

you (PL) before student were

‘you (PL) were students before’

(33)

*?inti tin tamare dori*

they before student were

‘they were students before’

The negative forms of the above sentences are the following.

(34)

*tani tin tamare base dori*

I before student not was

‘I was not a student before’

(35)

*neni tin tamare base dori*

you (M) before student not were  
 ‘you (M) were not a student before’  
 (36)

*neni tin tamare base dori*

you (F) before student not were  
 ‘you (F) were not a student before’  
 (37)

*?i tin tamare base dori*

he before student not was  
 ‘he was not a student before’  
 (38)

*?izi tin tamare base dori*

she before student not was  
 ‘she was not a student before’  
 (39)

*nuni tin tamare base dori*

we before student not were  
 ‘we were not students before’  
 (40)

*?inti tin tamare base dori*

you (PL) before student not were  
 ‘you (PL) were not students before’  
 (41)

*?inti tin tamare base dori*

they before student not were  
 ‘they were not students before’

## 2.3.2 The verb “to have”

### 2.3.2.1 Present tense of the verb “to have”

In order to show possession, the morpheme *-odê* is suffixed to the possessed noun. I assume that in Mesketo this morpheme functions like “to have”. Examples are given following.

(42)

*ta -b kets -od e*

I -for house -have  
 ‘I have a house’

(43)

*ne -b kets -odê*

you (M) -for house -have  
 ‘you (M) have a house’

(44)

*?afne -b kets -dê*

you (F) -for house -have  
 ‘you (F) have a house’

(45)

*?iya -b kets -odê*

he -for house -has  
 ‘he has a house’

(46)

*na?imda -b kets -ode*

she -for house -has

‘she has a house’

(47)

*nu -b kets -ode*

we -for house -have

‘we have a house’

(48)

*?inta -b kets -ode*

you (PL) -for house -have

‘you (PL) have a house’

(49)

*?inta -b kets -ode*

they -for house -have

‘they have a house’

In the negative, the verb “to have” does not take the morpheme *-ode*. Instead, we find the morpheme *bayye* as negative marker of the verb “to have”. Accordingly, the foregoing sentences change into their negative forms as follows:

(50)

*ta -b kets -i bayye*

I -for house -NM not

‘I haven’t a house’

(51)

*ne -b kets -i bayye*

you (M) -for house -NM not

‘you (M) haven’t a house’

(52)

*ne -bo kets -i bayye*

you (F) -for house -NM not

‘you (F) haven’t a house’

(53)

*nara -bo kets -i bayye*

he -for house -NM not

‘he hasn’t a house’

(54)

*na?inda -bo kets -i bayye*

she -for house -NM not

‘she hasn’t a house’

(55)

*nu -bo kets -i bayye*

we -for house -NM not

‘we haven’t a house’

(56)

*?inta -b kets -i bayye*

you (PL) -for house -NM not

‘you (PL) haven’t a house’

(57)

*?inta -b kets -i bayye*

they-for house -NM not

‘they haven’t a house’

**2.3.2.2 Past tense of the verb “to have”**

The past tense of the verb “to have” in Mesketo is the morpheme *wodore* which can be translated as ‘had’. The following examples may illustrate this.

(58)

*ta -bo tin kets -i wodore*

I -for before house -NM had

‘I had a house before’

(59)

*ne -bo tin kets -i wodore*

you (M) -for before house -NM had

‘you (M) had a house before’

(60)

*ne -bo tin kets -i wodore*

you (F) -for before house -NM had

‘you (F) had a house before’

(61)

*?iya -bo tin kets -i wodore*

he -for before house -NM had

‘he had a house before’

(62)

*?iza -bo tin kets -i wodore*

she -for before house -NM had

‘she had a house before’

(63)

*nu -bo tin kets -i wodore*

we -for before house -NM had

‘we had a house before’

(64)

*?inta -bo tin kets -i wodore*

you (PL) -for before house -NM had

‘you (PL) had a house before’

(65)

*?inta -bo tin kets -i wodore*

they -for before house -NM had

‘they had a house before’

As in the case of a present tense verb “to have”, the negative marker for the past tense verb “to have” is *bayye*, and we do not find any form of a past tense verb “to have” *wodore* in the negative.

(66)

*ta -bo tin kets -i bayye*

I -for before house -NM not

‘I hadn’t a house before’

(67)

*ne -bo tin kets -i bayye*

you (M) -for before house -NM not  
 ‘you (M) hadn’t a house before’

(68)

*ne -bo tin kets -i bayye*

you (F) -for before house - M not  
 ‘you (F) hadn’t a house before’

(69)

*?iya -bo tin kets -i bayye*

he -for before house -NM not  
 ‘he hadn’t a house before’

(70)

*?iza -bo tin kets -i bayye*

she -for before house -NM not  
 ‘she hadn’t a house before’

(71)

*nu -bo tin kets -i bayye*

we -for before house -NM not  
 ‘we hadn’t a house before’

(72)

*?inta -bo tin kets -i bayye*

you (PL) -for before house -NM not  
 ‘you (PL) hadn’t a house before’

(73)

*?inta -bo tin kets -i bayye*

they -for before house -NM not  
 ‘they hadn’t a house before’

### 2.3.3 Main verbs

#### 2.3.3.1 Past tense of main verbs

In order to illustrate this, the verb *moyide* ‘to eat’ will be used, and it will be conjugated in accordance with all the personal pronouns of Mesketo.

(74)

*ta dabb -i moy -ide*

I bread -NM eat -PF -1S  
 ‘I ate bread’

(75)

*ne dabb -i moy -ide*

you (M) bread -NM eat -PF -2MS  
 ‘you (M) ate bread’

(76)

*ne dabb -i moy -ide*

you (F) bread -NM eat -PF -2FS  
 ‘you (F) ate bread’

(77)

*?i dabb -i moy -ide*

he bread -NM eat -PF -3MS

‘he ate bread’

(78)

*?izi dabb -i moy -ide*

she bread -NM eat -PF -3FS

‘she ate bread’

(79)

*nu dabb -i moy -ide*

we bread -NM eat -PF -1PL

‘we ate bread’

(80)

*?inti dabb -i moy -ide*

you (PL) bread -NM eat -PF -2PL

‘you (PL) ate bread’

(81)

*?inti dabb -i moy -ide*

they bread -NM eat -PF -3PL

‘they ate bread’

To negate the preceding sentences, the morpheme *-kkaye* is suffixed to the verb.

(82)

*ta dabb -i mo -kkaye*

I bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘I did not eat bread’

(83)

*ne dabb -i mo -kkaye*

you (M) bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘you (M) did not eat bread’

(84)

*ne dabb -i mo -kkaye*

you (F) bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘you (F) did not eat bread’

(85)

*?i dabb -i mo -kkaye*

he bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘he did not eat bread’

(86)

*?izi dabb -i mo -kkaye*

she bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘she did not eat bread’

(87)

*nu dabb -i mo -kkaye*

we bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘we did not eat bread’

(88)

*?inti dabb -i mo -kkaye*

you (PL) bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘you did not eat bread’

(89)

*?inti dabb -i mo -kkaye*

they bread -NM eat -not -PF

‘they did not eat bread’

### 2.3.3.2 Present tense of main verbs

The imperfect marker in Mesketo is the morpheme *-re*; this also expresses present action. The verb *moyide* ‘to eat’ will be used again to illustrate this. It will be conjugated in accordance with all the personal pronouns of Mesketo. Here the negative form of each sentence is also given.

(90)

*ta ati dabb -i mo -re*

I now bread -NM eat -IMPF -1S

‘I am eating bread now’

(91)

*ta ati dabb -i mo -base*

I now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘I am not eating bread now’

(92)

*ne ati dabb -i mo -re*

you (M) now bread -NM eat -IMPF -2MS

‘you (M) are eating bread now’

(93)

*ne ati dabb -i mo -base*

you (M) now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘you (M) are not eating bread now’

(94)

*ne ati dabb -i mo -re*

you (F) now bread -NM eat -IMPF -2FS

‘you (F) are eating bread now’

(95)

*ne ati dabb -i mo -base*

you (F) now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘you (F) are not eating bread now’

(96)

*?i ati dabb -i mo -re*

he now bread -NM eat -IMPF -3MS

‘he is eating bread now’

(97)

*?i ati dabb -i mo -base*

he now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘he is not eating bread now’

(98)

*?izi ati dabb -i mo -re*

she now bread -NM eat -IMPF -3FS

‘she is eating bread now’

(99)

*?izi ati dabb -i mo -base*

she now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘she is not eating bread now’

(100)

*nuni ati dabb -i mo -re*

we now bread -NM eat -IMPF -2PL

‘we are eating bread now’

(101)

*nuni ati dabb -i mo -base*

we now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘we are not eating bread now’

(102)

*?inti ati dabb -i mo -re*

you (PL) now bread -NM eat -IMPF -2PL

‘you (PL) are eating bread now’

(103)

*?inti ati dabb -i mo -base*

you (PL) now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘you (PL) are not eating bread now’

(104)

*?inti ati dabb -i mo -re*

they now bread -NM eat -IMPF -3PL

‘they are eating bread now’

(105)

*?inti ati dabb -i mo -base*

they now bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘they are not eating bread now’

From the foregoing examples we observe that the morpheme *-base* is a negative marker in Mesketo.

### 2.3.3.3 Future tense of main verbs

There is no future marker morpheme in Mesketo, but the imperfect marker morpheme *-re* helps to show future action. Moreover, time adverbs like *giyabo* ‘tomorrow’ are used to show that the tense is future. Examples are given following.

(106)

*ta giyabo dabb -i mo -re*

I tomorrow bread -Nm eat -IMPF -1S

‘I will eat bread tomorrow’

(107)

*ta giyabo dabb -i mo -base*

I tomorrow bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘I won’t eat bread tomorrow’

(108)

*neni giyabo dabb -i mo -re*

you (M) tomorrow bread -NM eat -IMPF -2MS

‘you (M) will eat bread tomorrow’

(109)

*neni giyabo dabb -i mo -base*

you (M) tomorrow bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘you (M) won’t eat bread tomorrow’

(110)

*?i giyabo dabb -i mo -re*

he tomorrow bread -NM eat -IMPF -3MS

‘he will eat bread tomorrow’

(111)

*?i giyabo dabb -i mo -base*

he tomorrow bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘he will not eat bread tomorrow’

(112)

*?izi giyabo dabb -i mo -re*

she tomorrow bread -NM eat -IMPF -3FS

‘she will eat bread tomorrow’

(113)

*?izi giyabo dabb -i mo -base*

she tomorrow bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘she will not eat bread tomorrow’

(114)

*nuni giyabo dabb -i mo -re*

we tomorrow bread -NM eat -IMPF -3PL

‘we will eat bread tomorrow’

(115)

*nuni giyabo dabb -i mo -base*

we tomorrow bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘we will not eat bread tomorrow’

(116)

*?inti giyabo dabb -i mo -re*

you (PL) tomorrow bread -NM eat -IMPF -2PL

‘you (PL) will eat bread tomorrow’

(117)

*?inti giyabo dabb -i mo -base*

you (PL) tomorrow bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘you (PL) will not eat bread tomorrow’

(118)

*?inti giyabo dabb -i mo -re*

they tomorrow bread -NM eat -IMPF -3PL

‘they will eat bread tomorrow’

(119)

*?inti giyabo dabb -i mo -base*

they tomorrow bread -NM eat -not -IMPF

‘they will not eat bread tomorrow’

### 2.3.3.4 Imperative forms of main verbs

To change verbs into the imperative, the singular imperative marker suffix *-be* and the plural imperative marker *-te* will be suffixed to the verbal stem.<sup>5</sup> Again the verb *moyide* will be used to show how imperatives are formed.

(120)

*neni dabb -i mo -be*

you (M) bread -NM eat -2MS

‘you (M)! eat bread’

(121)

*neni dabb -i mo -be*

you (F) bread -NM eat -2FS

‘you (F)! eat bread’

(122)

*?inti dabb -i mo -te*

you (PL) bread -NM eat -2PL

‘you (PL)! eat bread’

The negative imperatives are as follows:

(123)

*neni dabb -i mo -?ope*

you (M) bread -NM eat -not -2MS

‘you (M)! don’t eat bread’

(124)

*neni dabb -i mo -?ope*

you (F) bread -NM eat -not -2FS

‘you (F)! don’t eat bread’

(125)

*?inti dabb -i mo -?opite*

you (PL) bread -NM eat -not -2PL

‘you (PL)! don’t eat bread’

---

<sup>5</sup>The other personal pronouns are also in the following paradigm.

*tani mal lukka -re*

I Melo go -IMPM -1S

‘let me go to Melo’

*?i mal lukk -o*

he Melo go -IMPM -3MS

‘let him go to Melo’

*?izi mal lukk -o*

she Melo go -IMPM -3FS

‘let her go to Melo’

*nuni mal lukk -anda*

we Melo go -IMPM -2PL

‘let us go to Melo’

*?intsi mal lukk -o*

they Melo go -IMPM -3PL

‘let them go to Melo’

### 3 Prepositions (Postpositions)

Mesketo prepositions will be illustrated in the following section of the sketch; the English equivalents are “at, from, in, with”, and “to, for”.

#### 3.1 At

(126)

*nʔas -adi namʔi saʔat -bara yey -ide*

man -the two o'clock -at come -PF -3MS

‘the man came at two o'clock’

#### 3.2 From

(127)

*nʔas -adi gabi -galapo gents wong -ide*

man -the market -from ox buy -PF -3MS

‘the man bought an ox from the market’

#### 3.3 In

(128)

*nʔas -adi ketsi -giddi gel -ide*

man -the house -in enter -PF -3MS

‘the man entered the house’

#### 3.4 With

(129)

*nʔas -adi fukkare -bara say ʔufk -ide*

man -the suger -with tea drink -PF -3MS

‘the man drank tea with suger’

#### 3.5 To, for

(130)

*nas -adi ʔas -inda -bo mif ʔimm -ide*

man -the woman -the -to money give -PF -3MS

‘the man gave money to the woman’

These are not the only prepositions in Mesketo. There are also compound prepositions which are affixed to the prepositions mentioned above. Details about these will be presented in a further report.

### 4 Adverbs

To illustrate Mesketo adverbs, some data with time adverbs will be given.

(131)

*zinabo* ‘yesterday’

*giyabo* ‘tomorrow’

*attabo* ‘today’

*zinibari* ‘last year’

*attibari* ‘this year’

*ʔubugalassi* ‘always’

*putti putti k'ammi* ‘sometimes’

*ʔubb ʔubb galassi* ‘quickly’  
*ʔada ʔadāri* ‘frequently’

(132)

*tamir -i putti putti k’ammi timirti ketsi lukk -(i)re*

Tamiru sometimes school go -IMPF -3MS

‘Tamiru goes to school sometimes’

## References

- Alemayehu, Haile. (1990). The Phonology of Basketo. Paper presented at the First National Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, 1990.
- Bender, M. L. (1975). Omotic: A new Afroasiatic language family. University Museum Studies. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.
- Haile, Yesus Bala. (1988). Mesketo Phonology (Basketo). B.A. thesis. Addis Ababa University.
- Hayward, Richard. 1990. “Introduction.” In Hayward, (ed.). Omotic Language Studies. London.
- Hompó, Éva. (n.d., 1987). Basketo: A survey report. manuscript. Addis Ababa University: Institute of Ethiopian Studies.