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Ideophones in Kambaata (Cushitic): Grammar, meaning and use

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Abstract

In the literature on Cushitic languages, ideophones have often only been treated in a cursory manner. A little explored problem of the synchronic analysis concerns their word class status: do they constitute a word class on their own, or should they be subsumed under another word class and if so, under which one? The study of Kambaata ideophones presented here shows that there are valid arguments both for analyzing them as a separate word class and as a subclass of verbs. Based on a language-internal definition of the ideophone word class, features of its phonology, phonotactics and stress marking are discussed. The section on morphosyntax shows in which syntactic functions ideophones are used, clarifies the status of their support verbs ('say' and 'do') and considers the argument structure of ideophones. The section on ideophone-related word formation investigates which derivational processes take ideophonic inputs, describes the functions of reduplication and illustrates the significance of compounding and conversion for the formation of ideophones. The discussion of the semantics of ideophones is followed by preliminary information about the frequency of ideophones across text types. Finally, the use of 'say' as a quotative verb in reported speech constructions is explored, and it becomes clear that the line between ideophone constructions with 'say' and reported interjections is not always easy to draw.

Keywords: Cushitic; ideophone; interjection; word class; stress.

1. Introduction

Kambaata (Highland East Cushitic, ktb; Glottolog code: kamb1316; endonym: *Kambaatissata*) is a morphologically rich language, which requires all nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives to be inflected (Treis 2023a). It therefore catches the eye that two major word classes are morphologically invariant: ideophones, e.g. *xóqq* ‘rise’, in (1) in combination with the verb *y-* ‘say’, and interjections, e.g. *hashshú* ‘yay, great, congratulations’ and *ekkú* ‘okay’ in (2148).

(1) *Mexx-é* *afuu’ll-itóo* *ma’nn-éechch* ***xóqq*** *= y-itán*
single-MULT sit_down-3F.PFV.REL place-F.ABL rise.IDEO = say-3F.PFV.CVB
qax-ée *wól-i-s* *óos-ut* *me’-ú = rr-a-ndo*
extent-M.DAT other-F.NOM-DEF children-F.NOM how_many-M.ACC = NMZ4-M.ACC-Q
hujat-táa’u
work-3F.IPFV
‘How many (tasks) do the other children work before she stands up once from the place where she is sitting?’ (Field notes 2015, DWD)

(2) ***Hashshú,*** *góon-ch-u-ta,* *abb-íshsh*
yay.INTJ males-SGV-F.PRED-F.COP2 exceed-CAUS1.1SG.PFV.CVB
galaxx-áan-ke.
thank-1SG.IPFV-2SG.OBJ
Y-itoontí = r-a *gu’mm-á < n > ka* ***ekkú!***
say-2SG.PFV.REL = NMZ4-M.ACC all-M.ACC < EMP > okay.INTJ
‘Yay, you are a hero! I thank you very much. Okay to all what you said.’ (SMS exchange 2019, BN)

In the literature on Cushitic languages, ideophones (as well as interjections) have so far only been treated in a cursory manner and their importance has (potentially) been underestimated. Tosco hypothesizes that ideophones “are not so common in Gawwada (gwd) (nor generally in Cushitic) as they are in many other African languages” (2006: 887). Mous’s detailed overview chapter of Cushitic dedicates only half a page to ideophones (2012: 381–382); interjections are not discussed at all. To

date, there are only few detailed studies on ideophones in individual languages, the most notable exceptions are Cabdulqaadir & Tosco (1998) on Somali (som) and Tosco (2006) on Gawwada, both languages of study belonging to the Lowland East Cushitic branch. In addition, three qualifying works from Addis Ababa University deal with ideophones in Cushitic languages (Amina 2013; Girum 2013; Desalegn 2020). While ideophones are underrepresented in descriptive and documentary works, so-called "descriptive compounds", i.e. complex predicates whose semantic core is a non-inflecting coverb (e.g. an ideophone) followed by an inflecting, semantically bleached light verb (often 'say' and 'do'), have attracted the attention of areal linguists, who trace their distribution across Northeastern Africa, and historical linguists, who see them as the source construction for new verb inflections across Afroasiatic (see, for instance, Cohen et al. 2002; Güldemann 2005).

An important, little explored problem of the synchronic analysis of ideophones in Cushitic concerns their word class status: do they constitute a word class on their own, or can they be subsumed under another word class and if so, which one? For Tosco, ideophones in Cushitic languages are "undoubtedly […] nominal in character" (2006: 887; see also Cabdulqaadir & Tosco 1998 on the nominal nature of Somali ideophones). The detailed study of Kambaata ideophones presented here significantly expands an earlier study of onomatopoeic ideophones (Treis & Deginet 2024). The present paper argues that ideophones could either be analyzed as a separate open word class or as a subclass of verbs. After a general introduction into the grammar of the language (§2), the core of this paper (§3) aims at characterizing ideophones from different angles. First, the defining criteria for the word class are established (§3.1), then features of its phonology, phonotactics and stress marking are discussed (§3.2). The section on morphosyntax (§3.3) shows in which syntactic functions ideophones are used, clarifies the status of their support verbs (enclitic or independent) and their variant forms, and looks at the argument structure of ideophones. The next section (§3.4) delves into ideophone-related word formation, investigates which derivational processes take ideophonic inputs, shows for which functions ideophones are morphologically reduplicated and illustrates the significance of compounding and conversion for the formation of ideophones. §3.5

is dedicated to the semantics of ideophones, while §3.6 provides preliminary information on the frequency of ideophones across text types and compares the size of the word classes of verbs and ideophones. §4 looks at the grammar of reported speech and other uses of 'say'. The section highlights, among others, that it is not always possible to draw a line between ideophones and reported interjections. The final discussion in §5 weighs up the pros and cons of considering ideophones as a word class on a par with the major word classes of nouns, adjectives and verbs, or of subsuming verbs and ideophones as subclasses under a joint word class. The final section also addresses to what extent the Kambaata ideophones fit the comparative concept of ideophones proposed by Mark Dingemanse.

The description presented here is based on data from my field notes[1] and transcribed recordings, local Kambaata publications and the extensive lexical documentation in Alemu's (2016) Kambaata-Amharic-English dictionary. If not indicated otherwise, all ideophones presented in this paper are attested in more than one source. Data taken from Alemu (2016) has all been checked with a native speaker and the translations corrected or refined.[2] Recorded field data is marked by the initials of the recorded speaker, the date of recording and the file number (e.g. AN2016-02-19_001). All data cited from local Kambaata publications has been segmented, stress-marked, glossed and translated by me. Wherever possible and relevant, complementary information about ideophones in related languages is given.

2. Background on Kambaata

Kambaata is a Highland East Cushitic language spoken in southwestern Ethiopia by at least 600,000 speakers, according to the latest census (Central Statistical Agency

[1] The field notes 2021-2023 were collected remotely or in person with native speakers in Germany.

[2] Desalegn (2020) is a thesis on Kambaata ideophones, which is partly based on Alemu (2016). I was not (yet) able to confirm many of the new ideophones provided in the appendix (2020: 135–138), which is possibly related to the fact that the author and most of his consultants come from the Shiinshichcho area, while my consultants are from around Duuraame, Daambooyya and Hangacca.

2007: 74). Neighboring groups are speakers of closely related Cushitic languages (Hadiyya; Alaaba)[3] and of Omotic languages (Wolaitta; Dawro).[4] The Ethiopian lingua franca Amharic (Semitic, amh) is the most important second language of Kambaata speakers. Kambaata's official orthography is based on the Roman script and used with minimal modifications to transcribe the data in this article. The following graphemes are not in accordance with IPA conventions: <ph> /p'/, <x> /t'/, <q> /k'/, <j> /dʒ/, <c> /tʃ'/, <ch> /tʃ/, <sh> /ʃ/, <y> /j/ and <'> /ʔ/. Geminate consonants and long vowels are marked by doubling, e.g. <shsh> /ʃː/ and <ee> /eː/. Consonant clusters consisting of a glottal stop and a simplex sonorant are spelled as trigraphs, e.g. <'rr> /ʔr/, to distinguish them from laryngealized sonorants, e.g. <'r> /r'/. Nasalization is marked by a macron, e.g. <ā> /ã/. The minor adaptations to the official orthography made in this contribution concern the additional marking of phonemic stress by an acute accent and the consistent notation of the phonemic glottal stop whenever it occurs in word-medial and word-final position.

Kambaata is a suffixing, agglutinating-fusional language with many portmanteau morphemes. It is both head- and dependent-marking with nine nominal cases and subject indexing on verbs. The constituent order is head-final: dependent clauses precede main clauses, the main verb or copula is the last constituent in a clause; in the NP, all modifiers (including relative clauses) are placed before the head noun.

The word classes can be divided into those that have morphologically variant (i.e. inflecting) members and those that have morphologically invariant members. Nouns inflect obligatorily for case and gender. The different types of pronouns are obligatorily marked for case as well as person, gender, number and/or honorificity. Adjectives must be minimally marked for case and gender; as modifiers, they agree with the head noun. All verb forms apart from the verbal noun are subject-indexed and marked for at least one other inflectional category (aspect, mood, subordination); verbal nouns are marked for case and gender. The non-inflected

[3] Hadiyya: hdy; Alaaba: alw.

[4] Wolaitta: wal; Dawro: dwr.

nominal, adjectival or verbal root is bound and never uttered in isolation. Pronominal roots are often not isolatable due to fusion or suppletion.

Of the five word classes with morphologically invariant members, three are very small. The word class of conjunctions contains only two members: *té* 'or' for the disjunction of noun phrases and *bagáan* 'but', a contrastive clause conjunction. Instead, Kambaata makes use of subordinating and coordinating suffixes. There is also a small word class of discourse particles with members such as *ammóo* 'however, furthermore' (contrast, addition), *áchche* 'then' (consequence), *áda* 'oh!, I see' (surprise, understanding) and *éman* 'congratulations!'.[5] The third negligibly small word class are adverbs, encompassing *léelan* 'slowly', *dángo* 'unexpectedly' and *bíinin* 'separately'. In the place of adverbs, Kambaata uses nouns and adjectives marked for adverbial cases or converbs in adverbial function. The two remaining invariant word classes, ideophones and interjections, have a large number of members. Ideophones are at the core of this paper, whereas features of interjections are here treated only insofar as they are relevant for the description of ideophones (in §4).

3. Features of ideophones

3.1. Language-internal definition and terminological choices

Ideophones are defined in Kambaata as an open word class of morphologically invariant lexemes that require the support verbs *y-* 'say' in intransitive clauses and *a'-* 'do' in transitive clauses to be inflected and syntactically integrated into an utterance. Ideophones differ from the equally invariant interjections in that they do not constitute an utterance on their own. In rare contexts, which are elliptic and belong to the domain of artistic speech, ideophones are attested in independent use. This is, for instance, seen in a riddle from Desalegn (2020: 111), here presented in

[5] The list of discourse particles is possibly incomplete. For the use of *éman* and *áda*, see (23) and (53).

(3).[6] See also verse 7 in the song *Haate Haate Haate* in Treis (2012), which ends in an ideophone without a support verb.

(3) *Cuph-á* ***dúbb,*** *can-á* ***wíqq***
pestle-M.ACC pound.IDEO leather_bag-M.ACC tie_tightly.IDEO
(Riddle) 'A pestle – to pound, a leather bag (filled with air) – to tie up tightly.' (Desalegn 2020: 111; transcription, glossing and translation adapted; solution of the riddle provided by YYZ: *cinú* 'excrements')

Ideophones principally combine with two different support verbs (4)-(5) (see §3.3.4 for exceptions).[7] The support verb *y-* 'say' is used in intransitive contexts, the support verb *a'-* 'do' in transitive contexts. As ideophone support, *y-* 'say' varies freely with *ih-* 'become', and *a'-* 'do' with *ass-* 'do' (§3.3.3); the alternatives are, however, less commonly used. As argued in §3.3.2, the support verbs are enclitic to the ideophones. All support verbs are still used as regular verbs in isolation, where they have retained their full lexical meaning (§4). The full reduplication of ideophones, as in (5), is frequent (§3.4.3).

(4) *bínn=y-* 'be dispersed, be scattered'
bínn=a'- 'disperse (s.th.), scatter (s.th.)' – see (41) for its use in an example

(5) *dúbb=y- / dúbb~dúbb=y-* 'produce the *dúbb(~dúbb)* sound (of feet, flail, load hitting the ground, pestle hitting the wooden mortar), be pounded'
dúbb=a'- / dúbb~dúbb=a'- 'cause to produce the *dúbb(~dúbb)* sound; pound; thresh'

The term "support verb" used here is equivalent to the more common term "light verb" found in the literature on complex predicates. The construction in which a

[6] Girum (2013: 52–53) also reports about the independent use of ideophones in Sidaama (sid) riddles.

[7] For reasons of space, in all the data tables below, ideophones are presented with only one possible support verb, often the one that is most commonly attested in my database. However, if not indicated otherwise (as in §3.3.4), these ideophones can usually also combine with the transitive or intransitive counterpart.

non-inflecting ideophone (or another coverb) is combined with a support verb is referred to in the literature on languages of Northeast Africa by a variety of terms, among them "compound verb", "composite verb" and "descriptive compound",[8] and considered an areal feature of the languages of the Ethiopian Linguistic Area or Northeast Africa (Leslau 1945: 72; Ferguson 1976: 71–72; Zaborski 1991: 125; Appleyard 2001: 1–2; Güldemann 2005). For Kambaata, I first speak of "ideophone-support constructions", before arguing in §5 that "periphrastic verb" could be a possible alternative.

3.2. The phonology, phonotactics and stress marking of ideophones

When compared to lexemes of other word classes, ideophonic lexemes do not have a particularly unusual phonology. The vast majority are phonologically inconspicuous. Only a handful contain phonemes that are elsewhere marginal (Treis & Deginet 2024), such as nasal vowels, e.g. *hā́ā̄=y-* 'gape (of mouth, abyss, deep hole)' and the geminate glottal stop, e.g. *mé''a=y-* 'bleat (of goat)'. The geminate glottal stop is, however, also found in interjections, e.g. *há''a* 'yuck', and the nasal vowels are attested in the noun *hāy-í* 'front leg of cattle' and in several interjections, e.g. *ī́* 'take what I have in my hand' and *ā́ā̄* 'yes'. The onomatopoeic ideophones *nyáu=y-* 'meow (of cat)', *wúh=y-* 'bark (of dog)' and *buhhú=y-* 'cough, make a coughing sound' are the only lexemes known to contain a palatal nasal,[9] a word-final glottal fricative and a geminate glottal fricative, respectively. At first view, the frequency of certain phonemes in ideophones is not significantly different from that in lexemes of other word classes, but this question needs to be studied quantitatively.

[8] Some languages in Northeast Africa have productive processes by which non-inflecting forms are derived from verbal lexemes. These constructions with a verb-based coverb are pragmatically marked when compared to simple verbs; see the "intersubjective modal functions" reported for Afar (aar) by Cohen et al. (2002: 247) or the attenuating/intensifying function of deverbal coverbs in Amharic (Meyer this volume). In this context, "descriptive" serves as a cover term for "pragmatically marked".

[9] Alemu (2016: 755) transcribes 'meow' with an alveolar nasal as *naawu.*

Regarding phonotactics, the typical Kambaata ideophone is monosyllabic, less commonly disyllabic, and ends in a geminate consonant or consonant cluster;[10] see selected examples in Table 1.[11]

Ideophone	**English**
Monosyllabic in CC#	
kú'nn=a'-	'tip (s.th.) out'
qóss=y-	'squat, sit on one's heels, sit down (of dog, cat)'
shóott=y-	'get up abruptly'
wíll=y-	'sneak away, disappear (from s.o.'s view)'
xéephph=y-	'be about to do'
zágg=y-	'fall flat to the ground (e.g. after heavy beating, when fainting)'
Disyllabic in CC#	
canqárr=y-	'cling (to s.o./s.th.), hold on (to s.o./s.th.)'
fitíkk=a'-	'untie (s.th.)'
fokkótt=y-	'bow (down), take a bow'
habább=y-	'burn (vi) with a sudden and high flame (e.g. of dry leaves)'
hokkóbb=y-	'stand on the hind legs and lean the front legs against (e.g. a tree)'
qomfó'll=y-	'get a dent, be dented'

Table 1: Ideophones illustrating the most common phonotactic structures.

Other phonotactic structures are not excluded, albeit less common (Table 2).[12] Some ideophones end in a single consonant or a long or short vowel. If an ideophone is vowel-final, it is more likely to be disyllabic than monosyllabic.

[10] Crass (2005: 226–227) reports the same phonotactic preference for K'abeena (alw) ideophones.

[11] Recall from §2 that certain consonants are represented by digraphs in the official orthography, e.g. <ph> /p'/ and <phph> /p':/, and that glottal stop-sonorant clusters are represented by trigraphs, e.g. <'nn> /ʔn/. The enclitic support verbs in this and the following tables are *y-* 'say' and *a'-* 'do'.

[12] Only tendencies can here be described. Due to the large number of ideophones attested in the Kambaata sources (§3.6), many hundreds still need to be checked in the field.

Ideophone	English
Monosyllabic in C#	
fúq=y-	‘gush out, spill out’
húf=y-	‘boil over (of liquid in cooking pot), rise through fermentation’
láph=y-	‘lie down a bit (e.g. of people taking a nap)’
shíq=y-	‘move over, scoot over’
túk=y-	‘walk behind each other in a large group’
Monosyllabic in V(V)#	
tú=y-	‘spit’
fúu=a’-	‘blow (of strong wind)’
táa=a’-	‘shoot (a gun)’
wóo=y-	‘wail’
ű́u=y-	‘say mm-hmm, give sign of attentive listening, backchannel’
Disyllabic in C#	
chalál=y-	‘float’
hagág=y-	‘strut about’
hambúq=a’-	‘down (a drink), finish (a drink) in one go’
shigíg=a’-	‘shock, disgust, revolt (s.o.)’
xambáq=a’-	‘stick, attach (s.th.)’
Disyllabic in V(V)#	
culú=a’-	‘please (s.o.), seem beautiful (to s.o.)’
forgó=y-	‘move a bit away, keep one’s distance’
hamúu=a’-	‘drive (s.o.) insane, make (s.o.) lose their mind’
kachá=y-[13]	‘argue, thrash out a problem’
rejé=y-	‘become calm’

Table 2: Ideophones illustrating less common phonotactic structures.

Trisyllabic ideophones (Table 3) are considerably less frequent than disyllabic ones.[14]

[13] This ideophone was incorrectly given as an example with penultimate stress in Treis (2008: 87).

[14] Desalegn (2020: 55–56) reports about simplex ideophones with more than three syllables. However, in the examples given, the support verb *a’-* ‘do’ is erroneously included in the syllable count, e.g. *munxulúqq=a’-* ‘remove completely’ (*munt’úluk’k’a?* in his writing) is considered to have four syllables.

Ideophone	English
biciríqq=y-	‘make a U-turn’
bitikínn=a’-	‘discard (e.g. an idea)’
budulúmm=y-	‘struggle, try hard’
buxurúqq=y-	‘come out suddenly, pop out’
chachachá=y-	‘be sufficiently fermented (of beer)’
kushurúmm=a’-	‘crunch, eat (s.th. hard) noisily’
menxeléqq=a’-	‘open completely/widely, uncover, disclose’
munxulúqq=a’-	‘remove completely’
ororó=a’-	‘soothe (a crying child) with a lullaby and rocking’
tililí=y-	‘ring (of telephone)’

Table 3: Trisyllabic ideophones.

In the vast majority of cases, the vowels across multisyllabic ideophones are identical; see most examples in the lower halves of Table 1 and 2 as well as in Table 3. Among trisyllabic ideophones, exceptions to this rule are especially hard to come by; but see *haburútt=y-* ‘wilt (of plants); become meagre, get a gaunt face (due to disease)’.

Phonotactically, ideophones differ little (if at all) from other roots in the language. Most verb roots, for instance, also have one or two vowels as nucleus (e.g. *laq-* ‘head (towards a place)’, *zuug-* ‘scrape; tan’, *iill-* ‘arrive’; *dagud-* ‘run’, *fikkaan-* ‘have many descendants’, *sangaagg-* ‘lean back one’s head’), while roots with three vowel nuclei (e.g. *foroffiit-* ‘steam’) are infrequent. Verbs roots also tend to have identical vowel nuclei if they are multisyllabic; this tendency seems, however, less pronounced than in the case of ideophones.

Kambaata is a language with phonemic stress whose position in a word is predominantly grammatically determined. The bound verbal, adjectival and (pro)nominal roots are undetermined for stress, but all inflectional morphemes are realized segmentally by a suffix and suprasegmentally by a specific stress position. Thus the stress patterns of word forms of the inflecting word classes are determined by their inflectional morphology. Kambaata has many systematic stress minimal pairs; see, for instance, the difference between accusative *-ú* vs. nominative *´-u* in nouns of the masculine declension M3: *bóos-u* (M.NOM) vs. *boos-ú* (M.ACC) ‘large clay pot’. In contrast, in the non-inflecting word classes of ideophones and interjections, the position of the stressed syllable is lexically determined and unpredictable, i.e. it

has to be noted in the dictionary.[15] Overall, ultimate stress is far more frequent on ideophones (see most examples in this article) than penultimate stress (Table 4). Trisyllabic ideophones with antepenultimate stress (ˈσσσ) are not attested.

Ideophone	English
báa'a=y-	'bleat (of sheep)'
bűra=y-	'forgive (esp. in a reconciliation ceremony)'
cá'a=a'-	'clear, remove, clean completely'
dú''u-dú''u=y-	'beat (of heart)'
hắā''ā=y-	'hee-haw, bray (of donkey)'
hánda=y-	'become thankful, grateful, content; become gratifying'
hó''a=a'-	'cause to vomit'
ilíli=y-	'ululate'
jába=y-	'bless (before pouring coffee)'
mé''a=y-	'bleat (of goat)'
qúuxo=y-	'do deliberately, willfully, on purpose, according to a plan'

Table 4: Ideophones with penultimate stress ((σ)ˈσσ).

Every simplex ideophone has one prominent (stressed) syllable. Stress thus helps distinguish between ideophones that have two (or more) identical syllables, i.e. which are lexically reduplicative, from ideophones that are morphologically reduplicated. The former have one stressed syllable, e.g. *tatá=y-* 'fall suddenly and heavily (of rain)', while the latter are stressed on each reduplicant, e.g. *cíl~cíl=y-* 'become shiny (with oil, lotion)' and *káf~káf=y-* 'put oneself in danger'. For information on the stress marking of the support verbs, see §3.3.3.

Ideophones display a higher degree of phonological variation across speakers than lexemes of other word classes (a similar observation is made for Sidaama ideophones in Girum 2013: 34). Variation affects vowel quality (e.g. C*a*C*a*C ~ C*u*C*u*C), the mode of articulation of consonants (e.g. *ph* /pʼ/ ~ *b*, *q* /kʼ/ ~ *g*, *c* /tʃʼ/~ *sh* /ʃ/) and even syllable structure (e.g. CVCC ~ CVCC*í*), as a perusal of the available sources and my experience in work with different speakers show; see Table 5 for illustrative examples. Deciding which form of an ideophone to provide

[15] Unfortunately, the stress of ideophones and interjections is not marked in Alemu (2016). Desalegn (2020: 61) erroneously states that ideophones are accented on the "second syllable"; irrespective of whether this is to be interpreted as second syllable from the left or right, the statement is falsified by my data and even by the data that he himself presents in the thesis.

in a wordlist is, therefore, considerably more challenging than for lexemes of other word classes.

Variant 1	Variant 2	English	Sources
bárr=y-	*búrr=y-*	'fly'	V1: TD2016-02-11_001 / V2: assistant[16]
birxí~birxí=y-	*bírx~bírx=y-*	'twist, wriggle about (e.g. to free oneself)'	V1: Frog Story DWD, Kambaata Education Bureau (1989: 7.125) / V2: Alemu (2016: 136)
bolóng~bolóng=a'-	*bolónq~bolónq=a'-*	'move one's eyes (up/down, left/right)'	V1: TD2016-02-11_001, see 160 / V2: assistant
chílk~chílk=y-	*chilkí~chilkí=y-* *kilchí~kilchí=y-*	'clink (of keys, coins, small bells on a horse's neck)'	V1 + V2 + V3: Treis & Deginet (2024)
hokkóbb=y-	*hochchóbb=y-*	'stand on the hind legs and lean the front legs against s.th.'	V1 + V2: Alemu (2016: 493)
kirír=a'-	*kurúr=a'-*	'rotate'	V1 + V2: Alemu (2016: 596)
kuukú=y-	*guugú=y-*	'coo (of dove)'	Treis & Deginet (2024)
lácc=y-	*láshsh=y-*	'go slowly, slow down (vi)'	V1 + V2: field notes and different written sources
ríph~ríph=y-	*ríbb~ríbb=y-*	'move slightly back and forth, up and down, in waves'	V1: Kambaata Education Bureau (1989: 4.51) / V2: Alemu (2016: 870)
qacác=a'-	*qucúc=a'-*	'crunch (e.g. roasted grain, bones)'	V1 + V2: Alemu (2016: 789, 851)
qu'mmí=eecc-	*qú'mm=eecc-*	'bring together (for one's benefit)'	V1: AN2016-02-19_001, see 168 / V2: assistant
qúrc=a'-	*gúrc=a'-*	'swallow'	V1 + V2: Alemu (2016: 404)
shóott=y-	*shokótt=y-*	'get up abruptly'	V1 + V2: Kambaata Education Bureau (1989: 8.22; 6.125)

Table 5: Illustrative examples of variation in the pronunciation of ideophones (V1/V2 = pronunciation variants).

[16] "Assistant" stands for the native speaker who assisted in the transcription of a recording and who pointed out discrepancies between their and the recorded speaker's pronunciation.

3.3. The morphosyntax of ideophones

3.3.1. Syntactic functions of ideophones

With the support of 'say' and 'do', ideophones can be used in any syntactic context where verbs are used in Kambaata.[17] In (6), the last ideophone is a declarative main clause verb, while the preceding ideophones are converbs. In (7), the ideophone serves as a non-declarative, benedictive main clause verb.

(6) ***Míkk.míll*** *= y-itu'nnáachch* ***címm*** *= y-ít*
budge.IDEO = say-3F.NEG4.CVB shrink.IDEO = say-3F.PFV.CVB
afuu'll-ít, *ill-í-se* *al-í,* *muggeenn-á,*
sit_down-3F.PFV.CVB eye-F.ACC-3F.POSS up-M.ACC down-M.ACC
gur-á[ta], *makk-íta* ***bolóng~bolóng*** *= at-táa',*
left-F.ACC right-F.ACC RED~move_one's_eyes.IDEO = do-3F.IPFV
tah-íchch-u *waal-anó = g-a* *zug-gán*
flies-SGV-M.NOM come-3F.IPFV.REL = SIM-M.ACC lie_in_ambush-3F.PFV.CVB
(Speaking about a chameleon:) 'It (lit. she) sat (there) stock-still, shrunk, (and only) moved its eyes up, down, to the left, to the right, (while) lying in ambush for a fly.' (TD2016-02-11_001)

(7) *Maaráam-it* *xumm-íin* *gulub-í-kk*
Mary-F.NOM peace-M.ICP knee-F.ACC-2SG.POSS
címm *= át-to-he*
bring_together.IDEO = do-3F.BDV-2SG.OBJ
(Blessing for a woman who has just given birth:) 'May Mary bring your knees (i.e. here: pelvis) together (again) in peace!' (EK2016-02-23_002)

Ideophones can also be used as final constituents in relative clauses and relative-based adverbial clauses (8). In (9), the support verb enables the ideophone to be used as a case-inflected verbal noun complement of *hoog-* 'not do'.

[17] There is one known exception to this rule: the ideophone *qúuxo = y-* 'do deliberately, willfully, on purpose, according to a plan' is only used in adverbial function and therein inflected as a converb.

(8) (…) *resh-á* ***xóqq*** *= a'-eemmá = g-a < n > ka*
corpse-M.ACC rise.IDEO = do-3HON.PFV.REL = SIM-M.ACC < EMP >
iddir-í *bun-á* *azzaz-eenáyyoomma*
funeral_association-M.GEN coffee-M.ACC order-3HON.PROG
'(…) as soon as the corpse has been picked up, one orders the funeral association's coffee.' (EK2016-02-23_003)

(9) *Giir-áta* *danáam-o = gga* ***tú'mm*** *= a'-ú*
fire-F.ACC good-M.OBL = SIM-M.OBL narrow_down.IDEO = do-M.ACC
hóog-gi-yan *mát-oa = rr-áan* *aphph-íti-yan*
not_do-2SG.PFV.CVB-DS one-M.OBL = NMZ4-M.LOC seize.MID-3F.PFV.CVB-DS
bu < m > bókkoomm!
burn < 1PL > APPR
'If you don't narrow down the fire properly (to the small spot in the center of the fire-place), (the fire) might light something, and we might burn.' (Field notes 2006, DWD)

3.3.2. The morphosyntactic status of the support verbs

Y- 'say' and *a'-* 'do' are not limited to the ideophone-supporting function but also used on their own. For the independent use of *y-* 'say', see §4; for *a'-* 'do', see (10) (for the stem alternation *a'-* ~ *at-* 'do' see §3.3.3).

(10) *M-á* ***at****-táyyoont?*
what-M.ACC do-2SG.PROG
'What are you doing?' (Geetaahun 2002: 178)

It is difficult to decide on the morphosyntactic status of 'say' and 'do', as ideophones and support verbs always immediately follow each other, no other constituents can intervene, and no morpheme can be suffixed to the ideophone or prefixed to the support verb.[18] I analyze *y-* 'say' and *a'-* 'do' as enclitic to the ideophones, and I mark the juncture with an equal sign. The support verbs are definitely not completely dependent on the ideophones (i.e. not suffixal), but they are not fully

[18] This is different from Sidaama, where, according to Kawachi (2007: 175), constituents can intervene between ideophones and support verbs.

independent words either. They retain their independent stress marking when inflected (§3.3.3) but tend to be reduced segmentally. The root consonant of *y-* 'say' is often hardly audible in non-careful speech. Regarding [ʔ]*a'-* 'do', the expected initial glottal stop, a phonetically determined boundary marker of vowel-initial words, is only realized in careful speech, e.g. *xóqq=a'-ú* 'to raise' is usually pronounced [ˈt'ok':aˈʔu] rather than [ˈt'ok':ʔaˈʔu] 'raise'.[19] The ambiguous status of the support verb is also reflected in written Kambaata texts, where one of the most common sources of inconsistency is their representation as (in)dependent elements. Some authors generally write both support verbs as separate (e.g. Alemu 2016; Alamu & Alamaayyo 2017), others attach 'do' but are undecided about 'say' (e.g. Geetaahun 2002; Kambaata and Hadiyya Translation Project Hosaina 2005), still others write 'say' as separate but are undecided about 'do' (Desalegn 2020). All this indicates that native speakers are not sure about the support verbs' status either; compare (11) and (12) from the same text.

(11) (...) *ba'anch-áan* <***luqqitoot***> *lúqq=y-ítoot-i*
argument-F.LOC enter_quickly.IDEO=say-2SG.NEG2-2SG.IMP
'(…) don't enter quickly into an argument.' (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 7.25)

(12) *(...)* <***calba yitu'nnaan***> *calbá=y-itu'nnáan*
waver.IDEO=say-2SG.NEG4.CVB
'(…) without (you) wavering.' (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 7.25)

The frozen middle suffix *-a'*, e.g. in *buqq(-)a'-* 'uproot' (Treis 2022: 23), may easily be mistaken as the *a'-* 'do' support verb and vice versa. Even though they are segmentally identical in non-careful speech, they differ in the morphophonological processes and the stress patterns they bring about (13)-(14) when inflected.

[19] Crass (2005: 228) mentions that ideophone and support verb often fuse into one phonological word in K'abeena. Since he does not analyze K'abeena stress in much detail, it is unclear whether there is a suprasegmental difference between regular verbs and ideophone-support constructions. The support verb 'say' is reduced and fused with the ideophone in Libido (liq), but it is consistently indicated in the transcription by Crass (n.d.: 30). For Alaaba, Schneider-Blum (2007: 277) reports about difficulties to tease regular verbs and ideophones apart.

(13) *tákk=a'-* 'simply drop' (IDEO)
3M.PRF = 3M.PFV: *tákk=a'-ée'u*
3F.PRF / 3F.PFV: *tákk=át-tee'u / tákk=at-tóo'u*

(14) *buqq(-)a'-* 'uproot' (VERB)
3M.PRF / 3M.PFV: *buqq(-)á'-ee'u / buqq(-)á'-o*
3F.PRF / 3F.PFV: *buqq(-)á'-ee'u / buqq(-)a'-óo'u*

3.3.3. The variants and the inflectional potential of the support verbs

The verbs *y-* 'say' and *a'-* 'do' are the most frequent but not the only possible support verbs for ideophones. In intransitive contexts, the verb *ih-* 'become' is sometimes attested where *y-* 'say' would be expected. It is unknown when *ih-* is preferred over *y-*, e.g. with *sá'mm=y-* ~ *sá'mm=ih-* 'become quiet', *xúnn=y-* ~ *xúnn=ih-* 'smoke, fume' or color ideophones, as in (15)-(16); when asked, consultants are fine with either support verb.[20]

(15) *Íchchi-yan* *hangaar-eemmá* *má'nn-it*
eat.3M.PFV.CVB-DS scratch-3HON.PFV.REL place-F.NOM
*bíishsh=**ík**-k*[21] *xid-ú*
red.IDEO=become-3F.PFV.CVB hurt-M.ACC
(From a dictionary definition) 'of a spot where it itched (and) that one scratched[:] to become red and hurt.' (Alemu 2016: 126)

(16) *Qachch-ó* *áaz-u* *gambáll=**y**-án* *qax-ée*
beehive-F.GEN interior-M.NOM black.IDEO=say-3M.IPFV.CVB extent-M.DAT
barg-í *barg-í* *akkis-áamm*
add-1SG.PFV.CVB add-1SG.PFV.CVB smoke.CAUS1-1SG.IPFV
'Until the interior of the beehive has become black, I continue smoking it.' (AYZ2021-06-25_006)

[20] See also the use of *ih-* 'become' with *xóphph* 'jump' in (17), an ideophone that usually combines with *y-* 'say' in my data. Speaker TH uses *ih-* 'become' more frequently than other speakers.
[21] *Ík-k* is the result of a regular morphophonological assimilation process: *h+t* > *kk*.

A rare alternative intransitive support verb is *eeh-*; no independent use is attested or elicitable, but (historically) it might have been the base of the causative verb *ees-* 'do', a rare variant of *ass-* 'do' (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 125).

(17) (...) *qo'rr-í* *xóqq=**eekk**-ó-o*[22] *maskoot-í* *al-íichch*
gird-3M.PFV.CVB rise.IDEO=?-3M.PFV.REL-CIRC window-M.GEN top-M.ABL
xóphph=íkk *had-áta* *láqq* (...)
jump.IDEO=become.3M.PFV.CVB outside-F.ACC head_towards.3M.PFV.CVB
'(...) when he had gotten ready and stood (up there), he jumped out from the window (...).' (Frog Story 2007, TH)

In transitive contexts, the short verb *a'-* 'do' is in free variation with the heavier verb *ass-* 'do'; see (164) and (34). The verbs are entirely synonymous, but *a'-* is much more frequent with ideophones and *ass-* much more frequent elsewhere.

(18) *Kank-á<n>ka* *shínn~shínn=**ass**-í*
this_much-M.ACC<EMP> RED~laugh_heartily.IDEO=do-3M.PFV.CVB
osal-siis-áyyoo-'nne=r-u *m-áha-a-n?*
laugh-CAUS2-3M.PROG-2PL.OBJ=NMZ4-M.NOM what-M.PRED-M.COP2-Q
'What makes you (PL) laugh so heartily?' (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 4.34)

The morphophonology and stress patterns of the support verb *a'-* 'do' are unlike that of any other verb with a root-final glottal stop, as the comparison of the perfect and perfective paradigms in Table 6 show. If we focus on the shaded 3M and 3F forms, we see that the 3M forms of *a'-* 'do' follow the model of *ga'-* 'call'. In contrast, the 3F forms of *a'-* 'do' are unlike that of the two other verbs: Their stress patterns are similar to that of *ossa'-* 'lie down', but we observe neither the *t*-deletion of the 3F markers *-tóo'u/´-tee'u* (3F.PFV/3F.PRF) that is characteristic of verbs like *ossa'-* 'lie down', nor the insertion of an epenthetic vowel before the 3F markers *-tóo'u/´-tee'u* (3F.PFV/3F.PRF) that is characteristic of *ga'-* 'call'.

[22] The stem of the support verb *eeh-* is here realized as *eekk-*, because stem-final *h* undergoes gemination and fortition in certain forms of the perfect(ive) due to a regular morphophonological process.

	***a'*- 'do'**		***ossa'*- 'lie down'**		***ga'*- 'call'**	
	PFV	**PRF**	**PFV**	**PRF**	**PFV**	**PRF**
1SG	*a'-éemm*	*a'-éemm*	*ossa'-óomm*	*ossá'-eemm*	*ga'-éemm*	*ga'-éemm*
2SG	*at-tóont*	*át-teent*	*ossa'-óont*	*ossá'-eent*	*ga'-itóont*	*ga'-íteent*
3M	*a'-ée'u*	*a'-ée'u*	*ossá'-o*	*ossá'-ee'u*	*ga'-ée'u*	*ga'-ée'u*
3F	*at-tóo'u*	*át-tee'u*	*ossa'-óo'u*	*ossá'-ee'u*	*ga'-itóo'u*	*ga'-ítee'u*
3HON	*a'-éemma*	*a'-éemmaa'u*	*ossa'-éemma*	*ossa'-éemmaa'u*	*ga'-éemma*	*ga'-éemmaa'u*
1PL	*a'-nnóomm*	*a'-nnéemm*	*ossa'-nnóomm*	*ossá'-nneemm*	*ga'-inóomm*	*ga'-íneemm*
2PL	*at-téenta*	*at-téentaa'u*	*ossa'-éenta*	*ossa'-éentaa'u*	*ga'-itéenta*	*ga'-itéentaa'u*

Table 6: Comparison of verbs with a root-final glottal stop (*ossa'*- 'lie down' is representative of all verbs with a frozen middle marker *-a'*).

The literature on Highland East Cushitic languages reports the use of 'say' and 'do' as support verbs in all languages (Table 7).

Language	**Support verbs**		**Source**
Kambaata	*y*- 'say' ~ *ih*-'become'	*a'*- ~ *ass*- 'do'	(own data)
K'abeena	*y*- 'say'	*a'*- ~ *ass*- 'do'	(Crass 2005: 226)
Alaaba	(*y*)- 'say'	*a'*- ~ *ass*- 'do'	(Schneider-Blum 2007: 277–278; 304–305)
Hadiyya	(*y*-) 'say'	*a'*- [< *'do'?]	(Hudson 1976: 273; Tadesse 2015: 346)[23]
Libido	(*y*-) 'say'	*aa'*- 'receive' [?][24]	(Crass n.d.: 30)
Sidaama	*y*- 'say'	*ass*- 'do'	(Kawachi 2007: 174–179; Girum 2013: 44–45)
Gedeo[25]	*hiyy*- 'say'	*ass*- 'do'	(Eyob 2015: §4.1.3.1)
Burji[26]	*iy*- 'say'	*iss*- 'do'	(Tesfaye 2015: 198–200)

Table 7: Cognate support verbs for ideophones in Highland East Cushitic.

Whereas all Cushitic languages employ 'say' in intransitive contexts, the choice of the support verb in transitive contexts varies quite a bit. In Lowland East Cushitic,

[23] Tadesse (2015) does not provide any information on the support verbs of ideophones (or any other information on this word class). The data in his appendix shows, however, that potentially ideophonic transitive lexemes have a recurring *-a(a)'*-element, e.g. *witt'*- 'gather' (vi) – *witt'a'*- 'collect'; see also the noun *witt'ite* 'meeting', which very likely contains the deideophonic nominalizer *-it* (§3.4.2). According to Hudson (1976: 273), the root consonant of 'say' is "omitted ordinarily" in Hadiyya, which might explain that is not written by Tadesse (cf. the situation in Libido and Alaaba). See also Hadiyya *huf*- 'boil (vi)' – *hufa'*- 'boil (vt)' and *hinc'*- 'approach; become close (vi)' – *hinc-a'*- 'present (vt)' in Hudson (1989: 282).

[24] I am not convinced that the support verb *aa'*- used in transitive contexts in Libido goes back to 'accept, receive', as claimed by Crass (n.d.: 30). Morphophonologically, it behaves like *a'*- in K'abeena and Alaaba, and it might (historically) originate from a 'do'-verb in Libido, too.

[25] Gedeo: drs.

[26] Burjii: bji.

'say' pairs with 'do' in Oromo (orm) and Saho (ssy) (Amina 2013: 41–45; Banti & Vergari 2005), with 'cause to say' in Konso (kxc) and Gawwada (Ongaye 2013: 247; Tosco 2006: 888), with 'give' in Somali (Cabdulqaadir & Tosco 1998: 129) and with 'put' in Afar (Cohen et al. 2002: 228; Hassan Kamil 2015: 392–394). For the Central Cushitic language Xamtanga (xan), Darmon argues that the support verbs originate from 'say' and 'cause to say' (2015: 293–294). Similarly, in Beja (bej) (Vanhove 2017: 111–112, 147), 'say' and 'cause to say' accompany ideophones (or onomatopoeia). In the South Cushitic languages Iraqw (irk) and Alagwa (wbj), only 'say' is used with ideophones (Mous 1993: 228–229; 2016: 202–205).

Amharic (Ethiosemitic), the Ethiopian lingua franca and most important second language of Kambaata speakers, employs 'say' and 'do' as support verbs for ideophones (Meyer this volume).

3.3.4. The argument structure of ideophones

Most ideophones occur in a 'say'/'do'-pair. When native speakers are consulted, even ideophones that are only attested with 'say' in the data usually also permit – given an appropriate context – a combination with 'do' and vice versa. If both support verbs are permitted, 'say' is used in intransitive contexts, 'do' in transitive contexts. Semantically, one could characterize ideophones with 'say' as expressing non-causal events and ideophones with 'do' as expressing causal events. Paired ideophones allow the 'do'-member to take an accusative object – see the accusative objects of ideophones in (7)-(9) – and to be passivized. The passive of 'do' is functionally equivalent to 'say' in ideophone-support constructions (19)-(20).

(19) *Kú* *xáh-u* *bóoc = **y**-ée = da*
A_DEM1.M.NOM thing-M.NOM clarify.IDEO = say-3M.PFV.REL = COND
xúm-a-a
good-M.PRED-M.COP2
'It's good (/better) if this issue is clarified.' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

(20) *Kú* *xáh-u* *bóoc = **ass**-amm-ó = da* *(~ bóoc = **a'**-amm-ó = da)*
A_DEM1.M.NOM thing-M.NOM clarify.IDEO = do-PASS-3M.PFV.REL = COND
xúm-a-a
good-M.PRED-M.COP2
'It's good (/better) if this issue is clarified.' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

One rarely comes across ideophones for which one of the support verbs is ruled out (unpaired ideophones). See, however, onomatopoeic ideophones for animal cries (Treis & Deginet 2024), e.g. *kutáakk=y-* '(of chicken) produce a sound which warns others of a predator', which do generally not permit 'do'. Support with 'do' was also ruled out for *hánda=y-* 'be thankful, grateful, content', *bíira=y-* 'forgive' and *qúuxo=y-* 'do deliberately, willfully, on purpose, according to a plan'.[27] There is reason to assume that these three ideophones (and possibly others) are not intransitive, in spite of them combining with 'say'. The evidence is most conclusive for *bíira=y-* 'forgive'. In (167), the patient whose sin the agent forgives is the direct object of the ideophone; see the accusative marking of *nées* 'us'. Through the passivization of 'say', the patient becomes the subject in (22).

(21) *Magán-o,* *nées* ***bíira=y-í-nne***
God-M.OBL 1PL.ACC forgive.IDEO=say-2SG.IMP-1PL.OBJ
'God, forgive us (our sins)!' (Field notes 2022, DWD)

(22) ***Bíira=y-am-ámm***[28] *fanqáll* *tees-ú-u*
forgive.IDEO=say-PASS-PASS.3M.PFV.CVB return.3M.PFV.CVB now-M.OBL-ADD
ba'-íshsh-o
go.bad-CAUS1-3M.PFV
'He was forgiven, (but then) he made a mistake again.' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

Examples such as (167)-(22) show that the use of 'say' as a support verb is not sufficient proof that an ideophone is intransitive. While some ideophones lack a 'do'-counterpart, the opposite configuration is also possible. In the semantic field of experiencer verbs, the use of 'say' is often not attested, sometimes explicitly excluded through negative evidence; see, e.g., *culú=a'-* 'please (s.o.)', *qúl~qúl=a'-* 'make (s.o.) feel nostalgic, cause a longing feeling (in s.o.)', *láf~láf=a'-* 'make (s.o.) feel nauseous', which take the stimulus as the subject and the experiencer as the direct object. Regarding their argument structure, ideophones thus seem to fall into (at least) four types:

[27] *Hánda* is not only an ideophone but also an interjection (§4.1), but the independent (interjectional) use of *bíira* and *qúuxo* was ruled out.

[28] Note that *y-* 'say' forms an irregular passive with *-am-am* (PASS-PASS), rather than simple *-am* (PASS).

- Type 1: Paired ideophone (most common): intransitive ideophone with ‘say’, transitive counterpart with ‘do’, e.g. *bóoc=y-* ‘be clarified’ – *bóoc=a’-* ‘clarify’; ‘do’-support passivizable.
- Type 2: Unpaired ideophones:
    - Type 2a: intransitive ideophone with ‘say’, no transitive counterpart with ‘do’, e.g. onomatopoeic ideophones for animal cries such as *búu=y-* ‘buzz (of bee)’ and bodily sounds such as *dú’’u-dú’’u=y-* ‘beat (of heart)’;
    - Type 2b: transitive ideophone with ‘say’, no counterpart with ‘do’, e.g. *bíira=y-* ‘forgive’; ‘say’-support passivizable;
    - Type 2c: transitive ideophone with ‘do’, no counterpart with ‘say’, e.g. experiencer verbs such as *culú=a’-* ‘please (s.o.)’.

The support verbs ‘say’ and ‘do’ can undergo middle derivation with *-’/-aqq* and the reciprocal derivation with *-am-/-aqq-am-* (Treis 2023b); see, e.g., the reciprocal forms *forgó~forgó=y-aqq-am-* ‘keep a distance from each other’, *gurgú=y-aqq-am-* ‘quarrel with each other’ and *háaf=y-aqq-am-* ‘forgive each other’ in Alamu (2022: 89, 152, 293; translation mine). The support verb *a’-* ‘do’ forms an irregular middle form *eecc-* ‘do for oneself’ (**a’-aqq-*), as in (168)-(24) from two different speakers.[29]

(23) *Éman* *xumm-íin* *gulub-í-kk*
congratulations.INTJ peace-M.ICP knee-F.ACC-2SG.POSS
*qu’mmí=**eecc**-ít*
bring_together.IDEO=do.MID-2SG.PFV.CVB
(Addressed to new mother:) ‘Congratulations, you have brought your knees together again in peace!’ (AN2016-02-19_001)

(24) *Ma’nn-íta* *xább=**eecc**-inim-bá’a* *y-éen (…)*
place-F.ACC prepare.IDEO=do.MID-1PL.NIPFV-NEG1 say-3HON.PFV.CVB
‘One says, “we have not (yet) prepared the place (for our benefit)”, (…).’ (EK2016-02-23_003)

[29] The middle *eecc-* ‘do for oneself’ is based on a free variant of the ‘do’ verb, namely *ees-*, cf. paragraph before (17).

Finally, there remains the question of the syntactic relation between the ideophone and the support verb. In his analysis of Gawwada, Tosco considers the ideophones "direct objects" of the verb 'say' and 'make say' (2006: 890). For Kambaata, there is no evidence that ideophones are direct objects of their accompanying support verbs: they cannot be pronominalized or be passivized upon, and they are not accusative-marked – which are all obligatory features of a Kambaata direct object.

3.4. The morphology of ideophones

This section analyzes word formation processes that take ideophones as inputs and/or produce them as outputs. The first subsections deal with two semi-productive derivational processes for deideophonic resultative adjectives (§3.4.1) and action nouns (§3.4.2). I then move on to two processes that have both ideophonic inputs and outputs, namely reduplication (§3.4.3) and compounding (§3.4.4). The last sub-section (§3.4.5) discusses the rather marginal examples of ideophones that are derived through conversion from adjectives and pronouns.

3.4.1. Deideophonic adjectivization

Resultative adjectives are derived from ideophones by *-eem*, e.g. *xóqq=y-* 'rise' > *xoqq-eem-á(ta)* 'raised, elevated, at higher altitude' and *hiríkk=y-* 'be lowered, bend over, stoop' > *hirikk-eem-á(ta)* 'lower(ed), at lower altitude', as seen in (25).

(25) *Lág-u* *xoqq-**éem**-ata* *ma'nn-éechch*
river-M.NOM rise.IDEO-RES-F.OBL place-F.ABL
*hirikk-**eem**-á=bb-a* *zaaz-anó-o*
be_lowered.IDEO-RES-M.ACC=PLC-M.ACC flow-3M.IPFV.REL-NMZ1.M.ACC
ikk-ó=biiha (...)
become-3M.PFV.REL=REAS2
'Because rivers flow from a higher/elevated place towards a lower place (...).'
(Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 8.71)

The resultative derivation is exclusive to ideophones, and no non-ideophonic inputs are attested. The resultative adjectives belong to A1, the largest adjectival declension;

consequently, their citation (= accusative) form ends in *-á* in the masculine and *-áta* in the feminine gender. Table 8 complements a list given in Treis (2008: 283–284).

Ideophone	English	Adjective	English
qubúbb=y-	'become round, circular, ball-shaped'	*qububb-eem-á(ta)*	'round, circular, ball-shaped'
cagágg=y-	'become unwell, indisposed, a bit ill'	*cagagg-eem-á(ta)*	'unwell, indisposed, a bit ill'
síww=y-	'become thin (e.g. of body, voice)'	*siww-eem-á(ta)*	'thin (e.g. of body, voice)'
cerérr=y-	'trickle, flow in a trickle'	*cererr-eem-á(ta)*	'trickling (e.g. of a jet of water); thin, elongated stretch (of land)'
géxx=y-	'go straight, go directly, stand straight'	*gexx-eem-á(ta)*	'straight, linear, direct'
lácc=y-	'go slowly, slow down (vi)'	*lacc-eem-á(ta)*	'slow (e.g. in walking, working)'
salákk=y-	'become quiet, calm (of a place), attentive'	*salakk-eem-á(ta)*	'calm, quiet, attentive'
wikkíkk=y-	'cling (to s.th.), not be dissuaded (from s.th.)	*wikkikk-eem-á(ta)*	'stubborn, obdurate'
qú'mm=y-	'be brought together/closer to each other; gather (vi)'	*qu'mm-eem-á(ta)*	'narrow, constricted (e.g. opening of a pot)'
(lúf~)lúf=y-	'become soft, malleable, fluffy'	*luf~luf-eem-á(ta)*	'soft, malleable, fluffy (e.g. a mattress)'
(qáf~)qáf=y-	'become restless, hyperactive, irrepressible'	*qaf~qaf-eem-á(ta)*	'restless, hyperactive, irrepressible'
qól~qól=y-	'do too hastily, distractedly; meddle, interfere'	*qol~qol-eem-á(ta)*	'distracted, too hasty; meddling, interfering'

Table 8: Deideophonic adjectives.

The resultative derivation takes simplex and reduplicated ideophones as input, as the last three lines of Table 7 and the second derived adjective in (26) illustrate.

(26) *laal-ú-s* *qububb-**eem**-áan* [*fushsh-anó*]
fruit-F.ACC-3M.POSS become.round.IDEO-RES-F.ICP come_out.CAUS1-3M.IPFV.REL
fatil-á *wez-eennó* *luf~luf-**eem**-á*
thread-M.ACC make-3HON.IPFV.REL RED~become_soft.IDEO-RES-M.ACC
hallaam-í *algod-ahá-a*
soft_interior_of_plant-M.GEN plant-M.ACC-ADD
hallaam-u-sí-i
soft_interior_of_plant-M.ACC-3M.POSS-ADD
(Monolingual definition of *fuuttá* '(i.) cotton plant, (ii.) cotton':) '[denotes] [i.] a plant that produces ball-shaped fruits/flowers [and] whose soft material is used for making threads and [ii.] the soft material itself.' (Alemu 2016: 331 [corrected by DWD 2023])

3.4.2. Deideophonic nominalization

Action nouns are derived from ideophones by *-it(t)*, e.g. *xóqq=y-* 'rise' > *xoqq-**itt**-á* 'height, elevation', *sáww=y-* 'think' > *saww-**itt**-á* 'thought, idea, (neolog.) sentence'; see also *xáphph=y-* 'gather (vi)' > *xaphph-**itt**-á* 'gathering, assembly', as in the neologism *xaphph-itt-í min-í* 'synagogue (lit. house of assembly)' of the Bible (Kambaata and Hadiyya Translation Project Hosaina 2005). If the ideophone ends in a short vowel, this vowel is dropped, e.g. *gambá=y-* 'come across, encounter by chance/suddenly' > *gamb-**itt**-á* 'chance encounter'; after a long vowel, an epenthetic *h* is inserted, e.g. *múu=y-* 'howl (of hyena)' > *muu-h-**itt**-á* 'time when hyenas howl at night'. Only one known *–it(t)*-derived noun is not based on an ideophone: *dang-itt-á* 'unexpected event' (28) is derived from one of the very few adverbs that the language has, namely *dángo* 'unexpectedly'. All *-it(t)*-derived nouns belong to the masculine declension M1, ending in *-á* in their citation (= accusative) form.[30] The use of deideophonic action nouns is illustrated in (27)-(28).

[30] The two allomorphs *-itt* and *-it* are probably dialectal variants. In Alemu (2016), most deideophonic nouns have *-it*, while my consultants from the Duuraame area consistently use *-itt*. In Kambaata's close relative K'abeena, the deideophonic nominalizer is *-it*, too; it is, however, marked

(27) *Caam-á-'i* *shobb-**itt**-á* *usúrr* *dagujj-óomm*
shoes-M.ACC-1SG.POSS tie_loosely-ACT-M.ACC tie.1SG.PFV.CVB run-1SG.PFV
'I tied my shoes loosely/quickly and ran off.' (Field notes 2022, DWD)

(28) *Tah-íchch-u* *dang-**ítt**-a* *waall-ó* *j-eechch-úta*
flies-SGV-M.NOM unexpectedly-ACT-M.OBL come-3M.PFV.REL time-SGV-F.ACC
qeraa'rr-utá-a *xámm=át-t* *af-fáa*
long-F.ACC-ADD stick.IDEO=do-3F.PFV.CVB seize-3F.IPFV.REL
arrab-i-sé-e *mexx-é* *tokkós-s*
tongue-F.ACC-3F.POSS-ADD single-MULT shoot-3F.PFV.CVB
fush-sh-ít=ke'éechch *xámm=át-t*
go_out-CAUS1-3F.PFV.CVB=SEQ stick.IDEO=do-3F.PFV.CVB
qúrc=at-táa', *tah-ichch-ú*
swallow.IDEO=do-3F.IPFV flies-SGV-M.ACC
'When a fly comes unexpectedly, it (= the chameleon (F)) shoots out, at once, its long (tongue) and sticky, seizing tongue, makes (it) stick (to the tongue) and swallows (it), the fly.' (TD2016-02-11_001)

The examples in Table 9 complement a list presented in Treis (2008: 157–158).[31]

Ideophone	English	Noun	English
báqq=y-	'wake up'	*baqq-itt-á*	'dawn, daybreak'[32]
bóoc=a'-	'give a hint, give some indication, clarification'	*booc-itt-á*	'hint, indication, clarification'
cagágg=y-	'become unwell, indisposed, a bit ill'	*cagagg-itt-á*	'being unwell, indisposition, being a bit ill'
háff=y-	'pass, be perceived (of a faint smell)'	*haff-itt-á*	'whiff, faint passing smell'

by *-i* in the citation form and thus grouped into a different declension than in Kambaata (Crass 2005: 84, 233).

[31] The *-it(t)*-derivation also takes reduplicated ideophonic inputs, as seen in *riph~riph-itt-á* (possibly): 'up and down/wave movement' in Kambaata Education Bureau (1989: 4.51). Unfortunately, the translation of the noun could not be verified and is, therefore, not included in the table.

[32] In Treis (2008: 157), the derived noun was translated as 'waking up'; this translation was not confirmed and is here corrected.

Ideophone	English	Noun	English
hazámm=a'-	'make (s.o.) doze off, make (s.o.) snooze briefly (esp. old people)'	*hazamm-itt-á*	'doze, snooze'
hánda=y-	'become thankful, grateful, content; become gratifying'	*hand-itt-á*	'thanks, gratitude, contentment'
híqq=a'-	'cause to hiccup'	*hiqq-itt-á*	'hiccups'
hó''a=a'-	'cause to vomit'	*ho''-itt-á*	'vomiting'
múgg=a'-	'lower; cause to have diarrhea'	*mugg-itt-á*	'diarrhea'
qú'mm=y-	'be brought together/closer to each other; gather (vi)'	*qu'mm-itt-á*	'collection; meeting, assembly, session'
shóbb=y-	'be loosely tied'	*shobb-itt-á*	'loose tie'
silímm=a'-	'cause to take a nap, cause to have a short/interrupted sleep'	*silimm-itt-á*	'nap, short/interrupted sleep'
xéff~xéff=y-	'have small spots, dots'	*xeff-itt-á*	'spot, dot'
yák~yák=a'-	'do haphazardly, do too quickly and carelessly, struggle to do'	*yak~yak-itt-á*	'haphazard, too quick and careless manner'
zammamm=a'-	'cause to doze off, cause to be half asleep'	*zammamm-itt-á*	'doze, half-sleep'

Table 9: Deideophonic nouns.

Apart from the two semi-productive deideophonic processes discussed above, there are a small number of nouns and verbs which are otherwise derived from ideophones. Among them are nouns derived by *-eenn*, e.g. *bizz-**eenn**-á* 'up(wards), North' < *bízz=y-* 'rise'; *mugg-**eenn**-á* 'down(wards), South' (used in (6)) < *múgg=y-* 'descend (vi)'; *cererr-**eenn**-á* 'trickle, rivulet, small rest of a drink' < *cerérr=y-* 'trickle'; *ilill-**eenn**-á* 'ululation' < *ilíli=y-* 'ululate' and *tilill-**eenn**-á* 'telephone' < *tililí=y-* 'ring'. However, unlike the *-it(t)*-derivation, the non-productive *-eenn*-derivation is not restricted to ideophonic inputs (Treis 2008: 165).

Finally, Treis & Deginet (2024: ex. 11) report a handful of verbs derived from onomatopoeic ideophones, e.g. *kaakk-**ees**-* 'cackle (of hen which is about to lay an egg)', based on the ideophone *káakk=y-* with the same meaning (see two similar examples from K'abeena in Crass 2005: 148). Most inputs of the semi-productive *-ees*-derivation in Kambaata are nouns (Treis 2022: 24).

3.4.3. Reduplicated ideophones

Two types of reduplicated ideophones can be differentiated: (a) lexically and (b) morphologically reduplicated ideophones. Kambaata has a morphological process of *partial* pre-reduplication, e.g. for generating reciprocal pronouns on the basis of simple personal pronouns (Treis 2008: 357–360) and for generating distributive numerals on the basis of cardinal numerals (Treis 2017: 352–355). However, partial reduplication is not attested in the domain of ideophones if we exclude the rare examples where the first and second CV are seemingly identical by chance, e.g. *qoqombó=a'-* 'munch (e.g. roasted grain)' (Alemu 2016: 843). Of the two types postulated above, type (a), which includes examples like the ones given in Table 10, does not concern us further in this section. This section only treats ideophones of type (b), i.e. ideophones that are also attested in a non-reduplicated form or whose stress pattern (§3.2) indicates that they are based on a simplex form.

Ideophone	**English**
chachachá=y-	'become sufficiently fermented'
didí=y-	'tumble down a slope (of stones)'
hĩhĩhĩ́=y-	'laugh, make a laughing sound'
tililí=y-	'ring, make a ringing sound'
xixí=y-	'crackle when being roasted on the fire (of small seeds)'
xaxá=y-	'crackle when being roasted on the fire (of big seeds)'

Table 10: Lexically reduplicated ideophones.

The full reduplication of ideophones is often observed in natural data, as seen in (29)-(30); also recall *bolóng~bolóng=a'-* 'move one's eyes (up/down, left/right)' in (6).

(29) *Xéem-u* *da'll-í*
type_of_laxative-M.NOM do_soon-3M.PFV.CVB
hurbú~hurbú=a'-í *fúsh-sh-o-he*
RED~grumble.IDEO=do-3M.PFV.CVB go_out-CAUS1-3M.BDV-2SG.OBJ
(Blessing for a boy who has been administered a laxative before his circumcision) 'May the laxative (extracted from the flowers of Hagenia abyssinica) make you(r belly) grumble soon and bring out (the tapeworm) for you.' (AN2016-02-19_001)

(30) *Min-í* *aaz-éen* *abb-ís-s*
house-M.GEN interior-M.LOC exceed-CAUS1-3F.PFV.CVB
haww-is-sáa *oos-úta* *kóo*
trouble-CAUS1-3F.IPFV.REL children-F.ACC 2SG.VOC
qáf~qáf *= y-itáyyoont,*
RED~become_hyperactive.IDEO = say-2SG.PROG
qáff = y-í *át,* *qánx-i*
be_chopped_in_pieces.IDEO = say-2SG.IMP 2SG.NOM break_off-2SG.IMP
át! *hittig-úta* *y-eenán* *hoolam-íta*
2SG.NOM like_this-F.ACC say-3HON.IPFV.CVB much-F.ACC
j-eechch-úta *xeleel-éenno*
time-SGV-F.ACC curse-3HON.IPFV
'To children who cause trouble in the house, one says, "Hey, are you being hyperactive? May you be chopped in pieces! May you break off!", (and) curses (them) like this.' (AN2016-02-19_003)

The reduplication of verbal constituents is much less common, but used to highlight that an event occurs continuously or repeatedly for a period of time (31). For this purpose, the inflected form is repeated; see the perfective converbs in (31) and (16).

(31) (…) *tees-ú-u* *káan*
now-M.OBL-ADD P_DEM1.M.ACC
háshsh háshsh háshsh háshsh háshsh háshsh *hóogg = ké'*
look_for.3M.PFV.CVB become_tired.3M.PFV.CVB = SEQ
bar-í, *qaxarr-ó* *bar-í* *kul-íi* *márr-ee'*
day-M.ACC appointment[.AMH]-F.GEN day-M.ACC tell-M.DAT go-3M.PRF
'(…) and again he looked looked looked looked looked looked for this (tree), got tired and went (to the father-in-law) to tell (him) on the day, on the appointed day (about the tree).' (EK2016-02-12_003)

The function of ideophone reduplication is often hard to grasp. For the ideophone *(lúf~)lúf = y-* 'become soft, malleable, fluffy', of which the reduplicated realization seems to be the default (and occurs as entry in Alemu 2016: 663), a non-reduplicated realization was considered possible by a consulted native speaker but

synonymous to the reduplicated form. A similar judgment was, for instance, made with respect to (*haráxx~*)*haráxx=y-* 'stride, walk with quick, long steps' in (32), where the reduplicated form was considered to be replaceable by a simplex form (here the entry in Alemu 2016: 450 is the simplex form).

(32) ***Haráxx~haráxx=y-itán*** *már-i,* *hawwarr-ókkoo-he*
RED~stride.IDEO=say-2SG.IPFV.CVB go-2SG.IMP become_dark-3M.APPR-2SG.OBJ
'Walk fast(er) or it might become dark on us!' (Field notes 2022, DWD)

#	Ideophone	English
1	*bárk~bárk=y-**	'flap (of wings)'
2	*béxx~béxx=y-*	'show up, start to come out (of plural subject)'
3	*birxí~birxí=y-*	'writhe, twist, wriggle about (e.g. to free oneself)'
4	*bolóng~bolóng=a'-*◆	'move one's eyes (up/down, left/right)'
5	*chílk~chílk=y-*	'clink, jingle (of keys, coins, small bells on a horse's neck)'
6	*cóphph~cóphph=y-*	'drip (e.g. of leaky water-tap)'
7	*dúbb~dúbb=a'-*	'pound (coffee leaves)'
8	*farcá~farcá=a'-*◆	'crumble, break up (sticky product, e.g. fermented tobacco, enset food)'
9	*forgó~forgó=y-*	'move a bit away from each other, keep a distance from each other, leave some space (e.g. so as not to bump into one another) (of plural subject)'
10	*gíphph~gíphph=y*	'stop briefly, pause (when walking or talking) (of plural subject)'
11	*haráxx~haráxx=y-*	'stride, walk with quick, long steps'
12	*hurbú~hurbú=a'-**	'make (the belly) grumble'
13	*láf~láf=a'-*	'make (s.o.) feel nauseous'
14	*óorin~óorin=y-**	'encourage a child to take a laxative; abet, goad, prompt (s.o.) repeatedly'
15	*qúl~qúl=a'-*	'make (s.o.) feel nostalgic, cause a longing feeling (in s.o.) (e.g. of person or home that is missed)'
16	*qulcú~qulcú=y-*◆	'slosh back and forth (of water in a container when carried)'
17	*qumbú~qumbú=a'-**	'drum, make (a drum) sound'
18	*shínn~shínn=y-*	'laugh heartily (of plural subject/continuously)'
19	*xéff~xéff=y-**	'have/be covered by small spots, dots'
20	*yák~yák=a'-*	'do haphazardly, do too quickly and carelessly, struggle to do'

Table 11: Reduplicated ideophones
(*only attested as reduplicated in my data and in Alemu 2016; ◆only attested as reduplicated in my data, not attested in Alemu 2016; rest: attested as simplex and as reduplicated).

In most cases, however, the reduplication of ideophones seems to be triggered by the iterative nature of the event that they express. Iterativity can be inherent in the event, as in #1 'flap', #14 'abet, goad, prompt repeatedly' and #17 'drum' in Table 11, which are (probably) always reduplicated. For other ideophones, an iterative realization of the event is very common; see *cóphph=y-* expressing a single dripping event (one drop) vs. the reduplicated *cóphph~cóphph=y-* (#6 in Table 11) expressing a repeated dripping event (multiple drops), e.g. of a leaky water-tap.

A slightly different meaning, a subtype of event plurality, is reflected in (33), where the reduplicated ideophone expresses repeated (possibly cautious) attempts to do something. According to a consultant, the reduplicated ideophone in (33) is (near) synonymous with the iterative/attenuative-derived ideophone in (34).

(33) (…) *iséta* *da'll-ít* ***xóqq~xóqq=at-táa***
3F.ACC do_soon-3F.PFV.CVB RED~rise=do-3F.IPFV.REL
mateemínn-it *yoo-ba'í=dda (…)*
shortage_of_manpower-F.NOM exist.3-NEG1.REL=COND
'(…) if there is no shortage of manpower (in the household) that makes her (= the new mother) soon try to rise up (again from childbed, in order to work) (…).' (EK2016-02-23_002)

(34) *Mann-í* *bác-u* *huj-ée* *xóqq=ass-**ans**-áno-se*
people-M.GEN shortage-M.NOM work-3F.DAT rise.IDEO=do-ITER-3M.IPFV-3F.OBJ
'The shortage of man(power) makes her gradually rise up for work (again).' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

Apart from event plurality (iterativity), reduplication also serves to express participant plurality;[33] see #2 'show up', #9 'keep a distance', #10 'pause' and #18 'laugh heartily' in Table 11, whose reduplicated forms are attested with plural subjects. The use of the simplex and reduplicated forms of ideophone #9 is illustrated in (35)-(36).

[33] In the literature on related languages, ideophone reduplication is said to express repeated events, events expressed by plural subjects and prolonged (continuous) events (see Amina 2013: 36–37 on Oromo; Crass 2005: 292–293 on K'abeena; Girum 2013: 70 on Sidaama; Eyob 2015: §9.3 on Gedeo).

(35) *Qah-ú<n>ka* *zakk-ú* ***forgó*=*y-ít***
small-M.ACC<EMP> behind-M.ACC move_away.IDEO=say-2SG.PFV.CVB
úurr-i
stand-2SG.IMP
(Possible context: Command addressed to a person who has crossed the yellow line) 'Move back a little bit and stand (there)!' (Field notes 2022, DWD)

(36) *Gomb-aqq-an-téenoochch-iyye,* ***forgó~forgó*=*y-itéen***
bump-MID-PASS-2PL.NEG2-2PL.IMP RED~move_away.IDEO=say-2PL.PFV.CVB
uurr-iyyé
stand-2PL.IMP
(Possible context: command addressed to a crowd) 'Please, do not bump into each other, keep your distance/stand a bit away from each other!' (Field notes 2022, DWD)

3.4.4. Compound ideophones

In my fieldwork data and in written sources, there is a small number of bipartite ideophones which result from compounding. Overall, compounding is not a very productive word formation process in Kambaata, the most frequent compound type are numeral-plus-noun compounds (Treis 2017: 349–351), whereas, for instance, noun-noun compounds like *min-ann-á* (house-father-M.ACC) 'head of the household' and noun-verb compounds like *oz-gal-á* (dinner-spend_the_night-M.ACC) 'something to eat for dinner' are rare. Even more exceptional are verb-verb compounds; the only attested verbally inflecting example, *birs-awwa'nn-*(*aqq-*)*am-* (precede.CAUS1-follow.MID-(MID-)PASS) 'follow one another', is possibly a recent calque from Amharic.

The use of a compound ideophone is shown in (37); see (40) for another example.

(37) *Tá* *wotar-ch-úta* *aass-íiha* *tí* *hárr-it*
A_DEM1.F.ACC foal-SGV-F.ACC give-M.DAT A_DEM1.F.NOM donkeys-F.NOM
shambá.qambá*=*y-itáni-yan *wotár-ch-u-s*
bustle_around_in_joyful_expectation-3F.IPFV.CVB-DS foal-SGV-F.NOM-DEF
káar-t (…) *firíix-x* *ir-íichch*
become_suspicious-3F.PFV.CVB gallop-3F.PFV.CVB land-M.ABL
ba'-óo'u
disappear-3F.PFV

> ‘When the donkeys were bustling around in joyful expectation to hand the foal over (to the hyenas), the foal became suspicious, (...) galloped away and disappeared from the face of the earth.’ (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 4.34)

Table 12 lists some compound ideophones from Alemu (2016) that are confirmed by at least one other source.[34]

#	Ideophone	English	Origin
1	*bízz-múgg=a’-*	‘make have the stomach flu; make vomit and make have diarrhea’	*bízz=a’-* ‘raise; make vomit’ + *múgg=a’-* ‘lower; cause to have diarrhea’
2	*fógg-xóqq=y-*	‘be busy (especially of a host who needs to prepare and serve food, entertain the guests etc.)’	*fógg=y-* ‘bend over/down’ + *xóqq=y-* ‘rise’
3	*kimbíll-biciríqq=y-*	‘tumble, turn over [?]’	*kimbíll=y- / biciríqq=y-* ‘return back, swerve suddenly’
4	*míkk-míll=y-*	‘budge, move a bit (lit. and fig.)’ - especially used in negative contexts: not move even a bit; see (6)	*míkk=y-* (meaning synonymous to compound); independent use and meaning of 2nd part not confirmed
5	*qashá-qombó=y-*	‘snap, respond impatiently, irritably, brusquely (and thus socially inappropriately)’	*qashá=y-* (meaning synonymous to compound); independent use and meaning of 2nd part not confirmed
6	*shambá-qambá=y-*	‘bustle around, be busy preparing (in joyful expectation)’	independent use and meaning of parts not confirmed
7	*shóott-gáff=y-*	‘be emotionally moved, agitated, fidget (because of anger, worries)’	*shóott=y-* ‘get up abruptly’ + *gáff=y-* ‘sit down for a little while’

Table 12: Compound ideophones.

Based on the meanings of their parts, Desalegn (2020: 68) proposes to categorize Kambaata compound ideophones into combinations of synonyms (e.g. #3 in Table

[34] Ideophone compounding is also reported for K’abeena (Crass 2005: 233) and Sidaama (Girum 2013: 46).

12), combinations of antonyms (e.g. #1 in Table 12) and combinations of an ideophone with a semantically empty counterpart (e.g. #5 in Table 12).[35]

Alternatively, the compounds could be classified according to whether their meaning is predictable. Compound #1 in Table 12 has a transparent origin and expresses the meanings of its parts. In contrast, the examples in #2 and #7 show that the meaning is not necessarily compositional: the concept of busyness (#2) is rendered as a combination of (repeated) bending over and rising up again; the concept of being agitated (#7) is expressed as a combination of (repeated) getting up abruptly and sitting down briefly. As far as semantic idiosyncrasies are concerned, ideophonic compounds are not different from other lexicalized compounds in the language.

3.4.5. Ideophone formation by conversion

Most Kambaata property concepts (apart from colors) can be expressed by adjectives and inchoative-stative verbs of the same root, e.g. *danq-á(ta)* 'deaf' – *danq-* 'become deaf', *itis-á(ta)* 'expensive' – *itis-* 'become expensive', *qug-á(ta)* 'raw' – *qug-* 'become raw'. There is no conclusive evidence making it possible to decide whether adjectives are derived (through conversion) from inchoative-stative verbs or vice versa, or whether property lexemes should be assumed to be undetermined for word class.[36] A similar conversion relation can be observed between color adjectives and ideophones (and not verbs). Color ideophones come in intransitive/transitive pairs, e.g. *gamball-á(ta)* 'black' and *gambáll=y-* 'become black' / *gambáll=a'-* 'blacken', *wojj-ú(ta)* 'white' and *wójj=y-* 'become white' / *wójj=a'-* 'whiten'; for the use of color ideophones in context see (15)-(16). Here again, we can ask whether color adjectives are derived from ideophones or vice versa. This time, there seems to be an argument in favor of the direction being adjective > ideophone. Unlike other ideophones, color ideophones cannot be the input of the adjectivizing derivation by *-eem* (§3.4.1) or of the nominalizing derivation by *-it(t)* (§3.4.2). Instead, color nouns are derived from the adjective by the productive deadjectival nominalizer *-im*, see *gamball-á(ta)* 'black' – *gamball-**im**-áta* 'blackness', just like *qug-á(ta)* 'raw' – *qug-*

[35] In K'abeena, Crass (2005: 293–294) considers examples such as #4 and #6 in Table 12 to be "echo word" formations, in which the second part of the compound does not have a meaning on its own but simply "echoes" the first part phonologically, i.e. produces a (near) copy.

[36] Recall that adjectives are cited in their accusative case form, i.e. the endings *-á(ta)*, *-ú(ta)* etc. of cited adjectives are inflectional, not derivational morphemes.

***im**-áta* ‘rawness’, which leads me to assume that the color adjective is the base and the ideophone derived.

We also find two ideophones that share a root with a pronoun. The manner demonstratives *hitt-íta* (F) ‘like this’ and *hatt-íta* (F) ‘how’ (Treis 2019) have two corresponding ideophonic demonstrative pairs, *hítt=y-* ‘do like this’ / *hítt=a’-* ‘do (s.th.) like this’ and *hátt=y-* ‘become how, turn out where’ / *hátt=a’-* ‘do how, do what (to s.th.)’. The transitive members of the pairs are seen in (38)-(39); see (53) for *hítt=ih-*.

(38) (…) *xit-á* *ang-áan* ***hítt**=a’-éen*
soot-M.ACC hand-F.ICP do_like_this.IDEO=do-3HON.IPFV.CVB
usur-éen=ké’ (…)
tie-3HON.IPFV.CVB=SEQ
‘(…), like this [GESTURE], one ties the (bunch of grass with the) soot with the hand and then (…).’ (EK2016-02-23_002)

(39) *Xon-é* *buud-á-s* ***hátt**=at-tóo-la?*
aforementioned-F.GEN horn-M.ACC-DEF do_how.IDEO=do-3F.PFV-MIT
‘What did she do with (i.e. where has she put) that horn?’ (TD2016-02-11_001)

Finally, one ideophone, *lamúbb=y-* ‘fall into two parts’ (40), is based on the stem of the denumeral noun *lam-ú=bb-a* (two-M.ACC=PLC-M.ACC) ‘into two parts’, a combination of the numeral *lam-ú* ‘two’ (M.ACC) and the place nominalizer *=b(b)* (Treis 2008: 243–247). Here it is undisputable that the ideophone is derived (through conversion) from the denumeral and not vice versa.

(40) (…) *hiliq-óon* *háam-u-s*
shock-M.LOC chest-F.NOM-3M.POSS
fíiqq-táaqq=y-ít
be_ripped_apart.IDEO-be_ripped_apart.IDEO=say-3F.PFV.CVB
boq-u-sí-i *áaz-u* *qixx-ú*
head-F.NOM-3M.POSS-ADD interior-M.NOM equal-M.ACC
***lamúbb**=y-ít*[37] *farshá=y-itóo-s*
fall_into_two_parts=say-3F.PFV.CVB break_apart.IDEO=say-3F.PFV-3M.OBJ

[37] The ideophonic form is here phonetically realized as *lamúbb=ít*, with the *y* of the ‘say’-verb omitted, but the independent stress on the support verb is retained.

(Description of a person's severe state of shock) '(…) his chest was ripped apart in shock and his head, the inside, broke neatly into two parts.' (Frog Story 2007, TH)

If compared to Amharic (Meyer this volume), where ideophones can be very productively derived from verbs, the derivation of ideophones is a marginal phenomenon in Kambaata and limited to some cases of conversion.

3.5. The semantics of ideophones

With regard to their semantics, ideophones range from the semantically broad (Table 13) to the semantically very specific and the evocation of complex scenes, e.g. *hokkóbb=y-* '(e.g. of a goat) stand on the hind legs and lean the front legs against (e.g. a tree)'.

Intransitive	English	Transitive	English
biddíqq=y-	'become flat, even, level; spread (vi) out'	*biddíqq=a'-*	'make flat, even, level; spread (vt) out'
búrr=y-	'fly'	*búrr=a'*	'make fly'
cál~cál=y-	'hang (vi) freely'	*cál~cál=a'-*	'hang (vt) freely'
dákk=y-	'be hidden, concealed'	*dákk=a'-*	'hide, conceal'
fógg=y-	'bend over/down'	*fógg=a'-*	'make bend over/down'
hínc=y-	'come close(r)'	*hínc=a'-*	'bring close(r)'
lácc=y-	'go slow, slow down (vi)'	*lácc=a'-*	'do (s.th.) slowly, slow (s.th.) down'
qúrc=y-	'be swallowed'	*qúrc=a'-*	'swallow'
sá'mm=y-	'become quiet, fall silent'	*sá'mm=a'-*	'silence (s.o.)'
shigíg=y-	'become shocking, disgusting, revolting'	*shigíg=a'-*	'shock, disgust, revolt (s.o.)'
xább=y-	'do (vi) well, in a straight manner'	*xább=a'-*	'do (s.th.) well, in a straight manner, prepare (s.th.)'
xíshsh=y-	'be tightened, strengthened, deepened'	*xíshsh=a'-*	'do (s.th.) tightly, strongly, deeply'

Table 13: Illustrative list of semantically fairly broad ideophones.

Verbal concepts could be said to be expressed arbitrarily by verbal or by ideophonic lexemes in Kambaata; compare, e.g., *búrr=y-* 'fly' (IDEO) vs. *dagud-* 'run' (VERB); *cál~cál=y-* 'hang (vi) freely' (IDEO) vs. *olaal-* 'hang (vi) freely; lean (e.g. of a tree

about to fall)' (VERB); *dákk=a'-* 'hide, conceal (s.th.)' (IDEO) vs. *maax-* 'hide, conceal (s.th.)' (VERB); *xóqq=y-* 'rise, get up' (IDEO) vs. *uurr-* 'stand (up); stop' or *ke'-* 'rise, get up; start' (VERB). Also recall from §3.4.5 that color changes are expressed, seemingly arbitrarily, by ideophones, e.g. *bíishsh=y-* 'become red' (IDEO) – *biishsh-á(ta)* 'red' (ADJ), whereas other property changes are expressed by verbs, *wiim-* 'become full' – *wiim-á(ta)* 'full' (ADJ).

Like verbal lexemes, ideophones can be polysemous, e.g. *díff=a'-* '1. knock back (a drink), 2. cover up (s.th. that should not be revealed), 3. beat (s.o.) up violently, 4. douse, extinguish (a fire)'. Metaphorical extensions of ideophones are possible, e.g. *míkk.míll=y-* + NEG '(not) budge, (not) move a bit', which is concretely said of heavy, unmovable objects and exhausted persons, and figuratively of unfaltering persons and unshakable truths. The ideophone *táff=a'-* 'take/hold simply, take/hold quickly, just touch' has developed the function of negation reinforcement: '(not) even touch' > '(not) at all, (n)ever' (41).

(41) ***Táff*** *=at-tí-i* *bínn=át-toot-i*
touch.IDEO=do-2SG.PFV.CVB-ADD disperse.IDEO=do-2SG.NEG2-2SG.IMP
muccur-ú-kk *gizz-áha*
clean-M.ACC-2SG.POSS money-M.ACC
(Verse of a poem) 'Do not spend any good (lit. clean) money at all (on them)!' (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 7.25)

Whereas attenuation and intensification are productively expressed by verb-derived ideophones in Amharic (Meyer this volume), these meanings are lexicalized in Kambaata ideophones. A significant number of them express the fact that an event is of short duration, sudden, or of low intensity, e.g. *gáff=y-* 'sit down for a little while' (attenuative of *afuu'll-* (VERB) 'sit down'), *gíphph=y-* 'stop briefly, pause' (attenuative of *uurr-* (VERB) 'stand, stop'), *tákk=a'-* 'drop simply, suddenly' (attenuative of *uujj-* (VERB) 'drop'), *sháaqq=a'-* 'sweep a small spot' (attenuative of *abbaas-* (VERB) 'sweep') or, the opposite, that an event is carried out thoroughly, completely, or excessively, e.g. *hamúu=y-* 'loose one's mind, go insane' (intensive of *machchaar-* (VERB) 'be(come) crazy'), *táaqq=a'-* 'tear beyond repair' (intensive of *zar-* (VERB) 'tear') and *shúmm=a'-* 'break into tiny pieces, crush' (intensive of *biix-* (VERB) 'break'). Attenuation and intensification are, however, only some of the meaning components that make ideophones semantically specific (narrow), as many of the examples in this paper attest;

others are, for instance, the manner/technique and the speed of an action, the accompanying sound and the nature of the participants.

Support for the impression that ideophones are semantically narrower than verbal lexemes comes from the observation that ideophones are often used as converbs in adverbial modification of a superordinate verb with which they are in a hyponym-hyperonym relationship. See (42) in which the semantically broader verb *usur-* 'tie' is preceded by the semantically narrower ideophonic converb *gánq=a'-* 'tie, close tightly'. Also recall (164), in which *osal-siis-* 'make laugh' is preceded by the ideophonic converb *shínn~shínn=ass-* 'make laugh heartily', (28), in which *af-* 'seize, hold, catch; begin' is preceded by the ideophonic converb *xámm=a'-* 'cause to stick', and (32), in which *mar-* 'go' is preceded by *haráxx~haráxx=y-* 'stride'.

(42) (…) *odoorr-í* *omol-íin* *cí'mm=a'-eemmá*
acacia-M.GEN bark-M.ICP shut_briefly.IDEO=do-3HON.PFV.REL
ill-íta *fan-eenúmb-o* *qax-áan* *zoobb-eechch-í* *lokk-áta*
eye-F.ACC open-3HON.NEG5.REL-M.OBL extent-M.LOC lions-SGV-M.GEN leg-F.ACC
gánq=a'-í *usúrr-o*
tie_tightly.IDEO=do-3M.PFV.CVB tie-3M.PFV
'(…) before one had blinked one's eyes, he (= the fox) had tightly tied up the lion's legs with a (strip of) acacia bark.' (Kambaata Education Bureau 1989: 6.125)

The impression that ideophones are semantically narrower overall than verbs is, however, difficult (if not impossible) to corroborate quantitatively and is possibly skewed, as the following case study shows. If we return to the ideophone *gánq=a'-* 'tie, close tightly' in (42) and investigate the semantic field of tying,[38] other semantically narrow tying ideophones are easy to find: *wíqq=a'-* 'tie tightly' in (3), *sitít[t]=a'-* 'tie tightly' (Alemu 2016: 960 2016),[39] *shóbb=a'-* 'tie loosely' in (27), *shágg=a'-* 'tie loosely (e.g. a cow to a pole)'; the ideophone *xíshsh=a'-* 'do tightly, strongly, deeply' is also a frequent adverbial modifier to tying and closing verbs (but not exclusively). These findings may, however, not be overestimated, because semantically narrow tying *verbs* are at least as frequent. Of the 22 lexical entries in

[38] The same exercise could be repeated for any other semantic field of verbal concepts.

[39] This lexeme could not yet be verified.

Alemu (2016) that are paraphrased as being a type of *usur-* 'tie', selected examples that I was able to verify are given in Table 14.

Verb	English
gaajj-	'tie up the back legs (of a cow for milking, so that it does not kick out)'
kuttubb-	'tie up two legs (esp. of equines and small livestock so that they do not wander far)'
laangoob-	'tie up to the right and left (of a cow in its pen so that it cannot turn around)' (synonym: *laambees-*)
saankaal-	'(Alemu:) tie the neck to the front leg / (my field notes:) tie a front to a back leg (of an equine so that it does not wander far)'
humbuub-	'tie up, wrap (esp. butter in enset leaf sheaths)'
qurunnees-	'tie up in a bundle (so that it can be carried on the back, esp. enset food, cabbage, wood)'
qirqaab-	'tie up a load (esp. a load on a donkey)'
wiriir-	'tie a cloth around the opening of a pot'
farshimm-	'tie up in a sheaf'
wixiix-	'tie tightly together (e.g. two poles)'

Table 14: Verbs from the semantic field of tying.

At present (and until further study), there is little reason to assume that Kambaata ideophones are semantically any different from verbs.

3.6. Ideophone frequency and size of the ideophone word class

Ideophones are not restricted to a particular text type but found in narrative texts, procedural texts, conversations, proverbs (43) and written texts (e.g. schoolbooks).

(43) *Gassim-á* [*kórj-o*] *luucc-ee-sé* *guumm-íchch-ut*
morning-M.ACC jump-M.OBL fail.MID-3M.PFV-3F.OBJ.REL duikers-SGV-F.NOM
tú'mm = *y-itán* *hos-sáa'u*
try_in_vain.IDEO = say-3F.IPFV.CVB spend_the_day-3F.IPFV
(Proverb) 'A duiker who failed when jumping in the morning tries the whole day in vain.' (Alamu & Alamaayyo 2017: 56 [correction by DWD])

One even finds ideophones in biblical texts (Table 15). The Gospel of John (Kambaata and Hadiyya Translation Project Hosaina 2005) contains 13 ideophone types and 73 tokens (in 11,851 words), i.e. 1 ideophone in ~162 words. If compared to the number of ideophones in a conversation (1,135 words, 1 ideophone in ~31 words) in Table 16, one can formulate the working hypothesis that natural conversational data has a higher ideophone ratio than translated data.

Ideophone type	English	Tokens
biddíq[q]=y-	'be spread out, be stretched out, be	1
biddíq[q]=a'-	levelled'	1
	'spread out, stretch out, level'	
bínn=y-	'be dispersed, be scattered'	3
bínn=a'-	'disperse, scatter'	1
búll=ih-	'become greyish/ashen'	1
hátt=ih-	'become how, turn out where'	9
hátt=a'-	'do how, do what (to s.th.)'	3
hínc=y-	'come close(r)'	13
hínc=a'-	'bring close(r)'	2
hiríkk=y-	'be lowered, bend over, stoop'	9
hítt=a'	'do (s.th.) like this'	1
qúrc=a'-	swallow (s.th.)	2
tú=y-	'spit'	1
úff=a'-	'blow, breathe (into s.th.)'	1
wíll=y-	'sneak away, disappear (from s.o.'s	1
	view)'	
xáphph=y-	'gather (vi)'	5
xáphph=a'-	'gather (vt)'	5
xóqq=y / xóqq~xóqq=y-	'rise'	5/2
xóqq=a'-	'raise'	7
13		**73**

Table 15: Ideophone types attested in the Gospel of John (11,851 words).

Ideophone type	English	Tokens
bárr=y- / búrr y-	'fly'	2
bolóng~bolóng=a'-	'move one's eyes (up/down, left/right)'	1
címm=y-	'slump down, shrink (vi)'	3
hátt=ih-	'become how, turn out where'	2
hátt=a'-	'do how, do what (to s.th.)'	1

Ideophone type	English	Tokens
hítt=ih-	'do (vi) like this'	5
kuchúchch=y-	'contract, shrink, coil up'	2
láaxx=a'- / láaxx-láaxx=a'-	'do (s.th.) quickly'	1/1
míkk.míll=y-	'budge, move a bit'	2
qúrc=a'-	'swallow (s.th.)'	4
sáww=y-	'think'	5
xább=y-	'do (vi) well, in a straight manner'	1
xámm=a'-	'make (s.th.) stick'	4
xíshsh=y-	'be tightened, strengthened, deepened'	1
xóphph=y-	'jump'	1
xóqq=y-	'rise'	1
15		**37**

Table 16: Ideophone types attested in a conversation about a picture book (TD2016-02-11_001; 12:10 min; 1,135 words; prompt: Carle 1984).

A varied repertoire of ideophones is also a manifestation of a person's narrative skills. One of my consultants (TH) with a strong literary interest wrote up a Frog Story in Kambaata (based on Mayer 1969), a text with which he wanted to demonstrate his story-telling talent. The resulting text of 1,187 words (*Fe'llóncho, hakkánne yóont?* 'Frog, where are you?', unpublished) contains no less than 46 ideophone types and 64 tokens (i.e. 1 ideophone in ~19 words). The ideophone frequency in the (crafted) Frog Story is thus about twice as high as in the conversational data displayed in Table 16. A quantitative study of ideophones across text types/genres and across individual speakers would make an interesting subject for future research.

In order to approach the question of how large the ideophone word class is, Alemu's comprehensive (2016) dictionary was taken as an empirical base. The author marks all ideophonic roots that obligatorily combine with either 'say' or 'do' by an asterisk (*) (2016: xxii).[40] A search of all *-marked roots yielded 853 entries, of which most are paired ideophones.[41] Quantifying the number of verb roots in the

[40] Interestingly, he does not invent a word class term for *-marked roots. In contrast, neologisms are created for all other Kambaata word classes (e.g. *shoosaaww-á* 'verb').

[41] Alemu's data contained originally 968 asterisks, but needed to be cleaned a bit (which I failed to do for Treis 2022). 51 lexemes which were said to combine with 'say' and 'do' but where the asterisk was forgotten were added to the count. 166 asterisks that occurred in accompanying texts outside the actual word list were subtracted. Note that this picture is still skewed, as the monolingual definitions

dictionary would require considerable effort, because not only roots but also all derived stems, any combination with a support verb and even verbs in cross-references are marked as "(sh)" for *shoosawwá* 'verb'. To be able to provide a rough estimate of the number of verbal roots in the dictionary, I counted them on 20 randomly chosen pages (pp. 368-389). The result was an average of 2.05 verb roots per page, which led to an estimate of 2388 verb roots for the whole dictionary (1,165 pages). This means that, among all lexemes expressing verbal concepts, ideophones amount to an estimated 26% (853/3241) and verbs to about 74% (2388/3241).

Borrowing into the ideophone word class is possible and observed in my field work data.[42] As Amharic ideophones (see Meyer this volume) are also invariant and morphosyntactically integrated with 'say' and 'do', Kambaata speakers can simply borrow the ideophonic root and inflect them with the corresponding Kambaata support verb, as (44) attests. In (44), speaker ED first uses the Amharic loan 'sit down' < ቀጭ አለ *qʷəčč alä* (Kane 1990: vol. 1: 843) with the Kambaata support verb, then translates the ideophone into Kambaata.

(44) (…) *tées-u* ***qúcc=y-éen***
now-M.OBL sit_down.IDEO[**AMH**]=say-3HON.PFV.CVB
afuu'll-éen *kánk-u* *has-is-áno*
sit_down 3HON.PFV.CVB this_much-M.NOM want-CAUS1-3M.IPFV
'(…) one sits down, sits down (and says:) "This much is needed."' (EK2016-02-23_003)

4. Other 'say'-constructions

This section gives an introduction into the expression of reported speech in general and of reported interjections in particular. It points out the fuzzy boundary between reported interjections and ideophone-support constructions. In the second part,

contain a number of ideophones which do not yet occur as entries (and are hence not *-marked). No dictionary can ever be complete, and a number of ideophones attested in my fieldwork data are absent from Alemu (2016), e.g. *bolóng~bolóng=a'-* 'move one's eyes (up/down, left/right)' and *kuchúchch=y-* 'contract, shrink, coil up', to name but two examples from Table 16.

[42] See also the discussion on ideophone borrowing in Crass (2005: 234) on K'abeena.

constructions with 'say' for the expression of transitory or vestigial tastes and smells are portrayed. Here the coverbs of 'say' are not ideophonic but nominal.[43]

4.1. Reported speech

The verb *y-* 'say' is used in the matrix clause of reported speech constructions. It either follows the reported speech as the only utterance verb, see (45), or functions as a converb to a semantically narrower, superordinate utterance verb, e.g. *kul-* 'tell', *fanqashsh-* 'reply', *xa'mm-* 'ask' (46).

(45) (…) *mát-o* *yaa'-áan* *mánn-u* *afuu'll-ée*
one-M.OBL meeting-M.LOC people-M.NOM sit_down-3M.PFV.REL
j-áata [*hannó* *á'nnu* *baad-ú* *maassa'-éen*
time-F.ACC please.INTJ 2HON.NOM land-M.ACC bless-2PL.PFV.CVB
jammarr-é]$_{\text{REPORTED SPEECH}}$ ***y-éeni-yan*** *nubáach-ch-u*
start-2PL.IMP say-3HON.PFV.CVB-DS elders-SGV-M.NOM
baad-ú *maassa'-íi* *jammar-áno*
land-M.ACC bless-M.DAT start-3M.IPFV
'(…) when people are sitting (together) in a meeting, one says, "Please, start to bless the land!", and an elder starts to bless the land.' (AN2016-02-19_001)

(46) (…) *híkka* *man-ch-ú* [*mát-it* *gambáll-at*
A_DEM2.M.ACC person-SGV-M.ACC one-F.NOM black-F.NOM
hóol-ch-ut *kanníin* *hig-góo'?* *xuud-déentaa'*
sheep-SGV-F.NOM P_DEM1.M.ICP pass-3F.PFV see-2PL.PRF
íkke?]$_{\text{REPORTED SPEECH}}$ ***y-í*** *xa'mm-áno*
PAST say-3M.PFV.CVB ask-3M.IPFV
'(…) he (who looks for his animal) asks that man (who passes him): "Has a black ewe passed by here? Have you seen (it)?"' (AN2016-02-19_002)

The underived verb *y-* 'say' has three arguments, (i) the speaker, expressed minimally by a subject index, (ii) the addressee, optionally encoded by a

[43] Due to reasons of space, other constructions in which (a more or less bleached) 'say' is used are left out of the discussion, e.g. the purpose, benefactive focus, internal impulse and 'at least'-constructions.

pronominal object suffix on 'say' and/or by an independent direct object noun phrase (see the accusative-marked *hík*ka *manchú* 'that man' in (46)), and (iii) the speech report. If the reported speech is pronominalized (e.g. 'She didn't say that'), the pronoun is also accusative-marked, which makes *y-* 'say' a ditransitive verb.

The boundary between reported speech and ideophone-support constructions is fuzzy in two areas. Firstly, the small subclass of onomatopoeic ideophones (Treis & Deginet 2024), which contains, among others, animal cries like *humbáa*=*y-* 'moo (of cattle)' in (47) and bodily sounds like *buhhú*=*y-* 'cough, produce a coughing sound', might still be interpretable as a reported animal cry and a reported bodily sound.

(47) *Kú* *sá'-u* ***humbáa***=*y-ú* *batíshsh-ee'u*
A_DEM1.M.NOM cow-M.NOM moo.IDEO=say-M.ACC do_much-3M.PRF
'This cow has mood a lot/too much.' (Field notes 2022, DWD)

Secondly, the fine line between quoted interjections and ideophones is difficult to draw. Members of both word classes are morphologically invariant, but interjections, unlike ideophones, constitute utterances of their own. Thus one could simply consider all invariant coverbs in 'say'-constructions, e.g. *shiinchaallé* 'never again!' in (48), to be interjections if they are also attested as independent utterances, which is the case for *shiinchaallé* 'never again!' in (49).

(48) ***Shiinchaallé*** *y-í* *gíbb-ee'u*
never_again.INTJ say-3M.PFV.CVB refuse-3M.PRF
'He said "Never again!" and refused (to do it).' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

(49) ***Shiinchaallé,*** *lan-kíi* *hikka*=*b-á* *mar-áam-ba'a*
never_again.INTJ two-ORD.DAT A_DEM2.M.ACC=PLC-M.ACC go-1SG.IPFV-NEG1
'Never again, I won't go there a second time!' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

However, this approach is not entirely satisfactory in cases where the meaning of a construction consisting of an interjection plus 'say' is not the sum of its parts, or, said differently, where the combination has become conventionalized, has extended its meaning and is in most contexts no longer interpretable as a direct speech report. An example which illustrates this point is the interjection/ideophone *hánda* '(I/we/someone/it are/is well,) thanks to God'. The only possible addressee of the

speaker's thanks is God; people are not thanked with *hánda*. In exchanges about one's well-being (in the broadest sense, i.e. physical, psychological, economical), *hánda* constitutes an utterance of its own and is thus best interpreted as an interjection (50).

(50) [A:] *Wées-it* *iill-ítee-ndo?*
enset-F.NOM reach-3F.PRF-Q
[B:] ***Hánda*** *(isíi)*[44] *iill-ítee'u*
thanks_to_God.INTJ3 M.DAT reach-3F.PRF
[A:] 'Are the enset (plants) ready (to be harvested)?' – [B:] 'Thanks to God, they are ready.' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

The combination of *hánda* and *y-* 'say' is in principle interpretable as 'say "Thanks to God"', but in the vast majority of cases it is best translated as 'be thankful, be grateful; be content; be gratifying'. Speakers do not interpret the examples in (51)-(52) as direct quotes of the subject, which is especially evident when the subject is an animal, as in (52). One might thus prefer not analyze *hánda* as an interjection in these contexts but as an ideophone that takes 'say' as a support verb.

(51) ***Hánda*** = *y-í* *gáll-ee-haa*
be_grateful.IDEO = say-3M.PFV.CVB pass_the_night-3M.PRF.REL-M.COP2
(Speaking about someone's attitude/character) 'He is (someone) who is content (with his life, with what he has)/he is a positive person (lit. he is (someone) who passes the night gratefully).' (Field notes 2023, DWD)

(52) *Habank-á* *ichchí-i* ***hánda*** = *y-áano-ba'a*
how_much-M.ACC eat.3M.PFV.CVB-ADD be_grateful.IDEO = say-3M.IPFV-NEG1
(Speaking about a cow with a bad feed conversion ratio) 'No matter how much it eats, it is not gratifying.' (Field notes 2022, DWD)

A similar point can be made for the pain and grief interjection *áayye* 'ouch!, I am so sad/sorry (about the loss)!'. In combination with 'say', *áayye* = *y-*, it translates as 'call out in pain; call out in sadness (at a funeral, in the home of a deceased)'. Likewise, the interjection *ekkú* 'okay' commonly combines with 'say' to express *ekkú* = *y-* 'agree, obey', irrespective of whether the agreement has actually been

[44] *Hánda* can govern a dative constituent; the optional *isíi* 'for him' refers to God.

expressed by *ekkú* ‘okay’ or otherwise.[45] So an interpretation of *ekkú=y-* ‘agree, obey’ as reported interjection does not seem warranted.[46]

4.2. Taste and smells

A construction consisting of a reduplicated oblique noun and ‘say’ is used for the expression of transitory and vestigial tastes and smells (53). The oblique is a multifunctional nominal case which marks locations, instruments and vocatives. Regarding its form, the construction is indicative of the reduplicated ideophones (§3.4.3); semantically, it is evocative of the attenuative value often expressed by ideophones (§3.5). For a similar construction in Amharic, see Meyer (this volume).

(53) *Hítt=íkk* *iséechch* *burtukaan-ú-s*
like_that.IDEO=become.3M.PFV.CVB 3F.ABL orange-M.ACC-DEF
hi’rr-í=ké’i *arrab-éen* *qáshsh*
buy.MID-1SG.PFV.CVB=SEQ tongue-F.ICP pierce.1SG.PFV.CVB
xuud-aammí=da *áda*
see-1SG.IPFV.REL=COND PART
wó’-a~wó’-a*=y-áyyoo-haa*
water-M.OBL~water-M.OBL=say-3M.PROG.REL- M.COP2
‘But (lit. it being like that) when I tasted (lit. pierced with the tongue (to) see) the oranges after I had bought them from her, ah!, they tasted watery (lit. they were saying water-water).’ (Field notes 2014, DWD)

The reduplicated noun can be modified to characterize the smell or taste further (54).

(54) *Wok-í* ***wó’-a~wó’-a****=y-áyyoo-haa*
beans-M.GEN water-M.OBL~water-M.OBL=say-3M.PROG.REL-M.COP2
‘(Speaking of drinking water:) ‘It smells/tastes like bean water (lit. (it) says bean’s water~water).’ (Possible context: Beans were cooked in the pot in which the drinking water has been heated.) (Field notes 2021, AYZ)

[45] Interestingly, most Kambaata speakers use the borrowed interjection *íshshi* (< Amharic) to say ‘okay’, while *ekkú=y-* is the most natural translation of ‘agree, obey’.

[46] A similar case from the Ethiosemitic language Tigre (tig) is discussed in Cohen et al. (2002: 246).

Table 17 gives an overview of all taste and smell constructions attested in my fieldwork data with different speakers; some of the examples were overheard, others elicited.[47] All of them combine with *y-* 'say'; combinations with *a'-* 'do' are unattested and were ruled out by a consulted native speaker.

Ideophone	English	Origin
babbáro~babbáro=y-	'have a taste of pepper'	*babbar-úta* (F) 'hot Ethiopian spice mixture'
gotí ále~ále=y-	'smell of hyena's body (e.g. a person who does not wash)'	*got-á* (M) 'hyena', *al-í* (M) 'body'
háqqa~háqqa=y-	'have a bland taste, be boring (of a talk)'	*haqq-á* (M) 'wood'
haráqe~haráqe=y-	'smell of brandy (e.g. a person who is drunk)'	*haraq-íta* (F) 'brandy'
hixíchcho~hixíchcho=y-	'have a taste of lemongrass (e.g. cheese)'	*hixichch-ú* (M) 'lemongrass'
hóolla~hóolla=y-	'smell of sheep (e.g. a person who has been in the sheep pen)'	*hooll-áta* (F) 'sheep'
íchcha~íchcha=y-	'smell of food (e.g. a room)'	*ichch-áta* (F) 'food'
má'lle~má'lle=y- / má'lla~má'lla=y-	'have a bland taste, lack spices'	*ma'll-á* (M) / *ma'll-íta* (F) 'bland food'
maxíne~maxíne=y-	'have a taste of salt'	*maxin-íta* (F) 'salt'
shá'lla~shá'lla=y-	'smell of cow dung (e.g. a person who has mucked out the cowshed)'	*sha'll-á* (M) 'cow dung'
wilíile~wilíile=y-	'smell of smoke (e.g. clothes of a person who has sat beside the fire)'	*wiliil-íta* (F) 'smoke'
wó'a~wó'a=y-	'taste watery (e.g. bad potatoes, bland oranges)'	*wo'-á* (M) 'water'
wóxe~wóxe=y-	'smell of sauce (e.g. the kitchen)'	*wox-íta* (F) 'sauce'
xágo~xágo=y-	'smell of spices (e.g. a person who has seasoned butter)'	*xag-úta* (F) 'spices'

Table 17: Transitory and vestigial tastes and smells.

The construction might represent a metaphorical extension of the reported speech construction, in which a participant exuding a taste/smell is expressed as a speaker calling out the source of a taste/smell (note that vocatives are oblique case-marked).

[47] Of all examples presented in Table 17, only *má'lle~má'lle=y-* translated as 'taste naff' and *maxíne~maxíne=y-* translated as 'become brackish' are found as entries in Alemu (2016: 691, 706).

5. Ideophones – word class of its own or subclass of verbs?

The present paper has taken a language-internal morphosyntactic definition of ideophones as a point of departure and then studied the form, the meaning and the use of ideophones across recorded, written and elicited data. Even though there are no productive mechanisms to generate ideophones (ideophone formation through compounding and conversion is very limited), it has become clear that ideophones are an open word class with a potentially infinite number of members, as attested by the ~850 ideophonic lexemes provided in Alemu (2016) and the adhoc integration of ideophones from Amharic into Kambaata utterances (§3.6). It now remains to be discussed whether it is more appropriate to consider ideophones as a separate word class or to subsume them under verbs as a subtype. As we will see, there are arguments for both positions.

Ideophones are distinct from verbs in that they obligatorily need a support verb to be morphosyntactically integrated into an utterance; verbs do not combine with 'say' and 'do' to form complex predicates. Ideophones have lexically determined stress, while verbal stems are undetermined for stress – stress marking is introduced through inflectional morphology. Idiolectal phonological variation is much more common for ideophones than for verbs. Kambaata has two derivational processes, the adjectivizing, resultative derivation and the action noun derivation that take ideophones as input, while verbal inputs are unattested. Ideophone reduplication is much more prominent than verb reduplication (or more appropriate: repetition).

In contrast, ideophones and verbs also share a number of features. Most importantly, ideophone-support constructions and verbs are used in the same syntactic functions as predicates in main and subordinate clauses. Ideophones usually come in intransitive/transitive pairs ('say'-'do'-pairs) and their argument structure maps onto that of intransitive and transitive verbs – notwithstanding that 'say' in its independent use as a speech verb is not intransitive but transitive. If we leave aside the small number of onomatopoeic ideophones, there is little to no evidence that ideophones are phonologically or phonotactically unusual. Regarding their semantics, §3.5 has cast doubt on the initial assumption that ideophones are semantically narrower than (or otherwise different from) verbs.

Based on the commonalities of ideophones and verbs, one could justifiably postulate a word class of verbs, which divides into two formal subtypes, true (non-periphrastic) verbs and periphrastic verbs. True verbs can be inflected directly,

periphrastic verbs require a semantically empty support verb. A division into two subtypes of verbs might even be supported by evidence from language-internal variation and change as well as comparative evidence – recall that the Kambaata support verbs are enclitic in nature and that the segmental substance of *y-* 'say' is about to be lost. At present, the stress patterns (and the unique morphophonology of the 'do'-verb) are often the most reliable indicator for identifying ideophone-support constructions (i.e. periphrastic verbs). Also in closely related Highland East Cushitic languages, the consonant root of the 'say' verb is on its way to being lost. One could speculate that the lack of attention paid to ideophones in the literature on Hadiyya is attributable to the fact that the 'say' verb is already completely absorbed and that the 'do'-verb is interpreted as a transitivizing derivational morpheme. Overall, the support verbs are losing their independent status.

Having justified the existence of ideophones as a word class or sub-word class on language-internal ground, it remains to be determined whether Kambaata ideophones fit the comparative concept proposed by Dingemanse (2019: 16), namely "an open lexical class of marked words that depict sensory imagery". As the openness of the word class and their structural markedness have been proven, I restrict my comments to the question of whether Kambaata ideophones "depict" and have "sensory meanings". Only a subset of Kambaata ideophones seems iconic (see Treis & Deginet 2024 on sound-imitative ideophones and §3.4.3 on the iconic functions of reduplication); usually the mappings between forms and meaning are arbitrary. Nevertheless, as Dingemanse (2019: 19) points out for other languages, also Kambaata native speakers are adamant that the form of an ideophone is suggestive of its meaning. Dingemanse attributes this to the depictive nature of ideophones, which "invites and affords the construal of iconic mappings between form and meaning" (Dingemanse 2019: 18). Kambaata ideophones can express sounds (e.g. *xixí* 'crackle when being roasted on the fire (of small seeds)'), movement (e.g. *túk=y-* 'walk behind each other in large groups'), visual patterns (e.g. *xéff~xéff=y-* 'have/be covered by small spots'), other sensory perceptions like texture (e.g. *lúf~lúf=y-* 'become soft, malleable, fluffy') and color (e.g. *búll=y-* 'become greyish, ashen'), inner feelings and cognitive states (e.g. *cagágg=y-* 'become unwell, indisposed, a bit ill'; *kulúl=a'-* 'make feel dizzy', *qúl~qúl=a'* 'make (s.o.) feel nostalgic') – i.e. Kambaata covers the whole implicational hierarchy of semantic fields proposed by Dingemanse (2012: 663) – but I find it difficult to judge whether

Kambaata ideophones have closer ties to sensory perception than verbal lexemes. A more fine-grained semantic analysis of ideophones and verbs is definitely required.

Of course, this is not the only gap that remains. This paper hopefully paves the way for in-depth investigations of some of the aspects presented above. I was, for instance, neither able to do justice to the (possibly) substantial Kambaata-internal regional variation in the form and meaning of ideophones nor to the (presumably) significant differences in the frequency of use of ideophones across text types and across speakers. The degree of cognacy of ideophones across closely related languages is also a question that would merit to be investigated in the future.

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Abbreviations

1 = first person
2 = second person
3 = third person
A_ = adjectival
ABL = ablative
ACC = accusative
ACT = action
nominalization
ADD = additive
ADJ = adjective
AMH = Amharic
APPR = apprehensive
BDV = benedictive
CAUS1 = short causative
CAUS2 = long causative
CIRC = circumstantial
COND = conditional
COP2 = ascriptive, identificational copula
-(h)a(a) (M) / *-ta(a)* (F)
CVB = converb

DAT = dative
DEF = definite
DEM1 = proximal demonstrative
DEM2 = medial demonstrative
DS = different subject
EMP = emphasis
F = feminine
GEN = genitive
HON = honorific; impersonal
ICP = instrumental-comitative-perlative
IDEO = ideophone
IMP = imperative
ITER = iterative
INTJ = interjection
MID = middle
MIT = mitigator
MULT = multiplicative
NEG1 = standard negator
NEG2 = imperative negator
NEG4 = converb negator
NEG5 = relative negator
NIPFV = non-imperfective
NMZ1 = nominalization with -V
NMZ4 = nominalizer =*r*-
NOM = nominative
OBJ = object pronoun
OBL = oblique
P_ = pronominal
PART = discourse particle
PASS = passive
PAST = past, counterfactuality
PFV = perfective
PL = plural
PLC = place nominalization
POSS = possessive
PRED = predicative
PRF = perfect
PROG = progressive
Q = question marker
REAS2 = reason clause marker =*biiha*
RED = reduplication
REL = relative
RES = resultative derivation
SEQ = sequential
SGV = singulative
SIM = similative
vi/vt = intransitive / transitive verb
VOC = vocative

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