A grammar of Hamar : a South Omotic language of Ethiopia
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3 Nouns

This chapter treats morphemes which pertain to the noun itself, namely gender and number inflections. The noun classification system of Hamar is peculiar since gender is not an intrinsic property of nouns: nouns are gender-less and neutral for number, but they can also be inflected for both genders (masculine and feminine) and for plural number, regardless of their animacy reference. This system has both semantic and pragmatic functions. After describing the formal characteristics of nouns and of gender and number markers, the semantic properties of the noun classification system are treated in detail (3.4) and discussed in a cross-linguistic perspective. The case system of Hamar, the expression of grammatical relations and the pragmatic and discourse-related functions of gender and number are treated in chapter 7.

3.1   Basic form of nouns

The basic form of a noun consists of a root plus a terminal vowel, or a root alone. This form is referred to as 'general form' and it is the citation form volunteered by the speakers to name objects and entities. The preferred structure for nouns is disyllabic. Trisyllabic nouns occur to a lesser extent. General forms can end in any of the vowels *a, e, i, o, u,* or in a consonant. The majority of nouns end in *-a*. Nouns ending in *u* are all monosyllabic and extremely rare. Nouns ending in a consonant form a fairly small set and some speakers add the prosthetic vowel *i* at the end of the word (phonological rule P3). Both forms are accepted by the speakers.

áan ~ **áani**	'arm'
baz ~ **bázi**	'lake'
gudúɓ ~ **gudúɓi**	'tall'

As already mentioned in chapter 2, some borrowings from Amharic also get a final prosthetic vowel *i*.

Nouns in many Omotic languages end in a vowel which cannot be considered part of the root (since it can be ignored with suffixation of some morphemes) and which cannot be considered a separate suffix either. These vowels are referred to as 'terminal vowels' (Hayward 1987) and their distribution is lexically determined. Similar to other Omotic languages (Hayward 1987, Azeb 2012a), in Hamar there is no correlation between terminal vowels and the semantics of nouns, and no variation in the realization of the terminal vowel across speakers has been observed. Terminal vowels in Hamar are not stable when gender and number inflections are affixed to the general form: depending on the phonological characteristics of nouns, gender and number markers can be either suffixed to the root plus the terminal vowel, or to the root alone:

qásk-i	'dog'		**qáski-no**	'dog-F.S'
hám-i	'field'	(hám-no)	**hámmo**	'field:F.S'

General forms are non-committal for gender and number, and are non-definite. General forms show some syntactic restrictions in that they cannot be modified by demonstratives or relative clauses and they are used only in combination with uninflected verb forms which do not cross-reference the subject (see chapter 6 and chapter 7).

3.2 Gender and number

Gender and number are overtly marked on nouns and trigger agreement on verbs and modifiers (determiners, adjectives, relativized verbs, possessive pronouns). Masculine, feminine and plural suffixes are illustrated in table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Masculine, feminine and plural suffixes

Masculine	Feminine	Plural
-â ; -tâ	-no ; -tóno	-na

Depending on the speakers' choice and on discourse context, general forms can be inflected for gender (M, F) or number (PL), or they can be left unmarked in the general form (see section 3.4 for the semantic values associated with nominal inflections and general forms). Any noun, irrespective of the animate or non-animate semantic reference, can thus occur in three inflected forms:

qáski	'dog'	**ooní**	'house'
qaskê	'dog:M'	**ɔɔnê**	'house:M'
qáskino	'dog-F.S'	**onnó**	'house:F.S'
qáskina	'dog-PL'	**onná**	'house:PL'

Masculine, feminine and plural markers exclude each other in the sense that a noun is either inflected for gender or for number. The only exception to this pattern is represented by the nouns for 'man, male', 'woman, female', 'mother', 'grandmother' and 'older sister', see 3.4.1. These are the only nouns with inherent gender and they cannot be inflected for the opposite gender value.

Gender and number in Hamar are not obligatory categories, but the marking of a noun as feminine, masculine or plural has syntactic relevance in that it triggers F, M or PL agreement on verbs and modifiers (see the examples below). Gender and number assignment is the ultimate speaker's choice.[26]

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[26] In this respect, gender and number marking shows features of both derivation and inflection. In the present work, gender and number markers will be referred to as inflections in the sense of *inherent inflections,* a distinction formulated by Booij (1994, 1996). (note continued on next page)

(1) **ɛ́ɛ-na**   **orgó-na**
     man-PL   short-PL
     the short people

(2) **onnó**   **hamɓ-áino**   **onnó**   **garró-ne**
     house:F.S   be.called-REL.PRES.F   house:F.S   big:F.S-COP
     A so called 'F' house is a big house

(3) **wɔxá**   **káa**   **inté-ne**
     ox:M   DEM1.M   1SG:M-COP
     this ox is mine

The masculine suffix *-tâ* and the feminine suffix *-tóno* are suffixed directly to the root and they mark gender mainly on animate nouns, see 3.3 and 3.4 for further details. The masculine suffix *-â* and the feminine and plural suffixes *-no* and *-na* can be affixed either to the root or to the stem, determining different types of declensions, see 3.3.

Definiteness is not marked on nouns by a dedicated morpheme (a common feature in Omotic), but definiteness and gender marking interact: the general form is always non-definite, and inflected nouns are definite. Gender and number assignment is also related to pragmatic factors such as the expression of several degrees of definiteness and discourse prominence, see chapter 7 for further details.

Hamar general forms do not correspond to the subject case, nor to the 'absolute' case of many nominative-absolutive (or marked-nominative) systems found in east African languages (Sasse 1984; König 2006, 2008a & b). Similarly, nouns inflected for M gender and PL number do not have an inherent value for nominative or accusative case. Feminine marking on the contrary, implies a distinction between a subject case and a non-subject case (or oblique case). Feminine nouns are glossed as F.S when they occur in the subject case (*-no* and *-tóno*), and as F.OBL when they are modified or occur in non-subject function (marked by *-n*). The system of grammatical relations and the interaction between gender and case marking is treated in detail in chapter 7.

3.3   Declensions

Hamar nouns can be grouped in six declensions depending on the phonological characteristics of the general form and depending on the behavior of terminal vowels (stable vs. unstable). If the terminal vowel is stable, vowel coalescence P5 merges the terminal vowel and the low vowel of the masculine inflection /-â/. When the terminal vowel is unstable, morphophonological processes take place between

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This distinction is useful in the case of Hamar since it takes into account the derivation-like features of gender and number markers.

the final consonant of the root and the first consonant of the nominal inflections. Nouns that preserve the terminal vowel along with the inflections belong to declension 1. Declension 2 includes nouns that preserve the terminal vowel only with the masculine inflection, whereas feminine and plural inflections are suffixed directly to the root. Declension 3 groups together all consonant ending nouns, and declension 4 includes nouns which get the masculine suffix *-tâ* instead of the suffix *-â*. Declension 5 consists of a small set of nouns which undergo final syllable truncation. A few nouns have lexicalized gender forms, and belong to declension 6. The majority of Hamar nouns belong to declension 1 and end in the vowel *a*:

Table 3.2: Declension 1

general form	M -â	F -no	PL -na
qúɲa 'resin-based incense'	quɲâ	qúɲano	qúɲana
kubá 'wall'	kubâ	kubáno	kubána
sílqa 'knuckle'	silqâ	sílqano	sílqana
meté 'head'	mɛtê	meténo	meténa
ééɓe 'cowhide'	ɛɛɓê	ééɓeno	ééɓena
rási 'footprint'	rasê	rásino	rásina
kut'ó 'vulture'	kut'ɔ̂	kut'óno	kut'óna
álko 'plant sp.'	alkɔ̂	álkono	álkona

In declension 2 the terminal vowel is stable with the masculine marker, but it is deleted when feminine and plural inflections are suffixed. The majority of nouns belonging to declension 2 end in coronal or sonorant consonants followed by a front vowel. However, nouns with these characteristics can be found also in declension 1 and 5. The nasal consonant of the feminine and plural inflections assimilates to the preceding liquid or nasal segment (P4), see for instance *segeré* 'dik-dik'. Metathesis (P2) inverts the position of the final obstruent consonant of the root and the nasal consonant of the inflections, see *tubáqe* 'type of tree'. In the masculine form, vowel coalescence shows that the masculine inflection *-â* is suffixed to the terminal vowel.

Table 3.3: Declension 2

general form	M -â	F -no	PL -na
afála 'clothes'	afalâ	afállo	afálla
tesíɓe 'axe'	tesiɓê	tesímɓo	tesímɓa
segeré 'dik-dik'	sɛgɛrê	segerró	segerrá
tubáqe 'type of tree'	tubaqê	tubánqo	tubánqa
kurí 'honey'	kurê	kurró	kurrá
ooní 'house'	ɔɔnê	onnó	onná
tuɗí 'buttocks'	tuɗê	tunɗó	tunɗá
kut'úɓo 'housefly'	kut'uɓɔ̂	kut'úmɓo	kut'úmɓa

In a few cases, some nouns may belong to both declension 1 and 2, that is the feminine gender marker and the plural number marker can be affixed either to the terminal vowel or to the root:

qáami	'ear'
qaamê	'ear:M'
qámmo ~ **qáamino**	'ear:F.S'
qámma ~ **qáamina**	'ear:PL'

Speakers attribute these differences to dialectal variation, but there is no consensus among the speakers about which of the two forms is Hamar and which is not. The form *qáamino* for instance is attributed to the Banna variety, but it is often attested in Hamar's speech.

Nouns consisting of the root alone belong to declension 3. Similar to declension 2, metathesis and assimilation take place at morpheme boundaries to avoid illicit consonant clusters. Voicing assimilation (P8) and consonant elision after palato-alveolar ɲ (P9) occur after metathesis and assimilation, see for instance *gerák* 'beam' and *gaʔásh* 'warthog'.

Table 3.4: Declension 3

general form	M -â	F -no	PL -na
yíir 'upper arm'	yiirâ	yírro	yírra
panáq 'frog'	panaqâ	panánqo	panánqa
atáɓ 'tongue'	ataɓâ	atámɓo	atámɓa
c'agáj 'green'	c'agajâ	c'agáɲo	c'agáɲa
gerák 'beam'	gerakâ	gerángo	geránga
gaʔásh 'warthog'	gaʔashâ	gaʔáɲo	gaʔáɲa

Nouns belonging to declension 4 are either monosyllabic words, or nouns referring to non-domesticated animals and ethnonyms. They are inflected in the masculine by means of the suffix *-tâ*. Nouns referring to animals usually have two feminine forms, one ending in *-no* and the other in *-tóno*. The semantic meaning of these two feminine markers will be discussed in 3.4. A few nouns such as *zóbo* 'lion' and *ukulí* 'donkey' can be inflected by both the masculine suffixes *-â* and *-tâ*: they belong also to declension 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 3.5: Declension 4

general form	M -tâ	F -no F -tóno	PL -na
dáa 'clay pot'	daatâ	dáano	dáana
íi 'stomach'	iitâ	íino	íina
pée 'land'	pɛɛtâ	péeno	pɛ́ɛna
píi 'human faeces'	piitâ	píino	píina
róo 'foot, leg'	rɔɔtâ	róono	rɔ́ɔna
qáu 'forest'	qautâ	qáuno	qáuna
sháu 'cheetah'	shautâ	sháuno shautóno	sháuna
ukulí 'donkey'	ukultâ ukulê	ukulló ukultóno	ukullá
seelé 'guineafowl'	sɛltâ	seeléno seltóno	seeléna
zóbo 'lion'	zɔttâ zɔbɔ̂	zóbono zottóno	zóbona

Declension 5 consists of a small set of nouns which undergo syllable truncation (MP1) before suffixation of feminine and plural inflections. In the masculine these nouns are irregular since the masculine marker -*â* is either affixed to the terminal vowel, triggering coalescence (P5), or it is suffixed to the root, see for instance *yáati* 'sheep' and *aizí* 'goat hide'. Nouns belonging to declension 5 end in a coronal segment followed by the high front vowel *i*:

Table 3.6: Declension 5

general form	M -â	F -no	PL -na
yáati 'sheep'	yaatâ	yáano	yáana
naasí 'child'	naasâ	naanó	naaná
aizí 'goat hide'	aizê	ainó	ainá
goití 'way'	goitê	goinó	goiná
koisí 'beer container'	koisê	koinó	koiná
anqási 'lamb'	anqasâ	anqáno	anqána

Declension 6 groups together a few nouns which have lexicalized gender forms. In the case of *waakí* 'cow' the inflected forms are more transparent and some morphophonological processes can still be observed, for instance metathesis and voicing assimilation in the feminine and plural forms *wóngo* and *wongá:*

Table 3.7: Declension 6

general form	M -â	F -no	PL -na
waakí 'cow'	wɔxá	wóngo woxóno	wongá
ootó 'calf'	ɔɔtâ	óono ootóno	ɔtárra
éedi 'person'	ɛ́ɛ	éedono éeno	ɛ́ɛna ~ éena

3.4   Semantics of gender and number

Hamar nouns can be organized according to their animacy reference and the semantic values expressed by gender and number markers. Apart from *singularia tantum* which cannot be inflected for plural, and a few kinship terms that cannot be freely assigned to both genders, any noun in Hamar can be inflected for masculine and feminine grammatical gender, and plural number. Nouns inflected for gender and number are definite (see chapter 7). On the animacy scale, the more a noun expresses animate semantic reference, the tighter is the bond between grammatical gender and biological gender, and *vice versa* (see table 3.8). For this reason, depending on the semantic profile of nouns, gender markers encode semantic values such as sex (4),[27] augmentative and diminutive (5), and collective (4),(6). The association of gender and size-related (augmentatives and diminutives) and evaluative (appreciatives and depreciatives) meanings is common cross-linguistically (Aikhenvald 2012, Corbett 1991) and in African languages (Heine 1982, Di Garbo 2014). The Hamar noun classification system however shows rare and unique features when compared to prototypical gender systems, as for instance the fact that nouns can be assigned to any gender and the association of feminine gender with augmentation (see 3.4.5 for further discussions).

The plural marker refers to small quantities, usually no more than four or five countable units, unless the noun inflected for plural number is modified by numerals higher than 'four' or other modifiers such as 'many'. For this reason plural is analysed as paucal and for some nouns it clearly contrasts with feminine gender which is used for reference to bigger quantities. In (4) below for instance, the general form of *qulí* 'goat' has one extra feminine form for collective reference in addition to the plural form:

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[27] In this chapter the expressions 'natural gender' and 'biological gender' are used to refer to the sex of female or male beings, and contrast with 'grammatical gender' which refers to morphological gender marking. The fact that nouns inflected for M and F show the same verbal agreement of male and female beings justifies the labels 'masculine' and 'feminine' markers.

(4)   General form: **qulí** 'goat'
               M: **qultâ** 'male goat (buck)'
               F: **qulló** 'female goat (doe)'
               F: **qultóno** 'herd of goats'
               PL: **qullá** 'some goats'

(5)   General form: **dáa** 'clay pot'
               M: **daatâ** 'small clay pot'
               F: **dáano** 'big clay pot'
               PL: **dáana** 'some clay pots'

(6)   General form: **kurí** 'honey'
               M: **kurê** 'a little bit of honey'
               F: **kurró** 'a lot of honey'
               PL: **kurrá** 'a few containers of honey'

As shown in example (6), mass nouns can be inflected for plural: the plural marker renders nouns countable, and it encodes distributive and paucal values.[28]

The nouns for 'sun' *hai,* 'moon' *árpi* and 'milky way' *wánc'o* can be considered *singularia tantum*, i.e. nouns which cannot be inflected for plural number. However, the noun *árpi* can be inflected for plural number when it refers to 'months'. The noun *barjó~bairó* 'fate, fortune, god' is the only Hamar noun which cannot be inflected for gender and number, however it triggers feminine agreement on verbs. Table 3.8 illustrates the semantic values expressed by grammatical gender and number inflections (M, F, PL) in relation to the animacy degree of nouns. Each class of nouns and the values encoded by gender and number markers are described in detail in the following sections.

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[28] The semantics of plural and the fact that uninflected forms are non-specific for gender and number is discussed in chapter 7 along with the pragmatic functions of the noun classification system.

Table 3.8: Semantics of gender and number

			M	**F**	**PL**
+ animate	higher animates	Human beings, domestic animals, kinship terms	Masculine sex and singular	Feminine sex and singular; collective number	paucal
	lower animates	other animals	Singular; diminutive, masculine sex; depreciative	Augmentative; feminine sex; singular;	paucal
		insects and small animals	singular; diminutive;	singular; augmentative; collective	paucal
– animate	+ countable	Objects, places, body parts, plants and trees	diminutive; depreciative	augmentative; collective; appreciative	paucal
	– countable	Liquid and solid mass nouns	diminutive; paucal	augmentative; collective	distributive, paucal

3.4.1 Higher animates

Nouns referring to human beings and animals that Hamar people breed are higher animates. These nouns refer to sexually differentiable beings, thus when gram-matical gender is expressed on the noun, it encodes biological gender. Kinship terms are exceptional since they do not always allow double gender marking, see later on. Nouns for domestic animals and a few nouns referring to human beings have two feminine forms to distinguish the female specimen from the collective number, usually the 'group' or the 'herd', see also the example of *qulí* 'goat' (4) above:

(7a) General form: **éedi** 'person'
       M: **ɛ́ɛ** 'the man'
       F: **éesono** ~ **éedono** 'married woman'
       F: **éeno** 'a group of people'
       PL: **ɛ́ɛna** 'some people'

(7b) General form: **naasí** 'child'
      M: **naasâ** 'boy, son'
      F: **naanó** 'girl, daughter'
      F: **naasóno** 'group of children'
      PL: **naaná** 'some children, kids'

(7c) General form: **waakí** 'cattle'
      M: **wɔxá** 'ox'
      F: **wongó** 'cow'
      F: **woxóno** 'herd of cows'
      PL: **wongá** 'some cows'

(7d) General form: **yáati** 'sheep'
      M: **yaatâ** 'male sheep' (ram)
      F: **yáano** 'female sheep' (ewe)
      F: **yaatóno** 'herd of sheep'
      PL: **yáana** 'some sheep'

(7e) General form: **ootó** 'calf'
      M: **ɔɔtâ** 'male calf'
      F: **óono** 'female calf' (heifer)
      F: **ootóno** 'group of calves'
      PL: **ɔtárra** 'some calves'

It is remarkable that the suffix *-tóno* cannot be associated univocally to collective semantic value. In fact the suffix is used for female reference in ethnonyms and in lower animates such as wild animals, see 3.4.2:

(7f) General form: **hámar** 'Hamar'
      M: **hamartâ** 'Hamar man'
      F: **hamartóno** 'Hamar woman'
      F: **hámarro** 'all the Hamar people'
      PL: **hámarra** 'some Hamar people'

(7g) General form: **káara** 'Kara'
      F: **kartâ** 'Kara man'
      F: **kartóno** 'Kara woman'
      F: **káarano** 'all the Kara people'
      PL: **káarana** 'some Kara people'

The kinship terms for 'younger brother/sister' and 'father' have only one feminine form for feminine natural gender:

(7g)	General form:	**kána** 'younger sibling'
	M:	**kanâ** 'younger brother'
	F:	**kánno** 'younger sister'
	PL:	**kánna** 'younger siblings'

The feminine form of the noun *imbá* 'father, owner' refers to a female specimen, i.e. the 'owner of the house' which is always the woman in the Hamar society:

(7g)	General form:	**imbá** 'father/owner/uncle'
	M:	**imbâ** 'the father, the owner'
	F:	**imbáno** 'the owner of the house'
	PL:	**imbána** 'uncles, owners'

Apart from the nouns *kána* and *imbá*, other kinship terms cannot be inflected for both genders. The noun *kána*, like any other noun in Hamar, has a genderless general form that can be inflected depending on the context, whereas terms such as 'mother', or 'female', or 'male' reference biologically feminine or masculine entities by their inherent lexical genders and cannot be assigned to the opposite gender. The noun for 'mother' for instance can only be inflected for feminine gender (8c). The set of kinship terms illustrated in (8) and (9) represents the only nouns with lexical gender which do not allow double gender marking:

(8a)	General form:	**ángi** 'man, male'
	M:	**angê** 'the man'
	F:	-
	PL:	**ángina** 'men'

(8b)	General form:	**máa** 'woman, female'
	M:	-
	F:	**máano** 'the woman'
	PL:	**máana** 'women'

(8c)	General form:	**indá** 'mother'
	M:	-
	F:	**indáno** 'the mother'
	PL:	**indána** 'mothers'

(8d)	General form:	**aaká** 'grandmother'
	M:	-
	F:	**aakáno** 'the grandmother'
	PL:	**aakána** 'grandmothers'

(8e) General form: **mishá** 'older sister'
      M: -
      F: **misháno** 'the older sister'
      PL: **mishána** 'older sisters'

It is remarkable that apart from *ángi*, 'man, male', the rest of the nouns illustrated above has female lexical reference. Kinship terms referring to male beings, such as 'grandfather', do inflect for feminine gender but grammatical F gender encodes collective value, showing that the additional meaning of F is indeed collective:

(9a) General form: **eiké** 'grandfather'
      M: **eikê** 'the grandfather'
      F: **eikéno** 'the group of the ancestors'
      PL: **eikéna** 'ancestors, grandfathers'

(9b) General form: **ishím** 'older brother'
      M: **ishimê** 'the older brother'
      F: **ishímmo** 'the group of older brothers'
      PL: **ishímma** 'older brothers'

3.4.2 Lower animates

The set of lower animates includes insects and animals for which biological gender distinction is not fundamental. Since the link between grammatical gender and natural gender is weaker, the semantic values of masculine and feminine gender markers vary. Nouns can be arranged depending on whether the feminine gender marker encodes natural gender, big size, or collective number. However, a clear cut semantic distinction is not always possible and the following organization should not be taken as a straitjacket. Sometimes it is difficult to draw a clear cut distinction between 'feminine natural gender' and 'big size' because of sexual dimorphism. For instance the feminine form of 'hyena', *gudurró,* refers either to the large specimen or the female specimen, depending on context; similarly the feminine form of 'spider', *tangayóno,* may refer to the female or the big specimen. In these cases the female specimens are actually larger than the male ones, thus the two semantic values coincide, however sexual size dimorphism does not apply to all species.

A few nouns referring to wild animals (10a-e) have two feminine forms, similar to nouns for domesticated animals in the higher animates set. For some of them (10f-g) there is no consensus on which of the two forms refer to the feminine specimen or to the collective value. The suffix *-tóno* often marks female biological gender for some wild animals and ethnonyms, but this is in contrast with the pattern attested for domestic animals: see for instance *qultóno* 'herd of goats', *yaatóno* 'herd of sheep', *ootóno* 'group of calves' in 3.4.1.

(10a) General form: **seelé** 'guineafowl'

M: **sɛltâ** 'male guineafowl'

F: **seltóno** 'female guineafowl'

F: **seeléno** 'a flock of guineafowls'

PL: **seeléna** 'some guineafowls'

(10b) General form: **góro** 'Colobus monkey'

M: **gɔrɔ̂** 'male Colobus monkey'

F: **gortóno** 'female Colobus monkey'

F: **górono** 'troop of Colobus monkeys'

PL: **górona** 'some Colobus monkeys'

(10c) General form: **labalé** 'ostrich'

M: **labaltâ** 'male ostrich'

F: **labaltóno** 'female ostrich'

F: **laballó** 'herd of ostriches'

PL: **laballá** 'some ostriches'

(10d) General form: **zóbo** 'lion'

M: **zɔbɔ̂ ~ zɔttâ** 'male lion'

F: **zottóno** 'female lion'

F: **zóbono** 'pride of lions'

PL: **zóbona** 'some lions'

(10e) General form: **gaʔásh** 'warthog'

M: **gaʔashâ** 'male warthog'

F: **gaʔashtóno** 'female warthog'

F: **gaʔáɲo** 'sounder of warthogs'

PL: **gaʔáɲa** 'some warthogs'

(10f) General form: **ukulí** 'donkey'

M: **ukulê ~ ukultâ** '(one) male donkey' (ass)

F: **ukultóno** 'female donkey' (jenny) / 'herd'

F: **ukulló** 'female donkey / 'herd'

PL: **ukullá** 'some donkeys'

(10g) General form: **gáya** 'baboon'

M: **gaitâ** '(one) male baboon'

F: **gaitóno** 'female baboon' / 'troop of baboons'

F: **gáyano** 'female baboon'/ 'troop of baboons'

PL: **gáyana** 'some baboons'

Probably the distinction between feminine and feminine-collective was common in the past when the Hamar used to hunt regularly, and it is now fading away: some nouns referring to other animals do not distinguish between female natural gender and feminine-collective value, see for instance the noun for 'elephant' below. The question of why the suffix *-tóno* is associated with feminine gender in some lower animates and human beings, and with collective number in domestic animals remains unsolved for the moment. For other animals, especially animals that Hamar people do not breed, masculine is generally associated with singular number and small size (diminutive) and feminine with big size (augmentative). However, while the association of feminine grammatical gender and big size is univocal and unambiguous among different speakers, the association of masculine and small size is occasional and irregular: masculine gender is mainly associated with singular number.

(11a) | General form: | **wúrro** 'cat'
| M: | **wurrɔ̂** 'one (small) cat'
| F: | **wúrrono** 'one big cat'
| PL: | **wúrrona** 'cats'

(11b) | General form: | **qáski** 'dog'
| M: | **qaskɛ́** 'one (small) dog'
| F: | **qáskino** 'one big dog'
| PL: | **qáskina** 'dogs'

(11c) | General form: | **átti** 'bird'
| M: | **attɛ̂** 'one (small) bird'
| F: | **áttino** 'one big bird'
| PL: | **áttina** 'birds'

(11d) | General form: | **dongár** 'elephant'
| M: | **dɔngarâ** 'one (small) elephant
| F: | **dongárro** 'one big elephant'
| PL: | **dongárra** 'elephants'

Masculine and feminine biological genders for these nouns can be expressed periphrastically by the modifier nouns *ángi* 'male' and *máa* 'female'.
In folktales, masculine gender is often used as depreciative and derogative, whereas feminine gender marks appreciation. Animals are usually referred to in their general form, the latter being used as a proper noun. In the excerpts below the vervet monkey, which personifies the clever character who tricks the fool baboon, triggers feminine agreement on the verb:

(12a) **qáara**   **yin**   **ko = giá-de**
      vervet.monkey   so   3F = tell-PFV
      Monkey said so […]

The baboon is inflected for masculine gender: this adds a derogative meaning and emphasizes that it is going to be killed because of its ineptitude:

(12b) **zóbo yiʔá-ise**   **gaitâ**   **garέ-be**   **gaitâ**
      lion   go-CNV1   baboon:M   big:M-COM   baboon:M
      likká-be-ɗan   **dees-idí-ne**
      small:M-COM-ACC   kill-PF-COP
      Lion went and killed the big baboon and the small baboon.

Insects and small animals are similar to non-domestic animals in that the bond between grammatical gender and biological gender is weaker. Similar to non-domestic animals, masculine grammatical gender for insects is rather associated with singular number than with small size, although the latter value cannot be excluded. Feminine gender is mainly associated with collective value:

(13a)   General form: **rínso** 'hornet'
      M: **rinsↄ̂** 'one (small) hornet'
      F: **rínsono** 'a nest of hornets'
      PL: **rínsona** 'hornets'

(13b)   General form: **c'íilo** 'ant'
      M: **c'iilↄ̂** 'one (small) ant'
      F: **c'íilono** 'a colony of ants'
      PL: **c'íilona** 'ants'

(13c)   General form: **kut'úɓo** 'housefly'
      M: **kut'úɓↄ̂** 'one (small) housefly'
      F: **kut'úmɓo** 'a swarm of houseflies'
      PL: **kut'túmɓa** 'houseflies'

(13d)   General form: **máaqa** 'lizard'
      M: **maaqâ** 'one (small) lizard'
      F: **máaqano** 'a group of lizards'
      PL: **máaqana** 'lizards'

In this respect nouns for insects and small animals resemble mass nouns, see next section.

3.4.3   Inanimates

Gender assignment in nouns with inanimate reference depends on how objects are viewed by the speaker. Generally speaking, masculine gender is used for particularly small objects and feminine for larger objects. In the excerpts below, a Hamar speaker tries to explain the semantic differences between masculine and feminine gender when marked on the noun for 'path' *goití* (14-15) and on the noun for 'river' *baití* (16-17):

(14) **goitê   hamɓaɗ-ê̂,   goitê   likkâ,   éen**
      way:M   say:PASS-REL.PRES.M   way:M   small:M   people.F.OBL
      goitê,   ɔrgɔ̂,   taxá-tte   yiʔ-ê̂,
      way:M   short:M   cut-SE   go-REL.PRES.M
      goitê   kɛmɓaɗ-é
      way:M   3.say:PASS-PRES
      The so called 'M' path is a small pathway, the path for people, short, the shortcut (the one that cuts across) is called a 'M' pathway.

(15) **goinó   hamɓaɗ-áino,   táaki   kó-te**
      way:F.S   say:PASS-REL.PRES.F   now   PRX.NSP-LOC
      kánki-n   goinó   dimeká-rra   laii   lála-xa
      car-F.OBL   way:F.S   Dimeka-ABL   IDEO.far   Lala-INS
      yiʔ-áino,   ogoró   goinó   kɔmɓaɗ-é
      go-REL.PRES.F   DEM2.F   way:F.S   3F.say:PASS-PRES
      The so called 'F' way, here now the car road that goes from Dimeka and continues through Lala, that is called a 'F' road.

(16) **baitê   qána   líkka-ne,   agá   táaki   shánqo-r**
      river:M   stream   small-COP   DEM2.M   now   Shanqo-IN
      ɓáa   kat'á   baitê   taxâ,   baití   líkka-ne,   agá
      UP   Kat'á   river:M   similar:M   river   small-COP   DEM2.M
      baitê   gidí-r   yer   sía   utá-ye [...]
      river:M   middle-IN   thing   bad   go.out-PAST.NEG.3
      the 'M' river is a small stream, like the Kat'á river up there in Shanqo: it is a small river, in a 'M' river bad things never happened

(17) **bainó   garró   hamɓaɗ-áino,   keské   baín**
river:F.S   big:F.S   say:PASS-REL.PRES.F   Keske   river.F.OBL

desí-no,   éedi-l   geɓí   gidí-r   di-idí,   bainó
similar-F.S   person-INCL   many   middle-IN   die-PF   river:F.S

gaarí-ne   noqó-no   gidí-r   róoro   wul   di-ê […]
big-COP   water-F.S   middle-IN   day   every   die-PRES.NEG.3

what is called a big 'F' river, it is like the Keske river: many people died in
it, it is a big river, the water in it never dries out […]

Masculine gender indicates a specific position in a delimited area when marked on
nouns referring to places or location, whereas feminine is used for general or wider
location (see also chapter 5 on the relation between gender and specific vs. non-
specific location, and chapter 7 for the pragmatic use of gender). The examples in
(18) and (19) are extracted from the same folktale and they illustrate the point. In
(18), somebody is giving precise instructions to the baboon as to where he must sit:
the masculine form of *gidí* 'middle' is used to refer to the exact location: the dry
trunk in the centre of the field. In example (19) instead, *gidí* 'middle' is used in the
feminine and it simply translates as 'in the middle', which is not specific and it is the
default form to express this locational meaning:

(18) **"hámi-n-sa   gidié-te   hattâ   durmâ   woyá"**
field-F.OBL-GEN   middle:M-LOC   tree:M   dry.log:M   stand.still.IMP.2SG
"stand still on a dry trunk in the very centre of the field!"

(19) **gaitâ   núu-n-sa   gidí-n-te   ɓul-áise**
baboon:M   fire-F.OBL-GEN   middle-F.OBL-LOC   jump-CNV1
di-idí-ne
die-PF-COP
Baboon jumped in the middle of the fire and died.

In mass nouns masculine gender encodes paucal and feminine gender encodes
collective number: however the speakers specify that liquid mass nouns inflected for
gender need to be conceived together with the container: 'masculine beer' refers to a
small gourd of beer, whereas 'feminine beer' indicates 'a lot of beer contained in a
big gourd'. The masculine form of 'water' attested in folktale below refers to a 'small
pond' (literally small water). In example (20) below the hyena teases a frog because
the frog spends its life in a small pond, whereas the hyena is always roaming. The
noun *noqó* 'water' is used in the masculine form to refer to the small pond but
masculine gender could also be interpreted as depreciative, since the hyena is
teasing and insulting the frog:

(20)   **ínta**   **laii**   **cóo**   **kízo**   **yiʔá-ɓ,**   **mágo**   **yiʔá-ɓ,**
       1SG   IDEO.far   DOWN   kizo   go-NARR   Mago   go-NARR

       óo   **boráana-n**   **péen**   **yiʔá-ɓ,**   **hayá-ise,**
       DST   boraana-F.OBL   land.F.OBL   go-NARR   do-CNV1

       woxón   **isá-ɓ**   **isá-ɓ,**   **yaatón**   **isá-ɓ […]**
       cattle.F.OBL   eat-NARR   eat-NARR   sheep.F.OBL   eat-NARR

       yáa   **c'anánna**   **ká-te**   **nɔqɔ́-te**   **dáa**
       2SG   always   PRX.SP-LOC   water:M-LOC   exist

       "I go far down to Kizo, to Mago, over there to the land of the Boraana, I eat entire herds of cattle and sheep…you are always here in this miserable pond!"

Masculine gender renders solid mass nouns singulative: the masculine form of *shudĩ* 'grass', for instance, refers to a 'grass blade'. Feminine gender may indicate a 'big bundle of grass' or 'a lot of grass', e.g. the grass contained in a field.

Plural number makes uncountable nouns countable and it has a distributive-paucal value, cf. (21) where feminine gender indicates 'large quantity' of sorghum with (22), where plural number refers to 'a small amount of' sorghum.

(21)   **"há = sa-l**   **gulpá**   **qolê,**   **kí = sa-l**   **gulfá**
       2SG = GEN-INCL   illness   exist.not   3 = GEN-INCL   illness

       qolê,   **isín-no-l**   **yé = na**   **ushá**   **ko = ush-é"**
       exist.not   sorghum-F.S-INCL   2PL = DAT   be.ripe   3F = be.ripe-PRES

       "there won't be sickness for you and also for him, and a lot of sorghum will grow ripe for both of you"

(22)   **túra**   **dúgge-n-ɗan**   **uká-ɓ,**   **isín-na**
       upwards   container-F.OBL-ACC   pierce-NARR   sorghum-PL

       qaashá-ɓ,   **tíma**   **kaá-ɓ**   **gaʔá-ɓ**
       collect-NARR   boiled.grains   pour-NARR   chew-NARR

       he pierced the sorghum container from below, upwards, collected a small amount of sorghum, boiled the grains, and ate

In (22) *isín* 'sorghum' is inflected for plural number and it translates as 'a little bit' of sorghum. The actual meaning though is distributive: the story is about a squirrel who day after day steals little amounts of sorghum until he eats the whole harvest.

3.4.4   Overview of gender and number

So far the semantic values associated with gender and number inflections have been discussed in relation to the animacy reference of nouns. However, the interpretation of masculine, feminine and plural markers depends also on other factors, such as discourse context (discussed in chapter 7) and the speaker's attitude. In order to give

the reader a complete picture, this section provides a summary of the semantic values associated with each inflection. For ease of reference, grammatical gender and number will be abbreviated to M, F and PL.

M is marked by the suffixes *-â* and *-tâ*. The latter inflects declension 4 nouns (cf. 3.3), i.e. monosyllabic nouns and nouns referring to animals and ethnonyms. M encodes masculine biological gender on higher animates (human beings, kinship terms, domestic animals) and a few lower animates, mainly wild animals that Hamar people probably used to hunt. M encodes singular number on other lower animates such as animals and insects. For lower animates, the association of M with diminutive and small size is secondary and not always mentioned by every speaker. However, M regularly encodes diminutive and small size in countable nouns with inanimate reference, such as objects and plants. M nouns referring to places designate small, specific and delimited locations. M on mass nouns takes on paucal or singulative values depending on whether nouns refer to liquid or solid materials: M liquid materials are usually conceptualized within a small container. M is used as depreciative and derogative when marked on animate beings in folktales.

The standard marker for F is the suffix *-no*. The suffix *-tóno* occurs as the additional F marker for those nouns which have two feminine forms distinguishing the female specimen from the 'group': higher animates (domestic animals, ethnonyms) and a few lower animates referring to game animals. For these nouns, the semantics of the F suffixes *-no* and *-tóno* varies: in ethnonyms and nouns referring to wild animals the marker *-tóno* encodes feminine biological gender, see for instance 'female ostrich' in (23); however, when suffixed to noun roots referring to domestic animals it encodes collective number, see the example of 'herd of goats' in (23) below.

(23)   **qulló**   'female goat (doe)'   **laballó** 'herd of ostriches'
        qultóno 'herd of goats'   **labaltóno** 'female ostrich'

For nouns like those in (23), feminine biological gender and collective values cannot be univocally associated with neither the two F markers. Apart from these, other nouns are inflected for F by the suffix *-no* only. F designates feminine biological gender in kinship terms whose general form is either genderless, as in *kána* 'younger sibling', or it references a female being, as for *máa* 'woman'. However, for kinship terms referring to male beings such as 'grandfather' or 'older brother', F denotes collective number. Augmentative and big size is associated with F on nouns referring to animals (i.e. lower animates which do not allow two feminine forms) and on nouns with inanimate reference. Mass nouns and nouns for insects inflected for F denote collective number and large quantities.

The inflectional PL suffix *-na* designates objects which are distributed in space and countable. If the noun inflected for PL is modified by modifiers such as 'many', or numerals higher than 'five', the PL marked noun denotes plural number, i.e. more than two units, but a noun inflected for PL alone usually refers to four/five

countable units or fewer instances. When asking the difference between (24) and (25) below, the speakers pointed out that (24) refers to 'three or four goats scattered on the road' whereas (25) indicates a 'group of goats' whose components cannot be counted separately:

(24) **qullá   goín-te   ki = dáa-de**
     goat:PL   way.F.OBL-LOC   3 = exist-PFV
     some goats are on the road

(25) **qultóno   goín-te   ko = dáa-de**
     goat:F.S   way.F.OBL-LOC   3F = exist-PFV
     the herd of goats is on the road

F groups and herds (collective) are conceived as indivisible and homogeneous unities, whereas nouns inflected for PL are separable and countable. The association of collective number with feminine gender is common in Cushitic languages. For instance in the Boraana dialect of Oromo, which is spoken to the south-east of Hamar, F can have collective reading (Clamons 1992:90-93).[29]

PL on mass nouns denotes distributive and paucal values: as shown in example (4) in section 3.4, the PL form of 'honey' refers to 'a few containers full of honey', but often PL takes on paucal value as well: the concept of a mass substance distributed in several containers is consequently associated with small quantity, see example (22) in 3.4.3.

In the example below, the noun for 'rain' is inflected for PL to indicate a light rain or a drizzle:

(26) **dommá   igirá   ɠɛá-xa   kidí   háqa   wa   demí-r**
     rain:PL   DEM2.PL   hit-TEMP   3   tree   another   side-IN
     woyá-ɓ
     stand-NARR
     while it was raining a bit he stood under a tree

3.4.5   Conclusions

In this section the characteristics of the noun classification system of Hamar are highlighted and compared with other systems. The structural differences with prototypical gender systems will be examined first, followed by a discussion on the dichotomy 'feminine-big' vs. 'masculine-small'.

Gender systems which allow the assignment of nouns to more than one gender have been called with different labels in the literature on noun classification. Heine

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[29] However, elsewhere within Afro-Asiatic, like in Arabic or Berber, F derives countable and singulative nouns from uncountable and mass nouns (which are usually M).

(1982) introduced the distinction between 'free' and 'fixed' gender systems for African languages: free gender systems are those in which nouns can be 'ideally' assigned to any gender (Heine 1982:198); Corbett (1991 *inter alia*) and Aikhenvald (2003) talks about 'multi-gendered', 'double-gendered' or 'hybrid' nouns as a rare phenomenon restricted to a small set of nouns with animate reference; Di Garbo (2014) in her typological survey on the interaction of gender, number and evaluative morphology in African languages refers to these systems as 'non-rigid' systems. The languages reported in the literature use productive *gender shift*[30] strategies in order to convey additional semantic values such as variation in size (diminution and augmentation) or variation in the speakers' attitude (depreciation and appreciation). In these languages however, gender is always lexically specified: the notion of *gender shift* itself implies a change from a default value (the default gender) to another value (the opposite gender in sex-based gender systems). For this reason, gender shift as a strategy to encode variation in size is usually restricted to inanimate nouns, and it is always constrained by the semantic properties of nouns (Corbett 1991:145-188, Aikhenvald 2003, Di Garbo 2014). In this respect the Hamar noun classification system shows unique features not only if compared to neighboring languages but also in a cross-linguistic perspective. In Hamar, as shown in the previous sections, any noun can be assigned to masculine or feminine gender regardless of its animate or non-animate semantic reference. This is possible because of the existence in Hamar of general forms which are non-committal about gender and number, but can be productively inflected for both genders and for number: Hamar nouns are neither lexically specified for gender, nor are there gender assignment rules based on formal, morphological or phonological, criteria. In the case of Hamar the concept of *gender shift* does not apply because gender (and number) are categories indexed by inherent inflections which depend ultimately on the speakers' choice and on discourse context. Within Di Garbo's sample of African languages, only Maasai (Eastern Nilotic) resembles Hamar in that for some nouns gender is not lexically specified and size-related gender shift is found also in combination with animate nouns. A few nouns in Maasai have a genderless stem which can be marked for masculine or feminine, but these nouns are obligatorily marked for gender and cannot occur 'unmarked' like Hamar general forms:

F:	en-kitók 'woman'
M:	ol-kitók 'very respected man'
F:	ɛn-dóínyó 'hill'
M:	ol-dóínyó 'mountain'

<div align="right">(Payne 1998:166-167)</div>

Heine (1982:198), gives Kxoe as example of free gender system:

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[30] otherwise called 'manipulable gender assignment' by Di Garbo (2014).

ngú	'hut'
ngú-mà	M 'big, rectangular hut'
ngú-hè	F 'small, round hut'

(after Köhler 1981:515)

However, he states later on that 'ideal' languages with completely free gender systems in which nouns can be allocated to both genders "have not been found and do not seem to exist in Africa" (ibid.).[31]

The Hamar gender system was described for the first time by Jean Lydall in her grammatical sketch (1976:406-408); in the article *Gender, Number and Size in Hamar* the author tried to give an answer to the following question: "How can a society in which men generally enjoy a higher status than women, speak a language in which masculine gender is equated with smallness?" (Lydall 1988:78). Indeed, masculine gender in Hamar encodes semantic values such as diminutive, whereas feminine gender is associated with augmentation: this is quite a rare dichotomy for languages which use gender to encode evaluative morphology (Aikhenvald 2012; Di Garbo 2014), and the reverse pattern (M for big and F for small) is attested in neighbouring Omotic (Azeb 2012b) and Cushitic languages, and generally within the Afro-Asiatic family. In Di Garbo's sample, the only language which associates feminine gender with large and big size is the isolate Hadza spoken in north-central Tanzania (Di Garbo 2014:161-165). Outside of Africa there are a few languages which apply feminine gender to objects that are large, wide, or ample: these are languages spoken in Papua New Guinea (Mali - Baining, Yonggom - Ok, Olo - Torricelli), in the Australian region (Tiwi - isolate), and in Europe (Cantabrian Spanish) (Aikhenvald 2012).

3.5   Nominal derivation

Two types of nominalization have been identified. Relativized verbs and some adjectives can be derived from verbs by means of relativizing suffixes which are described in chapter 8. The suffix *-ínta* derives abstract nouns from verbs and it is discussed in 3.5.1. A few nouns ending in *-a, -i* and *-o* pair with corresponding verb stems (table 3.9 on next page). Nouns ending in *-a* differ from verb stems only in tone. For some noun-verb pairs in table 3.9 it is not possible to take one form as the basic and derive the other from it; some verb forms have a more general meaning than the corresponding noun, and it is likely that this correspondence is the result of

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[31] The gender system of Kxoe as described by Köhler (1981) resembles the Hamar system. Köhler (1981:514) refers to the unmarked form of nouns as 'neutral' and he writes: "Le genre neutre singulier s'emploie lorsqu'on parle de manière générale d'un ' enfant ', d'un ' homme ', du 'membre d'une tribu ou d'un peuple '. Alors que dans les langues à genres la désinence de genre est habituellement liée indissolublement au nom, elle tombe fréquemment en kxoe, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de choses, qui relèvent du genre grammatical, mais fréquemment aussi lorsqu'il s'agit d'animaux ou même d'hommes [...] (ibid.).

verb to noun derivation (see for instance the pair *sára / sará*), for other pairs the contrary is also plausible, as the pair *ɗáki / daxá* suggests. A few adjectives have corresponding inchoative verbs, see 3.6. Agentive nouns can be derived from verbs by means of relativizing suffixes, see chapter 8.

Table 3.9: Noun - verb pairs

Nouns		Verbs	
ɓúla	'egg'	ɓulá	'to jump, to lay eggs'
désima	'grinding stone'	desimá	'to grind'
sára	'goatskin used as baby sling'	sará	'to catch'
waadíma	'work'	waadimá	'to work'
áapi	'eye'	aapá	'to see'
c'aaqí	'evil eye, jinx'	c'aaqá	'to cast the evil eye'
ɗáki	'rope'	ɗaxá	'to tie'
díibi	'thief'	diibá	'to steal'
dúmai	'thumb'	dumá	'to grab'
eepí	'coffin, dead body, funeral'	eepá	'to cry'
galt'í	'wall covered in mud'	galt'á	'to seal with mud'
shooshí	'guest'	shooshá	'to welcome sb.'
pet'í	'spittle'	pet'imá	'to spit'
píi	'faeces'	piá	'to defecate'
ráati	'sleep'	raatá	'to sleep'
shupí	'lid'	shupá	'to seal'
óiso	'question'	oisá	'to ask'
keemó	'wedding, marriage'	keemá	'to marry'
pusó	'fart'	pusá	'to fart'
rósho	'sling'	roshá	'to hurl stones'

3.5.1 Abstract nouns

Abstract nouns are derived from verb roots through the suffixation of the suffix *-ínta*. The suffix can derive abstract nouns from both transitive and intransitive verbs:

Table 3.10: Abstract nouns

Verb stem		Derived noun	
ɗes-	'to know'	ɗesínta	'knowledge'
aɗ-	'to give birth'	aɗínta	'birth'
ois-	'to ask'	oisínta	'questioning'
kumm-	'to eat'	kummínta	'nourishment'
wuc'-	'to drink'	wuc'ínta	'beverage'
dees-	'to kill'	deesínta	'murder'
ɗalq-	'to speak'	ɗalqínta	'speech'
pax-	'to throw'	paxínta	'throwing stones at animals'
da-	'live, exist, be'	daínta	'life'

Some illustrative sentences are given in the examples below. Derived abstract nouns behave similar to general forms of nouns, their use is avoided in syntactic environment where agreement is required. For this reason abstract nouns cannot be modified by relative clauses or demonstratives. They have non-definite semantic interpretation, suggested also by the fact that they are usually followed by the noun *yer* 'thing':

(27) **bíto ɗesínta zagá ki = zag-é**
Bito knowledge want 3 = want-PRES
Bito seeks education

(28) **deesínta yer sía-ne**
killing thing bad-COP
murder is a bad thing

(29) **seení-n gaarí-n-ka yer paxínta**
stone-F.OBL big-F.OBL-INS thing throwing
dandaim-ê
be.possible-PRES.NEG.3
with a big stone you can't chase birds and animals (lit. throwing and related things are not possible)

3.6 Adjectives

There are two types of adjectives in Hamar: adjectival nouns and de-verbal adjectives. Adjectives in Hamar can function both as head and as modifier. The majority of the adjectives are nouns: they have a general form ending in a consonant or in the vowels *-a, -e, -i, -o* and are inflected for masculine, feminine and plural by means of nominal inflections. The adjective *háali* 'new', for instance, inflects according to declension 2 rules and undergoes the morpho-phonological processes described in section 3.3 above:

(30a) **borqotó háali**
headrest new
new headrest

(30b) **bɔrqɔtô haalê**
headrest:M new:M
the new headrest (M)

(30c) **borqotóno hállo**
headrest-F.S new:F.S
the new headrest (F)

(30d) **borqotóna**   **hálla**
       headrest-PL   new:PL
       new headrests

A few adjectives denoting states or feelings are derived from stative verbs by means of the relativizing suffixes described in chapter 8. These de-verbal adjectives are basically relativized stative verbs marked by relative past inflections.

Attributive adjectives follow their head and agree in gender and number with it. The examples below show the agreement patterns of the adjectival noun *déɛga* 'foolish' and the de-verbal adjective *barɗá* 'drunk' in attributive position. The adjective *déɛga* has been chosen since it ends in the vowel -*a*: morphologically, the two adjectives in (31) below differ in the fact the nominal inflections are suffixed to the nominal stem (i.e. the nominal root plus the terminal vowel) in the adjectival noun, whereas the relativizing suffixes are attached directly to the verb root of *barɗá*. The difference between the two adjectival forms surfaces only in the feminine form: if *barɗá* was inflected by means of nominal inflections we should have the form **barɗáno*.

(31a) **éedi**   **déɛga**   **éedi**   **barɗá**
       person   foolish   person   be.drunk
       a foolish person   a drunk person

(31b) **ɛ́ɛ**   **dɛɛgâ**   **ɛ́ɛ**   **barɗ-â**
       man:M   foolish:M   man:M   be.drunk-REL.PAST.M
       the foolish man   the drank man

(31c) **éeno**   **déɛga-no**   **éeno**   **barɗ-óno**
       people:F.S   foolish-F.S   people:F.S   be.drunk-REL.PAST.F
       a group of foolish people   a group of drunk people

(31d) **éesono**   **déɛga-no**   **éesono**   **barɗ-óno**
       woman:F.S   foolish-F.S   woman:F.S   be.drunk-REL.PAST.F
       the foolish woman   the drunk woman

(31e) **ɛ́ɛ-na**   **déɛga-na**   **ɛ́ɛ-na**   **barɗ-ána**
       man-PL   foolish-PL   man-PL   be.drunk-REL.PAST.PL
       the foolish people   the drunk people

The verb stem *barɗá* is a full-fledged verb which can be inflected for any tense as prototypical verbs do (32). The only restriction is that stative verbs cannot be conjugated in the present progressive form.

(32)   **ínta**   **barɗá = i = da**   **barɗ-é**
          1SG   be.drunk = 1SG = IPFV   be.drunk-PRES
          I will be drunk

Most of de-verbal adjectives are derived stems featuring the passive derivational suffix *-ɗ-* (see chapter 6 for further details on verb derivation) and refer to physical states and emotions. These passive stems do not have a corresponding underived transitive form with an active meaning. A list of de-verbal adjectives can be found in table 3.12 at the end of the chapter.

A few adjectival nouns ending in *-i* correspond to inchoative verb stems, see table below.

Table 3.11: Adjectival nouns and inchoative verbs

Nouns		Verbs	
qáji	'cold'	qajá	'become/be cold'
dúrpi	'fat'	durpá	'become fat'
geɓí	'big, many'	geɓá	'grow up, become big'
qailí	'decorated'	qailá	'to decorate'
t'óot'i	'full'	t'oot'á	'become full, be numerous'

As mentioned before, adjectives in attributive positions agree in gender and number with their heads. Attributive adjectives are inflected also when the head noun is dropped, hence they agree with the noun for which they stand.

(33)   **durfê**   **háine?**
          fat:M   who
          who is the fat one (M)?

When used as predicates in copular sentences, adjectival nouns cannot be inflected and occur in the general form: compare (33a) with (33b) and the two attributive and predicative adjectives in (34):

(33a)   **ɔɔnê**   **káa**   **háali-ne**
          house:M   DEM1.M   new-COP
          this house (M) is new

(33b)   **ɔɔnê**   **káa**   **haalê**
          house:M   DEM1.M   new:M
          this new house (M)

(34)   **onnó**   **koró**   **geccó-no**   **gúuri-ne**
          house:F.S   DEM1.F   old-F.S   empty-COP
          this big old house is empty

De-verbal adjectives cannot occur as predicates, see chapter 9 (section 9.2 on non-verbal predication). A list of basic Hamar adjectives is given in the table 3.12.

Table 3.12: Hamar adjectives

Adjective	Meaning	Adjective	Meaning
payá	'good'	sía	'bad'
zía	'brave'	píi	'fearful'
gazá	'generous, kind'		
tipá	'honest, reliable'	wóbo	'dishonest'
paxála	'clever, sharp'	déɛga	'foolish'
qará	'clever, dynamic'		
múuqi	'strong'	qáji	'weak'
wodímo	'rich'	qámɓi	'poor'
geccó	'old'	bárshi	'young'
		háali	'new'
geɓí	'big, many'		
gaarí	'big'	líkka	'small'
		sháaqa	'small' (for goats and sheep)
gudúɓ	'tall, long'	orgó	'short'
t'óot'i	'full'	gúuri	'empty'
dúrpi	'fat'	ganc'á	'thin'
t'eezí	'near'	pegé	'far'
oiɗí	'hot, warm'	qáji	'cold'
shíiti	'soft, easy'	wócci	'hard (e.g. of wood), difficult'
shólɓa	'light'	déet'a	'heavy'
dáat'a	'sweet'	c'apá	'rotten'
Colours		**De-verbal adjectives**	
tí'a	'black'	barɗá	'drunk'
déer	'red'	deebarɗá	'thirsty'
c'aulí	'white'	daaqarɗá	'hungry'
galáp	'yellow'	ɗagaɗá	'angry'
c'agáj	'green'	qajaɗá	'tired'
úlo	'blue'	aajaɗá	'sick'
		qaabimá	'sad'
		oshimɓá	'shy'