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7. Adjectives

7.1. Adjectival root classes

Konso has a limited number of adjectival roots (Black 1973; Mous and Ongaye 2009). Below I give an exhaustive list of the adjectival roots by grouping them into certain semantic categories: those in (1a) are colour adjectives, those in (1b) are height/size adjectives, those in (1c) are quality adjectives and those in (1d) are distance/location adjectives.

(1a)	at-	‘to be red’
	awl-	‘to be brown (+ non-human)’
	room-	‘to be brown (+ human)’
	poor-	‘to be black’
	tiim-	‘to be red’
	ilaaw-	‘to be green’
	makaal-	‘to be brown’
	pudfayyays-	‘to be yellow’
	pufaffars-	‘to be multi-coloured’
	purpurrays-	‘to be spotted’
(1b)	der-	‘to be tall, long’
	kummaʔ-	‘to be short’
	kapp-	‘to be fat’
	ɕallaʔ-	‘to be thin (length)’
	ɕaah-	‘to be thin (width)’
	kord-	‘to be thick’
	kutt-	‘to be big’
	lek-	‘to be many’
	killlaʔ-	‘to be narrow’
	pald-	‘to be wide’
	fakk-	‘to be small’
	apd-	‘to be skinny’
(1c)	kokkook-	‘to be strong, hard’
	nukkull-	‘to be weak, soft’
	paɕaar-	‘to be good, beautiful’
	neecɕ-	‘to be bad, ugly’
	ɕoyy-	‘to be wet’
	uls-	‘to be heavy’
	ʃollaʔ-	‘to be light’
	woyy-	‘to be better’ ¹¹

¹¹ The adjectival root *woyy-* ‘to be better’ does not form a plural number agreement by reduplication, possibly because of the notion of comparative degree (as opposed to simple degree of comparison).

- (1d) **deh-** 'to be near, shallow'
sek- 'to be far, deep'

Adjectival roots behave like verbs in the sense that they occur with subject clitics as well as aspect markers except when they are used as attributives. Gender agreement markers occur after the adjectival root, see below (7.4).

7.2. Reduplication in adjectives

As is the case with verbs, adjectival roots also show two types of reduplication: full reduplication and partial reduplication. The reduplication of an adjectival root has a distributive connotation (i.e. the meaning of the adjectival root in question applies to every single member of the group).

Not all adjectival roots show full reduplication of the root. The adjectival roots that reduplicate the full root are listed below.

- (2) **tiimtiim-** 'to be red.PL' from **tiim-** 'to be red'
poorpoor- 'to be black.PL' from **poor-** 'to be black'
atʔat¹²- 'to be white.PL' from **at-** 'to be white'

The above adjectival roots also have partial reduplication of the root as discussed below.

Partial reduplication in adjective roots may be either C_1V or C_1VC_1 . The C_1V reduplication is a variant of the C_1VC_1 reduplication with subsequent degemination conditioned by a geminate consonant in the following syllable. That is, C_1V applies only to adjectival roots with geminate consonants. The following are illustrative examples.

- (3) **ka-kapp-** 'to be fat.PL' from **kapp-** 'to be fat'
ku-kutt- 'to be big.PL' from **kutt-** 'to be big'
ʃa-ʃakk- 'to be small.PL' from **ʃakk-** 'to be small'
ɕo-ɕoyy- 'to be wet.PL' from **ɕoyy-** 'to be wet'
ki-killlaʔ- 'to be narrow.PL' from **killlaʔ-** 'to be narrow'

The C_1VC_1 reduplication applies to adjectival roots that do not have geminate consonants. Interestingly, long vowels in the adjectival roots appear short in the reduplicated part. Below are illustrative examples.

- (4) **dɛd-dɛr-** 'to be tall, long.PL' from **dɛr-** 'be tall, long'
pap-pald- 'to be wide.PL' from **pald-** 'to be wide'
uʔ-ʔuls- 'to be heavy.PL' from **uls-** 'to be heavy'

¹² **atʔat-** 'to be white.PL' is also pronounced with a geminate glottal stop: **aʔʔat-** 'to be white.PL'

kok-kord-	‘to be thick.PL’	from	kord-	‘to be thick’
nen-neeɣ-	‘to be bad, ugly.PL’	from	neeɣ-	‘be bad, ugly’
tit-tiim-	‘to be red.PL’	from	tiim-	‘to be red’
pop-poor-	‘to be black.PL’	from	poor-	‘to be black’

Banti (1986) reports that the plurals of adjectives in Konso are ‘like [in] Oromo but always without consonant doubling’. However, from the above examples we note that adjectival plurality in Konso also involves consonant doubling, (i.e. the C₁VC₁ reduplication (see also below for more examples).

The following are instances that do not follow the above mentioned patterns of reduplication:

(5)	kur-kutt-/kut-kutt-	‘to be big.PL’	from	kutt-	‘to be big’
	ɕal-ɕallaʔ-	‘be thin.PL’	from	ɕallaʔ-	‘to be thin’
	kap-kapp-	‘to be fat.PL’	from	kapp-	‘to be fat’
	ʃak-ʃakk-	‘to be small.PL’	from	ʃakk-	‘to be small’

7.3. Intensity

Intensity in some adjectives is expressed by alternating adjectival roots. For some adjectival roots the variation may involve gemination of the middle consonant if there is one in the root, as in the case of **paɕaʔaar-** in example (6).

(6)	tiffiim-	‘to be very red’	from	tiim-	‘to be red’
	puɕɕuur-	‘to be very black’	from	poor-	‘to be black’
	paɕaʔaar-	‘to be very good’	from	paɕaʔaar-	‘be good’

The other way of expressing intensity in adjectives is reduplicating the whole phrase. Intensity of a situation can be expressed in relation to an individual entity or a group of entities. For instance, the example in (7a) expresses intensity of **dɛr** ‘be tall’ of the individual entity **ɕoyra** ‘tree’, whereas the example in (7b) expresses the same in relation to a group of entities **ʔorra** ‘people’. Note that the subject clitics occur only once.

(7a)	ɕoyrasiʔ ʔideri dɛri		
	<i>ɕoyra-siʔ</i>	<i>i = dɛr-i</i>	<i>dɛr-i</i>
	tree-DEF.M/F	3 = be.tall-PF	be.tall-PF
	‘The tree is very very tall.’		

(7b)	orrasiiʔ idedɕɕeri dɛɕɕeri		
	<i>orra-siiʔ</i>	<i>i = dɛɕɕ-dɛr-i</i>	<i>dɛɕɕ-dɛr-i</i>
	people-DEF.M/F	3 = PL-be.tall-PF	PL-be.tall-PF
	‘The people are very very tall.’		

7.4. Predicative adjectives

The adjectival verb roots may occur in affirmative or negative sentences as predicates that describe a state of being or becoming. When used to describe a state of being, they require subject clitics and aspect marking. For the plurals of all persons, the adjectival root initial C_1V or C_1VC_1 is reduplicated. First person plural and second person plural also have the suffixes *-nna* and *-ttan*, respectively, on the adjective. The following are illustrative examples:

- (8a) *anti?* *inderi*
 anti-? *in = d̥er-i*
 1SG.PRO-NOM 1 = be.tall.PF
 ‘I am tall.’
- (8b) *iʃina?* *ʔidd̥ed̥derittan*
 iʃina-? *iʔ = d̥ed̥-d̥er-i-t-tan*
 2PL.PRO-NOM 2 = PL-be.tall-PF-2-2PL
 ‘You (PL) are tall.’

In the following paradigm, the adjectival root *d̥er-* ‘be tall, long’ is used to show the use of adjectival predicates with the various persons to describe the state of being.

- (9) *anti?* *ʔinderi* ‘I am tall.’
 inu? *ʔind̥ed̥derinna* ‘We are tall.’
 atti? *ʔid̥deri* ‘You (SG) are tall.’
 iʃina? *ʔidd̥ed̥derittan* ‘You (PL) are tall.’
 iʃa? *ʔideri* ‘He is tall.’
 iʃeenna? *ʔideri* ‘She is tall.’
 iʃoonna? *ʔid̥ed̥deri* ‘They are tall.’

Adjectival roots form verb forms by adding derivational suffixes such as the inchoative and the causative. The inchoative forms are *-ad̥*, *-aad̥* and *-naad̥* (see 6.1.4). The following are sentential examples.

- (10a) *id̥eraatti*
 i = d̥er-aad̥-t-i
 3 = be.tall-INCH-3F-PF
 ‘She became tall.’
- (10b) *i = ka-kapp-ad̥-a-n*
 3 = PL-be.fat-INCH-IPF.FUT-PL
 ‘They will become fat.’

- (10c) **ikkappatti**
iʔ = kapp-ad-t-i
 2 = be.fat-INCH-2-PF
 ‘You (SG) became fat.’
- (10d) **indedderaanna**
in = ded-der-aad-n-a
 1 = PL-be.tall-INCH-PL-IPF.FUT
 ‘We will become tall.’

The causative derivation that renders adjectival roots verbs has three forms: -ʃ, -ayʃ and -nayʃ (see 6.1.1). Examples:

- (11a) **χormasiʔ ʔikkappissan**
χorma-siʔ iʔ = kapp-f-t-a-n
 ox-DEF.M/F 2 = be.fat-DCAUS-2-IPF.FUT-P
 ‘You (PL) will fatten the ox.’
- (11b) **kokaasiʔ ʔinnukkullayʃay**
kokaa-siʔ in = nukkull-ayʃ-ay
 skin-DEF.M/F 1 = be.soft-DCAUS-PF[3M]
 ‘I softened the skin.’
- (11c) **oktoowwaasiniʔ ʔinenneeʃnayʃin**
oktoowwaa-siniʔ i = nen-neeʃ-nayʃ-i-n
 pots-DEF.P 3 = PL-be.bad-DCAUS-PF-P
 ‘They made the pots bad.’

So far, we have considered affirmative sentences in which adjectival roots serve as predicates. Next, we examine negative sentences in which adjectival roots serve as predicates.

Negative sentences in which adjectival roots serve as predicates differ from their counterpart affirmative sentences in the following ways:

- They require the existential verb **kit-** in addition to the adjectival predicate;
- Except for third persons, the other persons do attach negative subject clitics on the adjectival predicates;
- All persons have negative subject clitics on the existential verb;
- Except for second and third person plurals, all persons attach a negation marker on the existential verb.

The above features of negative sentences in which adjectival roots are predicates can be observed from the following examples.

- (12a) **anderi anco**
an = d̄er-i *an = kiy-o*
 1NEG = be.tall-PF 1NEG = be-NEG
 ‘I am not tall.’
- (12b) **addfedferi akkittan**
aʔ = d̄ed̄-d̄er-i *aʔ = kit-t-a-n*
 2NEG = PL-be.tall-PF 2NEG = be-2-IPF.FUT-P
 ‘You (SG) are not tall.’

The examples in (12) are obtained only in careful speech. In fast speech, however, the negative subject clitics of the existential verb *kit-* occur as enclitics to the adjectival predicate. This leftward cliticisation suppresses the glottal stop of the subject clitics. This in turn causes vowel coalescence for first and second persons: *i + a = ee*. For third persons, the vowel *i* is deleted and negation is marked only by *-n*. The following are illustrative examples.

- (13a) **andereen co**
an = d̄er-i = an *kiy-o*
 1NEG = be.tall-PF = 1NEG be-NEG.IPF.FUT
 ‘I am not tall.’
- (13b) **addereek kittu**
aʔ = d̄er-i = aʔ *kit-t-u*
 2NEG = be.tall-PF = 2NEG be-2NEG.IPF.FUT
 ‘You (SG) are not tall.’
- (13c) **d̄ed̄ferin can**
d̄ed̄-d̄er-i = in *kiy-a-n*
 PL-be.tall-PF = 3NEG be-PF-P
 ‘They are not tall.’

For a complete structure, I provide the following paradigm with the same adjectival root *d̄er-* ‘be tall, long’ as a predicate.

- (14) **andereenco** ‘I am not tall.’
anded̄dereenkinnu ‘We are not tall.’
addereekkittu ‘You (SG) are not tall.’
added̄dereekkittan ‘You (PL) are not tall.’
d̄erinco ‘He is not tall.’
d̄erinkittu ‘She is not tall.’
d̄ed̄derincan ‘They are not tall.’

In the following table, I present both the affirmative and negative subject clitics that occur with adjectival predicates.

Person	Affirmative subject clitics with adjectival root	Negative subject clitics realized with adjectival roots or with the cooccurring verb <i>kit-</i> 'be'
1SG	<i>in =</i>	<i>an =</i>
1PL	<i>in =</i>	<i>an =</i>
2SG	<i>iʔ =</i>	<i>aʔ =</i>
2PL	<i>iʔ =</i>	<i>aʔ =</i>
3SGM	<i>i =</i>	<i>in =</i>
3SGF	<i>i =</i>	<i>in =</i>
3PL	<i>i =</i>	<i>in =</i>

Table 1: Subject clitics that occur with adjective predicates

Approximation of the prototype meaning of the adjective can be expressed by using the instrumental suffix on the subject as illustrated in (15).

- (15a) *ifanne poori*
ifa-nn=i *poor-i*
 he-INST=3 be.black-PF
 'It's blackish.'
- (15b) *ifanne tiimi*
ifa-nn=i *tiim-i*
 he-INST=3 be.red-PF
 'It's reddish.'
- (15c) *ifannik kappi*
ifa-nn=iʔ *kapp-i*
 he-INST=2 be.fat-PF
 'You (SG) are a bit overweight.'
- (15d) *ifa-nn=in* *ʒallaʔ-i*
 he-INST=1 be.thin-PF
 'I'm a bit thin.'

7.5. Attributive adjectives

Adjectival roots that serve as attributives do occur neither with subject clitics nor with aspect markers. Rather, they occur with terminal vowels *a* and *aaʔ*. These terminal vowels are gender agreement markers in that those head nouns that show the third masculine or third feminine gender agreement require *a*, while those head nouns that trigger the third person plural gender agreement require *aaʔ*. Number agreement is shown by reduplication. Indefinite head nouns also require a genitive particle *a*, which has not been recognised in the

earlier works on the language. The genitive particle occurs between the head noun and the adjective. Definite head nouns do not require the genitive particle.

The following examples contain the adjectival roots *kutt-* ‘to be big’. The distribution of number-gender agreement with this adjectival root can be seen in the examples in (16). In (16a), we have the semantically singular noun *ḡoyra* ‘tree[M]’ for which the adjectival root has only the singular gender agreement marker on the adjective. In (16b), we have the semantically singular noun *innaa* ‘child[P]’ for which the adjectival root has only the plural gender agreement marker on the adjective. In (16c), we have the semantically plural noun *orra* ‘people[M]’ for which the adjectival root has a plural number agreement and a singular gender agreement on the adjective. In (16d), we have the semantically plural noun *dillaa* ‘fields[P]’ for which the adjective has plural number and gender agreement markers.

- (16a) *namasiḡ ḡoyra a kuta imuray*
nama-si? *ḡoyra* *?* *kutt-a*
 person-DEF.M/F tree GEN be.big-3M/F

i = mur-ay

3 = cut[SG]-PF[3M]

‘The person cut a big tree.’

(lit.: ‘The person cut a tree which is big.’)

- (16b) *iskatteetasi? ḡinnaa a kuttaa? ḡiḡap-t-a*
iskatteeta-si? *innaa* *a* *kutt-aa?*
 woman-DEF.M/F child GEN be.big-P

i = ḡap-t-a

3 = have-3F-IPF.FUT

‘The woman has a grown up child.’

(lit.: ‘The woman has a child who is big.’)

- (16c) *anti? ḡorra a kukuttan akkay*
anti-? *orra* *a* *ku-kutt-a = in*
 1SG.PRO-NOM people GEN PL-be.big-3M/F = 1

akk-ay

see-PF[3M]

‘I saw big people.’

(lit.: ‘I saw people who are big.’)

- (16d) *attif dillaa a kukuttaa?iG G̃apta*
atti-ʔ *dillaa* *a* *ku-kutt-aaʔ=iʔ*
 2SG.PRO-NOM fields GEN PL-be.big-P=2

G̃ap-t-a

have-2-IPF.FUT

‘You (SG) have big fields.’

(lit.: ‘You (SG) have fields which are big.’)

Banti (1986:242) reports that Konso is the only language within Oromoid with adjectival words preceding the nouns they modify. His claim holds true only when agentive suffixes are added to adjectival roots (see 7.6 below). Otherwise, the opposite order [N Adj] is the case in Konso, as can be seen from the preceding examples. We can further look at the examples in (17a) and (17b), in which the head noun *kutasiʔ* ‘the dog[M]’ and *hellaa* ‘children[P]’ are modified by the adjectival roots *kutt-* ‘to be big’ and *fakk-* ‘be small’, respectively.

- (17a) *kutasik kutta it^waay*
kuta-siʔ *kutt-a* *i=toy-ay*
 dog-DEF.M/F be.big-3M/F 3 = die-PF
 ‘The big dog died.’

(lit.: ‘The dog which was big died.’)

- (17b) *hellaa a fafakkaaʔ ?ideyin*
hellaa *a* *fa-fakk-aaʔ* *i=d̃ey-i-n*
 children GEN PL-be.small-P 3 = come-PF-P
 ‘Small children came.’

(lit.: ‘Children that are small came.’)

7.6. Deadjectival derivation

7.6.1. Nominal derivation and gender marking

Adjectival roots may combine with agentive suffixes which trigger gender marking: *-ayta*, *-ayteeta* and *-ayaa* for masculine, feminine and plural gender respectively. They give the reading ‘X one’ where X contains the semantics of the adjective. In the following examples, we observe that the adjectival root *d̃er-* ‘be tall’ has the agentive suffix *-ayta* in (18a), *-ayteeta* in (18b) and *-ayaa* in (18c). In (18c) we also observe that in addition to the plural gender agreement, the adjective root is reduplicated for number marking. The same suffixes are used for deverbal agentives, see 4.10.2.

- (18a) *d̃er-ayta*
 be.tall-AGENT.M
 ‘tall one’

- (18b) **der-ayt-eeta**
 be.tall-AGENT.F
 ‘tall one’
- (18c) **ded-der-ayaa**
 PL-be.tall-AGENT.P
 ‘tall ones’

Adjectival roots that have agentive suffixes occur in relativised or non-relativised phrases. When they occur in relativised phrases, the head noun occurs phrase final as in (19a). On the other hand, in non-relativised phrases, the head noun occurs phrase-initially, as in (19b). The examples in (20) are unacceptable because in (20a) the genitive particle is missing between the agentivised adjective and the head noun; (20b) is unacceptable because a genitive particle is inserted between the head noun and the agentivised adjective.

- (19a) **kutt-ayteeta** **a** **tika**
 be.big-AGENT.F GEN house
 ‘a house which is big’
- (19b) **tika** **kutt-ayteeta**
 house be.big-AGENT.F
 ‘a big house’
- (20a) ***kutt-ayteeta** **tika**
 be.big-AGENT.F house
- (20b) ***tika** **a** **kutt-ayteeta**
 house GEN be.big-AGENT.F

Earlier we saw the gender agreement when the adjectives are used attributively. We have seen that plural nouns such as **orra** ‘people’ and **iskatta** ‘women’ trigger the same gender agreement as the third person singular masculine or feminine subject. However, with the background suffix **-eyye** added to nominal roots, all nouns that are semantically plural occur with the plural agentive suffix **-ayaa**. Singular nouns that trigger plural gender agreement also occur with the agentive plural suffix **-ayaa**. The following are illustrative examples.

- (21a) **tikeeyye kuttayteeta**
tika-eyye *kutt-ayteeta*
 house-BKGRD be.big-AGENT.F
 ‘House-wise, it is a wide one.’

- (21b) *ḡoyreeyye* *dérayta*
ḡoyra-eyye *dér-ayta*
 tree-BKGRD be.tall-AGENT.M
 ‘Tree-wise, it is a tall one.’
- (21c) *innaayye ḡallaʔayaa*
innaa-eyye *ḡallaʔ-ayaa*
 child-BKGRD be.thin-AGENT.P
 ‘Child-wise, he is a thin one.’
- (22a) *orreeyye deddérayaa*
orra-eyye *déd-dér-ayaa*
 people-BKGRD PL-be.tall-AGENT.P
 ‘People-wise, they are tall ones.’
- (22b) *iskatt-eyye ḡaḡallaʔayaa*
iskatta-eyye *ḡa-ḡallaʔ-ayaa*
 women-BKGRD PL-be.thin-AGENT.P
 ‘Women-wise, they are thin ones.’
- (22c) *dillaayye pappaldáyaa*
dillaa-eyye *pap-pald-ayaa*
 fields-BKGRD PL-be.wide-AGENT.P
 ‘Fields-wise, they are wide ones.’

7.6.2. Deadjectival action nominals

Deadjectival action nominals are derived from adjectival stems by adding the suffix *-taá*. The inchoative suffix is required before attaching *-taá* as shown in (23).

- (23a) *paldattaá*
pald-ad-taá
 be.wide-INCH-NML
 ‘widening’
- (23b) *kappattaá*
kapp-ad-taá
 be.fat-INCH-NML
 ‘getting fat’

Below are sentential examples:

- (24a) **sukeentasik kuttattaa ipaayyiti**
sukeenta-si? *kutt-ad-taá* *i=paayyi-t-i*
 lamb.F-DEF.M/F be.big-INCH-NMLZ 3 = strat-3F-PF
 ‘The lamb has started to grow.’
 (lit.: ‘The lamb started to become big.’)
- (24b) **okkattasik kappattaa ipaayyay**
okkatta-si? *kapp-ad-taá* *i=paayy-ay*
 cow-DEF.M/F be.fat-INCH-NMLZ 3 = start-PF[3M]
 ‘The cow has started to get fat.’