Grammaticalization of Tense and Focus Movement in Ganta

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Abstract: Ganta has three tense grammaticalization systems. To this end, the paper deals with the shape of the tense forms in relation to focus markers movement to the word classes in the clause constructions. There have been no exhaustive descriptions about distinct grammaticalization of tenses and their morphological forms, and contexts in which they have been employed. The paper provides a detailed description of tense grammaticalization systems and also shows the used speech contexts as declarative and interrogative moods. Furthermore, it shows the grammaticalization and focusing property of Ganta in light of typological claims.

Keywords: future, present, past, grammaticalization, focus

1. Introduction

Ganta is an endangered language of agrarian society in Southwest Ethiopia, in Gamo-Gofa Zone in the vicinity of Arbaminch town close to the East African rift valley lakes; Southwest of Abaya and Northwest of Chamo. It situated at 505 kms away from Addis Ababa. Ganta has 12,789 speakers (Selamawit, 2004) who live in six villages, Meiche, Ochole, Kanchama, Bonke, Afazze and Shaara. The word Ganta stands for the language of the people and for the antonym of the people. Ganta is genetically classified under Eastern Ometo groups together with Zayse, Zargulla, Koyra (Koreete) and Haro by the works of Selamawit (2004), Hirut (2005) and Wondimu (2010). However, Ganta is little known and less studied language.

There are, except for present tense, distinct morphological forms that are used to express future and past tenses in Ganta speech contexts whose distributions have received no attention in studies like Selamawit (2004) and Hirut (2005). The reason of having such distinct forms of future and past tense has not been observed in detail even in other closely related Ometo languages Haro (Hirut, 2004), Koorete (Binyam, 2008) and Zayse (Bender, 2000).

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Ganta expresses ‘complex’ verb morphology on which information of indicative, focus, person and number marking suffixes have ordered together with tense, aspect, mode and mood marking elements. But, this paper investigates grammaticalization of tense in relation to mood constructions. In the first place, encoding strategies of future, present and past tenses are discussed on the verb stems, where their distinct grammatical forms are determined or changed by the movement of focus (or copular focus) markings on the word classes in the clause. Particularly, future and past tenses are expressed by the distinct grammatical forms when focusing strategy occurs on subject, object, adverb and verb of the clause. But, the encoding strategy of present tense is occurred by juxtaposing of main and existential verbs when continuative aspect marking morpheme suffixes to the main verb in the clause.

The purpose is to show the grammaticalization properties of tense in Ganta in relation to the other closely related Ometo languages, and role of focus movement.

The objects of description are morphological markers of tenses and speech acts in which distinct forms of tense markers are expressed, of which, the first, grammatical forms of tense, determining focus markers and word classes on which focus markers have been moved to change the forms of tense are presented in the table below.

| Tense category | Grammatical form | Determining focus | Focused word classes |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Future         | -mu-, -ade-      | -kko/-tte         | subject              |
|                | -m-              | -kko/-tte         | object, and adverb   |
|                | -tam-            | -(k)k-/-t(t)-     | verb                 |
| Present        | -á, -é           | -kko/-tte         | subject, object and verb |
| Past           | -(i)             | -kko/-má/-wa      | subject              |
|                | -d               | -kko              | object, adverb and verb |
|                | -tr              | -kko              | adverb and object    |
|                | -ee, -é          | -tte              | subject              |
|                | -nne             | -tte              | subject, object, and adverb |

Most linguists define tense nearly in the same words. For Lieber (2009:94), the concept of tense is “the point of an event in relation to another point generally the point at which the speaker is speaking”. Lieber relates the act of the speech context together with the point of event. By the same understanding, Payne (1997) associates tense to the time of an event to certain reference point in the time of uttered speech moment. In relation to this view, Comrie (1985:9) has observed the role of tense in most world languages which “express location in time by means of grammatical categories”. The same observation is also

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1 Verb with series of morphological markers including indicative, focus, subject/person, tense, aspect, or mood.
reported in most Omotic languages in which tense is used to mark for time references by using time marking lexical categories, or by using grammatical affixes. In Koorete (Binyam, 2008) present and past tenses are marked by grammatical affixes. In the case of Haro (Hirut, 2004), three tense categories as future, present, and past tenses are observed. Like Haro, similar sequences of tenses are realized in Ganta by different tense marking morphemes. In the following sections, future, present and past tenses including their sub sections are described from section two up to four. Finally, a summary of discussion is presented.

2. Future tense

Lieber (2009) puts an event time in the future tense after the time of speaking. In the similar manner, an event time is expressed after act of speech context by using distinct future tense marking suffixes like -mu-, -m-, -ttam-, and -ade- in Ganta. The form of these markers are determined by the movement of copular focus -kko/-tte and focus -k(k)-/-t(t)- markers on the word classes. One of the unique focusing strategies that has only employed in Ganta is observed when the two distinct focus forms -kko and -tte, or -k(k)- and -t(t)- optionally express the same focusing strategies. Typological claims which report that focus marker has one and only one linguistic form in speech acts and discourse levels, and there has been no optional markers that replace each other without any meaning differences (Bender, 2000; Hirut, 2004; Selamawit, 2004; Azeb, 2008; Wondimu, 2010). In Ganta, there are distinct focus markers in each speech and discourse situations. Among them, the above forms replace each other in the same speech acts without changing the meaning of utterances. Therefore, in this paper, a detailed description of tense grammaticalization system and change of its grammatical form in relation to the movement of those and other focus markers to the constituents of clauses are presented.

2.1 Future tense and -kko/-tte movement to subject word class

In (1a-b), future tense is marked by marker -mu- preceding third person masculine (3MS) and accusative case -a. But, in (1c-d), the future marker is optionally expressed by prospective aspect marker -ade- before third person masculine nominative marker. As can be observed in both cases, the copular focus marker -kko/-tte is on the subject case pronoun so as to express the focused subject pronoun tán-kko, or tán-tte ‘it is me/I’. See the following in (1)

(1) a. tán-kko       güta      gaayá    hám-a-mu-s-a
   1-COP:FOC tomorrow market go-IND-FUT-3MS-3MS:ACC
   ‘It is me/I that will go to the market tomorrow.’
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b. tán-tte    güta    gaayá    hám-a-mu-s-a  
I-COP:FOC    tomorrow    market    go-IND-FUT-3MS-3MS:ACC

‘It is me/I that will go to the market tomorrow.’

c. tán-kko    güta    gaayá    háñ-ade-y  
I-COP:FOC    tomorrow    market    go-PROS-3MS:NOM

‘It is me/I that will go to the market tomorrow.’

d. tán-tte    güta    gaayá    háñ-ade-y  
I-COP:FOC    tomorrow    market    go-PROS-3MS:NOM

‘It is me/I that will go to the market tomorrow.’

2.2 Future tense and -kko/-tte movement to the adverb and object word classes

For example, in the illustrations (2a-b) and (2c-d), adverb güta ‘tomorrow’ and object noun gaaya ‘market’ are attached by copular focus -kko/-tte respectively. In this case, future tense is marked by marker -m at the final position of the verb stem after indicative vowel a, and before present continuous and declarative marker e.

(2) a. tán-i    güta-kko    gaayá    hám-a-m-e  
I-NOM    tomorrow-COP:FOC    market    go-IND-FUT-PRES:CONT.DEC

‘Tomorrow, I will go to the market.’

b. tán-i    güta-tte    gaayá    hám-a-m-e  
I-NOM    tomorrow-COP:FOC    market    go-IND-FUT-PRES:CONT.DEC

‘Tomorrow, I will go to the market.’

c. tán-i    güta    gaayá-kko    hám-a-m-e  
I-NOM    tomorrow-COP:FOC    market    go-IND-FUT-PRES:CONT.DEC

‘Tomorrow, I will go to the market.’

d. tán-i    güta    gaayá-tte    hám-a-m-e  
I-NOM    tomorrow-COP:FOC    market    go-IND-FUT-PRES:CONT.DEC

‘Tomorrow, I will go to the market.’

2.3 Future tense and -k(k)/-t(t)- movement to the verb word class

In (3a-b), future tense is marked by marker -ttam- in the complex verb stem. This marker is held its present form due to the occurrence of focus marker -k(k)- or -t(t)- in the verb stem.

(3) a. tán-i    güta    gaayá    hám-a-k-oti-ttam-e  
I-NOM    tomorrow    market    go-IND-FOC-1SG-FUT-PRES:CONT.DEC

‘I will go to the market tomorrow.’

b. tán-i    güta    gaayá    hám-a-t-ey-ttam-e  
I-NOM    tomorrow    market    go-IND-FOC-1SG-FUT-PRES:CONT.DEC

‘I will go to the market tomorrow.’
3. Present tense

According to Lieber (2009:94), “in present tense the point in time of speaking and of the event spoken about is the same”. In relation to Lieber’s concept, Ganta present tense is expressed by the combination of existential verb root  ngữ- ‘exist’ with continuative marker -á, and with present continuous and declarative marking marker -e in a clause. In the process, the existential verb ngữ- ‘exist’ expresses stem modification. In this case, alveolar sibilant s that marks for third person masculine (3MS) immediately occurs on the verb root before continuative marker -á. The high tone of the root vowel has shifted to the forward and overlapped on the continuative marker. In the construction, present continuous and declarative marking element -e occur after imperfective marker -n- on the existential verb stem. Look at the following illustrations in (4a-b) and (4c-d) respectively below. But, the movement of focus marker -kko/-tte does not affect as usual the grammatical form of present tense in Ganta.

(4) a. ade-kko sē-y-gə ?ec’-á ye-s-á
   man-COP:FOC that-3MS-ALLA stand-CONT exist-3MS-CONT
   ‘A man is standing there.’

   b. tolkkō-tte hā-y-ga ye-s-á
   hyena-COP:FOC this-3MS-ALLA exist-3MS-CONT
   ‘A hyena is here.’

   c. ŋaatō-y gāydd-ṛ-ra-kko ŋe-ŋ-e
   child/boy-NOM cattle-ACC-COM-COP:FOC exist-IMPERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘A boy is with cattle/ a boy is looking after cattle.’

   d. Ganta kaát-az-i gaayá-ṭte
   Ganta king-3MS:SG.PL:DEF-NOM market-COP:FOC
   Gér-ṛ-ra ŋe-ŋ-e
   people-ACC-COM exist-IMPERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘The king of Ganta is in the market with people.’

   e. tolkkō-y hā-y-ga ye-s-á-kko
   hyena-NOM this-3MS-ALLA exist-3MS-CONT-COP:FOC
   ‘A hyena is here.’

   f. tolkkō-y hā-y-ga ye-s-á-ṭte
   hyena-NOM this-3MS-ALLA exist-3MS-CONT-COP:FOC
   ‘A hyena is here.’
4. Past tense

In the past tense, the time of situation or event is before the time of uttered discourse. Ganta past tense can be marked by perfective markers -í(i)-, -d-, -tt-, -ee-, -é and -nne in different contexts. In the following illustrations (5-11), past tense constructions are presented.

4.1 Past tense and -kko, -máá and -wa movement to the subject word class

If a subject of a sentence or question word is focused by the one of the markers -kko, -máá and -wa in the clause, the past tense will be marked by converb marker -í(i)-. The situation is expressed in the rapid or attentive speech contexts. In the construction, converb immediately occur after final segment of verb roots and before series of third person singular masculine (féminine) accusative or nominative markers. Compare example (5a-b) with (5c-d).

(5) a. tán-kko mitstsi mis'-i-s-a
   1-COP:FOC tree collect-CONV-3MS-3MS:ACC
   ‘I collected fire wood.’

b. naʔá-kko gaayá háŋ-i-s-a
   boy-COP:FOC market go-CONV-3MS-3MS:ACC
   ‘It was a boy who went to the market.’

c. foóju-kko zawá géł-i-s-a
   snake-COP:FOC home enter-CONV-3MS-3MS:ACC
   ‘It was a snake that entered home.’

d. ...nú jàw-ons'-u-máá wóôd-ii-s-i.... nú woga
   we children-DUL-3MS:ACC-FOC kill-CONV-3MS-NOM we culture
   ‘...It was our boys that killed... our culture.’

e. há-y-s-a hi-d-ii-s-i óode-wa
   this-3MS:NOM-3MS-3MS:ACC say-PERF-CONV-3MS-NOM who-FOC
   ‘Who said this one?’

4.2 Past tense and -kko and k(k)- movement to adverb, object, and verb word classes

Marker -d- can be used alone or together with converb -í- to inform past tense. The situation is determined by the movement of copular focus (or focus) markers. In this respect, the movement of copular focus -kko and focus -k(k)- on the word classes can change sequence of converb with past tense marker -d-. If focusing process occurs on the adverb or object word classes, the converb -í and perfective marker -d- occur together on the verb stem as in (6a, 6b, and 6c). As it can be assumed that the presence of converb supports the base to the second marker -d- on the main verb stems in Ganta. But, the formation cannot give different meaning as first past or second past. It simply informs the
past notion in Ganta. This case might be different in converb constructions. In the verb focusing case, the only perfective marker -d- is appeared on the verb stem so as to mark for past tense in (6d). For these illustrations, look at examples in (6).

(6) a. tán-i místst-u-kko místsi'-i-d-e
   I-NOM tree-ACC-COP:F.OC collect-CONV-PERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘I collected fire wood.’

   b. tán-i k’ámma-kko míststsi místsi'-i-d-e
   I-NOM yesterday-COP:F.OC tree collect-CONV-PERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘Yesterday, I did collect fire wood.’

   c. tán-i k’ámma místst-u-kko místsi'-i-d-e
   I-NOM yesterday tree-ACC-COP:F.OC collect-CONV-PERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘I did collect fire wood yesterday.’

   d. tá-y k’ámma míststsi místsi'-a-k-oti-d-e
   I-3MS:NOM yesterday tree  collect-IND-FOC-1SG-PERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘I collected fire wood yesterday.’

If marker -d- occurs after voiceless consonant segments in the verb stem, the phonetic feature of the marker will be changed to a voiceless sound. In this case, voiced alveolar stop -d- assimilates to a geminated voiceless alveolar -tt- after voiceless sibilants so as to make a surrounding environment more similar with that of the preceding segments. The rule would have the form: \( d \rightarrow tt/sibilant \). For example, in (7a-b), the allomorph of -d- has occurred after a verb root of alveolar sibilant \( s \) and before present continuous and declarative marker -e, whereas in (7c-d), the form is appeared after postalveolar sibilant \( ʃ \) and also before the present continuous and declarative marker -e. In the illustrations, the focus marker -kko has occurred on the postpositional word, subject and object respectively as in (7b-d). See below.

(7) a. áamma-se hi-s-ʃ-e
   what-3MS say-3MS:PPERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘What did he do?’

   b. gáltʃ-s-i mítstsi aʃa-kko kés-ʃ-e
   monkey-NOM tree above-COP:F.OC climb-PERF-PRES:CONT.DEC
   ‘A monkey climbed on a tree.’

   c. inddo-kko waatstse ūʃ-ʃ-e-s-i
   mother-COP:F.OC water drink-PERF-PRES:CONT.DEC-3MS-NOM
   ‘It was mother who drank water.’
d. faatô-y zawâ-kko feyʃ-t-t-e
   child/boy-3MS:NOM home-COP:FOC stay-PERF-PRES:CONT:DEC
   ‘A child/boy stayed at home.’

4.3 Past tense and -tte movement to subject word class

Marker -ee suffixes at the final position of a verb root for past tense marking in Ganta. The movement of the other copular focus -tte to the subject word class also changes the past tense marker in Ganta. When subject argument is focused or suffixed by -tte, the occurring past marker will be marker -ee. See in (8a-b).

(8) a. tán-tt gaayâ hâŋ-ee
   I-COP:FOC market go-PA
   ‘It was me/I who went to the market.’

b. tolkkó-tt haré wód-ee
   hyena-COP:FOC donkey kill-PA
   ‘It was a hyena that killed a donkey.’

In the same manner with the above construction (8), subject focusing strategy with the copular focus -tte also changes the form of the past tense marker in Ganta. In this case, the main verb of the sentence suffixes with a middle marker -é so as to express past notion, as in (9).

(9) a. naʔá-tte gaayâ hâŋ-é
   boy-COP:FOC market go-MID
   ‘It was a boy who went to the market.’

b. máydo-tte só-y-i-ga háyʔ-é
   ox-COP:FOC that-3MS:NOM-NOM-ALLA die-MID
   ‘It was an ox that died there.’

4.4 Past tense and -tte movement to adverb and object word classes

If copular focus -tte occurs on the adverb or object word classes, the past form of -é- will not occur on the main verb stem. In this case, converb -i- and past tense marker -nne occur together on the verb stem. The position of -é- is replaced by the converb and other past tense. The occurrence of the converb cannot bring notion difference as in gerundive (converb) construction rather they favor base to the main verb past tense -nne formation. Thus, converb -i is immediately attached to the verb root by the following marker -nne as in (10a-b). Such phenomena cannot be observed when focusing is applied on a verb word class in Ganta.

(10) a. tán-i k’ámma-tte gaayâ hâŋ-i-nne
   I-NOM yesterday-COP:FOC market go-CONV-PA
4.1 Past tense and -t(t)- movement to verb word class

In the verb focusing case, the only past marker -nne can be appeared on the complex verb stem after person or subject markers respectively, as in (11a-b). For these illustrations, look at examples in (11).

(11) a. tán-i  k’ámma  gaayá  hám-a-tt-eti-nne
I-NOM  yesterday  market  go-IND-FOC-1SG-PA
‘I went to market yesterday.’

b. tolkkó-y    haré   wóɗ-a-tt-eyi-nne
hyena-3MSːNOM  donkey  kill-IND-FOC-SUBM-PA
‘It was a hyena that killed a donkey.’ / ‘It was a hyena killed a donkey.’

5. Summary

In typological works (Bender, 2000; Hirut, 2004; Binyam, 2008; Mulugeta, 2008), there has been no assertion that made express whether focusing strategy interacts with the change of grammatical tense forms in Omotic languages. But, in Ganta, the fact has asserted the alteration of grammatical forms of tenses, for which the movement of focus markers to the word classes in the clause are closely interacted with. For example, if subject of clause is marked by optional focus markers -kko/-tte, the form of future tense will have -mu- and -ande- in the verb stem of Ganta. But, such forms can be changed to -m- if adverb and object word classes occur with the focus markers. In the verb focusing strategy, the future tense will have the form -ttam- in Ganta.

The grammaticalization of present tense has rarely showed its interaction with the movement of focus markers in the clause. As that of grammatical forms of future tense, past tense also changes its grammatical forms as a result of focus marker movements in the clause. When a subject of sentence occurs with focus -kko, the form of past will be -i(i)-, and if it is focused with -tte, the form -ee-, or -é will be expressed in the verb stem. But, the focus -kko movement from subject to the adverb and object results the form -d-, or -tt- in the verb stem, whereas the focus -tte movement realizes as the -nne. Similarly, focusing of verb with -kko and -tte also expresses -d- and -nne respectively as grammatical form of past tense in Ganta.
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**Abbreviation**

| Abbreviation   | Meaning                                      |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1SG            | First Person Singular                        |
| 3MS            | Third person masculine singular              |
| 3MS:NOM        | Third person masculine singular and nominative |
| 3MS:ACC        | Third person accusative                      |
| 3MS:SGPL:DEF   | Third person masculine singular and plural definiteness |
| ACC            | Accusative                                   |
| ALLA           | Allative                                     |
| COM            | Comitative                                   |
| CONT           | Continuous                                   |
| CONV           | Converb                                      |
| COP:FOC       | Copular Focus                                |
| DEF            | Definite                                     |
| FOC            | Focus                                        |
| FUT            | Future Tense                                 |
| IMPERF         | Imperfective                                 |
| IND            | Indicative                                   |
| MID            | Middle                                       |
| NOM            | Nominative                                   |
| OPT            | Optative                                     |
| PA             | Past tense                                   |
| PERF           | Perfective                                   |
| PRES           | Present Tense                                |
| PRES:CONT     | Present Continuous                           |
| PRES:CONT:DEC | Present continuous and declarative           |
| PROS           | Prospective                                  |
| SUBM           | Subject Marker                               |

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