



Noun Morphology of Kafi Noonoo

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at describing noun morphology in Kafi Noonoo (the Kafa language). Kafi Noonoo is an Afroasiatic language belonging to the Omotic family. The language is now been reduced to writing and is serving as a medium of instruction, administrative, media, and judiciary tool in the Kafa zone since 2008. The study is made to look into the noun morphology of the language. To achieve this, primary data has been collected from Kafa Zone and analyzed categorically. Nouns in the language generally end in -o/oo in their lexical entry (i.e. in isolation). Few nouns end in -e(e), and few place names that end in -a, and a few in -i. Most proper nouns end in -i. The vowels attached also indicate the gender (-o/ -oo (masculine), -e/ -ee (feminine)) and number (e.g. géddžò 'lake(s)) of the head noun. Proper names usually end in -i; and morphologically, the prototypical Kafi Noonoo noun inflects for gender, number, and case. Under the noun morphology of Kafi Noonoo, the discussion of proper names, common nouns, derived nouns (of different forms of verbal nouns, abstract nouns, agentive nouns, and result nouns), compounds (resulting in euphemism, verb-manner compounds, language names and compounds with ?indèè 'mother' and dòónò 'lord') has been discussed. Noun inflection of Kafi Noonoo nouns is also discussed. Thus, it is attested that the language inflects gender (usually masculine and feminine), number (singular and plural; the latter is formed by suffixing -nà?ó), and case. Concerning case, Kafi Noonoo has distinct case marking morphemes which are identified and discussed as follows. Thus, the nominative (appears unmarked), accusative (marked either by the morpheme -n, or by lengthening the final vowel, or it can be found unmarked), vocative (morphologically unmarked), allative (suffixes -wàán 'to(wards)' or -mág), ablative (expressed by -wàánè or -mágè 'from'), dative, locative, genitive (all these three are marked by the suffix -tj), instrumental (expressed by the morpheme -nà), comitative (expressed by -nnà), similative (marked by -òóm), and comparative (marked by -jèè to the compared subject) cases have been identified in Kafi Noonoo.

Keywords: *Compounding; derivation; inflection; Kafi Noonoo; morphology.*

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims at describing nouns in Kafi Noonoo. The paper is organized as follows: 1.2 is about the discussion on basic noun forms; §1.3 offers a description of the derived forms of Kafi Noonoo nouns, and §1.4 does the same on compound nouns in the language. Section 1.5 deals with noun inflection in Kafi Noonoo; finally, §1.6 gives the summary of the paper.

1.2. Basic Noun Forms

Kafi Noonoo nouns generally end in a final vowel (usually **-o/oo**) in their lexical entry (i.e., in isolation). The nouns that end in vowels consist of two components: the root and the final vowel. A few nouns end in **-e(e)**, a few place names that end in **-a**, and a few in **-i**. Most proper nouns end in **-i**.

<i>ʔáf-ò</i>	‘person-M’	<i>k’òndá</i>	‘place name’
<i>gènn-èé</i>	‘woman-F’	<i>gìrmì</i>	‘name of a person’

Table 1. Basic Noun Forms in Kafi Noonoo

The alteration of root final vowels can bring semantic differences: *báàtòó* ‘leg’, *báàtá* ‘down in location’ and *báàtèé* ‘leg DIM’.

In Kafi Noonoo nouns, the vowels attached also indicate the gender (most often it is **-o/ -oo** (in masculine singular) or **-e/ -ee** (in feminine singular (or diminutive) and number (*gédǵò* ‘lake(s), *hádǵòó* ‘wealth(s)) of the head noun. However, proper names usually end in **-i**; as in *tàsfàjì*, *tèklì*. Phonologically, the Kafi Noonoo noun stem consists of disyllabic and there are also a few trisyllabic nouns. As far as my investigation is concerned, noun stems with more than three syllables have not been attested. Morphologically, the prototypical Kafi Noonoo noun inflects for gender, number, and case:

- (1) *bùf-òó* *gátt-òó-n* *ʔààttf’-ó-wàán* *dàámm-t-è*
 child-M ox-M-ACC river-M-ALL take-PFV-3SG.M
 ‘The boy took (the) ox to the river.’

1.2.1. Proper Nouns

Proper names in Kafi Noonoo usually end in **-i**; as in *tàsfàjì*, *tèklì*. However, where the names of a person are being given in the first, second, and third names altogether, it is the last proper name that ends in **-i**; the first proper names remain without any change in their form: *tàsfàjè*, *tèklì*. The

proper names can also be derived from words for common nouns in the language. They can be used when the speakers want to give nicknames (NN) to people that they know. The main reason that people like to use nicknames is so that the person named in that way will not know they are talking about him/her in conversations for a while. After it has come to be familiar, even for the person named by that name, it may remain as if it were the second name of that individual. Usually, the nicknames are from a relevant attribute that the speakers think that the person may have; and in most cases, they usually take feminine gender. For example, *kámbèé* ‘drum’ is a nickname mostly given to a short and fat person around his/ her abdomen; *bóttèé* ‘mortar made of wood’ is a nickname given generally for a person who is short and fat.

1.2.2. Common Nouns

Common nouns are those that, morphologically, can be optionally marked by the determinative morpheme in Kafi Noonoo. Common nouns in Kafi Noonoo can be either dependent (2a-c) or independent (2d-e):

- (2) a. *tà mán-èé wààm-ó*
1SG sibling-F ear-M
‘My sister’s ear.’
- b. *bùf-èé bí bàát hàll-ò wókk’èll-òó-né*
child-F 3SG.F leg nature-M deform-M-AUX
‘The nature of the girl’s leg is deformed.’
- c. *tà gáf-ò*
1SG teeth-M
‘My teeth’
- d. *òògè tà gátt-òó wàá-h-è*
big 1SG ox-M comes-PFV-3SG.M
‘My big ox comes.’
- e. *tà fùùnè t’ààʔ-òó wòh-ó-né*
1SG work place-M far-M-COP
‘My working place is far.’

Common nouns can co-occur in the same NP with demonstratives. However, unlike proper nouns, the common nouns can enter into a constituent with the demonstratives, as in the following:

- (3) a. *bèk’áttf èb bùf-òó fùùn t’ààʔ-òó wòh-ó-né*

DIST PROX_I child-M work place-M far-M-COP

‘That boy’s working place is far.’

b. *hín-í tà mán-èé bùf-òó-né*

PROX_I-3SG.M 1SG sibling-F child-M-COP

‘This is my nephew.’

1.3. Derived Nouns

Derived nouns are formed from different word classes like verbs, adjectives, and other nouns through derivational processes. Using these strategies, verbal nouns, abstract nouns, agentive nouns, and result nouns are derived in Kafi Noonoo. This can be achieved by introducing a vowel on the root of the verb, by adding the morphemes *-ttino*, *-ttfo/ ttfi* and *-hinnoo* to the verbal or adjective base, and by changing the tone of a root final vowel of the verbs respectively.

1.3.1. Verbal Nouns

A verbal noun is a noun derived directly from a verb or verb stem and in some uses has the sense and constructions of a verb (Ronan 2006: 17). In Kafi Noonoo, it can be derived from all verbs by introducing **-o** usually with a H(igh) tone:

Verb root	Gloss	verbal noun	Gloss
mám-	‘eat’	Mámó	‘eating’
kèm-	‘sell’	Kèmó	‘selling’
kém-	‘buy’	Kémó	‘buying’

Table 2. Verbal Nouns in Kafi Noonoo

The following examples illustrate the use of Verbal nouns in sentences:

(4) a. *k’òll-ó òóg jèéll-béèt fùùn-òó-né*

beg-VN big shame-exist work-M-COP

‘Begging is a shameful act.’

b. *kèm-ó kém-ó-jèè bэф ?árij-òó-n k’ààw-h-è*

sell-VN buy-VN-COMP better knowledge-M-ACC need-PFV-3SG.M

‘Selling needs better knowledge than buying.’

1.3.2. Abstract Nouns

Abstract nouns are of particular interest as they reflect the “invisible” world of qualities, actions, and interrelations of various subjects abstracted from the subjects themselves. Feuer (1995, pp 105-106) emphasizes that abstraction is an inherent ability of human cognition and does not imply people’s need for philosophical concepts – abstract nouns exist even in languages whose speakers do not show any inclination toward metaphysics.

Abstract nouns refer to uncountable entities or ideas, feelings, or qualities that cannot be reached by sense organs. They do not refer to a concrete entity but rather to a general quality or property related to the semantics of the simple stem from which they are derived. Abstract nouns in Kafi Noonoo are derived by suffixing the morpheme *-ttinò* to simple nouns and adjectives. While affixing the morpheme, there usually involves a change of gender marker vowel of (whatever quality and type) the base into *-i*:

Base noun	Gloss	Abstract noun	Gloss
ʔáfò	‘person’	ʔáfittinò	‘personhood’
gùúnò	‘slave’	gùúnittinò	‘slavery’
Adjective			
déʔò	‘kind’	déʔittinò	‘kindness’
ʔátʃó	‘sharp’	ʔátʃittinò	‘sharpness’

Table 3 Abstract Nominal in Kafi Noonoo

As can be seen from the illustrations provided above we can understand that the derivational morpheme *-ittinò* semantically expresses the notion of ‘*the fact of being X*’. The examples below illustrate the base noun and base adjective; and the use of the derived noun:

- (5) a. *tà-nnà* *bí-nnà* *nùùttf-òó* *nò-né*
 1SG-COOR 3SG.F-COOR friend-M 1PL-COP
 ‘We are friends (Lit. I and she and are friends).’
- b. *bí-nnà* *tà-nnà* *nùùttf-ttìn-ò* *jág-ò-né*
 3SG.F-COOR 1SG-COOR friend-NMLZ-M long_time-M-COP
 ‘Our friendship is long-lasting (Lit. she and I and friendship is a long time).’

Note that the nominalizer may end in *-e*; in this case, however, the semantics intended to convey may change to depict diminutive or the intention to degrade something:

- (6) *bòònò ʔikk-ttìn-è-n tʃín-b*
 3PL.HON one-NMLZ-F- see-IMP
 ACC

‘Look at their unity.’ (Lit. The speaker undermines the unity formed.)

In such sentences, it is known to the language speaker that there is a unity formed by a group of people or animals; however, it does not make a significant impact on the surrounding this unity is formed. Such expressions are common in the language where some gathering is made by small kids, animals, and (or) powerless individuals in the community.

1.3.3. Agentive Nouns

Agentive nouns in Kafi Noonoo are formed when a verb loses its verbal quality and functions as a noun. This is a very productive process in Kafi Noonoo and is achieved by suffixing *-ttfo* or *-ttfi* (the former for the masculine singular and the latter for the feminine singular) to the stem of a verb (Kifle 2013); the final vowel of the stem generally changes into -e before the introduction of the suffix morpheme:

Verb stem	gloss	Agentive NM	Agentive NF	Gloss
ʃèmm-	‘read’	ʃèmmè-ttʃ-ó	ʃèmmè-ttʃ-í	‘reader’
dòddɔ́-	‘teach’	dòddɔ́è-ttʃ-ó	dòddɔ́è-ttʃ-í	‘teacher’

Table4 Agentive Nouns in Kafi Noonoo

The following examples illustrate the base verb and the use of the derived noun:

- (7) *a. kɪfɪlì ʃèmm-ò hákk-àáttf-è*
 Kifle read-VN able-NEG-3SG.M
 ‘Kifle cannot read.’
- b. kɪfɪlì gààw ʃèmm-ttf-o tòón-ò-né*
 Kifle good read-NMLZ-M NEG-M-AUX
 ‘Kifle is not (a) good reader’

1.3.4. Result Nouns

Result nouns in Kafi Noonoo are formed by changing the tone of the final H(igh) vowel of the VN into a L(ow) in the derived noun:

Verbal N	gloss	Derived N	Gloss
kèèt'ó	'tearing'	kèèt'ò	'(a) tear'
ʔùfó	'cursing'	ʔùfò	'a curse'

Table5 Result Nouns in Kafi Noonoo

The following examples illustrate result nouns derived from verbal nouns due to the effects of tone:

- (8) a. *tà bùf-èé bí k'órèddèé kèèt'-ó tàá-n ʔipp-t-ò-né*
 1SG child-F 3SG.F clothe tear-VN 1SG-ACC irritate-PFV-AUX
 'That my daughter's tearing her clothe irritated me.'
- b. *tà bùf-èé k'órèdd-kèèt'-ò gámin-ò-né*
 1SG child-F clothe-tear_hole-RN wide-M-COP
 'My daughter's clothe tear hole is wide.'

1.4. Compound Nouns

A compound is a complex word that consists of two or more lexemes. In Kafi Noonoo the following types of compounds exist:

1.4.1. Compounds Resulting in Euphemism

Nouns in Kafi Noonoo can be derived from the combination of adjectives and nouns as well as nouns and nouns. Such compounding may result in endocentric or exocentric semantic notions. The compounding generally involves the change of the root-final vowel -o of the adjective and nouns into -ì or -è, as in:

Adjective	gloss	Noun	gloss	compound formed	Gloss
òògòó	'big'	dòónò	'lord'	òògè dòónò	'lion'
Nouns	gloss	Noun	gloss	compound formed	Gloss
mààtʃò	'belly'	jèt'ò	(a) hit	mààtʃ'è jèt'ó	'diarrhea'
báàtòó	'leg'	t'ùgò	'hindrance'	báàtè t'ùgò	'menstruation'

Table6 Kafi Noonoo Compounds Resulting in Euphemism

A sentential illustration is given here under:

- (9) a. *tà mán-è-n ʔàáʔ tʃ'òót'-ó kùpp-t-é*
 1SG sibling-F-ACC black beast-M sting-PFV-3SG.M
 'A snake bit my sister.' (Lit. A black beast bit my sister)

- b. m̀ààtʃ'-jèt'-ó gòndè bííj-ò-né**
 stomach-kick-M bad disease-M-COP
 ‘Diarrhea is a severe disease. (Lit. Stomach kick is a bad disease.)’

1.4.2. Verbal Noun - Noun Compounds

In Kafi Noonoo, the verb - manner nominal compound is made by attaching the manner expression *-hinn-/ háll-* to the verb base. The introduction of manner noun expression to the verbal noun triggers the base-final vowel change into -ì underlying. However, this can be observed as -ì or -è in the surface form:

Verbal noun	gloss	Manner nominal	Gloss
wóttʃ'ó	‘runing’	wóttʃ'ihinnòó	‘manner of running’
mámó	‘eating’	mámihinnòó	‘manner of eating’

Table7 Verb-Manner Noun Compounds in Kafi Noonoo

This can be seen in the following sentential examples:

- (10) **Bò fààbb-hàllòó p'it'ààf-ò-né**
 3SG.HON milk-MN excellent-M-COP
 ‘His/her milking style is good.’

1.4.3. Language Names

Language names are derived by attaching the word *noonoo* (‘mouth/ language’) to the respective ethnic and/ or place names. As usual, the final vowel of the host word changes in its type for the convenience of the production of the combination pattern:

ethnic/ place name	Gloss	language name	Gloss
Kàfá	‘kafa (place)’	kàfi Nòònòó	‘Kafa language’
shèkká	‘shekka (place)’	shèkkí nòònòó	‘Shekka language’
ʔámàáròó	‘amhara’	ʔámàárí Nòònòó	‘Amharic’
fàránddʒó	‘white person’	fàránddʒè Nòònòó	‘English’

Table8 Compounds Formed using Language Names

The following illustrations give a briefing for this:

- (11) **fàránddʒè-nòònòó mágg-ò-né**
 English_language difficult-M-COP

‘English language is difficult (Lit. Ferenj mouth is heavy).’

It is known that a compound is distinguished from a combination (or a phrase) because it functions as a single word (i.e. as a word unit as distinguished from a phrase unit). The criteria for compounds are all such that they try to show the 'unitary' character of the compounds and contrast this 'unitary' character with the non-unitary character of phrases.

Since compounds function like single words, no part of a compound can be modified separately:

(12) *Kàfí Nòònòò-jèè ?ámàárí Nòònòó mágg-ò-né*

CPD-COMP Amharic difficult-M-COP

‘Amharic is more difficult than Kafi Noonoo’

* [Kàfíjèè Nòònòó ?ámàárí nòònòó mággòné]

* [Kàfí Nòònòójèè ?ámàárimággòné nòònòó]

Another characteristic is that compounds cannot be divided by inserting some other material between the two parts:

(13) *bùf-èé Kàfí Nòònòó-n ?ikké nát-ò-nà dòj-t-àn*

child-F CPD-ACC one year-M-in learn-PFV-3SG.F

‘The girl learned Kafi Noonoo in one year.’

* *bùfèé Kàfí ?ikké nòònòón nátònà dòjítàn*

The third criteria to identify compounds from phrases is that the former cannot move separately in a sentence, and the latter can move in a separate form:

(14) *[bùfèé Kàfí nòònòón ?ikké nátònà dòjítàn]*

[Kàfí nòònòón bùfèé ?ikk nátònà dòjítàn]

[bùfèé ?ikk nátònà Kàfí nòònòón dòjítàn]

‘The girl learned Kafi Noonoo in one year.’

Thus, from these arguments, we can understand that language names in Kafi Noonoo can be found in their compound form; not in the phrase form.

1.4.4. Compounds with ?indèé ‘mother’ and dòónò ‘lord’

Both ?indèé ‘mother’ and dòónò ‘lord’ are used in compound forms and function frequently as nominalizers in Kafi Noonoo. This is true in other Omotic languages, too, (see, Rapold 2006: 206;

Mulugeta 2008: 63; Hellenthal 2010: 180-186): Thus: *bùf(èé)* *ʔindèé* ‘mother of a newly born baby’, *miindɔ́* *ʔindèé* ‘cow’, *kèttfí* *dòónò* ‘father’, *gáttèé* *dòónò* ‘farmer’, *gíddzèé* *dòónò* ‘rich’, *ʃáwèé* *dòónò* ‘owner’ (of land), *ʃimàájí* *dòónò* ‘God’ are few cases to name in the language. We can see these in the following sentential examples:

- (15) a. *èb* *bùf-èé* *ʔind-èé* *jààtf* *wòj-mm-né*
 PROX child-F mother-F tomorrow come-IMPV-AUX

‘This woman will come tomorrow.’ (Lit. This baby mother will come tomorrow)

- b. *hìn* *ʃáw-dòón-ò* *dògè* *ʔárijèttf-ó-né*
 PROX_I land_lord-M big wise-M-COP

‘(The) owner of this land is (a) wise person.’

1.5. Noun Inflection

Kafi Noonoo nouns inflect for gender, number, and case. These are discussed hereafter.

1.5.1. Gender

Kafi Noonoo has two grammatical genders: masculine and feminine. The language has only a grammatical gender in which only those nouns which are inherently [+ feminine] cannot be exclusively marked as feminine morphologically. Thus, masculine gender generally ends with *-o(o)* in the singular, and it can also serve as a default gender marker in the language. Inherently masculine nouns have the same suffix *-o(o)*. The feminine is marked only in the singular forms by adding *-e(e)*, and a few by adding *-i* to the root form. The feminine has two forms: (1) underived feminine, which includes those that are naturally, semantically feminine: for example *mèttfè* ‘wife’ *ʔindèé* ‘mother’, *ʃʔàájí* ‘porcupine’ and all names of months (see example (21) below). (2) derived feminine, which includes those that are derived from female forms carrying female, caritive, or diminutive semantics; for example *t’úppillè* ‘stool (a seat)’ derived from *t’úppillò*. In Kafi Noonoo, the semantics of plurality can also be conveyed by the use of this masculine gender suffix. Accordingly, *mààttfòó* ‘females’, *gènnòó* ‘women’, *mèttfó* ‘wives’ which used the masculine gender suffix are however in their feminine form. In the following illustrations we can see the masculine and feminine in their citation form:

Feminine		Masculine	
noun	Gloss	noun	Gloss
bìtʃèr-ée	‘mule’	bìtʃèr-óò	‘mule’
kúr-è	‘jenny’	kúr-ò	‘jack’
màám-í	‘calf’	màám-ó	‘bull calf’

Table9 Gender Distinction in Kafi Noonoo

When *-i* or *-e(e)* are introduced on the inanimate nouns, they function as diminutive markers in the language; and the nouns in such a situation usually become definite:

Feminine		Masculine	
Noun	Gloss	noun	Gloss
mit'-í	‘the wood’	mit'-ó	‘wood’
k'ónd-ée	‘the pot’	k'ónd-òò	‘pot’

Table10 Diminutives in Kafi Noonoo

This can be illustrated with the following examples:

- (16) a. *bùf-ée k'ónd-ée-n dèéb-t-án*
 child-F pot-F-ACC bring-PFV-3SG.F
 ‘The girl brought (the) small pot.’
- b. *gèpp-ò-ttf béèt kèt'-í nòòttf-í-né*
 mountain- exist house-F 1PL-F-COP
 M-LOC
 ‘The small house over the hill is ours.’

Lexical gender marking is also possible in the language:

masculine	Gloss	feminine	Gloss
kén-ò	‘husband’	mèttf-é	‘wife’
níh-òó	‘father’	ʔínd-ée	‘mother’
ʔább-òó	‘father-in-law’	ʔámààt-ée	‘mother-in-law’
kènèéf-òó	‘brother of one’s wife’	tèttf-ée	‘sister of one’s wife’

Table11 Lexical Gender in Kafi Noonoo

Nouns referring to ethnonyms in Kafi Noonoo also inflect gender. In the same way, as in the other nouns, the morpheme *-o(o)* indicates masculine gender for singular referents or is used with

generic terms, while the inflectional morpheme *-ttf* is introduced before the feminine marker *-e* that shows the singular referents. The ethnonyms in Kafa introduce the *-ttf* to convey feminine ethnicity semantics. In the language *mààttfě* ‘female’ and *mèttfě* ‘wife’ serve to convey the semantics that carries a feminine concept. It may be from this analogy that nouns referring to feminine ethnonyms introduce the morpheme *-ttf*. Thus, the feminine can be formed; as in:

(17)	Masculine	feminine	Gloss
a.	<i>hínnùúttf-ò</i>	<i>hínnùúttf-è</i>	‘a person from the <i>hínnùúttf</i> ò clan’
b.	<i>dáddzèw-ò</i>	<i>dáddzèwèttf-è</i>	‘a person from the <i>dáddzèw</i> ò clan’

This can be illustrated in a sentence:

(18)	<i>tà</i>	<i>mán-èé</i>	<i>śààgg-t-ò</i>	<i>hínnùúttf-ò-né</i>
	1SG	sibling-F	marry-REL-M	hinucho-M-COP

‘My sister married a hinucho man.’ (Lit. My sister carried a hinucho)

A feature associated, or assigned to each noun is its grammatical gender. As in most Omotic languages, gender is generally semantically motivated. Most inanimate nouns are masculine in Kafi Noonoo. However, sometimes inanimate nouns may take feminine markers to express diminutive referents. There are few exceptions whereby a reference to inanimate nouns can be made using pronouns, as in:

(19)	a.	<i>ár-ò</i>	<i>òògé</i>	<i>gédđ-ò-né</i>
		3SG-M	big	lake-M-COP
		‘It is (a) big lake.’		
	b.	<i>ár-è</i>	<i>k'èém</i>	<i>śáw-è-né</i>
		3SG-F	fertile	land-3SG.F-COP
		‘It is (a) fertile land.’		

There are also inanimate nouns with the feminine gender. These are the words for ‘moon’ and ‘sun’. This is true in other languages, too (see also, Bender 1991: 103; Mulugeta 2008: 44); as in:

(20)	a.	<i>śàgèn-è</i>	<i>békk-t-àn</i>
		moon-F	see-PFV-3SG.F
		‘The moon is seen’	
	b.	<i>śààb-è</i>	<i>kéttf-t-àn</i>
		sun-F	rise-PFV-3SG.F
		‘The sun rose’	

The latter (example 20b), however, does not remain inherently feminine in all the contexts. It becomes masculine to show the semantics of strength (as strength is often associated with masculinity in the language) when the speaker is addressing issues related to ‘sun’ in the mid-day: as in:

- (21) *ʔààb-ò bũf-èé-n máà-h-è*
 sun-M child-F-ACC scorch-PFV-3SG.M
 ‘The sun scorches the girl (Lit. The sun eats the girl).’

In Kafi Noonoo days of the week are all in their masculine [táttfájò ‘Monday’, ʔàákkèròó ‘Wednesday’, bũfáà fámbeò ‘Saturday’ etc.] and months of the year [kéèllí ‘September’, dóngéllèbì ‘January’, díjì ‘May’ etc.] are all in their feminine form:

In the language, the term month is glossed as ‘*ʔàgèné*’ literally to mean (a) moon. The term *ʔàgèné* ‘moon’ is feminine in gender in the language. Thus, it should be from this argument that months of the year are all in their feminine form.

1.5.3. Number

The regular pluralization process in Kafi Noonoo involves affixation. The plurals are formed by suffixing **-nàʔó** (usually) and can be considered as the regular plural form. There are words in the language that use **-Ø** for their plural formation. Generally, while doing so, the plural nouns in Kafi Noonoo do not distinguish between masculine and feminine gender (see, Girma 2010: 27-28). There is no distinction in plural formation both for the animate and inanimate nouns. Based on the tone marking criteria of nouns, the regular pattern of the plural form of the language can be summarized as follows:

Nominals ending in a root-final vowel **-ó**, change to **-í-** with the plural suffix **-nàʔó**:

- (22) a. kèt’ó ‘house’ kèt’- + nàʔó kèt’ínàʔó ‘houses’
 b. tʃ’ààjò ‘porcupine’ tʃ’ààj- + nàʔó tʃ’ààjínàʔó ‘porcupines’

Nominals, whose root-final vowel is **-ò**; this changes to **-è-** with the plural suffix **-nàʔó**:

- (23) a. mátʃ’ò ‘horse’ mátʃ’- + nàʔó mátʃ’ènáʔó ‘horses’
 b. káfò ‘farm tool’ káf- + nàʔó káf’ènáʔó ‘farm tools’

For nominals ending in **-òó**, change this to **-é-**:

- (24) a. k’éttòó ‘neck’ k’étt- + nàʔó k’étténàʔó ‘necks’
 b. kàfòó ‘bird’ kàf- + nàʔó kàf’énàʔó ‘birds’

Note that the change *-o* to either *-i* or *-e* highly depends on the tone of the final vowel the nouns carry. Thus, if the tone of the final vowel of the nouns is H(igh), then it changes to H(igh) *-i*; and if the tone of the final vowel of the nouns is L(ow), then it changes to L(ow) *-e*. However, when the final vowel of the noun is long, then the tone of the final vowel is copied to the stem-final *-e*. There are irregular nouns in the language, on the other hand, whose singular and plural remain the same. They follow the following process:

(i) Adding suffix **-Ø** to the singular form:

	singular	plural	Gloss
(25) a.	gédǵò	gédǵò	‘lake(s)’
b.	háǵǵòó	háǵǵòó	‘wealth(s)’
c.	gíǵǵòó	gíǵǵòó	‘cattle’

As is indicated above, both the singular and the plural remain similar. In the process of communication, however, it is understood from the context of the sentence whether the referred object is in the singular or plural form. In such a situation, quantifying words can be introduced to indicate the plural number:

(26)	<i>tà</i>	<i>mán-èé</i>	<i>wòddà</i>	<i>gíǵǵ-òó</i>	<i>kém-t-án</i>
	1SG	sibling-F	many	cattle-M	buy-PFV-3SG.F
	‘My sister bought many cattle.’				

(ii) Changing root-final (short or long) vowel *-e*, or *-i* into (short or long) vowel *-o*; as in:

singular	gloss	Plural	gloss
génǵéé	‘woman’	génǵòó	‘women’
métǵǵé	‘wife’	métǵǵó	‘wives’
màámí	‘calf’	màámó	‘calves’
gídèrèé	‘heifer’	gídèròó	‘heifers’

Table12 Plurals Formed by Changing Root-final Vowel in Kafi Noonoo

Note that the plural form of *màám-í* ‘calf-F’ can also serve as a singular form for a masculine *màám-ó* ‘calf-M’. What determines which form of the noun is used in the communication is the way the communicators make the issues understandable for the hearer; as in:

(27) a. *màám-ó-n* *dán-ì-t-è*

calf-M-ACC connect-CNV-PFV-3SG.M

‘He milked the cow (Lit. He connected the calf with the cow.)’

b. màám-ó-n jòók-t-è

calf-PL-ACC chase-PFV-3SG.M

‘He chased the calves.’

It is also possible for nouns mentioned (examples 27a-b above), to form their plurals by suffixing **-nàʔó**.

Three nominals, **bùʃó** ‘boy’ **òògòó** ‘the big one’ and **gùʃó** ‘the small one’ form their plurals in a very irregular way by partial reduplication of the final syllable; as in **bùʃó** vs **bùʃùʃó** ‘boys’, **gùʃó** vs **gùʃíʃó** ‘small’ and **òògòó** vs **ògòògòó** ‘big’. The following sentential examples illustrate best:

(28) **a. Èb òògè gátt-òó-n kém-b**

PROX_I big ox-M-ACC sell-IMP

‘Sell this big ox.’

b. Èb ògòògè gátt-nàʔó-n kém-b

PROX_I big.PL ox-PL-ACC sell-IMP

‘Sell these big oxen.’

In Kafi Noonoo, the plural expression **-òʃi** is also possible with demonstrative pronouns of **-hín**, **-èb**, and **-mèn**:

(29) **a. Mèni Keri bùʃ-òó-né**

PROX_{II} Kero child-M-COP

‘This is Kero’s child.’

b. mèn-òʃi Keri bùʃùʃ-nàʔó-né

PROX_{II}-PL Kero child.PL-PL-COP

‘These are Kero’s children.’

In example 29b we see that double pluralization is possible in the language. However, this is not frequent in the language as far as my native speaker’s competence is concerned.

In Kafi Noonoo it is also possible for proper nouns and kinship terms to make associative plurals when the expression **bùnnòʃi** ‘and others’ is attached to the proper nouns and kinship terms. This is true for other Omotic languages, too (see, Hellenthal 2010: 170; Girma 2015: 119):

Proper nouns	Associative plural	Gloss
Girmì	girmibìinòfi	‘Girma and others’
Àlmààzì	àlmààzì bìinòfi	‘Almaz and others’
Kinship terms		
ʔindèé	ʔindèé bìinòfi	‘mother and others’
kittinnè níhòó	kittinnè níhòó bìinòfi	‘Godfather and others’

Table13 Associative Plurals in Kafi Noonoo

The kinship terms in Kafi Noonoo in most cases go with personal pronouns of all forms in everyday communications, as in:

Kinship terms	Associative plural	Gloss
tà ʔindèé	táʔind bìinòfi	‘my mother and others’
bò kittinnè níhòó	bókittinnè níhòó bìinòfi	‘his Godfather and others’

Table14 Kinship Plurals in Kafi Noonoo

We can see these in the following sentences:

- (30) *girmì bìinòfi álmààz-n dèg-t-èété*
 Girma ASS.PL Alamz-ACC help-PFV-3PL
 ‘Girma and others helped Alamz.’

1.5.4. Case

The case system of Kafi Noonoo appears to be a nominative-accusative system, i.e. not marked nominative. In Kafi Noonoo the following morphologically distinct case marking morphemes have been identified and discussed as follows.

1.5.4.1. Nominative and Accusative Case

In Kafi Noonoo, the nominative case appears in the unmarked form. Simple nouns can occur in their citation form without any morphological affix. Nouns in subject/agent function show only the gender marking elements: the masculine -o(o), or the feminine -e(e) or -i:

- (31) *a. búf-òó ʔààtf'-ó-ttf hámm-t-è*
 child-M water-M-LOC go-PFV-3SG.M
 ‘The boy went to the river.’
- b. ʔúr-è gátt-òó-n dèéb-t-án*
 person.DEF-F ox-M-ACC bring-PFV-3SG.F
 ‘The woman brought the ox.’

Accusative case in Kafi Noonoo can be marked either by the morpheme *-n*, or by lengthening¹ the final vowel, or it can be unmarked (empty).

- (32) a. *èb bűf-òó tà mán-èé-n t'òób-t-è*
 PROX_I child-M 1SG.POSS sibling-F-ACC hit-PFV-3SG.M
 'This boy hit my sister.'
- b. *bűf-òó nèé tf'èégg-t-è*
 child-M 2SG.ACC call-PFV-3SG.M
 'The boy called you.'
- c. *bűf-òó gátt-òó kè-m-t-è*
 child-M ox-M.ACC buy-PFV-3SG.M
 'The boy bought an ox.'

The presence of the accusative marker, however, is obligatory when the object of the construction is a proper noun, interrogative pronouns, 2SG.HON, 2PL, the *ár-* forms of the 3SG, and when the nouns are in their plural form except for those nouns which appear the same both in the singular and plural forms. See the following illustrations:

- (33) *bűf-èé-n t'òób-t-è*
 child-F-ACC hit-PFV-3SG.M
 'He hit (the) girl.'

* *bűfèé álmàáz t'òóbètán*

The *ár-* forms of the third person singular pronouns necessarily take the accusative morpheme *-n*. Here, the final vowel length on the pronoun is mandatory, as in:

- (34) *bűf-èé ár-òó-n tf'èégg-t-án*
 child-F 3SG-M-ACC call-PFV-3SG.F
 'The girl called him.'

The interrogative words in the language also take accusative marker *-n* obligatorily:

- (35) *bűf-èé kónì-n tf'èégg-t-án*
 child-F who-ACC call-PFV-3SG.F
 'Who did the girl call?'

¹Lengthening exceptionally serve when the object of the construction is *common nouns*, *1SG&PL*, *2SG*, the *bi-* forms of 3SG.

1.5.4.2. Vocative Case

Vocative nouns in Kafi Noonoo are formed in different ways (see, Girma 2010: 19). One way is by using *tà*- ‘1SG’ before a noun that is going to be addressed. In this case the tone quality of the pronoun vowel changes to H(igh); as in:

- (36) a. *tà* ‘1SG’ *mán-òó* ‘sibling-M’ *támánòó* ‘My brother.VOC’
 b. *tà* ‘1SG’ *dòón-ò* ‘lord-M’ *tádòónò* ‘my lord.VOC’
 c. *tà* ‘1SG’ *gènn-èé* ‘madam-F’ *tágènnèé* ‘madam.VOC’

Besides, Kafi Noonoo uses the proper names as vocatives (see, Girma 2010: 19). The vocative, however, can be set off from the rest of the construction by a pause before and/or after articulation. If a proper name is an addressee, the vocative ending for the masculine gender is -ó and for the feminine gender is -è with an exception. Thus:

- (37) *dáttfító háttf wò-b*
 Dachito here come-IMP
 ‘Dachito, come here!’

It is very common in the language to use the demonstrative pronoun *hín* ‘this’ to convey the vocative case. The use of this demonstrative pronoun for vocative purpose can be due to two reasons – where the addressee does not know the name of the individual who s/he is addressing; and the addressee may have a good relationship or s/he may think that the one s/he is addressing is younger or lower in social status, as in:

- (38) *hín-ó òkk èb bùf-òó-n tàá-ttf dèé-b*
 PROX_I-2SG DIST PROX_I child-M-ACC 1SG-DAT bring-IMP
 ‘You, bring that boy for me.’

1.5.4.3. Allative Case

Allative in Kafi Noonoo suffixes -*wàán* ‘to(wards)’ to mark. The suffix can be used with both nouns and pronouns:

- (39) *kàámèll-è bòóng-wàán hámm-t-án*
 car-F bonga-ALL go-PFV-3SG.F
 ‘The car went to(wards) Bonga.’

It is possible in the language to use the suffix -*mág* alternatively in communication to serve the purpose of the allative case where it is suffixed to personal pronouns:

- (40) *ʔémɨf-è dòn-ó-mág wótʃ-t-án*
 goat-F lord-M-ALL run-PFV-3SG.F
 ‘The she-goat run to(wards) (the) lord.’

1.5.4.4. Ablative Case

The ablative case expresses motion away from something. Words in this case typically indicate source, origin, separation, or causation. In Kafi Noonoo it is expressed by the morpheme *-wàánè* ‘from’. The morpheme *-mágè*, here too, can be alternatively used in the language to serve the purpose of ablative case:

- (41) *bòóng-wàánè*
 bonga-ABL
 ‘From Bonga.’

3.5.4.5. Dative, Locative and Genitive Marked by -ttf

1.5.4.5.1. Dative

The suffix *-ttf* serves the dative purpose in Kafi Noonoo for both masculine and feminine common nouns. A dative represents the recipient or goal of a noun. It also serves to show benefactive function. In the language, dative serves in the following ways:

- (42) *ʔàátʃ-òò-ttf hámm-t-án*
 river-M-DAT go-PFV-3SG.F
 ‘She went to (the) river.’

1.5.4.5.2. Locative

A locative case is a situation whereby we indicate an item in space, time, or a metaphorical domain. In Kafi Noonoo it is marked by the morpheme *-ttf* to refer to spatial locations of nouns:

- (43) *mátʃ-ò-n dúàdd-òó-ttf tʃ’ùj-b*
 horse-M-ACC back-M-LOC tie-IMP
 ‘(You) tie the horse at the back yard.’

Moreover, to express a more specific location the locative noun can be followed by *tùkk*, *dàmbá* ‘on top/surface of’ plus the locative morpheme, or *múàtʃ* ‘in the interior of the language’.

1.5.4.5.3. Genitive

The genitive construction in Kafi Noonoo has two possibilities. One consists of the simple juxtaposition of the possessor and the possessed, usually in that order. The possessor appears in the (unmarked) nominative case and the possessed appears in whichever case a simple noun would otherwise appear in the matrix clause (see, Girma 2010, p. 23). In the following examples, the possessed appears in the nominative case since a simple noun in citation form takes the nominative:

- (44) *màt'-í k'édd-ò*
 bee-F color-M
 'The color of the bee.'

The second option for the genitive is to use the overt genitive marker *-ttfi*.

- (45) *màt'-í-ttfi k'édd-ò*
 bee-F-GEN color M
 'The color of the bee'

In more detail, the genitive construction in Kafi Noonoo can be realized in several ways:

(A) By using the suffix *-Ø*. This involves changing the final vowel to *-e/ ee* or *-i*:

- (46) *ʃèèkkòó* 'grass' *ʃèèkkèé-Ø* 'of grass' *ʃèèkkèé kèt'ó* 'house made of grass.'

(B) By using the suffix *-ttfi*, only if the genitive precedes the head noun:

- (47) *màt'í* 'bee' *mát'i-ttfi* 'of the' *gèèndòó* 'hive' *mát'i-ttfi gèèndòó* 'bee hive'
 bee'

In forming the *-ttfi* genitive, possessed nouns delete their stem-final syllable as demonstrated in the following examples:

- (48) *mèèno* 'meat' *mèè-ttfi* 'of meat' *gáttòó* 'ox' *mèè-ttfi gáttòó* '(an) ox for meat'

Note that there will be no deletion of the stem-final syllable when the morpheme *-ttfi* serves a non-possessive function, as in:

- (49) *kèt'ó-ttfi gùttè t'úm-ò ʔímm-t-è*
 house-for two million-M give-PFV-3SG.M
 'He paid two million for the house.' (Lit. He gave two nights for the house.)

(C) By using the suffix *-tṣó*. This is a variant of *-tṣi* and is used only phrase-finally; that is, only if the head noun precedes the genitive (the marked order) which can happen for the sake of emphasis, or else if the genitive stands alone as a possessive pronoun:

- (50) *gíddɔ́-òó* *bùf-èé-tṣó*
 money-M child-F-GEN
 ‘Money of the girl’

1.5.4.6. Instrumental Case

The instrumental case is a case that expresses an entity by which an action is performed. It serves to mark an activity described by the verb or the means of accomplishing the action expressed in the verb (see, Crystal 2008, p.248; Black 2004, p. 276; Payne 2006, p. 96; Dixon 2010, p. 320). In Kafi Noonoo, the instrumental case is expressed by the morpheme *-nà*, as in:

- (51) *Kèrí* *Ṗúr-ò-n* *fikk-òó-nà* *kòttf-ì* *wút'-t-è*
 Kero person.DEF-M-ACC knife-M-INS stab-CNV kill-PFV-3SG.M
 ‘Kero stabbed the man with a knife and killed him.’

1.5.4.7. Comitative Case

A comitative case is a case expressing with whom an action is performed (Crystal 2008: 87). In Kafi Noonoo, it is expressed by the combination of the *-nnà* suffixed to 1, 2SG, the ‘bi’ forms of 3SG and 3SG.HON personal pronouns and *-nà* suffixed to proper and common nouns, pronouns of 2SG.HON, 2PL, the ‘árò / árè’ forms of 3SG, 3PL, and 3PLH; and the relator noun *tòókkû / áà* ‘together with’. The preference of the vowel to go with *tòókk-* ‘together’ generally depends on the subject with a referent that goes with the morpheme *-nà / nnà*. Thus, *tòókk-* ‘together’ goes with the vowel *-î* where the referent segment to which it is attached is either a proper (or common noun) or forms of 2Pl, 3SG.M, 3SG.HON, 3PL, and 3PLH pronouns. On the other hand, it is possible in the language to use both vowels interchangeably with the remaining forms to serve the purpose:

- (52) *Kàbbàdì* *álmààzì-nà* *tòókkû* *kèt'-ó-n*
 Kebede Almaz-COM together_with house-M-ACC
t'ákk'-òó-nà *hágg-t-è*
 stone-M-INS build-PFV-3SG.M
 ‘Kebede together with Almaz build his house with (a) stone.’

* *álmààzì kàbbàdìnàtòókkû/ áà kèt'ón t'ákk'òónà hággètán.*

1.5.4.8. Similative Case

A similative case **is a** noun case used to indicate likeness, resemblance, or similarity. In Kafi Noonoo the similative is marked by **-òóm** and this can be attached to proximal demonstrative pronouns, proper and common nouns, and the object pronouns, as in:

- (53) *èb-òóm jìbbààt-ò gòndè mòój-ò-né*
 PROX_I-SIM talk-M bad thing-M-COP
 ‘This kind of talk is bad.’

The similative marker **-òóm** cannot be attached to the distal demonstratives. It can only be attached when the distal demonstratives are coordinated with the proximal demonstratives.

1.5.4.9. Comparative Case

Comparison in Kafi Noonoo is usually accomplished via attaching the comparative marker **-jèè** to the compared subject; not to the adjective in the construction. The subject of the clause (the compare) can occur first or be followed by what it is compared with:

- (54) *bùf-èé kèrí-jèè k'áàbb-è-né*
 child-F Kero-COMP elder-F-COP

In Kafi Noonoo, a comparison can be made by listing several nouns to be compared to a single noun. In such a situation, all the compared nouns take the comparative morpheme:

- (55) *Kèrí tà-jèè nè-jèè bò-jèè kúpp'-ò-né*
 Kero 1SG-COMP 2SG-COMP 3SG.HON-COMP strong-M-COP
 ‘Kero is stronger than us.’

Conclusion

This paper aimed to describe nouns in Kafi Noonoo. Accordingly, nouns generally in Kafi Noonoo end in -o/oo in isolation. It is also attested that few nouns end in -e(e), and few place names that end in -a and few in -i. Most proper nouns end in -i. In their distribution nouns function as the head of the noun phrase. The vowels on the nominal phrases indicate the gender and/ or number. It is also attested that Kafi Noonoo noun inflects for gender, number, and case.

Proper names in Kafi Noonoo can be derived from words for common nouns. They can also be used when the speakers want to give nicknames to people that they know. Proper nouns in the language cannot form a single constituent with a determinant. The common nouns can be found

either dependent or independent; can co-occur in the same NP with demonstratives. In the discussion of derived nouns, we found that they are formed from different word classes through different derivational processes. Thus, verbal nouns, abstract nouns, agentive nouns, and result nouns are derived by introducing a vowel on the root of the verb, by adding the morphemes *-tino*, *-tfo/ tfi*, and *-hinoo* to verbal or adjective base, and by changing the tone of root final vowel of the verbs respectively. Concerning the compound nouns, in Kafi Noonoo, we have compounds resulting in euphemism, verb-manner nominal compounds, compounds of language names, and compounds with *ʔindée* ‘mother’ and *dòónò* ‘lord’.

Under the section on noun inflection, I have made a discussion on the inflection of nouns for definiteness, gender, number, and case. About the definiteness discussion, definite nouns in Kafi Noonoo are not morphologically marked; rather the citation forms are used to show such features. The only exception of definiteness is discussed. Thus, *ʔúr-* ‘person. DEF’ is used for nouns whose referent is already known to the hearer; otherwise, *ʔáf-* ‘person. INDF’ can be used.

Concerning the discussion of gender in Kafi Noonoo, we have two grammatical genders in the language: masculine and feminine. The masculine gender is generally marked with *-o(o)* and the feminine is marked by adding *-e(e)*, and a few by adding *-i* to the root form. The feminine sill has two forms: the underived feminine and the derived feminine. In Kafi Noonoo it is attested that plurality can also be conveyed by the use of the masculine gender suffix. The diminutives are marked by *-i* or *-e(e)*; and the nouns in such a situation usually become definite.

Gender is semantically motivated; most inanimate nouns are masculine and sometimes inanimate nouns take feminine markers to express diminutive referent. This work reveals that days of the week are all in their masculine and months of the year are all in their feminine form.

In Kafi Noonoo the regular pluralization process involves affixation; some words use *-Ø* for pluralization. There are irregular nouns whose singular and plural remain the same. It is also possible for proper nouns and kinship terms to make an associative plural expression.

The case system appears to be a nominative-accusative system in Kafi Noonoo. We have identified morphologically distinct case-marking morphemes. These include: accusative (*-n*, *Ø* or with vowel length), allative (*-waan*), ablative (*-waane*), dative (*-ttf* or *Ø*), genitive/ possessive (*-ttf* or *Ø*), locative (*-ttf*), instrumental (*-na*), comitative (*-(n)na* followed by the relator expression *-tookii/aa*) and comparative (*-jee*).

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