Finiteness in Gurage Languages

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Abstract
Despite their geographical adjacency and genetic relatedness, the various Gurage languages display remarkable variation in marking verbs in independent main clauses vis-à-vis dependent clauses, or, in other words, in distinguishing between finite and nonfinite verbs. A detailed analysis of inflectional features of verbs (marking of aspect/mood, subject indexing, negation, tense, and clausal status) and a comparison of inflectional features of verbs in dependent and independent clauses shows that finiteness in Gurage languages is a relational category that can best be described through a combination of morphological and syntactic features.

1 Introduction

According to Hetzron (1972a:6 f.), Gurage is best understood as a geographical term for the southernmost pocket of Semitic-speaking peoples in central Ethiopia who are encircled by Cushitic- and Omotic-speaking peoples, as shown in Map 1.

Older classifications consider Gurage to be a single language with different dialects (cf. Meyer 2011; Appleyard 2002a). However, Hetzron (1972a; 1977) provides clear evidence for separate Gurage languages belonging to different genetic sub-branches within South Ethio-Semitic (SES) (see Figure 1). The Gurage languages form two major groups: *Gunnän Gurage* with Northern Gurage (Gälila, Kistane, Dobbi, Muher) and Western Gurage (Mesqan, Central (CWG) and Peripheral (PWG) Western Gurage) vs. *Eastern Gurage* with Silt'e, Wolane and Zay. Gunnän Gurage is spoken in a relatively contiguous area, while Eastern Gurage is dispersed across the Gurage area.

Hetzron's classification of Ethio-Semitic is not commonly accepted (cf. Voigt 2009) but, until today, it is "[t]he only really methodologically sound and indeed the definite internal classification of [Ethio-Semitic]" (Appleyard 2002a:409). The classification of the Gurage varieties, which are part of ES is impeded by the lack of data for some varieties and intense multilingualism among the speakers.

Map 1: Geographical Distribution of the Gurage Languages

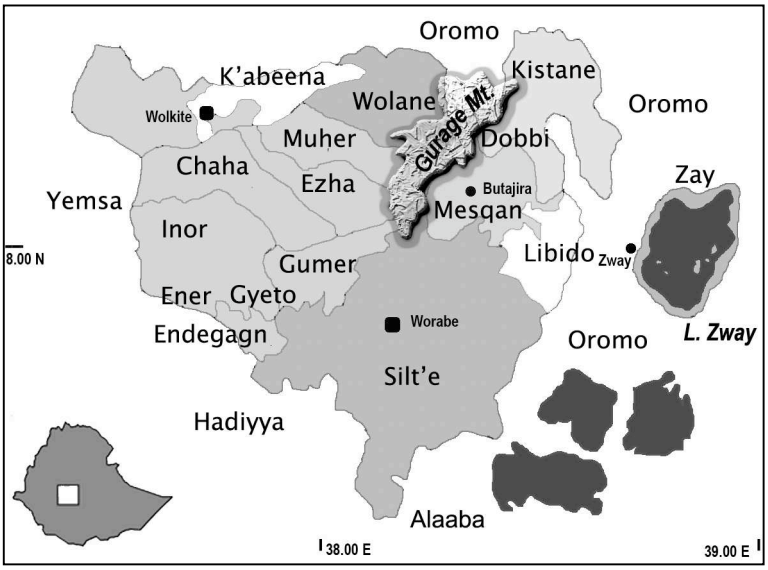
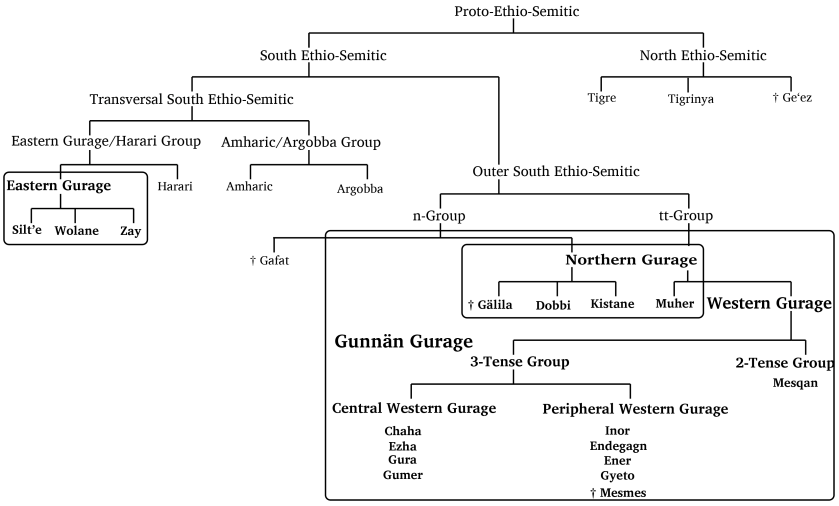


Figure 1: Genetic Classification of the Gurage Languages



(Adopted from Hetzron 1972a:119; Meyer 2011:1222)

Due to reasons related to general structural features, available grammatical descriptions and intelligibility,[1] I focus in this paper on the Gunnän Gurage languages Chaha (as representative of CWG), Inor (as representative of PWG), Kistane, Mesqan, Muher, and on the Eastern Gurage languages Wolane and Zay.[2]

2 Finiteness as a linguistic concept

The concept of *finiteness*, traditionally the marking of tense, aspect, mood (TAM), and subject indexing on verbs, goes back to the School Grammar tradition (Nikolaeva 2007:1 ff.). If a verb is marked for these categories, it is considered finite; if it lacks any of them it is nonfinite. From a syntactic perspective, finiteness is used to distinguish between dependent and independent clauses (ICL) in such a way that nonfinite verbs occur in dependent clauses but finite verbs in independent ones. However, cross-linguistically, morphological TAM marking and subject indexes are by no means universal, and nonfinite verbs may also occur in independent clauses. Other points of discord are whether finiteness is a phrasal category connected only with the verb or a clausal category, or whether it is a binary or scalar phenomenon.

Recent approaches to finiteness (Anderson 2007; Klein 2006; Maas 2004; etc.) view finiteness as a complex phenomenon that can be defined by a combination of overt morphosyntactic constructions and covert pragmatic/semantic functions. Generally, finiteness entails an independent interpretation of a clause by anchoring the communicated verbal event to a specific time, by establishing the referents of the participants, and by asserting the relationship between the event and the participants (Klein 2006:263 ff.). Consequently, the prototypical finite clause is a simple assertion as found in affirmative, declarative statements in the indicative mood (Anderson 2007:2). Other clause types may lack some of these features but still remain finite.

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1 Intelligibility between Eastern and Gunnän Gurage is very low. Within Eastern Gurage, Wolane and Silt'e are very similar while Zay diverges. As to Gunnän Gurage, Mesqan is best understood by speakers of all other languages (Fekede 2013:312). Muher and CWG are fairly intelligible to speakers of Kistane and Mesqan whereas PWG diverges from all (cf. Hetzron 1972a:2; Gutt 1980; Ahland 2010:2 ff.).

2 The data is obtained from the following sources if not mentioned otherwise: Kistane (Leslau 1968a; Goldenberg 1968; Elizabeth 2012), Mesqan (Leslau 2004; Meseret 2012), Chaha (Leslau 1983; 2004), Inor (Berhanu & Hetzron 2000; Leslau 1983), Wolane (Meyer 2006a), and Zay (Meyer 2005). The Muher data result from my own field research with Abubakr Sherifo and Sitti Gragn to whom I am very grateful.

For the description of finiteness in Gurage languages, I will base myself on Bisang (2007), in which a distributional approach based on obligatory marking of certain morphosyntactic categories in dependent or independent clauses was followed. Finiteness is, then, a property of the clause, not the verb (Bisang 2007:134). TAM and subject indexes play an important role for defining finiteness but other categories, like illocutionary force, i.e., assertion, interrogation, etc., and politeness, can also be used to define the independent status of a clause. In this approach, finiteness appears to be a binary phenomenon in individual languages but a scalar phenomenon across languages because not every language uses exactly the same morphosyntactic categories (cf. also Nikolaeva 2007:13).

Finiteness is usually discussed as a verbal feature in individual grammars of Ethio-Semitic languages. According to Appleyard (2002b), there is a clear morphological distinction between main vs. subordinate verbs in various Ethio-Semitic languages, whereby verbs in main clause are formed by attaching additional morphemes (for finiteness) to subordinate verbs. This distinction, which constitutes one feature of the Ethiopian linguistic area, is commonly ascribed Cushitic influence. Appleyard (2002b) distinguishes between three types of main verb markers in Ethio-Semitic: (i) no marker (for North Ethio-Semitic), the present tense auxiliary (for Transversal South Ethio-Semitic), and (iii) a main verb marker derived from an older copula (for several language of Outer South Ethio-Semitic). This typology fits perfectly Hetzron's (1972b) genetic classification of Ethio-Semitic (cf. Figure 1 above) but does not faithfully display the complexity of finiteness in Gurage languages. Although marking verbs in ICL is a prominent feature in these languages, there are also other more subtle indicators for finiteness, like specific subject indexes or markers for negation. Often finiteness cannot be ascribed to a specific morphological category but only through paradigmatic relations between them.

3 Inflectional features of verbs

3.1 General remarks

All Gurage languages belong to the synthetic-fusional type. Verbs are commonly formed by non-concatenative morphology and consist of three obligatory morphemes: (i) a lexical root (prototypically containing three or four consonants) that interdigitates with (ii) a grammatical template for aspect/mood, i.e., a vocalic prosody that also contains information about the gemination or non-gemination of root consonants, and (iii) a subject index (cf. Table 1).

Table 1: Formation of Type A Verbs in Mesqan

{ROOT	+	TEMPLATE}	>	BASE	VERB (SBJ 3PL.M)	
$\sqrt{s_1b_2r_3}$ 'BREAK'		PFV $C_1äCC_2äC_3$-		$s_1äbb_2är_3$-	*säbbär-o*	'they broke'
		IPFV -$C_1äC_2C_3$-		-$s_1äb_2r_3$-	*ji-säbr-o*	'they break'
		SBJV -$C_1C_2C_3$-		-$s_1b_2r_3$-	*jä-sbir-o*	'they may break'

A simplex verb may belong to one out of three lexically determined conjugation patterns called *(Verb) Type A, B, C*. I will restrict my description to verbs of Type A because they are the unmarked type and neatly distinguish between the various aspect/mood forms by separate templates.

All Gurage languages distinguish between verb bases in the imperfective aspect, the perfective aspect, and the subjunctive, which encompasses the jussive, imperative and verbal noun (cf. Section 3.2). These bases still need to be specified by subject indexes to form an independent verb. There are two different subject indexes: a suffix subject index for perfective verbs, and a pre-/circumfix subject index for imperfective and jussive verbs (cf. Section 3.3). Usually, the prefix in the latter set denotes person while the suffix marks gender and number.[3]

Additional morphemes found with verbs in Gurage languages are negative markers (cf. Section 3.4), temporal auxiliary verbs (cf. Section 3.5.1), and markers of clausal status (cf. Section 3.5.2). Object indexes and derivational affixes are also part of the verb morphology but will not be discussed here (cf. Meyer 2011:1239 f. for an overview).

3.2 Templates for aspect and mood

Type A verbs in Gurage have minimally three and maximally five templates to form the perfective, imperfective, or subjunctive, as shown in Table 2.

3 For objections against this generalization, cf. Rose (1996a:339); for a unifying analysis of the two indexes, cf. Degif (2000:241 ff.).

Table 2: Conjugational Templates of Type A Verbs

	PERFECTIVE		IPFV	SUBJUNCTIVE	
	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE		TRANSITIVE	INTRANSITIVE
EASTERN GURAGE					
Wolane	$C_1äC_2äC_3$		$C_1äC_2C_3$	$C_1C_2äC_3$	
ZAY	$C_1äC_2äC_3$	$C_1C_2äC_3$	$C_1äC_2C_3$	$C_1C_2äC_3$	
GUNNÄN GURAGE					
Kistane	$C_1äCC_2äC_3$	$C_1äC_2äC_3$	$C_1äC_2C_3$	$C_1C_2(ä)C_3$	
Mesqan, Muher	$C_1äCC_2äC_3$	$C_1äC_2äC_3$	$C_1äC_2C_3$	$C_1C_2C_3$	$C_1C_2äC_3$
Chaha, Inor	$C_1ä(C)C_2äC_3$		$C_1äC_2C_3$	$C_1C_2C_3$	$C_1C_2äC_3$

With the exception of the negative perfective in Zay whose template is that of the subjunctive, all three verb bases, perfective, imperfective and subjunctive, are always clearly distinguished by a specific vocalization of C_2, i.e., no vowel or $C_2ä$ in the subjunctive, $äC_2$ in the imperfective but $ä(C)C_2ä$ in the perfective. The imperfective template has the most regular pattern across all languages while the perfective and subjunctive templates have two patterns each in some languages.

The subjunctive in Gunnän Gurage, except Kistane, morphologically distinguishes between transitive and intransitive verbs, whereas there is only one template in Eastern Gurage. Kistane merges the two transitivity patterns into a single irregular conjugation in the subjunctive: The intransitive template $C_1C_2äC_3$ occurs in the negative, in the formation of verbal nouns, and with 3SG.F, 1PL and second person subjects in the affirmative whereas the transitive pattern $C_1C_2C_3$ is used with the remaining subjects (cf. Leslau 1968a:22; Goldenberg 1968:95 f.).

The subjunctive template is also used to form verbal nouns by attaching to it the prefix *wä*-, the suffix *-ot*, or a combination of them (Hetzron 1977:110).

Table 3: Formation of Verbal Nouns

	SUBJUNCTIVE	
	TRANSITIVE	INTRANSITIVE
Wolane	$C_1C_2äC_3$-ot	
Zay, Kistane	wä-$C_1C_2äC_3$	
Mesqan, Muher	wä-$C_1C_2C_3$	wä-$C_1C_2äC_3$
Chaha	wä-$C_1C_2C_3$	wä-$C_1C_2äC_3$
	$C_1C_2C_3$-ot	$C_1C_2äC_3$-ot
Inor	ä-$C_1C_2C_3$-$^{w/j}$-t	ä-$C_1C_2äC_3$-$^{w/j}$-t

The verbal noun in Chaha can be optionally formed by using either affix while the Inor verbal noun applies a combination of the two affixes in a phonologically reduced form, whereby the suffix *-t* is preceded by the non-segmental feature -^{wj} that triggers labialization and palatalization of root consonants, i.e., Inor *√*kft* 'open' > *ä-kuf^{w}ʧ-t* 'to open' (Leslau 1983:18).

Gemination of C_2 as part of the perfective template with Type A verbs is realized phonetically in two different ways in Gunnän Gurage: lengthening or devoicing. Lengthening of C_2 occurs in Kistane, Muher, and Mesqan.[4] These languages are spoken in an almost contiguous area in the north-central part of the Gurage area (cf. Map 1). In the remaining Gunnän Gurage languages, gemination is phonetically realized by devoicing underlying voiced consonants in a position that is geminated in the above-mentioned languages, as in Chaha *säpärä-m* (<**säbbärä-m*) 'he broke' vs. *ji-säbir* 'he breaks (usually)'. In Chaha and Inor, the overt realization of gemination does not affect voiceless consonants.[5] Thus, it seems that in Gunnän Gurage gemination of C_2 is in a process of decay; in Eastern Gurage languages, it already disappeared.

To summarize, the templates for aspect/mood are identical for verbs in dependent and independent clauses. Although the subjunctive template forms the jussive/imperative, which can only occur in independent clauses, this template is also used for forming the verbal noun and converbs, i.e., in dependent clauses.

3.3 Subject indexes

The subject indexes are similar across all Gurage languages (cf. Meyer 2011:1237; Hetzron 1977:77 ff.). The suffix subject index, which is used with perfective verbs, is relatively invariant. The respective forms are shown in Table 4.

4 Ezha as only CWG language also lengthens C_2 in the affirmative perfective.

5 In Endegagn (PWG), geminated C_2 may occur as devoiced and/or lengthened consonant depending on the overall time length of the verb (cf. Rose 2006).

Table 4: Suffix Subject Index

	3RD PERSON				2ND PERSON				1ST PERSON	
	SG.M	SG.F	PL.M	PL.F	SG.M	SG.F	PL.M	PL.F	SG	PL
Zay	*-(ä)*[6]	*-t*	*-^{w}*		*-h(ä)*	*-ʃ(ä)*	*-h^{w}m(ä)*		*-h^{w}*	*-n(ä)*
Wolane	*-ä*	*-t*	*-u*		*-Kä*[7]	*-ʃ*	*-K^{w}m*		*-K^{w}*	*-nä*
Mesqan	*-ä*	*-ätʧ*	*-o*	*-äma*	*-hä*	*-ʃ*	*-hu*	*-hma*	*-h^{w}*	*-nä*
Kistane	*-ä*	*-ätt*	*-m^{w}*[8]	*-ma*	*-Kä*	*-ʃ(i)*	*-Km^{w}*	*-Kma*	*-K^{w}*	*-nä*
Muher	*-ä*	*-ätt*	*-m^{w}*	*-ma*	*-hä*	*-h^{j}*	*-hm^{w}*	*-hma*	*-h^{w}*	*-nä*
Chaha	*-ä*	*-äʧ*	*-äm^{w}*	*-äma*	*-hä*	*-h^{j}*	*-hu*	*-hma*	*-h^{w}*	*-nä*
Inor	*-ä*	*-äʧ*	*-^{w}*	*-aa*	*-hä*	*-ʃ*	*-hu*	*-ha*	*-h^{w}*	*-nä*

A perfective verb uses the same subject markers in all clause types so that they do not help to distinguish between verbs in dependent and independent clause.

The pre-/circumfix subject index displays more variation within and across languages, as shown in Table 5.[9] The subject index for the affirmative subjunctive, i.e., (affirmative) imperative with second person subjects but jussive with first and third person subjects, is clearly set apart from the other subject indexes of other clause types. The affirmative imperative lacks of the subject prefix *t-*, which re-occurs in its negated form. Most subject prefixes for the affirmative jussive contain the vowel *ä*, i.e., all subject prefixes for Eastern Gurage, but only third person prefixes starting with *j-* in Gunnän Gurage, with the exception of Kistane, which also marks 1SG subjects with the vowel *ä*.

6 The vowel *-ä* in Zay is only pronounced in non-final position (Meyer 2005:55); word-finally it is zero yielding Zay *säbär* instead of Wolane *säbärä* 'he broke'.

7 The capital letter *K* indicates that the morpheme has two complementarily distributed allomorphs: When attached to verbs ending in a consonant, it is pronounced as plosive *k*, otherwise as fricative *h*.

8 The labialized nasal *m^{w}* is pronounced word-finally as plain nasal *m* in Kistane (Goldenberg 1968:77) but as nasalized labiovelar *ŋm͡* in Muher. When followed by other suffixes it is pronounced as *mu* (or also as labialized nasal *m^{w}* in Muher).

9 The column *Subordinate imperfective* only refers to imperfective verbs marked by a subordinating conjunction; it does not include converbs.

Table 5: Pre-/Circumfix Subject Indexes

			SUBJUNCTIVE		IMPERFECTIVE		
					SUBORDINATE	INDEPENDENT	
			AFF	NEG	AFF/NEG	NEG	AFF
Wolane	3	SG.M	*jä-*		*j-*	*ʔil-*	*j-*
		SG.F	*tä-*		*t-*	*ʔitt-*	*t-*
		PL	*jä-…-u*		*j-…-u*	*ʔil-…-u*	*j-…-u*
	2	SG.M	*ø*		*t-*	*ʔitt-*	*t-*
		SG.F	*-i*		*t-…-i*	*ʔitt-…-i*	*t-…-i*
		PL	*-u*		*t-…-u*	*ʔitt-…-u*	*t-…-u*
	1	SG	*lä-*		*l-*	*ʔill-CC1*	*j-*
		PL	*lä-…-nä*		*l-…-nä*	*ʔill-CC1…-nä*	*j-…-nä*
Zay	3	SG.M	*jä-*		*j-*		
		SG.F	*tä-*		*t-*		
		PL	*jä-…-^{w}*		*j-…-^{w}*		
	2	SG.M	*ø*		*t-*		
		SG.F	*-^{j}*		*t-…-^{j}*		
		PL	*-^{w}*		*t-…-^{w}*		
	1	SG	*lä-*		*l-*		*j-*
		PL	*lä-…-n(ä)*		*l-…-n(ä)*		*j-…-n(ä)*
Mesqan	3	SG.M	*jä-*		*j-*		
		SG.F			*t-*		
		PL.M	*jä-…-o*		*j-…-o*		
		PL.F	*jä-…-ma*		*j-…-ma*		
	2	SG.M	*ø*		*t-*		
		SG.F	*-^{j}*		*t-…-^{j}*		
		PL.M	*-o*		*t-…-o*		
		PL.F	*-ma*		*t-…-ma*		
	1	SG			*n-*		*ä-*
		PL			*n-…-nä*		
Kistane	3	SG.M	*jä-*		*j-*		
		SG.F			*t-*		
		PL.M	*jä-…-m^{w}*		*j-…-m^{w}*		
		PL.F	*jä-…-ma*		*j-…-ma*		
	2	SG.M	*ø*		*t-*		
		SG.F	*-^{j}*		*t-…-^{j}*		
		PL.M	*-m^{w}*		*t-…-m^{w}*		
		PL.F	*-ma*		*t-…-ma*		
	1	SG	*nä-*	*n-*	*ä-/n-*	*ä-*	
		PL			*n-*		

			SUBJUNCTIVE		IMPERFECTIVE		
					SUBORDINATE	INDEPENDENT	
			AFF	NEG	AFF/NEG	NEG	AFF
Muher	3	SG.M	*jä-*		*j-*		
		SG.F			*t-*		
		PL.M	*jä-…-m*^{w}		*j-…-m*^{w}		
		PL.F	*jä-…-ma*		*j-…-ma*		
	2	SG.M	*ø*		*t-*		
		SG.F	*-*^{j}		*t-…-*^{j}		
		PL.M	*-m*^{w}		*t-…-m*^{w}		
		PL.F	*-ma*		*t-…-ma*		
	1	SG			*n-*		*ä-*
		PL			*n-…-nä*		
Chaha	3	SG.M	*jä-*		*j-*		
		SG.F			*t-*		
		PL.M	*jä-…-o*		*j-…-o*		
		PL.F	*jä-…-äma*		*j-…-äma*		
	2	SG.M	*ø*		*t-*		
		SG.F	*-*^{j}		*t-…-*^{j}		
		PL.M	*-o*		*t-…-o*		
		PL.F	*-äma*		*t-…-äma*		
	1	SG			*n-*		*ä-*
		PL			*n-…-nä*		
Inor[10]	3	SG.M	*ä-*		*j-*		
		SG.F			*t-*		
		PL.M	*ä-…-*^{jw}*ua*		*j-…-*^{jw}*ua*		
		PL.F	*ä-…-*^{jw}*aa*		*j-…-*^{jw}*aa*		
	2	SG.M	*ø*		*t-*		
		SG.F	*-*^{j}*ua*		*t-…-*^{j}*ua*		
		PL.M	*-*^{jw}*ua*		*t-…-*^{jw}*ua*		
		PL.F	*-*^{jw}*aa*		*t-…-*^{jw}*aa*		
	1	SG			*n-*		*ä-*
		PL			*n-…-nä*		

The occurrence of the vowel *ä* as part of the subject index starting with a consonant is a clear indicator for affirmative jussive clauses. Wagner

10 The morphophonological changes in the verb triggered by the subject indexes in Inor are not well described (cf. Berhanu & Hetzron 2000:44 ff.). Generally, the indexes for 2SG.F and 2/3PL may labialize or palatalize consonants in the verb; the final diphthong *-ua* is sometimes omitted.

(1968:210 ff.), and later also Hetzron (1977:79 f.), suggest that the jussive with a 3SG.M subject was preceded by an element **lä-*,[11] which fused with the subject prefix *j-* yielding (**lä-j-* > **le-* >) *jä-*.[12] In Eastern Gurage, the vowel *ä* of the person prefix was further extended to all third and even first person subjects (Wagner 1968:112), whereby in the first person, the combination of **lä-* and original 1SG subject prefix **ʔ-* yielded *lä-*. The 1SG *nä-* in Kistane is probably related to *lä-* in Eastern Gurage.

Wolane uses a special subject index with negated imperfective verbs in ICL, where the negative marker and the subject index fused into a unique prefix, which clearly distinguishes this clause type from all others (cf. Section 3.4).[13] In all other Gurage languages, the subject index used in the negated subjunctive also occurs with affirmative and negative subordinate and negated imperfective verbs in ICL. This might be due to the reason that the subjunctive was used as a subordinate verb form at an earlier stage in these languages, as observable in Geʿez (Tropper 2002:90, 192). The subject index of the negated subjunctive also occurs in the affirmative imperfective in ICL, with the exception of the first person subjects. All Gunnän Gurage languages use the prefix *ä-* to mark 1SG subjects with affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL while the 1SG subject prefix *n-* is used in all other clause types. Only in Kistane the 1SG subject prefix *ä-* also occurs in negated ICL and in affirmative subordinate clauses.[14] In Eastern Gurage, the first person subjects are marked by the prefix *j-* in ICL with an affirmative imperfective verb while the prefix *l-* occurs in all other clause types. While the first person subject prefixes *l(ä)-* and *n(ä)-* result from the fusion of the subjunctive particle **lä-* with the older subject prefix,[15] the origin of the prefixes *ä-* and *j-* for first person subjects, however, remains unclear.

To summarize, there is no straightforward relation between subject index and finiteness. The only forms that are clearly mark verbs in ICL are the

11 Hetzron (1977:79) considers **lä-* a dative prefix while Wagner (1968:211) relates it to the subjunctive particle *la-* in Geʿez or *li-* in Arabic (cf. also Lipiński 1997:336). As to Huehnergard (1983:592), the prefix **la-* can be reconstructed for Proto-Semitic (PS) where it was used to emphasize or topicalize the subject of clauses expressing an intention, volition or command.

12 Leslau (1968b) and also Lipiński (1997:368, 373), in contrast, assume that the vowel *ä* of the subject prefix represents a PS feature.

13 A similar negation for the imperfective in ICL is also found in Silt'e (cf. Gutt 1997:923).

14 The 1SG subject prefix with subordinate verbs is given as *ä-* for the affirmative but *n-* for verbs in negative relative clauses (Leslau 1968a:20).

15 Bulakh & Kogan (2010:279) consider the 1SG subject prefix *l-~n-* an innovation in SES, which might not have its origin in the jussive paradigm.

affirmative imperative, and the affirmative jussive. Further, all Gurage languages have a unique prefix for the affirmative imperfective with 1SG subjects in ICL, which was extended to 1PL subjects in Eastern Gurage. Except Zay, Eastern Gurage languages have a unique subject index for the negative imperfective in ICL. All other subject indexes occur with various verbs in dependent and independent clauses.

3.4 Negation

Negation in Gurage is marked on the verb but has scope over the entire clause. Most commonly, it is marked by the negative prefix *al-/an-* or *a-*.[16] The negative prefix *al-* occurs with perfective verbs in Eastern Gurage and Kistane but *an-* in the remaining Gunnän Gurage languages.

Table 6: Perfective Verbs in Main Clauses

	AFFIRMATIVE	**NEGATIVE**
Zay	*säbär-ä-n-u*	*al-sɨbär-o* [assɨbäro]
	break\PFV-3SG.M-FOC-DECL	NEG-break\SBJV-3SG.M:DECL
Wolane	*säbär-ä*	*al-säbär-ä*
	break\PFV-3SG.M	NEG-break\PFV-3SG.M
Kistane	*säffär-o*	*al-säfär-ä*
	break\PFV-3SG.M:MVM	NEG-break\NPFV-3SG.M
Mesqan	*säbbär-ä*	*an-säbär-ä*
	break\PFV-3SG.M	NEG-break\NPFV-3SG.M
Muher	*säbbär-ä-m*	*an-säbär-ä*
	break\PFV-3SG.M-FOC-MVM	NEG-break\NPFV-3SG.M
Chaha	*säpär-ä-m*	*an-säpär-ä*
	break\PFV-3SG.M-MVM	NEG-break\PFV-3SG.M
Inor	*säpä'r-ä*[17]	*ã-säpär-ä-da*
	break\PFV-3SG.M:MVM	NEG-break\PFV-3SG.M-KTD
Gloss	'he broke'	'he did not break'

16 The negative prefix for perfective verbs in SES is commonly reconstructed as **ʔal-*, while the negative marker with imperfective/subjunctive verbs might be **ʔal-* or **ʔaj-* (Bulakh 2012:407 f.). Contrary to Leslau (1952:76 fn. 77) among others, I assume that only the prefix *(ʔ)a-*, probably a reflex of the negative prefix **ʔaj-*, is the negative marker for imperfective/subjunctive verbs in Gurage (cf. also Hudson 2003:213 ff.).

17 The apostrophe in the Inor data indicates an unexpected ultima accent, which is due to the diachronic loss of word-final *-m* (Hetzron 1977:42 f.).

In addition to the negative prefix, Zay, Kistane, Mesqan and Muher use different templates for affirmative and negative perfective verbs (cf. Table 2 above). The negative perfective template in Kistane, Mesqan and Muher lacks the gemination of C_2.[18] Zay, in contrast, uses the subjunctive template but with the suffix subject index.

The negative marker *a-* plus the 3SG.M subject prefix *j-*, merge to *e-* in most Gunnän Gurage languages but yield *aj-* in Eastern Gurage and Inor. As mentioned in Section 3.3, negative imperfective verbs with 1SG subjects use prefixes different from those in the corresponding affirmative forms; negative jussive verbs lack the vowel *ä* of the corresponding affirmative forms.

Table 7: Imperfective ICL Verbs in the Present Tense

	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE
	EASTERN GURAGE	
Zay	*ji-säbr-in-aa*	*a-j-säbr-u*
	3SG.M-break\IPFV-FOC-AUX:PRS:DECL	NEG-3SG.M-break\IPFV-DECL
Wolane	*ji-säbr-an*	*ʔili-säbir*
	3SG.M-break\IPFV-AUX:PRS	NEG:3SG.M[ICL]-break\IPFV
	GUNNÄN GURAGE	
Kistane	*ji-säbr-u*	*t-i-säbir*
	3SG.M-break\IPFV-MVM	NEG[ICL]-3SG.M-break\IPFV
Muher	*ji-säbr-u*	*e-säbir*
	3SG.M-break\IPFV-MVM	NEG:3SG.M-break\IPFV
Mesqan	*ji-säbir*	*e-säbir*
	3SG.M-break\IPFV	NEG:3SG.M-break\IPFV
Chaha	*ji-säbir*	*e-säbir*
	3SG.M-break\IPFV	NEG:3SG.M-break\IPFV
Inor	*ji-säbir*	*a-j-säbir-ka*
	3SG.M-break\IPFV[ICL]	NEG-3SG.M-break\IPFV-KTD[ICL]
Gloss	'he breaks'	'he does not break'

The negative prefixes *t-* in Kistane[19] and *ʔl-* in Wolane[20] occur only with imperfective verbs in ICL, which, thus, become distinct from all other clause

18 Given that the gemination of C_2 with perfective verbs is an innovation in SES (Hetzron 1972a:22 ff.), its lack in the negation must represent an archaism (Goldenberg 1977:487, fn. 123).

19 Beside Kistane, the negative prefix *t-* also occurs in Gafat (Leslau 1945:68), but not in Zay as wrongly indicated in Leslau (1952:76), Hudson (2003:215) and probably elsewhere. The negative marker *t-* is mainly considered a borrowing from Sidaama

types. In Inor, the negated imperfective in ICL is marked by the KTD-suffix,[21] which makes it identifiable as an ICL verb. In Zay, affirmative jussive, and affirmative and negative indicative verbs in ICL are marked by the declarative marker (cf. Section 3.5.2.2). Negative ICL in Kistane and Muher lack the main verb marker (cf. Section 3.5.2.1). Further, in Eastern Gurage, affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL are obligatorily marked by a temporal auxiliary (cf. Section 3.5.1). In negation, however, the present tense auxiliary is always lacking.

An ICL with a non-present imperfective verb is ambiguous. It can denote a durative/habitual in the past or an unreal consequence. In negation, however, these two meanings are formally distinguished in the Eastern Gurage languages Zay and Silt'e. The negated non-present durative/habitual in Zay is formed by an affirmative imperfective verb followed by the negated non-present auxiliary *naar*, as in (1a).[22] The negated unreal consequence in Zay (and Silt'e), as in (1b), consists of the negated perfective verb (which occurs with the subjunctive template in Zay) preceded by the prefix *l-*, which marks a real protasis in other contexts (Meyer 2005:285; Gutt 1997:950).

(1) a. *jɨ-* *näk'ɨl* *al-* *naar-* *uh* ZAY
1SG- take\IPFV NEG- AUX:NPRS- 1SG
'I was not taking' (durative)

b. *l-* *aal-* *nɨk'äl-* *uh-* *u*
COND- NEG- take\SBJV- 1SG- DECL
'I would not take (it)' (unreal)

(Hetzron 1972a:97; Leslau 1952:76 f.). Other suggestions are an origin as phonetic augment (Leslau 1945:68) or a relationship to the Egyptian negative element *tm* (Lipiński 1997:455).

20 Hetzron (1972a:28) relates the negative marker *ʔl-* to the common SES negative marker **ʔal-*, which is not sound. Despite the uncommon sound change **ʔal-* to *ʔi(l)-* and the deletion of the subject prefix *j-* in the 3SG.M and 3PL, the negative marker for the 1SG in Silt'e has an additional *w*, as in *ilaw-nakt* 'I will not beat' (Gutt 1997:923). This *w* does not occur in Wolane but probably left a trace in the gemination of the *l* in the negative prefix and the first radical of the verb, as in *ʔilli-ssäbɨr* 'I do not break' (Meyer 2006a:110).

21 The KTD-suffix represents a set of allomorphs in complementary distribution (cf. section 3.5.2.3).

22 Silt'e expresses the negated non-present habitual/durative by the negated imperfective followed by the invariable non-present auxiliary *naar* (Gutt 1997:923).

In Wolane, another Eastern Gurage language, and in most Gunnän Gurage languages, however, only one negative form for both uses prevails:[23]

(2) a. *b-* *a-* *j-* *säbɨr* WOLANE
COND- NEG- 3SG.M- break\IPFV
b. *b-* *e-* *säbɨr* MUHER
COND- NEG:3SG.M- break\IPFV
i. 'he was not use to break'
ii. 'he would not break'

In Gunnän Gurage language, as shown for Muher in (2b), the negated non-present imperfective in ICL consists of the negated imperfective to which the prefix *b-* is attached, which synchronically functions as subordinating conjunction to mark temporal or conditional clauses. As for Wolane in (2a), instead of the ICL negation, the negation for subordinate imperfective verbs is used in this case (cf. Table 5).

A separate prohibitive construction exists in Muher, CWG and PWG.[24] This construction consists of the invariable prefix *ɨn-*[25] followed by the inflected negative perfective (recall Table 2) (plus main verb markers in Muher):

(3) a. *ɨnkäfätho* MUHER
ɨn- käfät -hä -u
PROH- open\NPFV -2SG.M - MVM
b. *ɨn-* *käfät* *-xä* INOR
PROH- open\NPFV -2SG.M
'Don't open (it)!'

At least for Muher, the prohibitive is exceptional because it co-occurs with the main verb marker that is otherwise restricted to affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL (cf. Section 3.5.2.1).

23 According to Hetzron (1977:87), the non-present imperfective in ICL in Gunnän Gurage is negated uniformly by using the negated imperfective preceded by *b-*. At least for Kistane this seems not to be the case because Goldenberg (1968:96) provides an example which follows the negated habitual/durative in Silt'e.

24 Contrary to Hetzron (1977:88), the prohibitive construction could not be attested in Mesqan.

25 Leslau (1969a) considers the prefix *ɨn-* an archaic PS negative marker (cf. also Lipiński 1997:456 f.).

To summarize, negated verbs are marked by the same negative prefixes in dependent and independent clauses. Further, the negated unreal consequence in all Gurage languages and also the negated non-present durative/habitual in Wolane and Gunnän Gurage is formed by a construction that resembles a subordinate verb due to the prefixed conditional markers *l-* or *b-*. Only in the Eastern Gurage languages Wolane and Silt'e negated imperfective verbs in ICL form a unique paradigm, which sets them apart from all other clause types. In Gunnän Gurage except Mesqan, a uniquely marked prohibitive construction occurs whose occurrence is restricted to ICL.

3.5 Additional compulsory morphemes

Besides the obligatorily marking of aspect/mood, subject indexes, and polarity, there are some recurrent morphemes attached to verbs in Gurage languages that occur only in specific clause types in some of the languages. These morphemes can be divided into two broad groups: tense markers and markers of clausal status.

3.5.1 Tense

Affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL in all Gurage languages distinguish between present and non-present situations by temporal auxiliary verbs,[26] whereby their usage patterns vary across the languages. The most common temporal auxiliaries grammaticalized from the verbs *√*hlw* 'exist (present)' (Hetzron 1972a:18 f; Goldenberg 1977:494 ff.) and *√*nbr* '(a) live, (b) exist (non-present)'. For the non-present tense, another auxiliary based on the element **bannä* of unclear origin is used in some Gunnän Gurage languages (Hetzron 1972a:65 ff; 1977:106 ff.). The distribution of these auxiliaries in ICL and other morphemes of affirmative imperfective in ICL is summarized in Table 8.[27] The non-present auxiliaries based on *√*nbr* or **bannä* occur in all languages in an invariable form in ICL, while the present auxiliary, which agrees with the subject in most persons, is restricted to Eastern Gurage. The

26 Temporal auxiliaries also occur with perfective verbs in ICL. In this case, however, the perfective verb is usually marked as converb. Exceptions, in which a temporal auxiliary and a negated perfective verb are juxtaposed, are reported for Kistane (Goldenberg 1968:96) and Silt'e (Gutt 1997:920). These constructions as well as tense distinctions in dependent clauses will not be considered.

27 The Gurage situation fits Pettersson's (1994) analysis of tense as a binary category: present (situation occurs at the moment of speech) vs. non-present (situation does not occur at the moment of speech, i.e., in the past or in the future). This distribution accounts for the use of the non-present auxiliary in temporal and modal constructions.

auxiliary *√*hlw* underwent stark phonological reduction in Eastern Gurage where it is now a clitic or suffix (Hetzron 1972a:40).

Table 8: Additional Morphemes with Imperfective Verbs in ICL

	NON-PRESENT	**PRESENT**
	EASTERN GURAGE	
Zay	IPFV *naar*-AGR-DECL	IPFV-[*aa*-AGR]-DECL[28]
Wolane	IPFV *när*$_{INV}$	IPFV-[*a*-AGR][29]
	GUNNÄN GURAGE	
Kistane	IPFV *näbbär*$_{INV}$	IPFV-MVM
Muher	IPFV *bannä*-MVM$_{INV}$	IPFV-MVM
Mesqan	IPFV *bannä*$_{INV}$	IPFV
Chaha	IPFV [*banä~ba*]$_{INV}$, SBJV-*ʃä*, IPFV-KTD	IPFV
Inor	IPFV [*baanä~baan*]$_{INV}$-KTD, SBJV-ˈ*se*, IPFV-KTD	IPFV

Chaha (CWG) and Inor (PWG) make temporal/modal distinctions in ICL, which are absent in the remaining Gurage languages. Beside a plain imperfective denoting an ongoing situation in ICL, these languages also use an imperfective verb plus the KTD-suffix (see 3.5.2.3) to denote a *definite future* while the combination subjunctive plus invariable auxiliary *-ʃä* / -ˈ*se* 'want' marks an *indefinite future* (Hetzron 1977:85 f.).

(4) a. *jɨ-* *säbɨr* CHAHA
3SG.M- break\IPFV
'he breaks/is breaking'

b. *jɨ-* *säbɨr* *-te*
3SG.M- break\IPFV -KDT
'he will certainly break'

c. *jɨ-* *sbɨr* *-ʃä*
3SG.M- break\SBJV -AUX:FUT
'he may break'

d. *jɨ-* *säbɨr* INOR
3SG.M- break\IPFV
'he breaks/is breaking'

e. *jɨ-* *säbɨr* *-k^{w}e*
3SG.M- break\IPFV -KDT
'he will certainly break'

f. *jɨ-* *sbɨr-* *-ˈse*
3SG.M- break\SBJV -AUX:FUT
'he may break'

28 In the 3SG.M and 1PL, the auxiliary is optionally *-äl(ä)* (Meyer 2005:159 f.).

29 In the 3SG.M, 1PL, and 3PL, the present auxiliary occurs as invariable *-an* (Meyer 2006a:96 f.).

The use of temporal auxiliaries with affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL is obligatory in Eastern Gurage (cf. Hetzron 1972a:38 ff.). In Gunnän Gurage, however, temporal distinctions with imperfective verbs in ICL are less rigid.

In negation, the tense distinction is retained but not the respective auxiliary verbs (cf. Table 7). Definite and indefinite future constructions as well as constructions with the non-present auxiliary **bannä* occur exclusively in ICL, but never in dependent clauses. These constructions are, thus, a clear indicator for finite verbs. The auxiliaries based on **√hlw* and **√nbr*, however, can co-occur with verbs in independent and dependent clauses, in particular with relative clause verbs (cf. Section 4).

3.5.2 Clausal status

Several Gunnän Gurage languages and Zay distinguish between dependent and independent clauses by additional morphemes. Three main strategies can be distinguished: (a) the use of affirmative indicative main verb markers (MVM), (b) the use of declarative markers (DECL) to distinguish between declaration and interrogation,[30] and (c) the use of the KTD-suffix.

3.5.2.1 Affirmative indicative main verb marking

The Gurage languages Kistane and Muher, but also Dobbi and partly even Gafat, use a set of suffixes consisting of the allomorphs *-u, -i, -n/-t* (short MVM *-u*) attached to verbs to mark affirmative indicative ICL (cf. Hetzron 1968:170 f.; 1972a:37 ff.; 1977:88 ff. for details). As these markers clearly distinguish between affirmative independent vs. negated and dependent clauses, Hetzron (1968; etc.) calls them *main verb marker*. These markers obligatorily occur with perfective and imperfective verbs in Kistane, cf. (5), but usually only with imperfective verbs in Muher.

(5) a. *alläfo*
alläf -ä -u
go\PFV -3SG.M -MVM
'He went.'

b. *j- alf -u* KISTANE
3SG.M- go\IPFV -MVM
'He goes/will go.'

Beside imperfective verbs, the main verb marker in Muher is also suffixed to the non-present tense auxiliary in ICL, cf. (6a), and to a perfective verb in the

30 The terms *indicative* and *declarative* denote different clause types. Indicative is in contrast to subjunctive and encompasses affirmative and negative verbs in the perfective or imperfective aspect. Declarative stands in contrast to interrogative and encompasses verbs in the indicative and subjunctive.

prohibitive construction (cf. (3a) in Section 3.4). Note that main verb marker and non-present tense auxiliary are in complementary distribution in Kistane (cf. also Table 8):

(6) a. *abdi bethut jef banno* MUHER

abdi	bet	-hut	j-	ef	bannä	-ä	-u
Abdi	house	-POSS: 3SG.M	3SG.M-	go\IPFV	AUX: NPRS	-3SG.M	-MVM

'Abdi was going to his house.'

b. *käbbädä tä- gäbäja -jän j- alf näbbär* KISTANE

Kebede	to-	market	-CIRC	3SG.M-	go\ IPFV	AUX: NPRS

'Kebede was going towards the market.'

Perfective verbs in affirmative ICL in Muher are obligatorily marked by the invariant suffix *-m*.

(7) *bet -hut ef -ä -m* MUHER

house	-POSS:3SG.M	go\PFV	-3SG.M	-MVM

'He went to his house.'

Chaha (CWG) and Inor (PWG) also mark perfective verbs in ICL by the suffix *-m*, but not imperfective verbs. This suffix *-m* with perfective verbs in ICL is also considered a main verb marker (short MVM *-m*) due to its functional overlap with the MVM *-u* of Kistane.[31] The MVM *-m* is most probably related to the converb marker *-m* in Gunnän Gurage and Zay (cf. Hetzron 1972a:111 ff.). This is suggested by the situation in Kistane, where the suffix *-m* basically functions as converb marker, as shown in (8a). Converbs and the non-present tense auxiliary form complex predicates that may denote a past perfect in ICL, as in (8b). Recall that the non-present tense auxiliary is in complementary distribution with the MVM in Kistane.

31 In analogy to Eastern Gurage, Rose (1996b:219 ff.) considers the MVM *-u* and *-m* to be present or past tense marker, respectively. However, the evidence from Muher, in which the MVM *-u* combines with the non-present auxiliary, cf. (6a), does not support such an analysis.

(8) a. *bällam alläfo* KISTANE

bälla	-ä	-m	alläf	-ä	-u
eat\PFV	-3SG.M	-CNV1	go\PFV	-3SG.M	- MVM

'He ate and went.'

b. *alläf -ä -m näbbär*

go\PFV	-3SG.M	-CNV1	AUX:NPRS

'He had gone (away).'

Perfective verbs marked by *-m* without the non-present auxiliary also occur in ICL in Kistane where they are in opposition to verbs marked by the MVM *-u*, as in (9a) vs. (9b), which denote the opposition present perfect vs. perfective:

(9) a. *bällam*

bälla	-ä	-m	-ø
eat\PFV	-3SG.M	-CNV1	-PRS

'He has eaten.'

b. *bällo* KISTANE

bälla	-ä	-u
eat\PFV	-3SG.M	-MVM

'He ate.'

The construction in (9a) stands in a paradigmatic relationship to the past perfect in (8b). Thus, it can be assumed that the converb in (9a) is followed by a present tense auxiliary element, which is not overtly realized in Gunnän Gurage to form a present perfect.

In analogy to Kistane, the affirmative perfective plus the suffix *-m* in Muher, Chaha and Inor might actually also go back to a present perfect, which, however, grammaticalized into the only possible construction with perfective verbs in ICL in these languages. Consequently, dependent perfective converbs marked by *-m* became formally homonymous with perfective verbs in ICL. Only syntax, i.e., being in sentence-final position or not, can distinguish between the two.

3.5.2.2 Declarative clause marking

Zay (Eastern Gurage) obligatorily marks affirmative imperfective verbs for tense in ICL (cf. Section 3.5.1). In addition, Zay makes use of the declarative marker *-u* or its allomorph (lengthening of non-central vowels), and obligatory focus marking with *-n / -tä* in ICL (Meyer 2005:290 ff., 305 ff.).

(10) a. *fäfät' näk'äl -ä -n -u* ZAY

canoe	take\PFV	-3SG.M	-FOC	-DECL

'He took the canoe.'

b. *ʃäfät' jinäk'linälo*

ʃäfät'	j-	näk'l	-n	-älä	-ä	-u
canoe	3SG.M-	take\IPFV	-FOC	-AUX:PRS	-3SG.M	-DECL

'He takes the canoe.'

In contrast to the main verb marker in 3.5.2.1, the declarative marker in Zay occurs in affirmative *and* negative statements and in the jussive but not in the imperative, the negative subjunctive nor in subordination. Most strikingly, it never is used in questions, as shown in (11) vis-à-vis (10):

(11) a. *ʃäfät' näk'äl -ä -n?* ZAY

canoe	take\PFV	-3SG.M	-FOC

'Did he take the canoe?'

b. *ʃäfät' jinäk'linäl?*

ʃäfät'	j-	näk'l	-n	-älä	-ä
canoe	3SG.M-	take\IPFV	-FOC	-AUX:PRS	-3SG.M

'Will he take the canoe?'

The focus marker in Zay distinguishes between affirmative and negative ICL (Meyer 2005:290 ff.), i.e., it is obligatory in affirmative but not in negative ICL. In contrast to the declarative marker, the focus marker can be attached to any constituent of the clause; it need not be the clause-final verb.

3.5.2.3 KTD-suffix

Inor (PWG) and to a lesser extend also Chaha (CWG) attach the so-called KTD-suffix to verbs in specific clauses. The three consonants of the suffix are in complementary distribution: *-k* is attached to a verb base not ending with a subject index, *-t* follows a long vowel or diphthong, and *-d* occurs after a short vowel or a consonant belonging to a suffix of the subject index. These consonants are followed by the vowel *e* in the definite future tense but by the vowel *a~ä* elsewhere (Hetzron 1972a:67 ff.; 1977:92 f.).

In Chaha, the KTD-suffix is restricted to the imperfective in the definite future tense (see section 3.5.1), but in Inor it also occurs with verbs in other clause types: the non-present auxiliary in ICL, and negated perfective and imperfective verbs in ICL, as well as with the affirmative imperfective as relative clause verb and in subordinate clauses marked by the conjunction *t-*:

(12) a. *a-* *j-* *säßir* *-ka* INOR
NEG- 3SG.M- break\IPFV -KTD
'he will not break' (negative ICL)

b. *ji-* *säßir* *-kaa* *-te*
3SG.M- break\IPFV -OBJ.3PL.F -KTD
'who (3SG.M) will break them (F)' (relative clause)

c. *baanä* *-dä*
AUX:NPRS:3SG.M -KTD
'he was' (Hetzron 1977:93)

Neglecting the definite future construction and the non-present auxiliary, the KTD-suffix in Inor mainly occurs with negated verbs in ICL but with affirmative imperfective verbs in dependent clauses. This type of asymmetry is unique because a formal feature, the KTD-suffix, is cross-linked with a paradigmatic verbal feature, affirmative vs. negative, to distinguish between dependent and independent clause.

Hetzron (1972a:67) is of the opinion that the KTD-suffix in Inor is functionally equivalent to the main verb marker in Kistane and Muher (cf. Section 3.5.2.1). However, the main verb marker is attached to affirmative verbs in ICL but not to subordinate or negated verbs. The KTD-suffix has, thus, another functional range than the main verb marker, or the declarative marker in Zay.

4 Dependent clauses

Dependent clauses are marked by additional subordinating conjunctions attached to verbs but usually lack marking for tense and clausal status occurring with verbs in ICL, as shown in (13):

(13) a. *säbbär* *-hu* *-m* MUHER
break\PFV -1SG -MVM
'I broke'

b. *bä-* *säbbär* *-h*^{w}
COND- break\PFV -1SG
'if I break'

c. *al-* *nik'äl* *-uh* *-u* ZAY
NEG- take\SBJV -1SG -DECL
'I did not take'

d. *bal-* *nik'äl* *-uh*
COND:NEG- take\PFV -1SG
'if I do not take'

The verbs in the dependent clauses (13b/d) occur in the perfective aspect, but their actual temporal setting depends on the verb in the ICL (Hetzron 1977:101 ff.). Generally, dependent clauses do not anchor the verbal event to a specific time, which was one defining feature of finite verbs mentioned in Section 2.

Most common dependent clauses in Gurage languages are relative and converb clauses. Relative clause verbs can be overtly marked by the prefix *jä-* (with the allomorph *j-* before vowels) but need not, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Relative Clause Verbs

	PERFECTIVE		**IMPERFECTIVE**	
	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE
Zay	*jä-säbär-(ä)*	*j-al-sɨbär-(ä)*	*ji-säbɨr-aal*	*j-a-j-säbɨr*
	REL-break\PFV-(3SG.M)	REL-NEG-break\SBJV-(3SG.M)	3SG.M-break\IPFV-AUX:PRS[REL]	REL-NEG-3SG.M-break\IPFV
Wolane	*jä-säbär-ä*	*j-al-säbär-ä*	*ji-säbr-an*	*j-a-j-säbr-an*
	REL-break\PFV-3SG.M	REL-NEG-break\PFV-3SG.M	3SG.M-break\IPFV-AUX:PRS	REL-NEG-3SG.M-break\IPFV-AUX:PRS
Kistane	*jä-säbbär-ä*	*an-säbär-ä*	*ji-säbɨr*	*a-j-säbɨr*
	REL-break\PFV-3SG.M	NEG-break\NPFV-3SG.M	3SG.M-break\IPFV[REL]	NEG-3SG.M-break\IPFV[REL]
Muher[32]	*jä-säbbär-ä*	*an-säbär-ä*	*ji-säbɨr*	*e-säbɨr*
	REL-break\PFV-3SG.M	NEG-break\NPFV-3SG.M	3SG.M-break\IPFV [REL]$_{\text{Muher only}}$	NEG:3SG.M-break\IPFV
Inor	*ä-säpär-ä*	*ã-säpär-ä*	*ji-säbɨr-ka*	*a-j-säbɨr*
	REL-break\PFV-3SG.M	NEG-break\NPFV-3SG.M[REL]	3SG.M-break\IPFV-KTD[REL]	NEG-3SG.M-break\IPFV[REL]
Gloss	'who (3SG.M) broke'	'who (3SG.M) did not break'	'who (3SG.M) breaks'	'who (3SG.M) does not break'

Imperfective verbs in relative clauses in Zay and Wolane are also marked by the present tense auxiliary. In Zay, this auxiliary occurs only with affirmative imperfective verbs and merges with the relative prefix *jä-* yielding

32 The Muher relative verb forms occur also in Mesqan and Chaha.

**jä-äl(ä)* > *-aal*, which formally differs from the present tense auxiliary *-äl(ä)* or *-aa* in ICL (cf. Meyer 2005:177). In Wolane, however, affirmative imperfective verbs in independent and relative clauses are identical. In negation, however, the relative prefix *jä-* is attached to the imperfective verb in Wolane.[33]

In Gunnän Gurage, the relative prefix *jä-* is only attached to affirmative perfective verbs. Consequently, negative perfective verbs in relative clauses and ICL are homonymous in all Gunnän Gurage languages except Inor. Similarly, negative imperfective verbs in relative and independent clauses in Muher, Mesqan, and Chaha are identical, while Kistane marks imperfective verbs in ICL through the unique negative marker *t-* (cf. Section 3.4). Further, homonymy between verbs in relative clauses and ICL also occurs in the affirmative imperfective in Mesqan and Chaha, whereas the main verb markers in Kistane and Muher clearly distinguish between them. In Inor, verbs in relative clauses are clearly separated from ICL by the KTD-suffix, which is attached to negated verbs in ICL but not to negated verbs in relative clauses, and to affirmative imperfective in relative clauses but not in ICL.

A similar overlap of verbs in dependent and ICL is found with certain converbs (see Table 10), which are formed from inflected verbs to which various converb markers can be added (cf. Hetzron 1972a:99 ff.; 1977:94 ff.; Leslau 1969b; Meyer 2011:1247). The converb marked by *-ä* in Wolane but *-m* elsewhere in Gurage (CNV1) is a general converb, which is most frequently used for narration of subsequent events in a coherent macro situation without clear transitions between the individual events, and for causal and manner adverbial modifications of a verb. The converb formed by the suffix *-ani* in Wolane or *-m ta(nnä)~-nta(nnä)* in Muher, Chaha and Inor (CNV2) is mainly used for narration of subsequent events with different subjects or strong emphasis on the transition between the events. The converb construction based on the subjunctive template to which the suffix *-t* plus the suffix subject index is attached (CNV3) in Chaha and Inor co-occurs only as specialized narrative converb with selected reference verbs.

33 The relative prefix *jä-* in Silt'e does not occur with negated imperfective verbs: *a-j-säbr-aan* 'who (3SG.M) does not break'.

Table 10: Converbs in Gurage

	CONVERB 1	CONVERB 2	CONVERB 3
Zay (& Kistane, Mesqan)	*näk'äl-ä-m* take\PFV-3SG.M-CNV1 *ji-näk'l-im* 3SG.M-take\IPFV-CNV1 *jä-nk'äl-im* 3SG.M-take\SBJV-CNV1 'he having taken'		
Wolane (& Silt'e)	*säbär-t-ä* break\PFV-3SG.F-CNV1 *ti-säbr-ä* 3SG.F-break\IPFV-CNV1 *tä-sbär-ä* 3SG.F-break\SBJV-CNV1	*säbär-t-ani* break\PFV-3SG.F-CNV2 *ti-säbr-ani* 3SG.F-break\IPFV-CNV2 *tä-sbär-ani* 3SG.F-break\SBJV-CNV2	
	'she having broken'		
Muher	*säbbär-ä-m* break\PFV-3SG.M-CNV1 *jisäbr-im* 3SG.M-break\IPFV-CNV1 *jä-sbir-im* 3SG.M-break\SBJV-CNV1	*säbbär-ä-nta(nnä)* break\PFV-3SG.M-CNV2 *ji-säbr-inta(nnä)* 3SG.M-break\IPFV-CNV2 *jä-sbir-inta(nnä)* 3SG.M-break\SBJV-CNV2	
	'he having broken'		
Chaha (& Inor)	*säpär-ä-m* break\PFV-3SG.M-CNV1 *ji-säbr-im* 3SG.M-break\IPFV-CNV1 *jä-sbir-im* 3SG.M-break\SBJV-CNV1	*säpär-ä-nta(nä)* break\PFV-3SG.M-CNV2 *ji-säbr-inta(nä)* 3SG.M-break\IPFV-CNV2 *jä-sbir-inta(nä)* 3SG.M-break\SBJV-CNV2	*sibir-t-ä* break\SBJV-CNV3-3SG.M
	'he having broken'		

Generally, converbs are nonfinite dependent verbs that always have to co-occur with a reference verb, i.e., they cannot be the only verb in an ICL. The occurrence of CNV1 and CNV2 based on the imperfective or subjunctive templates is restricted to reference verbs in the same aspect/mood, while the CNV3 is restricted to negative or non-perfective reference verbs. Although the converb based on the perfective template co-occurs with reference verbs in all aspects and moods it is nonfinite because its aspectual/temporal setting

depends on that of the reference verb. Further, converbs are subject to certain restrictions with regard to object indexing, and only occur in the affirmative – with the exception of Kistane, Zay, and possibly Silt'e.[34]

Formally, the perfective converb marked by the suffix *-m* in Muher, Chaha (CWG) and Inor (PWG) is identical to perfective verbs in ICL, while in Kistane (cf. (9a) above) and Mesqan it is identical to the present perfect in ICL. Similarly, the perfective converb marked by *-ä* in Wolane is homonymous with certain perfective verbs in ICL (Meyer 2006a:131 ff.). In these cases, only the syntactic position of the verbs distinguishes dependent converbs from verbs in ICL.

5 Independent clauses

As shown in the preceding sections, the traditional finiteness features TAM and subject indexing do not plainly distinguish between finite verbs in ICL and nonfinite verbs in dependent clauses. In this function, rather the markers for tense and clausal status (cf. Section 3.5) are of major importance. Their distribution is summarized in Table 11.

Table 11: Compulsory Clause Marking in Gurage

	CLAUSE		MARKER	VERB AFFECTED	GURAGE GROUP	LANGUAGE
	Basic Types					
(1)	No markers					Mesqan
(2)	AFF indicative	(a)	MVM *-u*	PFV / IPFV	Northern Gurage	Kistane
		(b)	MVM *-u*	IPFV / PFV[35]	Northern Gurage	Muher
			MVM *-m*	PFV		
		(c)	MVM *-m*	PFV	CWG/ PWG	Chaha Inor (i)
			KTD-suffix	$IPFV_{Future}$ $AUX.NPRS_{Inor}$		
		(d)	AUX	IPFV	Eastern Gurage	Wolane Zay (ii)

34 Although negative converbs are rare, Hetzron's (1977:98) observation that there are no negated converbs in Gunnän Gurage is not correct, as negative converbs are attested with indicative reference verbs in Kistane (Bedilu 2010:126 ff.). In Zay (Eastern Gurage), a negated perfective converb followed by the negated present-tense auxiliary forms a complex predicate in ICL (Meyer 2005:171, 158 f.). Based on Gutt (1997:920), a similar construction with a negated perfective CNV1 might also exist in Silt'e, but the data is not entirely conclusive.

35 Only with PROH and AUX.NPRS.

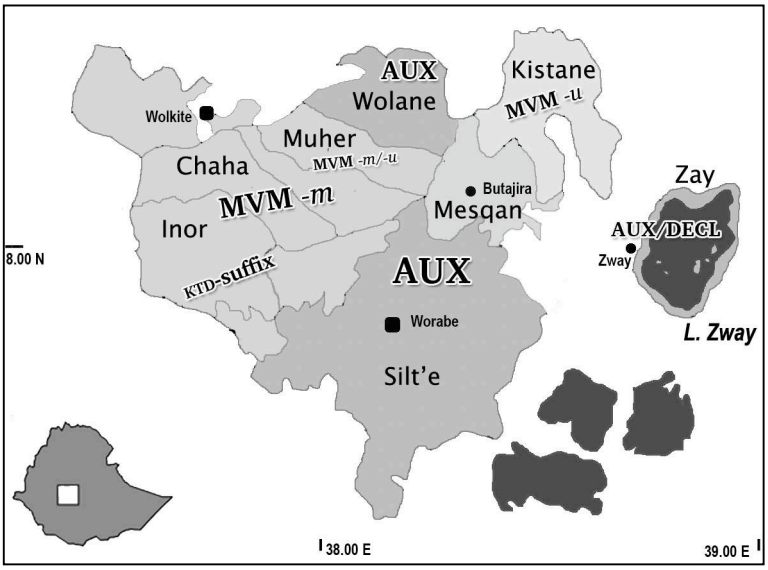
	CLAUSE	MARKER	VERB AFFECTED	GURAGE GROUP	LANGUAGE
	Additional Sub-Types				
i.	NEG indicative in ICL	KTD-SUFFIX	PFV / IPFV	PWG	Inor (2c)
	AFF subordinate		IPFV		
ii.	AFF/NEG non-questions in ICL	DECL	PFV / IPFV	Eastern Gurage	Zay (2d)
	AFF wishes in ICL		Jussive		

Most Gurage languages distinguish morphologically between dependent and independent clauses only with affirmative indicative verbs. Kistane is the prototypical member of this group. It attaches the main verb marker *-u* (or one of its allomorphs) to affirmative perfective and imperfective verbs in ICL. Muher follows the same principle but uses different markers: In affirmative ICL, imperfective verbs are followed by the MVM *-u* while the MVM *-m* is attached to perfective verbs. However, Muher also uses the MVM *-u* with perfective verbs in the prohibitive construction and with the non-present auxiliary verb *bannä* (cf. Sections 3.4; 3.5.1). Chaha only uses the MVM *-m* attached to affirmative perfective verbs in ICL while imperfective verbs are unmarked. Wolane, in contrast, obligatorily marks affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL, but not perfective verbs, by a temporal auxiliary instead of the main verb marker.

Inor and Zay represent more complex stages of Chaha and Wolane, respectively. Inor marks the affirmative perfective verb in ICL by an uncommon ultima accent on the verb, which is considered a reflex of the vanished main verb marker *-m* (Hetzron 1977:42 f.). In addition, Inor obligatorily attaches the KDT-suffix to the non-present auxiliary and to negated indicative verbs in ICL – which is unique within Gurage – but also as marker of affirmative subordinate imperfective verbs (mainly in relative clauses).

Zay, similar to Wolane, marks affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL by a temporal auxiliary, but in addition it has an obligatory declarative marker that distinguishes between statements and wishes, on the one hand, and questions, direct orders and negative wishes, on the other. This declarative marker differs functionally from the main verb marker, as it also occurs with negative verbs but not in questions. The approximate geographical distribution of these morphemes is shown in Map 2:

Map 2: Distribution ICL Markers



Mesqan is the only Gurage language that does not use additional markers attached to verbs in ICL. Here either subordinating conjunctions or word order alone distinguishes between dependent and independent clauses.

6 Conclusion

This paper has shown that there are no universal criteria to define finiteness even for genetically closely related languages spoken in a compact area with a high degree of interlingual contacts among their speakers. Subject indexing and aspect/mood marking on verbs are basic for finiteness in all Gurage languages because they enable the independent interpretation of a verbal event regarding its temporal setting and the involved participants. However, verbs marked for perfective or imperfective aspect occur in main and subordinate clauses as well. Although the subjunctive template is used for forming the jussive/imperative whose occurrences are restricted to ICL, it is also used to form the nonfinite verbal noun. However, the combination of the subjunctive template with a subject index, which is lacking on verbal nouns, can distinguish between the two. Further, the subject index with affirmative imperfective verbs in ICL for the 1SG in all Gurage languages (and for the 1PL in Eastern Gurage) is a unique morpheme, which does not occur in subordination or negation. The unique subject index with negated verbs in Wolane (and

Silt'e), or the unique negative marker in Kistane clearly distinguishes verbs in ICL from subordinate verbs.

Further, subordinating conjunctions and converb markers disable the verb to anchor the expressed event to a specific time. Consequently, these verbs cannot form an ICL on their own. On the other hand, the occurrence of the converb marker *-m* with perfective verbs in Gunnän Gurage is not sufficient to distinguish between converbs in dependent vs. complex predicates (present perfect) in independent clauses, as they are formally identical. Here only the syntactic position of the verb in a sentence can determine its status.

Additional compulsory categories used to mark ICL are tense in Eastern Gurage, the main verb marker in Kistane, Muher, and partly in Chaha and Inor, or the declarative marker in Zay. The KTD-suffix in Inor marks mutual exclusive clauses, namely negated indicative verbs in ICL but also affirmative imperfective verbs in subordination. The compulsory categories to mark ICL are found at geographically distinct places: main verb marking in the north (Kistane), declarative clause marking in the east (Zay) and the KTD-suffix in the south (Inor). Main verb marking dispersed to the south of Kistane into Muher, while the KTD-suffix spread to the north of Inor into Chaha. Today, Muher and Chaha exhibit mixed patterns.

Contrary to common opinion (cf. Appleyard 2002b), I do not believe that the different markers for clausal status are diachronically related to each other. Although the main verb marker and the declarative marker contain a morpheme *-u*, the allomorph of the declarative marker *-u* is vowel lengthening of non-central vowels, while that of the main verb marker *-u* are *-i*, or *-t/-n*. Vowel lengthening is clearly an innovation in Zay due to Oromo influence (cf. Meyer 2006b), which suggests that declarative marking in Zay might also be an innovation. The distribution of the KTD-suffix might resemble a pattern found in some Cushitic languages, where there is a relation between affirmative subordinate and negative imperfective verbs in ICL with affirmative subordinate verbs. Based on our current knowledge there is no clear answer as to the origin of these markers. The distribution of categories across verbal paradigms, such as aspect/mood templates, subject indexes, subordinating conjunctions, compulsory morphemes, which are all related to finiteness, suggests that they form interrelated networks with competing patterns. Some of these patterns are restricted to specific clause types, while others may occur in various clauses. Finiteness in Gurage languages is, thus, a relational category. It is the result of various grammaticalization and/or language contact processes, which can best be described through a combination of morphological and syntactic features.

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Abbreviations

ˈ	accented syllable
√	root
1 2 3	first, second, third person
$C_1C_2C_3$	first, second, third consonant in a root
^{w}	labialization
^{j}	palatalization
^{jw}	combined labialization and palatalization

AFF	affirmative	NPFV	negative perfective
AGR	agreement	NPRS	non-present tense
AUX	auxiliary	OBJ	object index
CNV1/2/3	converb 1/2/3	PFV	perfective
COND	conditional marker	PL	plural
CWG	Central Western Gurage	POSS	possessive
		PROH	prohibitive
DECL	declarative marker (clausal status)	PRS	present tense
		PS	Proto-Semitic
F	feminine	PWG	Peripheral Western Gurage
FOC	focus		
FUT	future	REL	relative clause or marker
ICL	independent clause		
INV	invariable	SBJ	subject index
IPFV	imperfective	SBJV	subjunctive
KTD	KTD-suffix (clausal status)	SES	South Ethio-Semitic
		SG	singular
M	masculine	TAM	tense, aspect, mood
MVM	main verb marker (clausal status)		
NEG	negative		