Homework 3
Will Theuer[1]

1 Orthography

The following orthography was created for easier transcription of Amharic and is used in the rest of the paper.

2 Commands

There are eight different command forms in Amharic. In the second person, there positive and negative forms for male, female, and plural recipients. Additionally, there are both positive and negative hortative forms.

Table 1: Command forms

	group 1			group 2			
	meblat	meténat	met'et'at	mambib	merot'	mets'af	mehéd
F	bí	téñí	t'ech'í	ambibí	ruch'í	ts'afí	híjí
M	bila	téña	t'et'a	ambib	rut'	ts'af	híd
P	bilu	téñu	t'et'u	ambibu	rut'u	ts'afu	hídu
H	inibla	initéña	init'eta	inambib	inirut'	inits'af	inihíd
NF	atibí	atitéñí	atit'ech'í	atambibí	atiruch'í	atits'afí	atihíjí
NM	atibla	atitéña	atit'et'a	atambib	atirut'	atits'af	atihíd
NP	atiblu	atitéñu	atit'et'u	atambibu	atirut'u	atits'afu	atihídu
NH	anibla	anitéña	anit'et'a	anambib	anirut'	anits'af	anihíd

2.1 Roots

To analyze these command forms, it is important to recognize the verb root. Each infinitive form starts with the prefix /me-/. In some of these forms, the /e/ is dropped when the root begins with a vowel.

(1) me-ambib > [mambib]
     INF-read
     'to read'

Verbs are broken up into two different groups based on their root structure. Group 1 nouns (as seen in table 1) have roots consisting of two syllables where the second syllable is CV. These nouns also have a word-final /-t/ indicating the infinitive.

(2) me-téña-t
     INF-sleep-INF
     'to sleep'

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[1]Collaborated with Julia Ruth

The language may require verbs to end in a consonant in their infinitive forms. Therefore, verbs in group 1 take an extra /-t/, while the verbs in group 2 already have a final consonant as part of the verb root. The verbs from table 1 must have the following roots:

Table 2: Verb roots

	group 1			group 2			
root	bla	téña	t'et'a	ambib	rot'	ts'af	héd
trans	eat	sleep	drink	read	run	write	go

2.2 Command affixes

The different command forms are encoded through affixes which are attached to the verb root.

Table 3: Command affixes

form	affix
F	-í
M	-∅
P	-u
H	in- -a
NF	at- -i
NM	at- -∅
NP	at- -u
NH	an- -a

In the case of group 1 verbs, the final vowel is dropped when there is a suffix. However, the final vowel of group 2 verbs is preserved in the masculine forms, where there is no additional suffix.

(3)   téña-∅
      sleep-2M.IMP
      'sleep! (to a man)'

(4)   ambib-∅
      read-2M.IMP
      'read! (to a man)'