Homework 3
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1 Orthography

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

Table 1: Vowels

í [i]	i [ɨ]	u [u]
é [e]		o [o]
e [ɛ]		a [ɑ]

Consonants remain largely the same as their IPA equivalents, with the exception of the affricates.

Table 2: Consonant Phonemes

Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
p b		t t' d			k k' g	'[ʔ]
m		n				
		r				
f		s z	sh[ʃ]			h
				y[j]		
		l				

Other sounds: w (labio-velar approximant)

Affricates: ch[ʧ], ch'[ʧ'], ts', j[ʤ]

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. Some examples are shown in table 3.[2]

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.[3]

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[1]Collaborated with Julia Ruth

[2]In this table, F represents a command directed toward a female, M represents male, P represents plural, H represents hortative 'let's', and N represents the negative form of each.

[3]In these glosses, INF represents the infinitive, 2M.IMP represents the second person masculine imperative, etc.

Table 3: Command forms

	group 1			group 2			
	meblat	metéñat	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

(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 3) 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'

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. Alternatively, the /-t/ suffix may exist underlyingly for every infinitive, and the word-final custers that would be produced in group 2 verbs are not allowed. The verbs from table 3 have the following roots:

Table 4: Verb roots

	group 1			group 2			
root	bila	téña	t'et'a	ambib	rot'	ts'af	héd
translation	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.

In the case of group 1 verbs, the final vowel is dropped when there is a suffix (as in (4)). However, the final vowel of group 2 verbs is preserved in the masculine forms, where there is no additional suffix. This can be seen in (3).

Table 5: Command affixes

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

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

(4) téñ-í
sleep-2F.IMP
'sleep! (to a woman)'

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

(6) ambib-í
read-2F.IMP
'read! (to a woman)'

In addition to the affixes, the root vowel changes for some verbs in the imperative form. Examples of this in table 3 include *merot'* and *mehéd*, which are shown in (7) and (8).

(7) *merot'* 'to run' → *rut'* 'run! (to a male)'

(8) *mehéd* 'to go' → *híd* 'go! (to a male)'

This process occurs in one-syllable verb roots. More data would is required to determine whether this process is phonological, but we can put together the following correspondences:

(9)   1. é → í

   2. o → u

   3. a → a (no change)

In the case of é and o, these vowels are being raised, but we do not see a similar process with a.

In the feminine forms of many commands, the consonant before the /-í/ suffix becomes palatalized. This can be seen in 10 and 11, and appears to only occur with /t/ and /d/.

(10) t'ech'-í
drink-2F.IMP
'drink! (to a female)'

(11) jíj-í
go-2F.IMP
'go! (to a female)'

This can be captured with the following phonological rule. This does not appear to be a general rule in the language and may be specific to commands.

(12) voiceless stop → palatalized / _ í