

7akéék-aa ‘attention’ Masculine Class A

7akéék-uwa ‘attention’ Masculine Class O

(4.2.1.6.1-9)

dááh-aa ‘elopement’ Masculine Class A

dááh-uwa ‘elopement’ Masculine Class O

For plural forms of masculine common nouns, see section 4.2.1.6.2.2.

#### 4.2.1.6.2 Feminine Common Nouns

There are two kinds of feminine common nouns: “genuine feminine common nouns” and “derived feminine common nouns.”

##### 4.2.1.6.2.1 Genuine Feminine Common Nouns

Genuine feminine common nouns are always inflected as feminine common nouns, like *micc-íyo* ‘sister’ illustrated in (4.2.1.6.2.1-2) is. In other words, their stems never take masculine endings. The feminine endings given in (4.2.1.1-1) are repeated here for convenience (tone is ignored).

(4.2.1.6.2.1-1) Endings of the Feminine Common Noun

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
Non-concrete	-o	-e, -i	-a	-oo	-oo
Concrete, SG	-iyo	-ee	-iya	-ii	-ee
Concrete, PL	-eta	-etu	-eti	-etee	-etoo
	-ota	-otu	-oti	-otee	-otoo

(4.2.1.6.2.1-2)

Word for ‘sister’

Non-concrete micc-ó, micc-í or micc-é, micc-á, micc-óo, micc-oo,

Concrete, SG micc-íyo, micc-ée, micc-íya, micc-íi, micc-ée

Concrete, PL micc-etá, micc-etú, micc-etí, micc-etée, micc-étoo

micc-otá, micc-otú, micc-otí, micc-otée, micc-ótoo

In terms of semantics, all genuine feminine common nouns refer to animate beings that are biologically female, as might be expected. Thus, their plural forms refer to more than one female. In this they differ from plural forms of masculine common nouns, which reveal nothing about the sex of the referents (see section 4.2.1.6.2.2).

It should be emphasized that genuine feminine common nouns are extremely rare in Wolaytta. Adams (1983: 254) has already said that: “[t]he number of nouns belonging to this inherently feminine noun class is rather limited.” The following is all the examples I have been able to collect so far:

(4.2.1.6.2.1-3) List of Genuine Feminine Common Nouns

7aayy-íyo ‘mother’

mácc-íyo ‘wife’,

micc-íyo 'sister'  
 mishir-íyo 'woman'  
 biyy-íyo 'daughter (used only in literature?)'

#### 4.2.1.6.2.2 Derived Feminine Common Nouns

Feminine common nouns can be derived from masculine common nouns. For example:

(4.2.1.6.2.2-1)

kan-íyo 'bitch' Cf. kan-áa 'dog' (Masculine Class A)  
 har-íyo 'she-donkey' Cf. har-íya 'donkey' (Masculine Class E)  
 gaamm-íyo 'lioness' Cf. gaamm-úwa 'lion' (Masculine Class O)

We find the following inflected forms for these and similar derived words.

(4.2.1.6.2.2-2)

From Masculine Class A (e.g. *kan-íyo* 'bitch')

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
Non-concrete	-a	-a	-i	-ee	-oo
Concrete, SG	-íyo	-ee	-iya	-ii	-ee
Concrete, PL	-ata	-atu	-ati	-atee	-atoo

From Masculine Class E (e.g. *har-íyo* 'she-donkey')

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
Non-concrete	-e	-e	-ee	-ee	-oo, -ee
Concrete, SG	-íyo	-ee	-iya	-ii	-ee
Concrete, PL	-eta	-etu	-eti	-etee	-etoo

From Masculine Class O (e.g. *gaamm-íyo* 'lioness')

	ABS	OBL	NOM	INTER	VOC
Non-concrete	-o	-o	-oi	-oo	-oo
Concrete, SG	-íyo	-ee	-iya	-ii	-ee
Concrete, PL	-ota	-otu	-oti	-otee	-otoo

Note that while the concrete singular forms are the same as those of the genuine feminine common noun (see (4.2.1.6.2.1-1)), the non-concrete and concrete plural forms are the same as those of the original masculine common nouns. (The same holds true of tone, although this is completely ignored above.)

Thus, the paradigm in (4.2.1.6.2.2-2) is slightly misleading in combining two different series of endings (those of the genuine feminine common noun and those of the masculine common noun). We should rather conclude that derived feminine common nouns do not have non-concrete and concrete plural forms of their own. When needed, the corresponding masculine forms are used instead.

More precisely, the non-concrete form of the "masculine" common noun lacks the notion of gender (as well as the notion of number; see section 4.2.1.5) to begin with because of its non-concreteness, and its concrete plural form does not distinguish between the two genders.<sup>190</sup>

Thus, the correct paradigm of, for example, the word for 'dog', whose stem is *kan-*, should be as

follows (the arrangement of each row is the same as that in (4.2.1.6.2.2-2)):

(4.2.1.6.2.2-3)

Non-concrete (lacking the notion of gender)

kan-á, kan-á, kan-í, kan-ée, kán-oo

Concrete, SG (usually referring to a male dog)<sup>191</sup>

kan-áa, kan-áa, kan-ái, kan-ái, kan-áu

Concrete, PL (referring to more than one dog without gender distinction)

kan-atá, kan-atú, kan-atí, kan-atée, kan-átoo

Derived Feminine, Concrete, SG (referring to a female dog)

kan-íyo, kan-ée, kan-íya, kan-íi, kan-ée

Consider the following.

(4.2.1.6.2.2-4)

hanná ne-kan-íi?

this.NOM.F your.SG-dog-INTER.SG.F.CONCR

‘Is this your bitch?’

(4.2.1.6.2.2-5)

hanná mác’c’-a kan-á.

this.NOM.F female-OBL dog-ABS.NCONCR

‘This is a bitch.’

(4.2.1.6.2.2-6)

hagáá-ní mác’c’-a kan-atí dar-ídosona.

this.OBL.M-in female-OBL dog-NOM.PL.CONCR increase-PFV.3PL

‘Here female dogs increased.’

There are masculine common nouns from which this kind of derived feminine common noun cannot be derived. For example, *7ish-áa* ‘brother’ does not have the expected feminine counterpart \**7ish-íyo* (‘sister’ is expressed by the genuine feminine common noun *micc-íyo*). Likewise, *7aarw-áa* ‘father’ does not have \**7aarw-íyo* (cf. *7aayy-íyo* ‘mother’), *7add-íya* ‘rooster, old man’ does not \**7add-íyo* (cf. *7ind-íyo* ‘hen, old woman’). Furthermore, *7um-áa* ‘the Omo River’ does not have \**7um-íyo* for unknown reasons. There may be other masculine common nouns like these. In any case, they are exceptional. As we will see below in this section, feminine common nouns can be derived productively from most common nouns.

Of interest is the fact that beings that can only be female biologically are in many cases expressed by derived feminine common nouns rather than genuine feminine common nouns. For example, the word for ‘woman in childbed’, whose stem is *gac’ín-*, inflects in the following way (the arrangement of each row is the same as that of (4.2.1.6.2.2-2)).

## (4.2.1.6.2.2-7)

Non-concrete

gac'ín-o, gac'ín-o, gac'ín-ói, gac'ín-oo, gac'ín-oo

Concrete, SG

gac'ín-uwa, gac'ín-uwa, gac'ín-oi, gac'ín-oi, gac'ín-uwa

Concrete, PL

gac'ín -ota, gac'ín-otu, gac'ín-oti, gac'ín-otee, gac'ín-otoo

Derived Feminine, Concrete, SG

gac'ín -iyo, gac'ín-ee, gac'ín-iya, gac'ín-ii, gac'ín-ee

Note that the endings of the first three series are the same as those of the Masculine Class O common noun while the endings of the last series are the same as those of the genuine feminine common noun. This suggests that the feminine noun *gac'ín-iyo* 'woman in childbed' is derived from a masculine common noun in the same way as *gaamm-íyo* 'lioness', and that it is not a genuine feminine noun like *7aayy-íyo* 'mother'.

Some other examples are listed in (4.2.1.6.2.2-8). Note again that these nouns refer to exclusively female beings.

## (4.2.1.6.2.2-8) Derived Feminine Common Nouns

From the Masculine Class A Common Noun

7omooss-íyo 'cow that gave birth recently'

7úss-iyo 'heifer'

dawútt-iyo 'co-wife'

From the Masculine Class E Common Noun

7ind-íyo 'hen, old woman'

dangariit'-iyo 'bridesmaid'

garund-íyo 'female old servant'

maggaayy-íyo 'mare'

máinn-iyo 'sterile cow'

From the Masculine Class O Common Noun

geelá7-iyo 'young virgin'

The following are examples in which feminine concrete singular forms of such derived feminine common nouns are used. Note that the endings are the same as those of the genuine feminine common noun.

## (4.2.1.6.2.2-9)

hanná ta-geelá7-iyo.

this.NOM.F my-young.virgin-ABS.SG.F

'This is my daughter of marriageable age/fiancée.'

## (4.2.1.6.2.2-10)

ha 7úss-iyá máínn-e.  
 this heifer-NOM.SG.F sterile-ABS

‘This heifer is sterile.’

In the following examples, a non-concrete form or a concrete plural form is used to refer to one or more female beings. This is possible because, as noted above, the former lacks the notion of gender to begin with and the latter does not distinguish between the two genders. Note, however, that the endings are not those of the genuine feminine common noun.

(4.2.1.6.2.2-11)

hageetú gidd-óó-ní 7úss-í báawa.  
 these.OBL inside-OBL-in heifer-NOM not.present

‘There is no heifer among these.’

(4.2.1.6.2.2-12)

hácc-i naa77-ú geelá7-ota be7-áas.  
 today-ADV two-OBL young.virgin-ABS.PL see-PFV.1SG

‘Today I saw two young virgins.’

The “masculine,” or rather, “default” concrete singular forms of derived feminine common nouns like those illustrated in (4.2.1.6.2.2-8) refer exclusively to female beings also. They are rather rare and seem to be used especially when the notion expressed by the stem is treated somewhat abstractly, without a strong connection to natural gender.

(4.2.1.6.2.2-13)

7úss-ái ha giy-áa  
 heifer-NOM.SG.M this market-ABS.SG.M

gel-énnée?

enter-NEG.INTER.IPFV.3SG.M

‘Doesn’t a heifer enter this market (i.e. don’t they trade in heifers in this market)?’

(4.2.1.6.2.2-14)

gac’in-uwa 7anj-an-á b-áasu.  
 woman.in.childbed-ABS.SG.M bless-INF-ABS go-PFV.3SG.F

‘She went to bless a woman in childbed.’

The masculine concrete singular of the feminine common noun *saw-iyó* ‘divorced woman’, which can be regarded as derived from a Masculine Class O common noun, does not seem to be used, perhaps because it conflicts morphologically with the Masculine Class O common noun *saw-íwa* ‘fragrance’.

No feminine common noun seems to be derived from *mác'c'-aa* 'female', even though this word is semantically related to the feminine gender. However, recall that this common noun is almost always used in the non-concrete form as discussed in section 4.2.1.4. This is one reason why the expected derived feminine form *?mác'c'-iyo*, also a concrete form, is highly odd at best.

We have seen that derived feminine common nouns are formed quite regularly from masculine common nouns in general. However, the derived feminine counterpart of *bóll-urwa* 'father-in-law, son-in-law' is not *\*bóll-iyo*, but *bóllot-iyo* 'mother-in-law'. I guess that this feminine form is based on *bóll-ota*, which is the plural of *bóll-urwa* and can also serve as an honorific word for 'parent-in-law'.

Feminine common nouns derived from collective nouns (see section 4.2.1.5) are semantically irregular. From *mízz-aa* 'cattle', the non-collective common noun *mízz-iyo*, which refers to a 'cow', is derived. The expected derived feminine form of *7as-aa* 'people'<sup>192</sup> is *7as-iyo*, but this means 'maid', not 'woman, female people'. Judging from their meanings, these words may not in fact be related to each other. See also the discussion around (4.2.1.4-57).

As the above examples show, derived feminine common nouns are used to clarify female natural gender in the case of what we call animate nouns. For example, *kan-iyo* means 'bitch' instead of 'dog', and *gaamm-iyo* means 'lioness' instead of 'lion'. However, feminine common nouns can be derived from almost all "inanimate" common nouns. Such derived nouns are used when the referents are regarded as small. In other words, they serve as diminutive forms.

(4.2.1.6.2.2-15)

7agín-iyo 'crescent'  
Cf. 7agín-aa ' (full or half-) moon'

(4.2.1.6.2.2-16a)

ha	<u>t'al-iya</u>	c'amm-áusu.
this	medicine-NOM.SG.F	taste.bitter-IPFV.3SG.F

'This tiny medicine tastes bitter.'

Cf. (4.2.1.6.2.2-16b)

ha	t'al-ée	c'amm-ées.
this	medicine-NOM.SG.M	taste.bitter-IPFV.3SG.M

'This medicine tastes bitter.'

(4.2.1.6.2.2-17)

gúútt-a	<u>súútt-iya</u>	gukk-í-kkó	...
small-OBL	blood-NOM.SG.F	flow-SUBOR-if	...

'If (even) a bit of blood flows ...'

Incidentally, the feminine gender can also be associated with a positive assessment such as "good" or "wonderful".

(4.2.1.6.2.2-18)

mác'c'-a            7úútt-aa  
 female-OBL        false.banana-ABS.SG.F

'delicious and nutritious false banana (አንሰት *ənsät* in Amharic)'

(4.2.1.6.2.2-19)

níyo                t'ooss-í            mác'c'-a            wónt-aa  
 for.you.SG        god-NOM        female-OBL        dawn-ABS.SG.M

7imm-ó.  
 give-OPT.3SG.M

'May God give you a wonderful dawn. (i.e. May tomorrow be a good day!)

Note, however, that the above common nouns modified by *mác'c'-a* 'female' are masculine singular forms. This is impossible when *mác'c'-a* literally means 'female' as in the following, except in the case of collective nouns like *míízz-aa* 'cattle' (see section 4.2.1.5).

(4.2.1.6.2.2-20a)

mác'c'-a            kan-íyo  
 female-OBL        dog-ABS.SG.F

'bitch'

(4.2.1.6.2.2-20b)

\* mác'c'-a            kan-áa  
 female-OBL        dog-ABS.SG.M

(4.2.1.6.2.2-21)

mác'c'-a            míízz-ai                            7attúm-a            míízz-ai  
 female-OBL        cattle-NOM.SG.M        male-OBL            cattle-NOM.SG.M

k'á    dors-ái                            deessh-ái                            d-ées.  
 also sheep-NOM.SG.M        goat-NOM.SG.M            exist-IPFV.3SG.M

'There are female cattle, male cattle, also sheep and goats.'

As mentioned in section 4.2.1.6.1, the masculine is the default or unmarked gender in this language. However, Lemma's (1992 EC) dictionary gives common nouns for 'pigeon', 'rabbit', and 'vervet monkey' in their feminine forms: *haraphphiyoo*, *harbbaynniyoo*, and *qaariyoo*, respectively.<sup>193</sup> Indeed, their frequent occurrence in their feminine forms in my data seems more than a chance occurrence.

(4.2.1.6.2.2-22)

harap'p'-íya                            mítt-aa                            boll-áa-ni  
 pigeon-NOM.SG.F            wood-OBL.SG.M            body-OBL.SG.M-at

7útt-aasu.  
sit-PFV.3SG.F

‘The pigeon perched on top (lit. body) of the tree.’ (Obtained by free composition)

(4.2.1.6.2.2-23)

gaamm-ói                      dárotoo              7azaz-an-á-u  
lion-NOM.SG.M            often                  order-INF-OBL.SG.M-to

kóyy-iyo                              dó7-atu-ppe  
want-REL.IPFV.NSBJ        wild.animal-OBL.PL-from

7iss-í-nn-á                              k'aar-íyo.  
one-OBL-NMLZ-NOM        vervet.monkey-ABS.SG.F

‘One of the wild animals that the lion often wants to give orders to is a vervet monkey.’ (From a text)

In my lexical investigations, the feminine form *barbainn-íyo*, instead of the masculine *barbainn-úwa*, was given first for the word for ‘rabbit’. Thus, for these common nouns the feminine may be the default or unmarked gender semantically.<sup>194</sup> The words for ‘bush duiker’ and ‘cat’<sup>195</sup> might be included here.

(4.2.1.6.2.2-24)

worakan-ái                      d-ées.                      geness-íya-kka  
fox-NOM.SG.M                  exist-IPFV.3SG.M        bush.duiker-NOM.SG.F-too

d-áusu.                              gaar-ái-kka                      d-ées.  
exist-IPFV.3SG.F              bushbuck-NOM.SG.M-too        exist-IPFV.3SG.M

‘There are foxes. There are bush duikers too. There are bushbucks too.’ (From a text)

(4.2.1.6.2.2-25)

gawar-íya                      k'á                      dend-ídaa-r-á  
cat-NOM.SG.F                  furthermore              get.up-REL.PFV.SBJ-NMLZ-NOM

“#####                      7ep-írg-iis.”                      g-áádá                      ...  
(imitation of a meow)        take-completely-PFV.3SG.M        say-CVB.3SG.F              ...

‘The cat, who got up, said “Meow, he (i.e. the thief) took (the household goods) completely,” and ...’ (From a text)

For the feminine form of the semi-independent common noun *t'áll-aa* ‘only’, see section 6.2, in which agreement is discussed.

#### 4.2.1.7 Semi-independent Common Nouns

Judging from their morphology and tone, nominals discussed in this section are undoubtedly common nouns. However, they are not used by themselves and are always accompanied by modifiers or similar in general. Such less independent common nouns are called “semi-independent common nouns” in this book.

Linguistic forms that can accompany semi-independent common nouns are those that can accompany ordinary common nouns. In addition, as noted above, semi-independent common nouns and ordinary common nouns are the same in terms of tone. Thus semi-independent common nouns can be distinguished from stem-forming suffixes discussed in section 5.3.1.

The following are examples of semi-independent common nouns.

*kéén-aa* ‘equal, what is equal to’ (Masculine Class A)

(4.2.1.7-1)

t’ooss-í      7imm-ó,      hegáá      kéén-aa  
 god-NOM      give-OPT.3SG.M      that.OBL.M      equal-ABS.SG.M

7ezg-ído      gishsh-á-u.  
 listen-REL.PFV.NSBJ      reason-OBL.SG.M-for

‘Thank you (lit. may God give), for the reason that you listened to that much.’

(4.2.1.7-2)

7aaw-ái      ba-na7-áa      “7oott-ó  
 father-NOM.SG.M      his.own-child-ABS.SG.M      do-REL.PFV.NSBJ

kéén-ai      gid-aná.”      g-íis.  
 equal-NOM.SG.M      become-FUT      say-PFV.3SG.M

‘The father said to his son “What you did (lit. equal that you did) is enough (lit. will become).”’

(4.2.1.7-3)

7etí      ta-kéén-ata.  
 they      my-equal-ABS.PL

‘They are the equal of me.’

*t’áll-aa* ‘only, alone’ (Masculine Class A)

(4.2.1.7-4)

ha      bitán-íya      t’áll-ai      y-íis.  
 this      man-OBL.SG.M      only-NOM.SG.M      come-PFV.3SG.M

‘Only this man came.’

(4.2.1.7-5)

don-úwa \_\_\_\_\_ t'áll-aa m-aaná.  
 potato-ABS.SG.M only-ABS.SG.M eat-FUT

'I will eat only potato.'

This word can be inflected for number and gender.

(4.2.1.7-6)

d-íya-geetí ʒeta-t'áll-ata.  
 exist-REL.IPFV.SBJ their-only-ABS.PL

'Only these are there (lit. what exist are their only).'

(4.2.1.7-7)

ʒi-t'áll-íya y-áádec?  
 her.OBL-only-NOM.SG.F come-INTER.PFV.3SG.F

'Did she come alone?'

See also section 6.2, in which this word is mentioned in the discussion of agreement.

***t'aláál-aa*** 'only' (Masculine Class A)

This is a synonym for the preceding word, *t'áll-aa*. However, it seems to be used with more emphasis. I could not elicit a plural or feminine form.

(4.2.1.7-8)

ʒeta-t'aláál-aa-ppe ʒekk-íis.  
 their-only-OBL.SG.M-from take-PFV.3SG.M

'He took only from them.'

(4.2.1.7-9)

ta-t'aláál-ai danday-íkke.  
 my-only-NOM.SG.M can-NEG.IPFV.1SG

'I cannot do by myself.'

***dó7-uwa, d-úwa*** 'and company, and others' (Masculine Class O)

The latter is a contracted form of the former. I could not elicit plural or feminine forms. Although these are used in the singular and may agree with singular finite verbs, they express plurality semantically (associative plurality).

(4.2.1.7-10)

ʒa-dó7-oi hagáá-ní ʒái  
 his-and.company-NOM.SG.M this.OBL.M-in what