

**Documentation and description of Borna verb morphology:
An Omotic language of Ethiopia**

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Addis Ababa

**Documentation and description of Borna verb morphology:
An Omotic language of Ethiopia**

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**College of Humanities, Language Studies and Journalism &
Communication**

Addis Ababa University

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for any academic study in any other university, and all sources of materials used for this work have been duly acknowledged.

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This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as thesis advisor.

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Abstract

This study was intended to provide a comprehensive documentation and description of the verb morphology of Borna, a little-documented North Omotic language spoken in Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional State of Ethiopia. The data was collected through recording of observed and staged communicative events and elicitation. As concerns documentation, comprehensive and representative linguistic practices of the speech community were made available. This was made by audio-video recordings of a variety of texts from a variety of genres. Similarly, under description of the verb morphology, an in-depth analysis of both the verb inflection and derivation was offered.

The study has showed that verb stems can be derived from verb roots, verb stems, nouns, and adjectives. The derived verbs include passives, causatives, reciprocals, middles, and inchoatives. In the same way, it was identified that verbs are inflected for agreement, mood, tense, aspect, negation, and focus. Subject agreement is expressed in three ways: suffixation, pronominal proclitics and unreduced personal pronouns. Similarly, verbs display a twofold tense distinction: past and non-past. Furthermore, verbs mark perfective and imperfective aspects. The imperfective aspect subsumes two types of aspects: habitual and progressive.

Negation in Borna is commonly expressed in two ways, by affixation and by using a lexically negative word. It was identified that verbal and nonverbal clauses follow different strategies of negation formation. The verbal clauses are negated morphologically, whereas the non-verbal clauses are negated by introducing a lexically negative word to the clause.

Focus is expressed in three ways in Borna: by suffixation, by word order alternation and by cleft constructions. It was also noted that some copula markers are also used to make an emphasis. In the language, either a constituent of a sentence or a whole sentence can be focused. Nonetheless, it is only one constituent of a clause that can be focused at a time.

The study has also revealed that there are major morphophonemic processes operating in the language. These are an insertion, deletion, assimilation, internal change and verb final consonant alternation.

Regarding copula clauses, it has been shown that the copula subject and the non-verbal copula predicate is linked by different bound morphemes attached to the copula complement. It was identified that the choice among the copula markers is determined by the copula subject.

Finally, the nature of multi-verb constructions is identified. The multi-verb constructions are SVC, ideophone based multi-verbs, and converbs. The SVCs are formed by juxtaposing two verbs without the intervention of any other element. Similarly, the ideophone based multi-verbs are formed by juxtaposing an ideophone and dummy verb. The converbs are marked by two morphemes whose choice is determined by the aspect of the verb.

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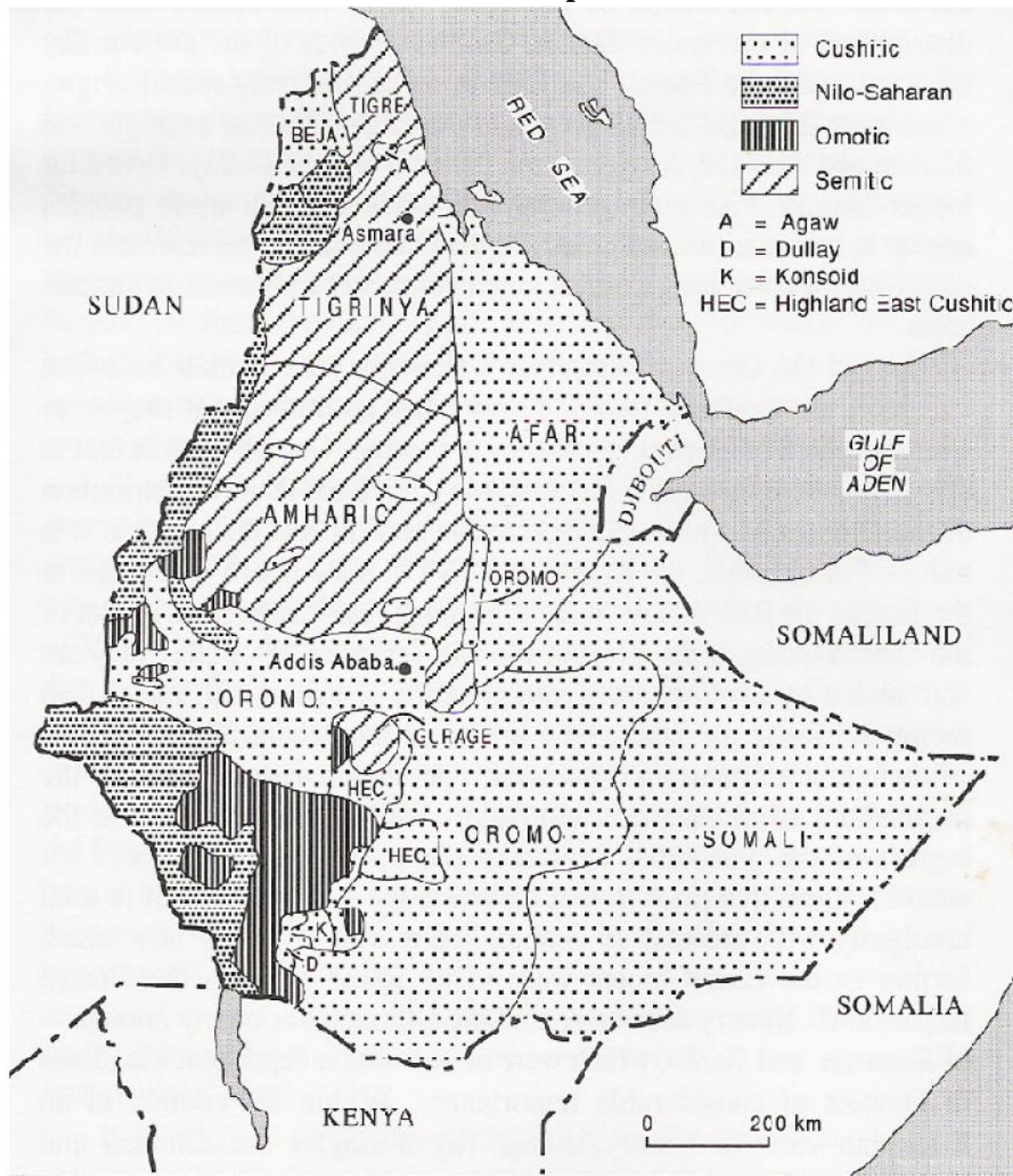
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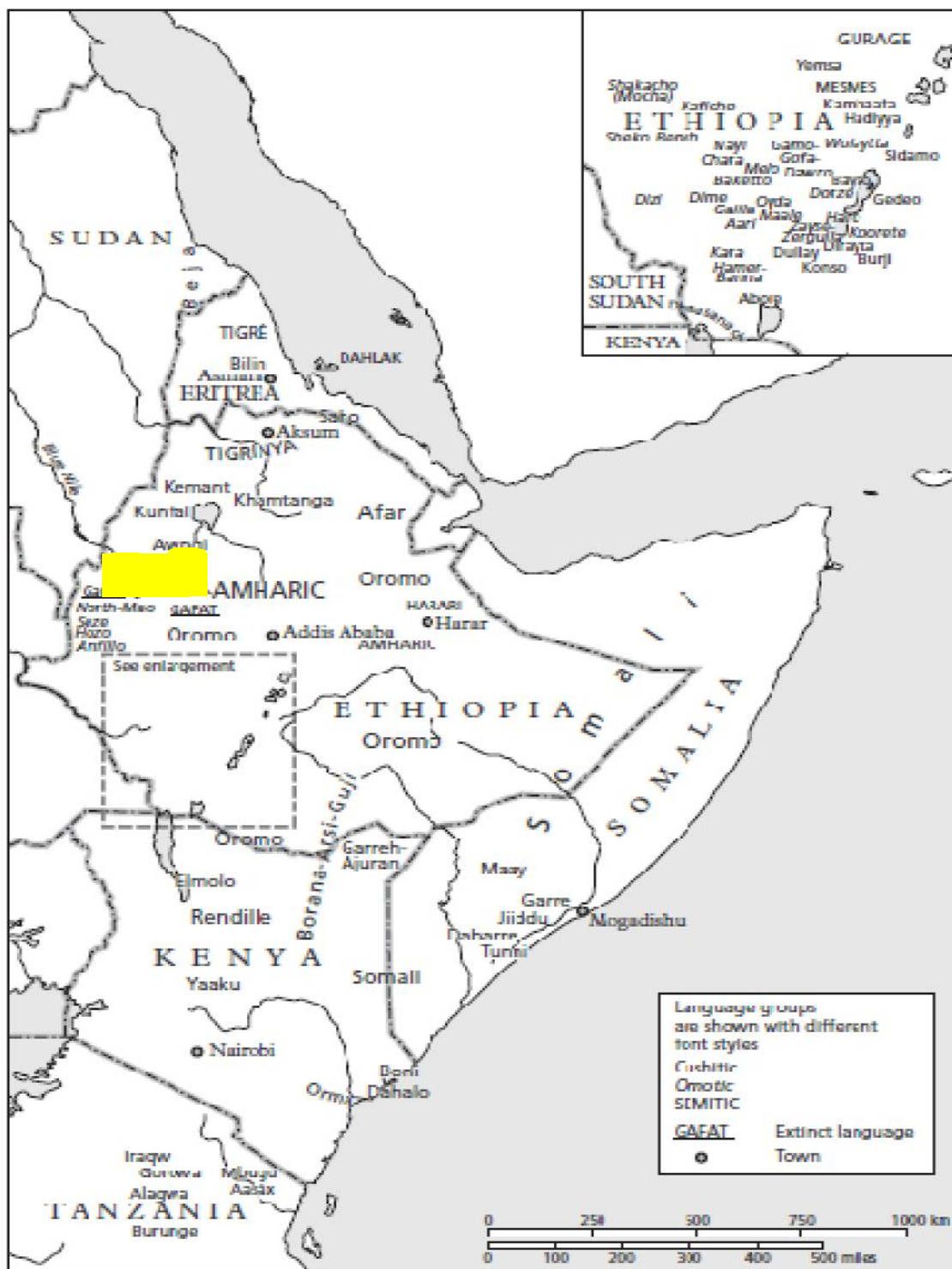
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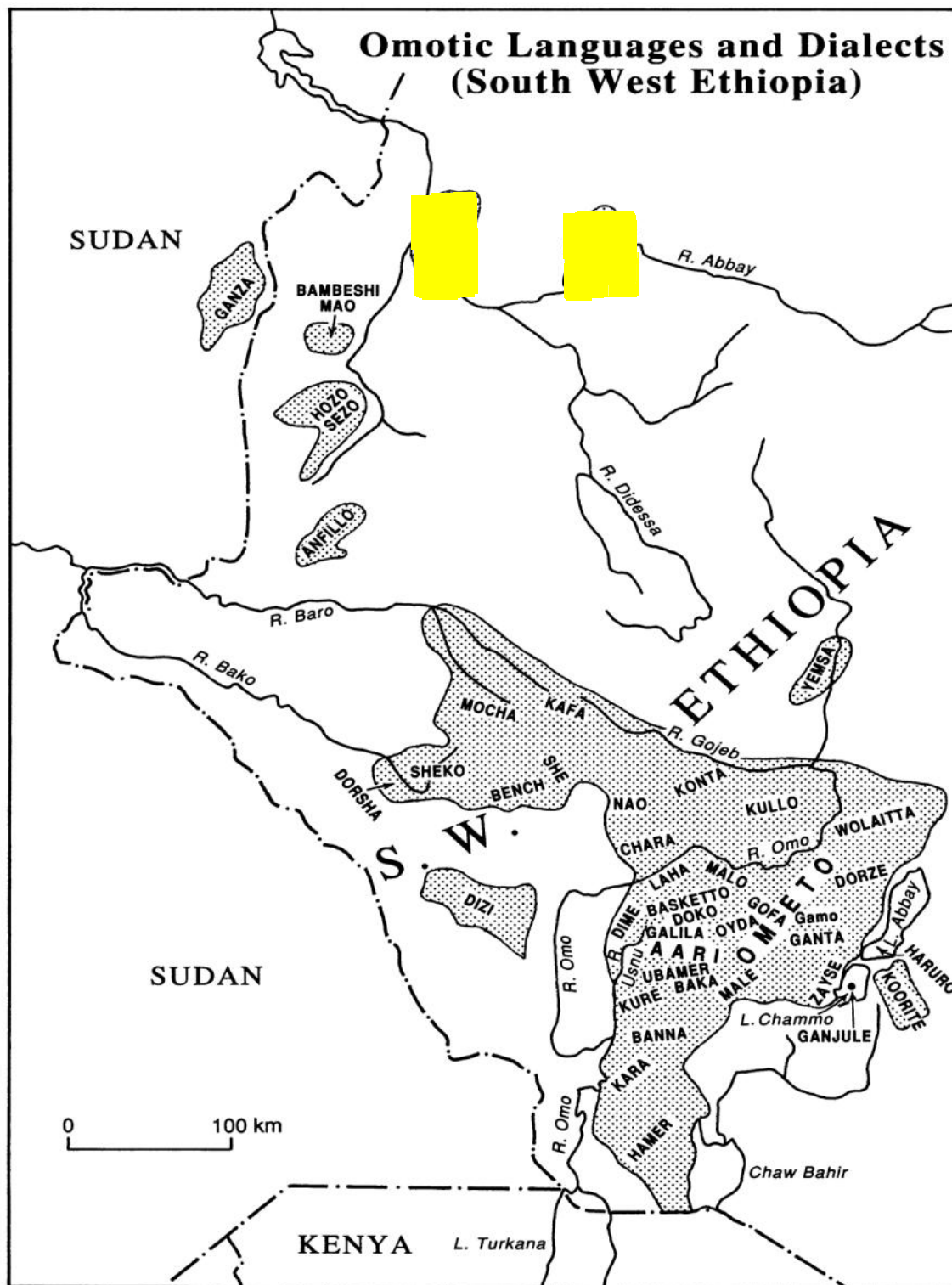
Maps



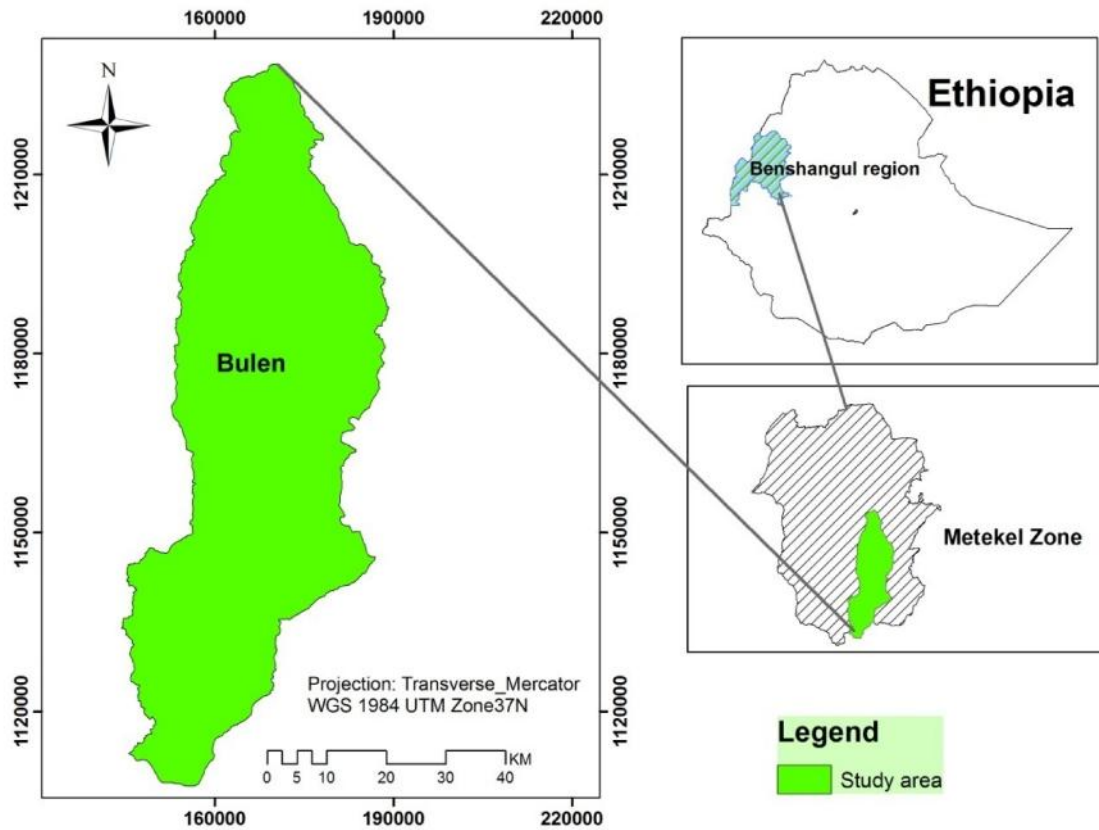
Map 1: Major language families in Ethiopia (Hayward 1995:7)



Map 2: Cushitic, Omotic, and Ethio-Semitic languages (Mous 2012:344)



Map 3: Omotic languages and dialects (South Ethiopia) (Hayward 1990: vi)



Map 4: Map Bulen woreda, the study area

List of abbreviations and symbols

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
A	agent-like argument of canonical transitive verb
ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ADE	adessive
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb(ial)
AGR	agreement
ALL	allative
ANTIP	antipassive
APPL	applicative
ART	article
AUX	auxiliary
BEN	benefactive
CAUS	causative
CLF	classifier
COM	comitative
COMP	complementizer
COMPL	completive
COND	conditional
COP	copula
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
DECL	declarative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner

DIST	distal
DISTR	distributive
DTV	ditransitive verb
DU	dual
DUR	durative
EPN	epenthetic
ERG	ergative
EXCL	exclusive
F	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
H	high tone
HAB	habitual
IDEO	ideophone
ILLA	illative
IMP	imperative
INCH	inchoative
INCL	inclusive
IND	indicative
INDF	indefinite
INE	inessive
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
INSERT	insertion
INTR	intransitive
IPFV	imperfective
IRR	irrealis
ITV	intransitive verb
JUSS	jussive
L	low tone

LOC	locative
M	masculine
MAL	maleficiary/malfactive
N	neuter
NEG	negation, negative
NMLZ	nominalizer/nominalization
NPST	non-past tense
NOM	nominative
NP	noun phrase
OBJ	object
OBL	oblique
P	patient-like argument of canonical transitive verb
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PRED	predicative
PRF	perfect
PRS	present
PROG	progressive
PROH	prohibitive
PROX	proximal/proximate
PST	past
PTCP	participle
PURP	purposive
Q	question particle/marker
QUOT	quotative
RECP	reciprocal
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
RES	resultative

RL	relative clause
S	single argument of canonical intransitive verb
SBJ	subject
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
SOC	source
SOV	subject-object-verb (word order)
TAM	tense-aspect-mood
TOP	topic
TR	transitive
TV	transitive verb
VOC	vocative
VP	verb phrase
*	indicates ungrammatical structure or ill- formed structure
[]	phonetic transcription
/ /	phonemic transcription
{ }	enclose bound morpheme
→	becomes
←	results from
Ø	zero morpheme
-	morpheme boundary
◡	high tone
◠	low tone
=	clitic boundary
~	reduplicated element

List of bound morphemes and their functions

The following are list of bound morphemes and proclitics identified in this study with their function in alphabetical order.

Form	Gloss	Function
-(à)ṭí	CNV	converb marker attached to perfective verb stem
-(ṭṭ)t	PST	non-past tense marker
-à	1SG:JUSS	first person singular marker in jussive mood
-à	3SGF	third person singular feminine marker in declarative mood
-à	3SGM:COP	third person singular masculine copula
-á	3SGM:JUSS	third person singular masculine marker in jussive mood
-á	3SGM:Q	third person singular masculine marker in interrogative mood
-ák-	NEG	negation in present tense with consonant final verb stems
-á -	NEG	negation in past and future tense with consonant final verb stems
-à è	ADE	adessive
bì=	3SGF	third person singular feminine subject proclitic
bí=	3SGM	third person singular masculine subject proclitic
bó=	3PL	third person plural subject proclitic
-è	1SG	first person singular person marker in declarative mood
-é	3SGM	third person singular masculine person in declarative mood
-é	3SGM:COP:Q	third person singular interrogative copula
-ée-	PASS	passive marker
-ṭṭ	2PL:JUSS	second person plural marker in jussive mood
-ṭṭ	NMLZ	nominalizer marker
-f-	PRS	habitual aspect marker

-fò	PRS	habitual aspect marker
-ì	M:NOM/M:ACC	nominative/accusative case for masculine subject/object with plural common nouns, proper nouns, demonstrative pronouns and possessed kinship terms
-í	2SG	second person singular person marker in declarative mood
-ì	3SGF:COP	third person singular feminine copula marker
-ì	3SHF:JUSS	third person singular feminine marker in jussive mood
-í	M:NOM/M:ACC	nominative/accusative case for masculine subject/object with plural common nouns, proper nouns, demonstrative pronouns and possessed kinship terms
-íí-	CAUS	causative marker
-íír	PROG	progressive aspect marker
-ít	2PL	second person plural marker in declarative mood
ít=	2PL	second person plural subject proclitic
-k-	NMLZ	nominalizer
-k'ò	EQ	equative case marker
-mànd	LAT	lative case marker
-n	INST	instrumental case; accusative case marker with object pronouns
-nà	3SGF:Q	third person singular feminine marker in interrogative mood
-nà	COP	copula, in first and second person plural and singular
-né	2SG:Q	second person singular marker in interrogative mood
-nè	COP:Q	copula question in first and second person plural and singular
-nì	FOC	focus marker
nì=	2SG	second person singular subject proclitic
-nó	3PL	third person plural in declarative/imperative mood
-nò	1PL:Q	first person plural marker in interrogative mood
nò=	1PL	first person plural subject proclitic

-ntòn	COM	comitative case marker
-ò	1PL	first person plural marker in declarative/jussive mood
-ó	M:NOM/M:ACC	nominative/accusative case for masculine subject/object
-òk	ALLA	allative
-ò	ILLA	illative
-ò è	INE	inesive
-r-	PST	past tense/perfective aspect marker
-rák-	NEG	negation in present tense with vowel final verb stems
-rá	NEG	negation in past and future tense with vowel final verb stems
-rí	CNV	converb marker suffixed to imperfective verb stem
-rúw-	PROG	progressive aspect marker
-	DAT	dative case marker
-tà	1SG:Q	first person singular marker in interrogative mood
-té	2PL:Q	second person plural marker in interrogative mood
tì=	1SG	first person singular subject proclitic
-túw-	FUT	non-past tense marker
-	REL	relativizer
-ú	F:NOM/F:ACC	nominative/accusative case for feminine subject/object
-ú	INCH	inchoative marker
-wò	PL	plural marker

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Chapter one

Introduction

This chapter introduces the language documented and described in this research, Borna. The chapter has three main sections. The first section presents background information about the names given to the language and the people, location and settlement of the people, the population, linguistic classification of the language and its dialects, the current state of the language, statement of the problem, earlier works on the language, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. In the second section, methods of data collection, documentation, and theoretical framework for data description are presented. The third section addresses organization of the dissertation.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 The people (Nomenclature)

So far, the language upon which this study is based, and its speakers have been called by different names. Among these *Shinasha*, *Sinichoo*, *Dangabo*, *(North) Gonga*, *Boro* and *Borna* can be mentioned. In the linguistic literature, the name *Shinasha* is widely used to represent both the people and the language. The term is a non-derogative Amharic term derived from *shi ena shi* which means ‘thousands and thousands’ (see also Tsega 2006:19). The Boro elders state that the name *Shinasha* was given to them by the Amharas of Gojjam. According to the elders, the Amharas gave them this name due to the great number of strangers they saw in their area. *Sinichoo* is a pejorative Afan Oromo term which means ‘hot pepper’; with the connotation of burning. According to Tessema (1980:17), the name *Sinicho* was given to the people due to their strong resistance to the Oromo expansion into their area in the sixteenth century. The Oromos of Wonbera still call them by this name (Abebe 2012:102). The name *Dangabo* is a non-pejorative Afan Oromo term given to the Boro people. Tsega (2006:20) states that the name might have been derived from *Dangab*, a locality of Metekel Zone, to represent the Boro people living in the area. On the other hand, according to Garretson (1989:657), the people under study were also historically called *Gonga*. He states that “linguistically the Gonga, or Shinasha as their remnants

are now called, are closely related to the Kefa speaking peoples of southwest Ethiopia”. Fleming (1976b:365) uses the term *North Gonga* to refer to the language.

Another name widely in use in recent works is *Boro*. *Boro* is the group’s self-name. The people believe that the name *Boro* is the name of one of their original ancestral fathers. They claim that the name of their founding father is *Shao*, who begot *Boro*, *Ashinao*, *Assibo*, and *Gongo* (see also Tsega 2006:20). According to Boro elders, the people prefer to be identified as *Boro* and their language as *Borna*. Recently, the term *Borna* has been widely in use to refer to the language of the Boro (see Binyam & Tsehay 2010; Tsehay 2011 and Bergfjord 2013).

Furthermore, except the names *Boro* and *Borna*, the rest of the names were given to the Boros by neighboring ethnic groups. As indicated earlier, the people claim that their original name is Boro, and hence like to call themselves *Boro*. Thus, in this study, the people’s preference is acknowledged; the names *Borna*¹ and *Boro* are used to refer to the language and the people respectively.

1.1.1.1 Location

According to the existing administrative divisions, the Boro people mainly live north of the Abbay River on the Ethio-Sudanese border in the southern part of the Metekel administrative zone of Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional State of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The Regional State is located in the northwestern part of Ethiopia. It shares common boundaries with Sudan in the west, with Amhara National Regional State in the northwest and with the National Regional State of Oromia in the east and south.

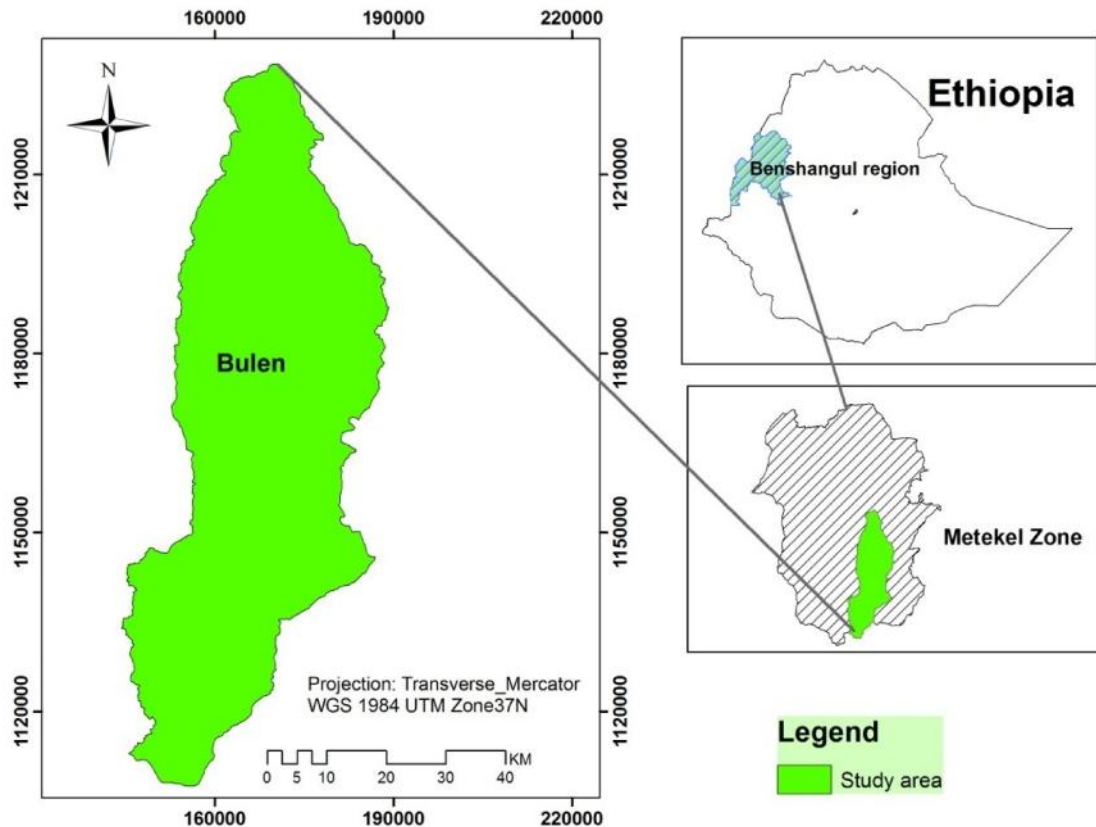
1.1.1.2 The Boro population

As per the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia 2007, Metekel Zone has a total population of 276,367 people out of which the Boro ethnic group constitutes 59,702 people. The Boro ethnic group is the second largest ethnic group in the zone next to the Gumuz. Amhara, Agaw-Awi, and Oromo respectively make up the third, fourth and fifth largest ethnic groups in the zone. In terms of mother tongue speakers, there are 35,406 people whose mother tongue is Borna. This means,

¹Derived from the root **bòr-**; by means of the morpheme **-n**, which is common process of deriving names of languages.

there are 24, 296 or 40.7% ethnic Boros in the zone who do not speak Borna as their mother tongue. This makes Borna the fourth largest language in Metekel Zone next to Gumuz, Oromo and Amharic.

Figure 1.1: **Map of the study area**



Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional States has three zones and two special zones of which Metekel Zone is one. Metekel Zone shares boundaries to the north and northeast with the Amhara National Regional State, and to the west with the Sudan. It is bounded by the Abbay river in the south. Its capital, Gilgel Beles, is 546 kilometers away from Addis Ababa.

Metekel Zone is a melting pot of different ethnic groups. It mainly comprises of about five Nationalities. The Nilo-Saharan speaking Gumuz, the Omotic speaking Boro, the Cushitic speaking Oromo and Agaw and the Semitic speaking Amhara inhabit the zone. Furthermore, the addition of Hadiya and Kambata following the Emergency Resettlement Program of the 1984/85 made the area's ethnic composition more heterogeneous (Tsega 2006:15).

Out of Metekel's six districts Bulen, Guba, Dangur, Debate, Mandura and Wombera, the Boro people predominantly live in Bulen and Wambara (Central Statistical Agency 2012:45). However, the two districts are not entirely occupied by the Boro people as they share the area with the Gumuz, Oromo, Amhara and Agaw.

1.1.1.3 Socioeconomic activities

1.1.1.3.1 Traditions of origin and settlement²

The Boros relate their tradition of origin to the Biblical Canaan. They claim that originally their ancestors came from present-day Israel. The way they left their ancestral homeland, Canaan, and came to their present place of inhabitation was very similar to that of the story of the Biblical Israelites described in the book of Exodus. According to Boro elders, their forefathers first left Israel to Egypt in search of pasture and fertile lands. They claim that their ancestors were led out of Israel to Egypt by one of their forefathers named *Hamati*. *Hamati* was believed to be one of the sons of Canaan. The people claim that it was from the Egyptians that they learned their traditional medicine and sorcery for which they are still very renowned. They also relate their unique ways of grave preparation³ to that of the Israelites to substantiate their tradition of origin. From Egypt, the Boros were forced to move to Ethiopia crossing the Red sea fleeing disagreement and conflict with the Egyptians created over grazing land because of population pressure. The Boros were led from Egypt to Ethiopia by the help of one of their clan chiefs called *Shao*. According to Boro elders, upon their arrival in Ethiopia, they first settled in *Shawa*. According to their claim the present day Shoa, found in central Ethiopia, is named after the Boro man who first led them from Egypt to Ethiopia. In Borna *Shawa* /ṣàwà/ means soil. It is from here that they scattered to different parts of the country. Again, the Boro elders claim that they were forced out of *Shawa* and moved northwestwards by crossing Abbay river to settle in Gojjam particularly in Azena, Bureshindy, Damot, Gumez, Gumyesu, Shashina, Wamberma, Zigem and the surroundings due to overpopulation and in search of pasture land. They claim that the name *Shinasha* was given to them by the people of Gojjam as the former reached there in a great number. They claim that the name *Shinasha* is derived from the Amharic word *shi ṣinna shi* which means thousands and thousands.

² Aba Dimawo, June 15, 2014 and Mengesha Shibeshi, June 23, 2014

³ See video data; funeral and grave preparation

1.1.1.3.2 Social structure

The Boro people have clan-based social structure. According to Boro elders⁴, Boro has two chief clans, *Dowo* and *Gonga*. The *Gonga* clan is further subdivided into two sub-clans, *Indi* and *Inoro*. It is these three clans that represent the ethnic group in all cultural activities of the society. These groups are sub-divided into many smaller clans or lineages. Under the *Dowo* clan, there are smaller clans like *Awujakila*, *Buda*, *Awuyima*, *Indimara*, *Mura*, *Gura* and etc. Similarly, under the *Indiwo* clan, there are smaller clans like *Karna*, *Urna*, *Jaron*, *Wondara*, *Awusha* and etc. The *Anfo* clan subsumes smaller clans like *Shawina*, *Jewona*, *Tulna*, *Shineso*, *Bura* and etc. The *Inoro* clan incorporates the *Azina*, *Gida*, *Nashna*, *Shawuna*, *Awukosha* and etc.

1.1.1.3.3 Livelihood

The main livelihood of the Boros relates to cultivation and livestock. They grow maize, sorghum, teff and beans for subsistence; cotton, coffee and oilseeds for cash. They also keep livestock, i.e. cattle, sheep, goats, horse, mule and donkeys and produce honey (see also Abbink 2010:664). Besides agriculture, trade is one of the sources of income that supplement agriculture for the Boros who dwell in the town.

1.1.1.3.4 Traditional/herbal medicine of the Boro

The Boros are much known as good traditional herbalists and healers. They have good knowledge of the local flora and its medical properties (see also Zelealem 2011:55). According to Boro elders'⁵ description, the Boros acquired the knowledge of herbal medicine from the Egyptians during their settlement in Egypt on their way from Canaan to Ethiopia. Traditionally, Boros believe that everybody is not gifted with the knowledge of herbal medicine. The knowledge is very confidential, and it is often acquired from parents. When the herbalist gets old, he or she transfers the knowledge to one of his or her relatives. A person who is trustworthy does not lie, does not cheat and who is confidential is carefully chosen to transfer the knowledge to. The traditional medicines are prepared from plant leaves, barks, branches, and roots.

In addition to their knowledge of herbal medicine, the Boros are also well-known for their sorcery. The herbalists are also rainmakers. They possess the magical power of making rain whenever necessary. For instance, the rain-makers can avert the rain if they believe the rain

⁴ Aba Dimawo, June 15, 2014, Hafa Bake, July 10, 2014 and Mengesha Shibeshi, June 23, 2014

⁵ Aba Dimawo, June 15, 2014 and Mengesha Shibeshi, June 23, 2014

could damage their crops. They can also stop the rain when it continuously rains and hinders the people from doing their daily chores.

Furthermore, the Boros are also known for their traditional beliefs and activities of blessing and cursing called **difin wata** /dífín wàt'à/ and **morm kisha** /mòrm kíà/. On these traditional activities, the Boro elders make a blessing for the abundance of their agricultural produce and make a curse to protect themselves and animals from disease. They also curse their enemies, not to attack their properties and surroundings.

1.1.1.3.5 Religion

Currently, the majority of the Boros are followers of Orthodox Christianity, yet there are some who follow Evangelical Christianity, Islam and traditional religion (Central Statistical Agency 2012:39). Nonetheless, before the expansion of Orthodox Christianity and the introduction of other religions to the area the Boros use to practice traditional religion. The Boros call their god *Iko* /ík'ò/⁶. They believe that *Iko* is the creator of the universe. According to an explanation by the followers of the traditional religion, *Iko* is not visible to people, though he can see everything. He is omnipotent and omnipresent.

1.1.1.3.6 Marriage

There are five different types marriage mainly practiced by the Boros⁷. These are, *Wida* /wíà/, *Jiya* /íjà/, *Tsitsa* /'í' à/, *Nata* /nààtà/, and *Phuriya* /p'úrìjà/.

I. **Wida** /wíà/

Wida is a form of marriage mostly arranged by the parents of the boy and the girl with a great deal of negotiation. Traditionally, it is arranged not based on the consent of the two parties; rather based on the agreement of the two families. In this type of marriage arrangement, the parents of the boy first select a beautiful girl with a good quality; who is modest, kind, obedient, skillful and clean (virgin). The background of the girl's parents as well as their clan's, economic status, social status, and religion are critically examined. Following this, they research whether there is any blood tie between the two families. They go back up to seven generations and research to make sure that there is no blood tie between the two families. This is often done by elders who know the family-lineage of both families very well. Marriage between close relatives

⁶ Aba Dimawo, June 15, 2014

⁷ Hafa Bake, July 25, 2016 and Mengesha Shibeshi, June 23, 2014

is impossible among the Boros. After all these investigations, the father of the boy sends a word through a go-between to the girl's parents requesting the latter's daughter in marriage for his son. The girl's parents receive the message, but they do not give their response, agreement or disagreement, on the spot. They appoint the go-between for another time for their responses. In the meantime, the girl's parents discuss the matter among themselves and consult their relatives too. They take their time to identify that the boy belongs to the right clan; also examine whether he is socially, and economically fit to marry their daughter. Moreover, they examine their dreams and *milki*, fortune-prediction. *Milki* is a traditional way of associating signs or happenings which are believed to be indicators of the success or failure of the marriage.

II. **Jiya** / ǃ ǃjǎ/

Jiya is a form of marriage that is arranged based on the consent of the two families. Nonetheless, sometimes, for reasons they do not disclose, the girl's family shows reluctance to set the wedding day. Or they present unconvincing excuses and delay the wedding day. In such a time, the boy goes with his friends to the girl's house without prior notice and requests the girl's family to give him their daughter. In this form of marriage, first, the boy's family makes all the necessary preparation for the wedding. On the wedding day, the boy with his best men and entourage goes to the girl's house early in the morning. They knock at the door; when the door is opened for them, they run into the kitchen room. They sit around a pot and repeatedly call the name of the girl. They request the girl's family for the conclusion of the delayed marriage. Since it is a common tradition, the girl's family does not quarrel with the boy and his companions. Meanwhile, elders from the vicinity are called to settle the surprising marriage. The elders persuade the girl's parents to accept the marriage request. They also make the boy fulfill all the necessary formalities required for the marriage to take place. Finally, on that very day, the boy takes the girl to his house.

III. **Tsitsa** / ǃ 'í ǃ'à/

This type of marriage is based only on the consent of the boy and the girl without the knowledge their parents. In this type of marriage, the boy proposes the girl he loved for a marriage through her best friend or he secretly meets her and asks her for a marriage. If she accepts his proposal, she proposes to him the type of clothes and ornaments she wants from him. After that, they discuss when and where they could meet on their wedding day. Most of the time, night time is

preferred. Night time is preferred because in Boro tradition the girl should leave the door open to show that she has escaped for marriage. On the day of their appointment, the boy with his companions gives her all the clothes and ornaments he promised her. The boy does not directly take the girl to his father's house; he rather takes her to one of his relatives' houses. On the next day, the boy's family sends words to the girl's family to tell them not to worry and inform them that their daughter is with them. Within a week, the boy's parents send go-betweens and make peace with the girl's family.

IV. **Nata /nààtà/**

Literally, *Nata* means inheritance. It is a form of marriage by which a brother of a deceased husband (or close relative) inherits the latter's widow. According to Boro tradition, the main reason for this form of marriage is to safeguard the property of the deceased from an outsider and to prevent the children of the deceased from mistreatment by a step-father. In this form of marriage, if there were no children born to the deceased, the children born to the inheritor will take the name of the deceased as their father's name. This is made for the continuity of the deceased's lineage. These days, this form of marriage is less practiced among the Boros.

V. **Phuriya /p'úríjà/**

Phuriya literally means 'abduction'. In this form of marriage, a girl is taken or kidnapped without her consent and the consent of her parents. In Boro tradition, there are two forms of *phuriya*: when the boy abducts the girl he already betrothed or when he abducts the girl he did not betroth. The boy abducts the girl he betrothed for different reasons. Especially, *phuriya* happens when the family of the girl unreasonably delays the wedding day and when another boy interferes and asks the girl for marriage. A man can also abduct if he is unable to pay the money and dowry imposed on him by the girl's family. A man can also abduct a girl he did not betroth when he fell in love with the girl and the girl and her parents decline his marriage request. Abduction often happens when the girl goes to the river to fetch water, goes to the market, goes to the forest to collect firewood, and goes to the different holidays and so on. Abduction often causes serious conflict between the two families. Particularly, if the girl is betrothed, it can cause quarreling and killing of each other. Thus, it is not acknowledged in the society. These days, this form of marriage is considered as harmful tradition; thus, it is rarely practiced.

1.1.1.3.7 Holidays⁸

There are many holidays that are very significant among the Boros. *Gara* /gààrà/, *Shawuya* /lāwújà/ and *Gediwo* /gèdìwò/ are some of the holidays that are colorfully celebrated by the society.

a. *Gara* /gààrà/

Gara is one of the most significant holidays. It marks the beginning of a new year; thus, it is warmly celebrated by Boros from all walks of life. There is no fixed date for the holiday; but according to the elders, it often takes place around the end of the month of September. It happens around the end of the winter season and the beginning of spring season. *Gara* is characterized by blessing, praying, dancing and feasting.

The Boros celebrated *gara* in two ways; individually, at their houses and collectively at a place called *gar jaba* /gààr ɛ̀ àbà/. At their houses, the Boros celebrate *gara* with their families and relatives. On the celebration day, they go around the houses of their kin (beginning from the elder's house) and make prayer to the god of their ancestors. They thank their ancestral god for enabling them to peacefully reach the new year and pray for him to peacefully get to the next year as well. This prayer and thanksgiving ritual is called *mish Kira* /míí k'írà/. The ritual involves throwing a piece of *chumbo* /'úmbò/ (traditional food specially prepared for this purpose) and spilling *borde* /bòrdè/ (cultural/local beer) to the ground while calling the names of their deceased ancestors. They also feast together from the food prepared for the holiday.

Collectively the Boros celebrate *gara* at a place called *Gar jaba*. Traditionally, this place is believed to be a sacred place; thus, it is always protected. On this ceremony, the elders thank the god of their ancestors for the rain, harvest and everything they got during the year. They also pray for all the good fortune to happen in the new year. On this ritual, people take with them food and a small amount of crop from each of their fresh harvest to *Gar jaba*. Finally, the participants feast together from the food prepared for the holiday. Among the youngsters, *gara* is the most favorite holiday. Each night, starting two months before *gara* day, they get together and go around the houses of each member of the group for singing and dancing. They continue doing this for two weeks after the holiday.

⁸ Aha Dimawo, June 15, 2014 and Hafa Bake, August 3, 2016

b. Shawuya /l̥awújà/

Shawuya is also one of the significant holidays among the Boros; though not the most favorite like *gara*. The holiday takes place around the end of January. It marks the beginning of the summer season. Like *gara*, *shawuya* is also characterized by praying, blessing, feasting, singing, and dancing. It is a time for preparing a threshing field for the fresh crop. It is also a thanksgiving time for the fresh harvest. There is also *mish kira* ritual. The feast for this holiday should be prepared from the fresh harvest. At this ceremony, male adults play a game called *undra* /úndírà/. *Undra* is played with a wooden stick called *boda* /bòdà/ and a small wooden ball called *undir awa*/úndír ààwà/. The adults also contribute money, buy and slaughter bulls. The elders bless the feast prepared and everyone eats and enjoy together.

c. Gediwo /gèdíwó/

Another significant holiday grandiosely celebrated among the Boros is *Gediwo*. It is celebrated seven months after *Garo*. The holiday marks the beginning of the winter season and the preparation for agriculture. Content-wise, *gediwo* is very similar to *gara*. The only difference is that singing and dancing by the youngsters do not occur in *gediwo*. On the eve of *gediwo*, they prepare *chumbo* and *borde* and perform *mish kira* ritual. The elders pray to the god of their forefathers for peacefulness of the winter season they are about to accept. They also pray for high yield of what they grow and energy and power for themselves.

1.1.1.3.8 Mourning, burial rituals, and grave arrangement among the Boros⁹

a) Mourning

Mourning for the deceased has a significant part in Boro culture. The ways they express their mourning vary according to the age of the deceased. If a young person dies, the mourning is very severe. There is extreme weeping, wailing and screaming. Because they believe that the person's life was cut short. They assume that he/she left the world earlier in which he or she would accomplish a lot. If a baby who has not yet developed teeth died, excessive mourning is unwanted. They assume that the mother of the deceased child would deliver another child, as a replacement. On the other hand, when an elderly person dies the grief is expressed through

⁹ Shishaw Alemu, July 25, 2016. See video data and ELAN data, *funeral and grave preparation*

unique traditional dirges and dance¹⁰. They express their feelings of pain and deep sadness through dirges and traditional dance. There is no intense weeping and grief as in the case of the death of a young person. The families, relatives, and friends of the deceased intensively weep only on three stages: when the soul of the person departs from the body, when they take out the body of the deceased from his/her house, and when they lower the body into the grave.

In Boro culture, there are significant traditional activities to be carried out when escorting the body of the deceased to the cemetery. The moment they take out the body of the deceased from his/her house, based on the financial status of the deceased, they either slaughter hen, sheep or cattle at the doorway of the house of the deceased. If the deceased person is a woman, her husband or first-born son performs the slaughtering. If the deceased person is a man, the slaughtering is performed by his elder son or brother. As the pallbearers pass over the blood of the slaughtered animal and take out the body through the door, the elders make blessings for the well-being of the family the deceased left behind.

Burial ceremonies are attended by families, relatives, close friends, and neighbors. Children are not allowed to attend funeral ceremonies. On burial ceremonies elderly people, particularly on escorting the body to the cemetery, some people go before the pallbearers singing their dirges and dancing as an outlet for their anguish. Other people throng alongside and behind the pallbearers. The men form a big circle, sing and dance holding a spear in their hand. They also beat two drums called *bambo* and *sermo*. The women play a drum, sing, and dance. Men from the neighboring Gumuz ethnic group play a flute¹¹.

The content of the dirges differs based on the gender of the deceased. Most of the time, in their songs, they express what the deceased has achieved in his/her lifetime. For instance, for a deceased old man, they sing about his heroism, bravery, good character and so on. They also express his contribution and achievement during war, famine or tough times to his society. They associate him with a lion. When an old woman dies, the content of the song is all about her kind-heartedness, love for others, help for the poor and so on.

On the way to the cemetery, the pallbearers put to rest the corpse several times. After a few minutes, they lift it again and go a similar distance before they give the corpse another rest.

¹⁰ See video data

¹¹ See video data

They continue doing this several times until they reach to the cemetery. There is no limit to the number of rests; it is simply determined by the distance of the cemetery from the house of the deceased. As the corpse rests, the women walk before the pallbearers form a big circle and dance. They play drums and sing their lamentations. Similarly, men form a separate group and dance. Other mourners stand and wait until the pallbearers lift the body and start walking.

As part of the funeral ceremony, some women prepare and take with them *chumbo* /ʃ'úmbó/ (traditional food) on a wooden bowl called *maro* and *borde* (local beer) with *nawura* /nàwùrà/ (calabash) to the cemetery. On their way to the cemetery, the lady (often daughter of the deceased) carrying the *chumbo* cut pieces from it with her left hand and throws it again and again until they reach to the cemetery. When they reach to the cemetery, before the actual burial, they rest the body next to the grave. At that point, the lady carrying the *chumbo* throws the remaining *chumbo* to the ground with the wooden bowl. She also throws the *borde* with the calabash to the ground and breaks the calabash. Finally, they take the body to permanent rest in the grave. Though not practiced these days, the Boros used to bury some of the deceased's personal belongings with the body in earlier times.

After the burial, all the funeral-goers directly go back to the house of the deceased. Upon their arrival, they wash their hands and they will be served a meal prepared by neighbors. Based on the economic status of the deceased, the family of the deceased can also slaughter a bull and serve raw meat to the visitors. Visitors sit in groups here and there in the house and around the house and talk to each other in low voices. They also comfort the mourners. Families and close friends of the deceased discuss and propose a plan to how the mourners pass through their grief. They also discuss how the families left behind could be helped. Among the Boros, mourning period lasts for nine days counted from the day of the funeral.

b) Grave arrangement

According to Boro tradition, the first step in the process of grave arrangement is choosing the right location for digging in the cemetery. When digging graves, it is the deceased's close male kin who would initiate the digging. If the deceased person is a man, grave digging will be initiated by his senior son or brother. If the deceased is a child, the father of the deceased will initiate the digging. Following this, the grave is arranged by relatives, neighbors or other people of the community. Grave digging is only done by men.

There are three types of grave arrangement in the Boro society. The first type is circular in shape¹². This type of grave is prepared by digging a circular hole with a radius of approximately the size of adult man's chest and with a depth of approximately one and half-meter. After achieving the desired depth, a wider circular tunnel that can let in two persons who lower the body into the grave is dug starting from the bottom of the grave. In this type of grave, a coffin is not needed. The body is only wrapped in a shroud of cotton and put to rest horizontally in the tunnel. The circular mouth of the grave will be covered with flat stone and plastered with mud to protect the body from earth. Finally, it is covered by earth and mounds of stones are placed to mark the grave. This kind of grave can be opened after seven years and another body of a close relative can be buried in. For instance, it is possible to lie-down husband and wife or brother and sister in the same grave.

The second type of grave is 'funnel' shaped. This type of grave is prepared first by digging a 'V' shaped hole with the depth of the height of an average man. Then, a tunnel is dug horizontally starting from half a meter from its bottom. The tunnel is dug with a width that can let in two people who lower the body to rest. This type of grave is also covered by a flat stone in order to prevent contact of the body with the earth. A coffin is also not needed; the body is simply wrapped in a shroud of cotton.

The third type of grave is dug with a width of the height of a man (average two meters) and depth of half a size of the height of a man (average one meter). This type of grave is often prepared when many people die at the same time due to war or epidemic. Unlike the other two grave arrangements, this grave type is filled with earth. In relation to the first two, this type of grave is easier and faster to dig. In all the three types of grave arrangements coffin are not used for burial; the body is simply wrapped in a shroud of cotton.

1.1.2 The language

According to the classification of Omotic languages made by Heyward (2003:242), Borna belongs to the Omotic language family of the Afroasiatic super-family. Within the Omotic family, it belongs to the North Omotic sub-family, under Ta-Ne languages (groups) and it forms the Gonga sub-group together with Kafa, Shakicho (Mocha) and Anfillo.

¹² See video data or ELAN video, burial and grave preparation

South Omotic Hamar, Aari, Dime

North Omotic

Dizoid Dizi, Sheko, Nayi

Ta-Ne languages

Gonga Kafa, Shakicho (Mocha), Shinasha [Borna], Anfillo

Gimojan

Gimira Bench, She

Ometo-C'ara C'ara

North Ometo Wolaitta, Gamo, Gofa, Dawro, Malo, Basketo, Oyda

East Ometo Zayse, Zargulla, Harro & other lacustrine varieties,
Koorete

South Ometo Maale

Yem (earlier known as 'Janjero') Yem

Mao Mao of Begi, Mao of Bambeshi and Diddes

Internal classification of Omotic languages (Hayward 2003:242)

Geographically, the location of the Borna is not found adjacent to any other Omotic languages. It is the only Omotic language spoken in northwest Ethiopia. Its neighbors are the Gumuz, Amharic, Afan Oromo and Agaw. The isolation of Borna from the other Omotic languages, which are found in the southwest of the country, is the result of the Oromo expansions in the mid-16th century and military pressure from the Christian Empire (Zaborski 1991:125; Tsega 2006:25 & Abbink 2010:665).

1.1.2.1 The Borna dialects

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, there does not seem to be any dialectal study on Borna. Classification of Borna dialects has not been clearly determined. It seems due to this gap that certain disagreement is observed among the different scholars concerning both the number of its dialects as well as the level of mutual intelligibility among speakers of the language.

Most of the scholars who studied the language identify two major dialects. For instance, Fekadie (1988:3), Ashenafi (1989:5), Wedekind and Lemma (2002:4) and Zelealem (2002:3) state that Borna has two distinct dialects: highland (or Gayibora) and lowland (or Taribora). However,

none of these scholars did a research on the dialects of Borna; nor did they mention a work done by other scholars. According to these authors, the variety that is spoken in Dibate, Mandura, and Guba is defined as highland variety. The lowland variety is spoken in Wenbera, Dangur, and Guangua. As to mutual intelligibility of the two groups, there is a consensus among these scholars that there is no intelligibility problem between them. As a result, they can be considered as very close varieties of the same language.

On the other hand, Fleming (1976b:365) identifies four distinct groups of ‘Shinasha’, i.e. Amuru (district name in former Wollega), Boro (south of Awngi in former south-central Gojjam), Guba (southwestern corner of former Gojjam) and Nega (North of Blue Nile). Regarding mutual intelligibility of these groups, Fleming (1976b:366) argues that they are much too unlike to be regarded as varieties of a single language and are not intelligible.

Davis, Hussein & Jordan (2013:8), in their report of “Multilingualism and Language Shift in Boro Communities: A Sociolinguistic Survey”, have defined four dialects of Borna. These are Bulen, Wenbera, Dibate, and Dangur. However, their categorization is solely based on districts (woredas) in which the language is spoken. In their report, they have indicated that the four varieties are very similar and there is no intelligibility problem between them.

Therefore, the exact nature and number of Borna dialectal variations remain open to further research. Nevertheless, for this research, the variety spoken in Bulen has been selected for two reasons. Firstly, Borna is relatively spoken by a larger population as their first language in this woreda: 45%. In this woreda, I assume, the language is less influenced than the other varieties spoken in other woredas as it is the dominant variety/language. The Boros of Bulen also demonstrate strong Boro identity. Secondly, as per the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia 2007, in this woreda, the Boros are the dominant ethnic group accounting for 48% of the Bulen total population. Therefore, I assume it is easier for me to get a good number of Borna speakers in this woreda.

1.1.2.2 The current state of Borna

Since the present researcher has not made any sociolinguistic survey to determine the state of the language under study, the discussions given below predominantly relies on the two surveys made previously by SIL International at different times and my observations during my fieldwork. The first survey was made in 2002, focusing on the sociolinguistic landscape of Boro and identifying

the difference between the highland and lowland dialects of Borna. The second survey was conducted in 2013 focusing on multilingualism and language shift in Boro communities.

According to Davis et al. (2013:9), Borna is being transmitted from one generation to the next without disruption in most areas. The majority of Boro children speak the language. Nonetheless, in Wenbera, the transmission of the language seems interrupted. Oromo is the first language for most of the children in Wenbera. Tsega (2006:23) also asserts that the Boros of Wenbera are almost fully assimilated and have abandoned their language and culture in favor of Oromo. Such disruption of language transmission to the younger generation is a clear indication that the variety of Borna spoken in this specific woreda is unsafe.

In terms of domain of usage, Borna is not used in all contexts. There is clear indication that the dominant languages, Amharic and Afan Oromo, are replacing Borna in different domains. For instance, in towns, Amharic is the working language in all official domains, i.e. public offices, government, and educational institutions. It is also used for religious purposes in Orthodox churches (Davis et al. 2013:7). Likewise, in local markets of Wenbera and Dibat'e, Afan Oromo is dominantly used. On the contrary, Borna is used in informal and home contexts (Wedekind & Lemma 2002:3). This is a clear indicator that the language is vulnerable; children speak the language but are restricted to certain domains. It is giving way to the major languages like Amharic and Afan Oromo, which are being in use as languages of wider communication.

As discussed in §1.1.1.2 above, Boro is the second largest ethnic group in Metekel Zone. Though the majority of the Boro ethnic group speaks Borna, there are 24, 296 (or 40.7%) ethnic Boro people who do not speak Borna as their first language. They use Amharic, Afan Oromo, Gumuz or Agaw (Wedekind & Lemma 2002:3). In terms of the number of mother tongue speakers, Borna is the fourth widely used language in the zone. Gumuz is the first; 100, 349 people use it as their mother tongue, Afan Oromo has 54,972 mother tongue speakers and there are 50,317 people who speak Amharic as their mother tongue. In other words, the ethnic populous group's language (Borna) is a minor language in the Zone.

Borna is a written language. Starting from 2009, the language is being offered both as a subject and medium of instruction in elementary schools. It is also one of the languages that are used in Gilgil Beles Teachers' Training College (Tsehay 2011:9). It is known that providing education using Borna is necessary for the language's vitality. Nonetheless, the facts that the students shift

to Amharic starting from grade five up to seven and then to English shows the social and economic opportunity that learning Amharic and English create. This can indirectly affect the prestige of Borna.

Multilingualism is a fact of life for most Boros. For instance, an astonishing fact, almost all of the people I met for the interview were multilingual. Wedekind and Lemma (2002:5) also witnessed this scenario. In addition to Borna, most Boros also speak Amharic, Afan Oromo, Gumuz and/or Agaw. Children who attend school acquire Amharic from school. Those who live in towns acquire Amharic from the high concentrations of Amharic speakers in towns. This is very common in areas like Dibat'e and Dangur. Similarly, in Bulen, Dibat'e, Dangur and Wonbera, people often speak Afan Oromo or Gumuz (Wedekind & Lemma 2002:3; Davis et al., 2013:7). Although multilingualism is a common linguistic phenomenon throughout the world and it does not necessarily show language loss, the fact that the people use Borna in limited domains makes the language vulnerable to endangerment.

The Boros have a positive attitude towards their language as well as to the other languages spoken in their vicinity. Parents encourage their children to use Borna. They want it to be used for many generations to come and hope that it will not be forgotten (see also Davis et al., 2013:8). However, according to Wedekind and Lemma (2002:3), people who live around Wenbera accept that the usage of Borna is decreasing.

The "UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger"¹³ categorizes Borna in the group of definitely endangered languages. Which means the language is no longer learned by children as a mother tongue at home. However, the fact on the ground contradicts UNESCO's claim. I have observed young children speaking the language. In addition, the language is being offered as a subject and medium of instructions in primary schools. There are also scholars who argue against UNESCO's categorization, as well. For instance, according to Davis et al. (2013:9) and Tsega (2006:24), Borna is still transmitted to the new generation at least in some districts and not all but some children still acquire it at home.

To sum up, there are indicators that the language is in danger, i.e. it has a relatively small number of native speakers, there is an interruption of intergenerational language transmission in some

¹³The interactive online edition of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger which is complementary to the print edition is used. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas>

areas, the language is not used in formal domains, there is loss of interest to learn the language by children in some areas, almost all Boros are multilingual and the language is not in use in junior and secondary schools. Thus, documenting the language and providing descriptions on its grammar is very essential.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Language endangerment is a major issue in every part of the world. For instance, linguists estimate that at least half of the 7,000 languages spoken worldwide today are under threat of extinction by the end of the current century (Harrison 2007:3). In Africa, 54 languages were already extinct, and another 116 languages are in the process of extinction (Nettle & Romaine 2000:9). Particularly, in Ethiopia, a country where more than 70 languages are spoken, though detailed surveys have not been undertaken, 9 languages are highly endangered, and 16 languages have become extinct or are nearly extinct (Batibo 2005:75).

It is evident that there is no consensus among scholars on degrees and judgments of language endangerment. However, even though Borna, the language under study, is not on the list of the endangered languages of Ethiopia given by Batibo (2005:75), there are indications that the language is endangered and that it needs urgent documentation (see §1.1.2.2).

Language is a tool of communication and a means of cultural accumulation and transmission. It is also a symbol of one's identity and self-expression. Hence, the loss of a language amounts to the loss of a culture, intellectual wealth, identity, and human experience. This diminishes linguistic and cultural diversity. Therefore, capturing, documenting and describing a language while the language is still functioning and available for study is very crucial.

As far as the present researcher's knowledge is concerned, some attempts have been made to describe various aspects of Borna by different scholars. However, the attempts were not comprehensive in documenting the language and cultural practices of the Boro people. Therefore, it is believed that the documentation and description of the verb morphology of Borna would preserve the language and culture for the future generation.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study has two general objectives. The first objective is documenting the language. The second is describing the structure of the verb morphology of the language. In line with these, the specific objectives of the study are the following:

- Collecting comprehensive primary data using video, audio texts; and providing metadata for every material (audio, video, and annotation)
- Transcribing, translating and annotating the video and audio data using ELAN (an annotation tool) and producing wordlist using Toolbox software.
- Archiving the annotated video and audio data
- Describing inflectional and derivational verb morphology of Borna
- Describing negation formation, focus system, morphophonemic processes and other topics related to the language's verb morphology.

1.4 Significance of the study

As described under §1.2, Borna is a language that has not yet been described and documented well. Thus, the significance of the present study can be seen in two different levels: The first level and the primary significance of this study is that it makes an important contribution to bridge the knowledge gaps in the area of comprehensively describing Borna verb morphology. The second level and perhaps the sub-significances of this include the following:

- a) The discovery, description, and preservation of Borna linguistic facts can serve as a reference for future linguistic study.
- b) Providing a linguistic analysis of texts in the proposed manner, i.e. by providing a quality of documented materials in different media- audio, video and written - would be a source for easily accessible data for linguists and experts in other related fields of study.
- c) The study can also serve as a live document showing the linguistic and cultural profiles of the Boro people.
- d) The rich textual corpus can serve as a source of information to produce educational materials for the Boro people.

1.5 Theoretical and methodological considerations

This section has two parts. In the first part, theoretical issues related to language documentation and description is presented. In the second part, methods of data collection, documentation and description are presented.

1.5.1 Theoretical considerations

Language documentation (or documentary linguistics) is a relatively ‘young’ sub-field of linguistics emerged in the last three decades. Its emergence as a sub-discipline of linguistics is due to a combination of different factors. The major factors include to give a response to the increasing pace of language endangerment around the world and to empower speakers of endangered languages so that they maintain their languages. Equally importantly, advancement of new technologies and advances in linguistics and neighboring fields of study have also contributed to the emergence of the discipline (see Himmelmann 1998:165; Whalen 2004:321; Austin 2006:88; 2008:91; Woodbury 2011:160).

According to Gippert, Himmelmann & Mosel (2006: v), as a linguistics sub-field, language documentation is “concerned with the methods, tools, and theoretical underpinnings for compiling a representative and lasting multipurpose record of a natural language or one of its varieties”. As also stated by Woodbury (2011:159), language documentation aims at “the creation, annotation, preservation, and dissemination of transparent records of a language”. Lehmann (2001:88) also mentions that the main concern of language documentation is “to represent the language for those who do not have direct access to the language itself”. As an independent field of linguistic research, thus, the fundamental concern of documentary linguistics is to document the linguistic practices and traditions of speech community just like the material culture of a speech community is documented (see Himmelmann 1998:166, 2006:1; Lehmann 2001:4; Woodbury 2003:35; Austin 2010:15).

Language documentation is multi-disciplinary in nature. In addition to the theories and methods in linguistics, it also involves concepts and techniques from a range of language-related disciplines like ethnography, psychology, computer science, recording arts, etc. (see Himmelmann 1998:165; Austin 2014:2; Woodbury 2011:159). Nonetheless, it also has its own characteristics which distinguish it from other approaches to the study of language. Himmelmann (2006:15) identifies five main characteristics of language documentation; these are, it’s focus on

primary data, concern for accountability, concern for long-term storage and preservation of primary data, work in interdisciplinary teams, and close cooperation with and direct involvement of the speech community.

Language documentation is closely related to the field of descriptive linguistics. According to Himmelmann (2000:160-164), language documentation and description are closely interrelated for various epistemological, methodological, and practical reasons. By its nature, language documentation includes a minimum degree of analysis, e.g. a phonetic transcription, an interlinear morphemic gloss, and translation. For instance, in doing transcription, a minimum level of phonetic and phonological analysis is required. In addition, documentation presupposes segmentation of words, clauses, and sentences at different levels of analysis. Furthermore, in an interlinear translation, morphological analysis of words is required. The same analysis is also done in language description (but at a higher level). So, in such areas, it is problematic to make a division between the two.

Another area where the two clearly overlap is in the area of ethnography. Both language documentation and language description are not limited to formal linguistics; the two make an ethnographic description of the language community, as well.

As stated above, the present study comprises of these two activities, language documentation, and description. The current state of Borna requires documentation. Certainly, data collection and documentation by itself cannot be a sufficient response. At the same time, producing a descriptive grammar of the language alone does not seem a satisfactory reaction. Therefore, supplementing documentation with a description is mandatory.

1.5.2 Methodological considerations

As indicated under §1.3, the objective of this study is twofold. In addition to documenting comprehensive and multipurpose primary linguistic data, it also gives a detailed descriptive analysis of the verb morphology of the language under study. Adequate documentation and linguistic description of a language require ‘good’ and abundant data. Thus, this section presents the nature of data, the methods through which it is obtained and the way it is analyzed.

1.5.2.1 Methods of data collection

The present study adopts Himmelmann's (1998, 2006, 2012); Lüpke (2009, 2010) framework (methods) of data collection in field-based language documentation and description research. According to Himmelmann (1998:166) language documentation strives to make available the "linguistic practices characteristic of a given speech community". These linguistic practices and traditions of a given society can be obtained in two ways: 1) the observable linguistic behavior, manifest in everyday interaction between members of the speech community; and 2) the native speakers' metalinguistic knowledge, manifest in their ability to provide interpretations and systematics for linguistic units and events (Himmelmann 2012:192).

Data for language documentation and description need to reflect both the observable linguistic behavior of the speech community and the covert linguistic behavior, namely metalinguistic knowledge. Himmelmann (1998:168) states that the linguistic behavior of a speech community is manifest in communicative events. Thus, recording (audio-video) comprehensive and representative sample of communicative events is central to language documentation. Communicative events may be very different in nature and length. It "includes all kinds of communicative activities in a speech community, from everyday small talk to elaborate rituals, from parents' baby-talking to their newborn infants to political disputes between village elders" (Himmelmann 2006:7). Nonetheless, as Himmelmann (ibid) himself admits, it is impossible to record all communicative events in a speech community for theoretical, practical and ethical reasons. Nevertheless, it is possible to minimize these problems by audio-video recording a variety of texts from a variety of genres. Data for language documentation and description need to be diverse, large, ongoing, transparent, preservable, and portable, as well as ethical (Woodbury 2003:36; Lüpke (2009:57).

Based on their 'naturalness', Himmelmann (1998:185; 2006:7) distinguishes four types of communicative events. These are, natural communicative events, observed communicative events, staged communicative events and elicitation. On the other hand, Lüpke (2009:62) identifies only three types of communicative events: observed communicative events, staged communicative events and elicitations. In the present study, except the natural communicative event type, the other three types of events, identified by Himmelmann (1998) and Lüpke (2009), were employed as a method of data collection. The natural communicative events are excluded

as they are not amenable to documentation and since this minimizes the phenomenon of the observer's paradox. (Himmelman ibid: 185). By applying these three methods, diverse and informative data that represent the language use of the Boro speech community were audio-video recorded.

1.5.2.1.1 Observed communicative events¹⁴

Observed communicative events refer to the type of events in which interference from outside is limited to the fact that the ongoing event is being observed and/or recorded (Himmelman 1998:185). According to Lüpke (2009:64), there are two types of observed communicative events: monologue and interactive discourses. In the present study, only monologues of different genres were audio-video recorded. These are descriptions of Boro traditions like holidays and rituals, explanations of marriage types, accounts on the custom of mourning and burial rituals, historical accounts like the myth of origins, traditional folktales, elaborations of the contemporary way of life, personal narratives/stories, description of cultural objects, description on households, dressing style and ornaments, environmental descriptions like climate, seasons, flora and fauna. The audio-video recordings were made within their appropriate social and cultural context closely as possible with the help of language consultants to minimize potential disturbance caused by the presence of a stranger.

1.5.2.1.2 Staged communicative events

The staged communicative events are data sources in this study. These types of events lack direct ecological validity. They are enacted or 'staged' for linguistic purposes, and they occupy a middle ground between observed communicative events and elicitations (Himmelman 1998:185; Lüpke 2010:68). In this study, different staged communicative events were documented. These include elaborations by the elders on the different types of burial rituals (a video of burial ritual spontaneously recorded was used as a prop) and blessing rituals on different wedding occasions; elaborations on how different cultural foods like *chumbo* /'úmbò/ are prepared; procedural description on how to make a basket (/òòà/)¹⁵ and a house.

¹⁴ See ELAN data, *description of cultural materials, funeral and grave preparation and folktales*

¹⁵ See audio data annotated by ELAN, *How to make Oosha 'basket'*

1.5.2.1.3 Elicitation

It is less likely to fully understand and give an adequate grammatical description of a language structure and culture of a speech community based only on texts from different communicative events. Thus, inclusion of data resulting from elicitation is often recommended (see Himmelmann 1998:186; Lüpke 2010:59). Elicitations are far less natural. In the present study, though most of the data come from recorded texts, elicitation method of data collection is also employed in conjunction with a text collection as a complementary method to capture and understand any linguistic patterns that did not fully manifest and/or rarely manifested in the data from the communicative events. Furthermore, elicitation is also used to identify ‘negative data’, i.e. ungrammatical structures in the language. Three forms of elicitation techniques were employed, translation of words, phrases, and sentences into Borna, grammaticality judgments (about acceptable and unacceptable sentences) and manipulation of the already existing data (changing one word in a sentence, or changing the order of words). The linguistic phenomena used for elicitations consist of word lists, morphological paradigms, verb conjugations, phrases and simple and complex sentences. Elicitations were conducted with more than five native speakers to collect a range of data. The contact language predominantly used for elicitation is English; nonetheless, occasionally Afan Oromo and Amharic are also used with some multilingual language consultants.

1.5.2.2 Methods of data analysis

The task of language documentation involves two very interrelated activities: collection and descriptive analysis of data. In language documentation, data analysis involves transcribing, translating of the data and making it accessible to a broad range of potential users. In the present study, some level of analysis was made to the recorded audio-video materials. Firstly, the recordings are edited (identified and cut) to filter out the important data from the ‘not important’ one and manageable chunks, and file sizes were formed by using Audacity for audio files and Corel Video Studio Pro x7 for editing video files.

After manageable file size is formed and the ‘unimportant data’ is removed, the remaining important data were analyzed. As indicated above, the analysis involves transcription, translation, annotation, and notation of metadata. The main tool used for transcribing and glossing is ELAN (version 4.3.3), which uses synchronized (audio-video) data for the

transcription and glossing. For phonetic and phonemic transcription purpose, the conventions of IPA standard are applied. The Toolbox is used to prepare wordlist. Similarly, for grammatical abbreviations and symbols ‘The Leipzig Glossing Rules’ (Comrie, Haspelmath & Bickel 2015) is used. The transcribed speech events were translated into English. The relevant metadata of the recorded materials like the speaker, recorder, date of recording, location of recording, duration of recording has also been documented along with the corpus.

After all the necessary analysis is made, the data is archived. All the audio files are archived using WAV format and MPEG 2 is used for video files and Extensible Mark-up Language (XML). Finally, then data are submitted on DVD to the Department of Linguistics, Addis Ababa University for archiving.

One of the general purposes of documentary data is providing the database for linguistic analysis (Lüpke 2010:57). In this study, the majority of the descriptive generalizations of the verb morphology of Borna were made based on the material extracted from documentary corpora.

1.5.3 Fieldwork duration and language consultants¹⁶

Data for this study were gathered during three field trips to Matakkaal zone, Bulen woreda from June 2014 to August 2016. Both natural and staged communicative events were recorded (audio and video) and transcribed and translated with the help of native speakers. In addition, systematic elicitation was also conducted. I conducted the first fieldwork during the period from June 2014 to August 2014. During this stage, resourceful elders who know the language and the culture of the speech community were identified and a good rapport with the community and the language consultants was established. It was also during this phase of fieldwork that initial data were collected using elicitation method to make phonological and some morphological description. In addition, Swadesh and SIL Comparative African Word List were used to collect basic wordlists. Some other Borna words that are not included in the Swadesh and SIL comparative wordlist were also included in the list. Furthermore, simple texts (like folktales, the myth of origin and clan genealogy) were collected.

The second phase of fieldwork was conducted a year after, from July 2015 to September 2015. During this period, I managed to work with many people. Most of the text collection took place

¹⁶ Information about the language consultants and resourceful elders is appended; see Appendix C.

during this phase of fieldwork. It was also during this phase of fieldwork that I translated the recorded texts with the help of language helpers. Furthermore, an elicitation method was employed to collect the relevant data with respect to verbal morphology and syntactic properties of the language.

The third phase of fieldwork was conducted from July 2016 to August 2016. During this period, I collected additional audio and video data of different genres. It is also during this phase that the data collected during the past two phases of fieldwork were also cross-checked by native speakers.

In selecting language consultants, I used information I got from the people themselves. Purposeful sampling is employed to select linguistically and culturally knowledgeable consultants. In selecting culturally knowledgeable elders, my main research assistant was Regassa Gudeta, 28 years old, and was brought up in Bulen town. Regassa is a university graduate who works for the culture and tourism bureau of Bulen woreda. He helped me identify and contact Boro elders with whom I conducted several hours of the interview on different topics. Regassa spoke mainly Borna and sometimes Amharic with his friends. I have had consultation sessions with Regassa regularly to contact Boro elders and collect Borna data. His knowledge of the area helped me a lot to contact the different community elders and collect the necessary data.

The other key consultants who helped me by providing many traditional stories and contributed to elicitation of words were Sileshi Dessalegn and Belay Balda. Sileshi is a mathematics teacher at Bulen elementary school. Belay Balda was a daily laborer. The other people who were highly involved in my data collection are Asmamaw Dessalegn (younger brother of Sileshi), Esayas Anbessa, Mamush Dagnew and Binyam Yirsaw. Asmamaw was a fourth-year student of civil engineering at Jimma University. He is a multilingual person who is native to Borna and who also speaks Afan Oromo, Amharic and English with good competence. He had a keen interest in the work and has considerably supported me in elicitation, transcription, and translation with the rather difficult task of recorded texts. He has also assisted me in elicitations of the morphological paradigms. Binyam Yirsaw who was a high school student has helped me in eliciting word lists, expressions of numbers and greetings. Isayas Anbessa has helped me in eliciting minimal pairs,

sentences and cross-checking the elicitation and translation I did with Asmamaw. With Mamush Dagnewu, I elicited sentences; especially, negation formation and serial verb constructions.

In addition to the aforementioned individuals, I have also worked with many Boro elders. Alene Boyo described to me the different cultural materials. Shishaw Alemu eloquently narrated to me the different burial ceremonies and grave preparation among the Boro. Hafa Bake, Mengesha Shibesh, Aba Dimawo and Reta Hora told me the origin of the Boro and how they arrived at their present area, the Boro clans, the different holidays, marriage types, Boro relation with other ethnic groups and blessings on different cultural occasions.

Godano Gameda[†] described to me how /òòlà/ is made (a type of basket often carried by a woman). W/ro Shakatse Wando explained and demonstrated to me each and every step of preparing *chumbo* /ʈ'úmbò/ 'cultural food'. Mintamir Alga and Datsu described to me the different hairstyles, dressing styles, and ornaments worn by young girls and women.

1.6 Organization of the dissertation

This study aims to document Borna and tries to offer a comprehensive description of its verb morphology. The study is organized into eleven chapters.

Chapter one is an introductory chapter. It gives the background to the study, clearly states the statement of the study, set the objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical and methodological considerations.

Chapter two gives a thorough review of previous works on the language. This will clearly show the gap observed on the knowledge on Borna and lay the basis for a source of continual reference throughout the chapters.

Chapter three presents the sketch grammar of the language. This chapter intends to introduce topics that are not directly part of the subject matter of the study, but a key to understanding the verb morphology of Borna. The topics included in this chapter are phonology, noun morphology and syntax of the language.

Chapter four provides Borna verb derivation. The chapter also identifies the morphological property of verb roots in Borna. The verb derivations identified include passives, causatives, reciprocals, inchoatives, and middles.

Chapter five identifies and describes the verb inflection of Borna. It discusses the different grammatical categories for which the verb is inflected. Namely, the chapter focuses on identification and description of agreement markers, tense markers, aspect markers and mood markers.

Chapter six examines negation formation in Borna. In this chapter, the strategies used to form negation will be identified and described. The chapter shows that the language uses affixation and negative auxiliary verbs to form negation.

Chapter seven discusses focus. The chapter mainly presents two topics: description of the pragmatic function of focus and morphological manifestation of focus in Borna.

Chapter eight discusses morphophonemic processes identified in relation to verb morphology. The major morphophonemic processes observed include insertion, deletion, assimilation, internal change and verb-final consonant alternation.

Chapter nine describes the copula and copula clause in Borna.

Chapter ten deals with multi-verb constructions, it emphasizes on serial verb constructions, ideophones, and converbs.

The last chapter, Chapter eleven, presents a summary and concluding remarks.

Chapter two

Literature review

The preceding chapter has dealt with the general introduction of the study. This chapter presents a review of the previous research works related to the language, Borna. The chapter consists of two sections; the first section presents a brief overview the early literature on the linguistics of Borna. In the second section, a critical review of the works directly related to the topic of the present study, Borna verb morphology, is presented.

2.1 Overview of early linguistic works on Borna

The Omotic language family is widely described as the least known language family within the Afroasiatic language phylum (Bender 1990:584; Hayward 2003:243). As a member of an Omotic family, this characterization also applies to Borna, as well. As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, though some efforts have been made, there is very little linguistic literature available on Borna. Thus, this section tries to present a summary of the most important contributions on Borna starting from the early 19th century up to recent times.

2.1.1 Nineteenth century

The earliest literature dealing with Borna came to the public in the nineteenth century with the work of d'Abbadie published in 1845 (Fleming 1976b:353). According to Fleming, d'Abbadie recorded a sample of 110 Borna words from the Boro people living in Abbay basin. In the same year, Beke (1845) published extensive wordlists of Borna and other twelve languages that he collected during his residence in Ethiopia, 1841-1843. Another earliest work on Borna is that of Schuver (1883); he published about 100 words (Fleming 1976b:354). Generally speaking, works on Borna in the nineteenth century are characterized by a collection of wordlists by foreigners.

2.1.2 Twentieth century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a European traveler called Oscar Crosby has encountered with the Boro people during his journey from Zeila to Khartoum. In his article (1901:54), Crosby states that the Boros were unknown before his visit to the area "[...] perhaps most interesting, as being probably not heretofore known, was found a tribe called the Shinasha".

Nonetheless, as was noted already, there are other people who described the Boro and recorded certain aspect of their language long before him. During his visit, Crosby managed to include a short vocabulary of Borna to his note which he assumed could help to define the origin of the Boro people. Crosby (1901:55) states that “a short vocabulary of their language and some [Gumuz] words are given in a note and these may yield, under the treatment of a linguist, some suggestions concerning the origin of this strange tribe”. Nonetheless, he did not include the words for his readers in his article.

Years later, Grottanelli (1941) published his compilation from earlier European travelers and writers. The work includes 600 wordlists and description about the Boro.

In the mid-20th century, 1950, Plazikowsky-Brauner wrote the first sketchy description of Borna morphology. In this work, Plazikowsky-Brauner attempted to illustrate the structure of Borna morphology in a general manner. She begins by introducing the phonology of Borna. She then described determiners, nouns, number, gender, case systems in Borna. Some points are also mentioned concerning adjectives, pronouns, numerals, adverbs, and verbs. As indicated already, since the earlier works on Borna are limited only to collections of wordlists, Plazikowsky-Brauner’s work can be taken as the first proper study of Borna grammar. Her work has served as a stepping stone for many following researchers who worked on Borna. The article is written in Italian.

Later, after 20 years, Plazikowsky-Brauner (1970) has published another article entitled “Die Schinascha in West-Äthiopien” [Schinascha in western Ethiopia]. In this article, she discusses the geographical location of the Boro, their tradition, their myth of origin, their language, their social life, and their religion. The article is written in German. In both her works, Plazikowsky-Brauner does not indicate the place where she gathered her linguistic materials.

The other work related to Borna and worth reviewing is Fleming’s (1976a) ‘Kefa (Gonga) languages’. In his work, Fleming attempts to show certain phonological and morphological similarities and differences between Borna and other Gonga languages for the aim of classification and historical reconstruction. Nonetheless, his comparison is entirely based on the descriptions made by his predecessors. Fleming preferred to use the term *North Gonga* to refer to the language, and claims that the language has varieties such as Guba, Naga, Boro, and Amuru. In the present study, it is identified that except the term *Boro* which refers to the people, the rest

of the varieties he claimed are not related to Borna. Guba and Naga are Gumuz clan names; while Amuru is an Oromo clan name (see also Tsega 2006:13). In addition, Fleming mentions the term *Shinasha* applies to the several languages of Gonga type in the Nile valley. Yet, in the present study, the term *Shinasha* is identified as a non-derogatory name given to the Boros by the Amhara to refer to both the Boro people and the language they speak. Furthermore, the only Omotic language currently found in the North of Abbey is Borna.

After a decade, Gebre (1986) made a remarkable contribution to the study of Borna. He described the phonology of Borna variety spoken around Dangur, sub-district of Matakka. In his description of Borna phonology, Gebre included the consonant and vowel phonemes of the language with their distinctive feature, the syllable structure and distribution of phonemes and the phonological processes and rules in Borna.

Even though Gebre's work is very significant as it is the first research on describing Borna phonology, it has some limitations. Firstly, in his description of Borna consonant phonemes, Gebre (ibid: 6) excludes two consonant phonemes i.e., the alveolar affricate /tʃ/ and the alveopalatal /tʃ/. Nonetheless, in the present study, the existence of these two phonemes is confirmed in words like tʃot'a 'to hit', tʃobà 'to kiss', kí 'to show', and tʃè 'to hug'.

Gebre's claim regarding the distribution of consonant phonemes in Borna is also not free from error. For instance, Gebre (ibid: 17) claims that "all phonemes except vowels and /p/, /D/[tʃ], /s/, /z/, /t/ and /tʃ/[tʃ] are found word initially". Nonetheless, in the present study, it is attested that the phonemes /p, t, s, z, and tʃ/ and all vowel phonemes except /i/ can also occur word-initially. Consider the following examples:

ààwà	'sun'	òòà	'basket'	ímà	'to give'	èèà	'big'
ùùà	'five'	zàànzà	'fly (N)'	í'í'a	'thin'	sízà	'feces'
pèràhà	'a type of snake'	úmbà	'a piece of cloth to carry children on the back with'				

Furthermore, Gebre's (1986: 18) claim regarding gemination of consonants in Borna also needs commenting. He argues that, except **p, p', f, t, z, r, w, j** and **h**, every consonant can be geminated at word-medial position. Yet, as the data collected in the present study reveal, his claim is too general. In Borna, gemination is very infrequent and it is only limited to /t/ and /k/. (For in-depth analysis, see Chapter three, §3.1.2)

The other key limitation of Gebre's (ibid: 10) work is related to the vowel phonemes of Borna. In his work, he gives only the ten peripheral vowels, five short and five long. The two central vowels, **i** and **ɪ**, are not included in his analysis. Contrary to his analysis, the data collected for this study provide convincing evidence that the high central vowel, **/i/**, is phonemic in Borna and the schwa, **ə**, is used as an epenthetic vowel with phonetic status.

Regarding the functions of tone in Borna, Gebre's (ibid) work deserves commenting, as it fails to mention anything about the tone system of the language. As the topic of his study is directly related to tone and since tone has both grammatical and lexical functions in the language he should have treated tone in his study. In this study, it has been identified that Borna uses tone both for lexical and grammatical functions (see also Chapter three, §3.1.2).

Other research so far conducted on Borna includes Ashenafi's (1989) 'The Structure of NP in Shinasha'. In his work, building on his predecessors' works, Ashenafi has attempted to show the constituents that compose the noun phrase in Borna and examines it in the light of Jackendoff's X-bar theory. His work specifically focuses on the Borna variety spoken in Wombera district. The study identifies three main units in an NP structure; these are specifiers, complements, and heads. The specifiers are further categorized into two, articles and quantifiers. Complements are of three types: functional arguments, restrictive modifiers, and non-restrictive modifiers.

Apart from the description of the structure of NP, Ashenafi also describes the phonology of Borna; and has identified four new phonemes (**j**, **A** (**ɔ**), **ts**, **I** (**ɪ**)) that have not been described in the works of Gebre (1986) and Fekadie (1988). Yet, in the present study, as was noted already, the schwa has only phonetic status.

Another significant research on Borna is Ashenafi & Wedekind's (1990) article, 'Characteristics of Omotic tone: Shinasha (Borna)'. It is the first major work on the tonology of Borna. In this article, building on Gebre's (1986) and Ashenafi's (1989) works, the authors tried to bridge one of the major gaps observed in the previous literature on Borna, the role of tone. According to Ashenafi & Wedekind's (ibid: 351), there are two contrasting tones in the language: high (H) and (L). The high tone has two allotones, one regular high and one extra high. The extra high tone only occurs on high vowels, and the regular high tone appears on low vowels. In their study, they have also demonstrated that tone in Borna is used to make lexical and grammatical distinctions. They have also proved that tone patterns are independent of vowel length. In other words, the

same tones and tone patterns are found both on short and long vowels. In their study, they have also compared the nature of tone in Borna with other Omotic languages and concluded that akin to other Omotic languages, in Borna, lexical tone does not change, they are stable. Except that some word-final tones disappear in certain morphological contexts. The article also provides evidence that there exists interdependence between tone height and vowel height in Borna.

It is obvious that Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990) have contributed immensely in describing the characteristics of tone in Borna and in revising the segmental phonemes of Borna. Nonetheless, in the present study, it is identified that their claim of the existence of schwa as a vowel phoneme is misleading. Ashenafi & Wedekind's (1990:348) presented the word **m̩h** 'definite marker' to illustrate the existence of the central vowel, **̩**, as a phoneme in Borna. Nonetheless, in the present study, the 'definite marker' is recorded as **mán** not **m̩h** for masculine and **màn** for feminine (in the present study, **mán/màn** is identified as demonstratives). In the present study, the schwa vowel is only used as an epenthetic vowel to correct impermissible ordering of consonants at morpheme boundary.

The other weakness of Ashenafi & Wedekind's (1990:348) that needs commenting is that they claimed the morpheme /**ʔ**/ doesn't occur in Borna. Yet, contrary to their claim, the morpheme /**ʔ**/ occurs in Borna. The occurrence of this phoneme is exhibited in words like **ʔí** 'à 'thin' **kà** 'à 'to cook' **kí** 'à 'to worry'.

Ashenafi and Wedekind republished this work without major modification under the title 'Aspects of the Omotic tonogenesis: Shinasha' in 1994. In this article, they compared the nature of tone in Borna with other North Omotic languages, Shekkinoono, Kafinoono, and Benchinoon. In the article, they also claimed that there are common trends in the development of Omotic tone systems, and that vowel quality is a major factor in the tonogenesis of North Omotic languages.

Zealelem's (1994) survey of Borna and Agew dialects and languages is an important study from the sociolinguistics point of view. The survey aimed at collecting wordlists and gather information using sociolinguistic questionnaires is the first survey to Boro area. Regarding Borna, the aim of the survey was to study the variations between the two dialects of Borna, lowland and highland. In his report, though he witnesses that he lost all the data from this survey because of an armed robbery, from what he recalls, Zealelem reports that there exist some

phonological differences between the varieties with no apparent intelligibility problems between them.

A year later, Wedekind & Lemma (1995) have made a sociolinguistic survey report of Borna. In their report, they attempted to describe some aspects of the sociolinguistic landscape of Borna, and some differences between the highland (Wombera) and lowland (Bulen) dialects of Borna. Their report shows that there exist differences between the highland and lowland Boro regarding their attitudes towards the languages of wider communication, Amharic and Afan Oromo, on vocabulary and in the various functions of Borna. They also mention that the Boros of Bulen often use Amharic, while the Boros of Wombera use Afan Oromo. In addition, their report indicates that the two varieties have about 85% lexical similarity; thus, they speak close varieties of the same language. Their findings confirm Zelealem's (1994) findings. Finally, the researchers noted that the use of Borna was decreasing at the time. "Strict statistics show that there is a tendency towards giving up [Borna] as a mother tongue" (Wedekind & Lemma 1995:5). The main tools they employed for data collection are wordlist comparison, interview, and sociolinguistic questionnaires.

Another important source worth reviewing is the survey report by Wedekind (1995) entitled 'Sociolinguistic survey report on the Amuru area of Ethiopia'. In the survey report, Wedekind mentions that he made the short trip to the area for two reasons: to identify if there exist any resident in the Amuru area whose mother tongue is Amuru, and to assess the distribution of languages which are being used in Amuru area. In his report, Wedekind (1995:6) states that "the languages spoken in Amuru do not include a language called Amuru. Nor is any dialect of Boro (Shinasha) spoken in this area". He mentions that during his time of visit, the languages predominantly used in the Amuru area are Afan Oromo, Amharic and occasionally, Berta. Therefore, at the present time, claiming a group of Borna speakers in Amuru may no longer be accurate. Nonetheless, by comparing Amuru wordlist transcribed by Fleming in the 1960s with that of Wedekind & Lemma (1995) collected from Bulen and Wenbera areas, Wedekind concluded that the now nonexistent Amuru was a close variety of Borna. Accordingly, his finding confirms Fleming's (1976b: 365) claim that Amuru is a variety of North Gonga.

2.1.3 The twenty-first century

In relative terms, there are many research works done on Borna in the twenty-first century. The majority of these works are done on the different aspect of the language by students of linguistics at Addis Ababa University both at undergraduate and graduate levels. A couple of works, Bergfjord (2013) and Gebre (2014) were done at Oslo University.

In the early twenty-first century, Ewnetu (2000) has written a senior essay on the structure of simple sentences of Borna. In his work, Ewnetu described the constituents of simple sentences, NP and VP along with few morphological features of both head nouns and verbs. Nonetheless, his work is not free from error. For instance, he has not described the kinds of verbs in the language. In addition, he neglects the function of tone in Borna.

Bikila's (2003) 'Relative clause in Shinasha' is another contribution on Borna. In his work, Bikila described the syntactic structure of relative clauses, the various types of relative clauses and the role of the head noun in Borna. According to Bikila, in Borna, the relative clause occurs at the beginning of a sentence, and the head noun immediately follows the relative clause. In addition, he describes that relativization is marked by suffixing the morpheme -*ɔ* to the relative verb. His work is limited to the variety of Borna spoken in Bulen. The major weaknesses observed in Bikila's work are the inability to identify and mark tone and identify morphemes properly.

The other research work on Borna is Tesfaye's (2003), 'The verb phrase of Shinasha'. His work is limited to the Borna variety spoken around Bulen district. In his work, Tesfaye attempted to describe the different constituents of the verb. Nonetheless, his work needs major commenting. The major shortcomings observed in Tesfaye's (2003) work can be generalized as a serious transcription error, under-analysis of morphemes and inability to recognize and mark the function of tone. For instance, regarding verb inflection in Borna, Tesfaye (ibid: 8) claims, the morpheme **-rw-** as the present tense marker, and **-yi-** as the imperfective aspect marker. Nonetheless, in the present study, the morpheme **-rúw-** which he miss-transcribed as **-rw-** is a non-past tense marker.

Tsehay (2011) has produced an MA thesis entitled 'Relative clause in Borna'. The main objective of his work was to look at and describe the structure of relative clauses (RCs) in the language. In his study, the types of RC, accessibility hierarchy, the ways of relativization,

relative verb interaction are described. His work is similar to that of Bikila (2003). The only significant difference is that he marked the tone. His work can be claimed as the first work done by a native speaker of the language. Thus, Tsehay used introspection as the main method of data collection and consulted two native speakers of the language for the sake of confirmation and clarification. His work is limited to Borna variety spoken in Bulen and Debatu districts.

Bergfjord's (2013) 'Issues in Borna phonology' is one of the recent and most thorough research works on the phonology of the language. The study focuses on describing the word level phonology of Borna. Thus, Bergfjord's work is much related to Gebre's (1986) and that of Ashenafi & Wedekind's (1990) works. However, Bergfjord greatly improved earlier descriptions on Borna phonology. In his work, Bergfjord thoroughly discussed the consonants, vowels, and tones of Borna. Accordingly, he bridged the major gaps observed in Gebre (1986) and Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990; 1994).

For instance, he tried to address the differences observed among his predecessors, i.e. Gebre (1986) and Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990) regarding the very presence and the phonological status of the central vowels. For example, Gebre (1986) has not mentioned anything regarding the existence of central vowels in Borna. On the other hand, Ashenafi & Wedekind claim the existence of two central vowels: ə and i . Nonetheless, Bergfjord (2013: 66) clearly demonstrated that, in Borna, there are two central vowels, a schwa with phonetic status and the high central vowel /i/ with phonemic status. He claims that due to its phonologically predictable distribution the schwa is not considered as a vowel phoneme in Borna. The present study confirms to Borgfjord's argument, it is only the high central vowel, /i/ that is considered as a vowel phoneme, in Borna. The schwa is only used to break the impermissible sequence of consonants at morpheme boundary.

The other fundamental issue that Bergfjord (2013) tried to discuss is related to the number of phonetic tone levels that exist in Borna. In his analysis, Bergfjord (ibid: 93), agrees to Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990) conclusion that there exist two-tone levels in Borna: H and L. Nonetheless, he also mentions his assumption that the two tone system is not regular at this time, and claim that there exist many phenomena that do not fit this two-tone pattern. He, thus, indicates that a new tone system, with three phonologically distinctive tones, is in the process emerging. Furthermore, he demonstrated the interdependence between tone height and vowel height in

Borna tone system. According to Bergfjord the two high vowels (/i/ & /u/), can be either high or low, and the three non-high vowels (/e/, /o/ & /a/), can either be mid or low. As indicated above, Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990) also discussed the existence of such interdependence in Borna. In addition to a description of the phonology, Bergfjord's study also offers some notes on the ethnography of the Boro.

The most recent sociolinguistics survey made on Borna is that of Davis, Hussein & Jordan (2013) entitled 'Multilingualism and language shift in Boro communities: A sociolinguistic survey'. The central purpose of the survey was to establish the best possible language or languages for literature and educational materials in different ethnically diversified Boro areas. The main concepts concerned in addressing this question are language attitude, bilingualism, language vitality and social integration. The objectives related to these concepts incorporate assessing the people's attitudes toward Borna, Afan Oromo, and Amharic, testing their proficiency in Afan Oromo and Amharic, investigating the vernacular language vitality in ethnically Boro areas, and investigating the degree of social integration of Borna speakers with neighboring language groups. The report provides that majority of the Boros are bilinguals in Borna, Amharic or Afan Oromo. It also shows that the Boros have a positive attitude towards the dominant languages, Afan Oromo and Amharic and well-integrated with groups speaking these languages. Furthermore, the report includes that the Boros have a strong interest in preserving and developing their language.

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, the most recent research conducted on Borna is Gebre's (2014) work 'Shinasha noun morphology'. In his work, Gebre focuses on a description of rules that produce grammatical, derived, compound and borrowed noun word forms. The topics he discussed include gender, number and case, derivation, compounding borrowing and morphophonemics processes related to nouns. In addition to the thorough description of the different topics, he also pointed out topics that need further research. For instance, the present research, the verb morphology of Borna, is one of the topics he recommended for further research.

Despite all the contributions noted already, there are a few shortcomings that deserve comment. To begin with, in his description of consonant distribution he states that "Word medially and word finally all segments can occur." (Gebre 2014:66). Nonetheless, in the present study, the

occurrence of phoneme /r/ at word-medial and word-final position is not attested. He further claims that “Word initially plain consonants can occur, but not p, [b], s, z, r...”. However, as described under §3.1.1.1, the presence of the phonemes **p**, **b**, **s**, and **z** at word-initial position is attested in Borna. Gebre’s (ibid: 67) claim on co-occurrence of three consonants at word-medial and final positions is also misleading. As far as the data used in the present study are concerned, the co-occurrence of three consonants in a word-final position is not attested in Borna. Gebere produced no data to justify his claim.

2.2 Critical review of related literature

This section discusses a comprehensive review of the linguistic works related to the verb morphology of Borna.

2.2.1 Fekadie (1988)

One of the research works directly related to the present study is Fekadie’s (1988) unpublished senior essay, ‘Shinasha [Borna] verb and noun morphology’. In his work, Fekadie gives a short description of both noun and verb morphology of Borna and some morphophonemic processes related to both verbs and nouns. Fekadie also devotes some paragraphs to the ethnography of the people. His description is based on the variety of Borna spoken in Wombera, Dangur, and Guangua.

Fekadie’s description of Borna morphology has certain limitations that need to be commented on. To begin with, in the phonology part, following Gebre’s (1986:6) description of Borna phonology, Fekadie (ibid: 5) also claims the existence of twenty-four consonants and five short and five long vowels in Borna. But, in the present study, it is identified that Fekadie’s (ibid) claim is misleading. As pointed out in the foregoing paragraphs, in Borna, there are twenty-six consonant phonemes. In addition, there are five short and five long vowels and one high central vowel phoneme, **i** and a schwa, **ə**, with phonetic status.

In his description of the Borna verbal morphology, Fekadie (ibid: 8) claims that Borna verb inflection forms only distinguish first, second and third person singular. The morphemes he identified as person markers are {-e} 1SG, {-i} 2SG, {-e} 3SGM and {-a} 3SGF. Nonetheless, as identified in the present study, the drawbacks of Fekadie’s (ibid: 8) work regarding Borna verb inflection is of two kinds. First, in his description he fails to identify the first, second and third

person plural markers, **-ò**, **-(i)t** and **-nó**, respectively. Second, his description of the morpheme **-e** as both a first and third person singular masculine marker is misleading. For the reason that, in Borna, the first person singular is marked by **-è** and third person singular masculine is marked by **-é**. His omission of the tone system of the language from his description is believed to be the main reason for his wrong conclusion. One of the examples he used to ‘illustrate’ his argument is the following (ibid: 8).

/ma-r-e/ ‘I ate’ /ma-r-e/ ‘He ate’

As shown above by the examples taken from his work, in his description, the tone feature that distinguishes first person singular from the third person singular masculine is not identified. Even though the segmental phonemes in both cases are the same, they are distinguished by tone as the following example illustrates. The examples he provided is corrected in the present study as the following:

tà màà-r-è ‘I ate.’ bí màà-r-é ‘He ate.’

In his description of number marking in Borna, Fekadie (ibid: 8) gives a misleading representation regarding second person plural. He claims the morpheme **-er** to be the second person plural marker. He provides the following data as ‘illustrative’ example:

/k’az-r-er/ ‘You(pl) left’

Nonetheless, in this study, it is identified that the morpheme that marks second person plural is **-(i)t** not **-er**. In this study, the corrected transcription of the data he provided is as the following:

k’az-r-ít ‘You(PL) left.’

Similarly, regarding Fekadie’s (ibid: 9-11) description of the tense system in Borna, various shortcomings are identified. First, he failed to include the progressive tense in his description. In this study, the present progressive tense is marked by **-íír** and **-rúw-**. Second, he states that “the present tense is marked by **{-ø}** morpheme” (ibid: 10). He provided no data to substantiate his claim. Third, he claims the morpheme **-tni-** to mark the remote past action (ibid: 11). Nonetheless, in Borna, there is no such tense categorization. The past is marked by **-r-** in simple verb structures or by zero morpheme (**Ø**) in cleft constructions whether it is near or remote past.

Similarly, Fekadie (ibid: 11) claims “the present perfect tense is marked by morpheme **-k’rer-**”. Nonetheless, his description of **-k’rer-** as a present perfect marker is faulty in two ways. First, what he identified as a bound morpheme is a full-fledged word **k’írà** ‘to die’. Second, the word is miss-transcribed; it has to be **k’ír-**. Third, what he identified as a single ‘morpheme’ is under-analyzed; it consists of the verb stem and the past tense marker **-r-**. The following is some of the data he presented to ‘illustrate’ his claim (Fekadie ibid: 11):

/ma-k’rer-e/ ‘I have eaten’

/ma-k’rer-no/ ‘They have eaten’

In the present study, the data he transcribed, given above, is realized as a serial verb consisting sequence of two verbs. Verb one is in its bare form, whereas the second verb is suffixed with morphemes carrying different grammatical information. (For a detailed explanation, see Chapter ten)

tà	màà-k’ír-í-è	
I	eat-die-PST-1SG:DECL	‘I have eaten.’
nòò	màà-k’ír-í-ò	
we	eat-die-PST-1PL:DECL	‘We have eaten.’

According to Fekadie (1988:11), “the past perfect tense is marked by morpheme {–teš}”. Nonetheless, in the present study, what he described as a past perfect tense marking morpheme is a past existential/auxiliary verb **tèà** ‘exist_past’. Thus, it is used as an auxiliary verb to show an action happened in the past in complex verb.

Furthermore, though there is more than one way of marking negation in Borna, Fekadie (ibid: 13) identifies a single morpheme **-ra** - as a negative marker for perfective aspect. As to the present study, this claim is incorrect. In Borna, there is more than one negative marking morpheme, **-rá** -/–**á** -, **-rák**-/–**ák**-. (For a detailed explanation, see Chapter six, Negation)

In addition, Fekadie’s (ibid: 14) description of ‘negative imperfect aspect’ is not identified in the present study. According to his description, negation in imperfect action is marked by two morphemes, **-ra** - attached as a prefix and **-al-** as a suffix. He presents the following data to ‘illustrate’ his claim:

/al-me-ra -e/	‘I do not eat’
/al-ma-ra -o/	‘We don’t eat’

Nonetheless, the data used in this research do not show the occurrence of the -al- he claimed as the second negation marker.

Akin to the other verb inflection he described, Fekadie’s (ibid: 14-16) description of mood in Borna also needs commenting. In his description, he identified three types of mood in Borna: jussive, intentional and potential. According to his description, the morpheme **ab-,be?**- is a jussive mood marker in Borna. He presented the following data to ‘illustrate’ his argument (ibid: 15):

/ab-kay-be?-a/	‘let her play’
/ab-kay-be?-o/	‘let us play’
/ab-kay-be?-no/	‘let them play’

From his description, it is difficult to understand whether the morpheme he identified as a jussive marker is a single or two morphemes added to the base at the same time. Moreover, Fekadie (ibid) says nothing regarding the type of morpheme i.e., prefix, suffix or circumfix. In the present study, the morphemes he claimed as a jussive marker(s) is/are not identified. Based on the English gloss he presented, in the present study, the data he presented is transcribed as the following:

bì	kààj-ì	
she	play-3SGF:JUSS	‘Let her play.’
nòò	kààj-ò	
we	play-1PL:JUSS	‘Let us play.’
bó	kààj-nó	
they	play-3PL:JUSS	‘Let them play.’

Akin to the jussive mood, Fekade’s (ibid: 15) description of intentional mood also needs commenting. According to his description, the intentional mood in Borna is marked by **-o-, -etir-**. Nonetheless, there is no description given regarding the type of these morphemes. From the examples he provided, it is impossible to identify whether it is one or two morphemes or a prefix

and a suffix or circumfix. The following data are taken from one of the examples he provided to ‘illustrate’ his argument (ibid: 15-16):

/s'il-o-ša-etir-e/	‘I am intending to see’
/mos'-o-ša-etir-a/	‘She is intending to run’

In the present study, the morphemes he identified appear to be not intentional mood markers. Above all, in the present study, it is identified that the intentional mood is not morphologically marked; it is expressed periphrastically. (For further description, see Chapter five, §5.2.2.3) The following examples show how the examples given by Fekadie are realized in the present study:

tà	□ 'ííl-ǵ-à	tì=ètt-íír	
I	see-DAT-3SGM:COP 1SG-say-PROG		‘I am intending/about to see.’
bì	wò□ 'ǵ-à	bí=ètt-íír	
she	run-DAT-3SGM:COP 3SGF-say-PROG		‘She is intending/about to run.’

Similar to the other two types of mood commented in the foregoing paragraphs, Fekadie’s (ibid: 16) third type of mood, the potential, also needs remark. He claims that the potential mood is marked by the morpheme **-ofal-**. However, in the present study, what he claimed as a morpheme is identified as an auxiliary verb **fàl-** ‘can’. Consider the following examples:

tà	wààk-ó	fàl-ǵf-è
I	swim-M	can-PHAB-1SG:DECL
‘I can swim.’		

Akin to the verb inflection section, Fekadie’s (ibid: 16-18) description of the verb derivation also deserve comment. To begin with, Fekadie’s (ibid: 17) claim that passive verb form is derived by “lengthening any vowel in the root of the verb”. According to this claim, there are multiple morphemes that stand to mark passive voice. To ‘illustrate’ his argument he gives the following example (ibid: 17):

/kew-r-e/	‘he purchased’	/keew-r-e/	‘be purchased’
/uD-r-e-/	‘he killed’	/uuD-r-e/	‘be killed’

However, in this study, this claim is proved incorrect. In Borna, passive voice is marked by suffixing a single morpheme **-ée-** to the verb. Consider the following example:

bí	bì-n	òòb-éé-r-é
he	she-ACC	kiss-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL

‘He was kissed by her.’

Regarding causative construction, there is a minor difference between Fekadie’s (ibid: 17) work and the present study. He claims that the causative form of verbs is derived by suffixing the vowel /i/ to a verb base. Nonetheless, in the present study, one of the causative marking morphemes is -íí-. He also fails to include the other causative markers; i.e. -z-, - and - .

Fekadie’s (ibid: 17) description regarding frequentative derivation is also problematic. He claims that the frequentative is marked by the morpheme -teš-. Nonetheless, in the present study, it is identified that what he claimed as a morpheme is actually a past-existential auxiliary verb tèlà; and frequentative is not morphologically marked. Rather, it is shown by a multi-verb, combining the verb ílā ‘finish’ with the main verb. Consider the following example:

bí	ú -ír-é	‘He killed’
bí	ú -í -ír-é	‘He finished killing’ (Lit. He killed many.)’

Fekadie (ibid: 18) also describes reciprocal derivation incorrectly. He claims that the reciprocity or interchange of action is marked by suffixing -ee- to the verb base. His examples:

/uD-r-no/	‘they killed’	/uD-ee-r-no/	‘They killed each other’
/ma-r-no/	‘they ate’	/ma-ee-r-no/	‘They ate each other’

Nonetheless, in this study, the reciprocal action is not only marked morphologically. Rather, it is shown by the word tòòkà ‘head’ and suffixing the morpheme -é- to the verb base. Consider the following example:

nòò	nò-tòòk	tòòk-ó-n	lún-é-f-ò
we	1PL-head	head-M-INST	love-RECP-PHAB-1PL:DECL

‘We love each other.’

2.2.2 Rottland (1990)

Another work which deals with Borna grammar and is related to the present study is Rottland’s (1990), ‘A sketch of Shinasha morphology. In this work, a sketchy description of the phonology, noun, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, question words, numerals are made. In the following

paragraphs, though the emphasis is given to the verb morphology part, comments are also given to errors observed on other topics of his descriptions as well.

While Rottland's (1990) brief description of Borna morphology is a valuable source of information, at the same time, it deserves critical commenting for its different shortcomings. In the very first paragraph of his writing, Rottland (ibid: 85) states that the data he used for describing the morphology of Borna is recorded outside Borna speaking community from a refugee in Nairobi. In addition, Rottland (ibid: 185) himself acknowledges that his work needs checking "much of the data needs further checking, since by the time I was ready to go through my notes in detail, Mr. Jaleta [the language helper] had left Kenya. A further difficulty was that we had to use a meta-language (English) of which he then had only limited command".

In describing the phonology of Borna, Rottland (ibid: 187) identified 26 consonant phonemes. Two comments can be given regarding the consonant phonemes he identified: one, he missed out a phoneme $\varnothing$ from his description. Second, a sound, **rh** which does not exist in the language is added. Furthermore, he fails to comment whether **rh** is a monographim or diagraphim or aspirated **r**. According to the data collected for this study, it seems, his claim of **rh** as a consonant phoneme in Borna arises from transcription problem. For instance, Rottland (ibid: 192) uses the following data to 'illustrate' the occurrence of this sound in Borna:

bollú warhá 'a mule (f.) comes'

bolló warhé 'a mule comes'

In the present study, the misleading data he provided is recorded as follows:

bòl-ú wàà-r-à 'A mule (F) came.'

bòl-ó wàà-r-é 'A mule (M) came.'

Rottland (ibid: 188) also claims that "most of the 26 consonants (...) occur probably in a geminated form (non-initially)". Nonetheless, he fails to identify which consonants can be geminated and which ones cannot. In addition, contrary to his claim, it is only two consonants, /t/ & /k/ which can occur in a geminated form.

Furthermore, he claims that "there seem to be no restrictions on the occurrence of consonants in various word positions" (ibid: 188). Nonetheless, in this study, for instance, the occurrence of

/r/ / at word-final position and /r/ / at word-initial position is not attested. (See also Chapter three, §3.1.1)

Similarly, Rottland's (ibid: 188) description of vowel sounds in Borna is not free from error. He identified pairs of five short and five long vowels, /i, i:, u, u:, e, e:, o, o:, a, and a:/. Regarding the occurrence of the central vowels, he states "the two short front vowels have a tendency to be centralized ([ɪ]) in quick speech" (ibid: 188). The occurrence and status of the two central vowels, [ɪ] and [ɪ] is not identified in his work. As already stated, in the present study, [ɪ] is phonemic and [ɪ] is phonetic.

In his description of the tone system in Borna, he recognizes the importance of tone. Yet, he expresses doubt about the number of tonemes. Rottland (ibid:189) says, "I distinguish here three levels of pitch [...] the status of the mid tone, however, remains doubtful" and, "My suspicion is that the language has basically L and H and that up-stepping and/or down-stepping are involved". In addition, he admits that tone is not well treated in his work. "Although I cannot present a complete tonology, I can at least show tone is essential and grammatically more than lexically".

In describing the verb morphology of Borna, Rottland (ibid: 1990) identifies two morphemes, –y- and –s- that cannot be interchangeably used as causative markers in Borna. Nonetheless, in the present study, neither of the two is identified as causative. One of the causative markers, according to data collected for the present study is –íí-. The following is some of the data he presented to 'illustrate' his claim (ibid: 199):

daná	'to learn'	danya	'to teach'
k'eesá	'to be hot'	k'e:syá	'to heat'

In the present study, the data he provided to 'illustrate' his claim are realized as:

dànà	'to learn'	dàn-íí-j-à	'to teach'
k'èèà	'to be hot'	'k'èèà -íí-j-à	'to heat'

As indicated in the foregoing paragraph, in the present study, the causative markers identified are –íí-, –z-, –j- and –j-. (See Chapter four, §4.2.2)

Similarly, in describing the verb conjugation of Borna, Rottland (ibid: 204) presents misleading descriptions. For instance, he claims that the present/past tense is realized as **-ø-** morpheme and presents the following under-analyzed data as ‘illustrative’ example:

ta:	danfe	‘I know/knew’
ne:	danfi	‘You(sg.) know/knew’

From the data he provided, it is possible to realize that the data is under-analyzed. Because, in the above data, **dàn-** is the stem, **-f-** is a present habitual marker and **-è** is a first person singular marker and **-í** is a second person singular marker. The data is re-analyzed as follows:

tà	dàn-f-è
I	know-PHAB-1SG:DECL
‘I know.’	
nèè	dàn-f-í
you(SG)	know-PHAB-1SG:DECL
‘You(SG) know.’	

Thus, the analyzed data clearly show that the present habitual marker is **-f-**, not **-ø-**.

Similarly, there is also a difference in form with the different tense markers Rottland (ibid: 204-205) identifies and the ones identified in the present study. For instance, in his work, the future tense marker is **-itu**; nonetheless, in the present study, it is realized as **-túw-**. Likewise, what he identifies as the progressive marker, **-irí** is realized as **-íír** in the present study. He also claims **gér-** as a past tense marker. Nonetheless, in the present study, the past tense marker is identified as **-r-**. From the data collected for the present study, it seems that what he identified as the past tense marker is a wrong transcription of the verb **k’ír-** ‘to die’ used in expressing past perfect tense. In Borna, the past perfect is expressed by serial verb construction; in which case the second verb of the serial verb construction is **k’írà** ‘to die’. Consider the following example:

bì	òò	ítt-ó	k’à ‘-k’ír-à
she	yesterday	food-M	cook-die-PST-3SGF:DECL
‘She had cooked the food yesterday.’			

Rottland’s (ibid: 204) description of negation in Borna also needs commenting. First, he only identified a single morpheme, **-as-**, as a negation marker in Borna; whereas there are other

negation markers like **-rá** **-/á** - and **-rák-/ák-** in Borna. Second, the morpheme he identified as a negation marker is not properly transcribed; it has to be transcribed as **-á** -. It seems that such mis-transcription is a reflection of a weak description of the language's phonology. In his description of Borna consonant sounds, he failed to identify the morpheme / /.

2.2.3 Lamberti (1993)

The other work related to the present study, and worth reviewing is Lamberti's (1993) work 'Die Shinasha-Sprache: Materialien zum Boro [The Shinasha language: Boro materials]'. Lamberti's work consists of four main parts. The first part deals with the phonological structure of Borna, its consonants, vowels and prosodic relations. The second part deals with morphology. In the morphology part, the forms of nouns, personal pronouns, post-positions, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and the verbal system are discussed. The third part deals with the syntactic and morpho-syntactic rules of Borna. The fourth part consists of a list of words arranged alphabetically. His work can be taken as the first comprehensive work on Borna grammar. In the introductory section of his work, based on his predecessors' Plazikowsky-Brauner (1950 & 1970), Fleming (1976a) and Rottland (1990) works Lamberti also provides a brief discussion on the ethnography of the Boro. Lamberti's work is written in German.

To begin with, Lamberti (1993:44) mentions the presence of diphthongs in Borna. Nonetheless, in the present study, diphthongs are not attested. Yet, combinations of semi-vowels and vowels in either order are attested. For instance, in **àwùdà** 'four', **k'ewa** 'to shiver/tremble', **'úwà** 'smoke', **dòwà** 'grave', **gàwújà** 'market', **tàwà** 'fire', **àjijà** 'help', **èjì à** 'after', and **gújìà** 'neighbor' there are combinations of different vowels and semi-vowels.

Regarding tone, Lamberti (1993:46) identifies three tone levels; high, low and mid. Furthermore, in his description, Lamberti explicitly claims that there exist no publications available that treated tone, and he claims that his work is the first to analyze the nature of Borna tonology. Nonetheless, just three years before his publication, Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990) have already published their seminal work on the characteristics of Borna tone. In addition, in the same year, Rottland (1990) has also indicated the significance of tone in Borna. In the present study, as already indicated, two phonological tone levels: high (H) and low (L) are identified. (See Chapter three, §3.1.2.3 Tone)

Similarly, Lamberti's description of the inflectional morphology of Borna is also not free from error. For instance, Lamberti (ibid: 137) shows that the future tense marker is **-ttùw-**; and claims that this morpheme causes the verb-stem final consonant to be geminated. He provided the following data as 'illustrative' examples:

1.sg. àm-m-éttùwè

2.sg. àm-m-éttùwì

3.msg. àm-m-éttùwé

However, in the present study, the 'future tense' or non-past is marked by **-túw-**; and gemination of verb stem-final consonant is not observed. In the present study, the data he provided, given above, are realized as follows:

1.sg. àm-**tt**túw-è 'I will go'

2.sg. àm-**tt**túw-í 'You(SG) will go'

3.msg. àm-**tt**túw-é 'He will go'

Furthermore, regarding causatives, Lamberti's (ibid: 130) claim that the morpheme **-iy-** is the most commonly used causative marker is also misleading. In the present study, the causative morpheme is realized as **-íí-** and the glide sound **y(j)** is used to break the impermissible sequence of vowels in the language. Lamberti also claims that the addition of this causative marking morpheme, **-iy-**, sometimes causes the final consonants of some verbs to be geminated. The following are some of the data he provides to 'illustrate' his claims (p. 130):

àm- 'go' → àmm-íy- 'let go'

dék'- 'take' → dékk'-íy- 'to let take'

Nonetheless, in the present study, such morphophonemic process (gemination of the verb stem-final consonant due to suffixation of the causative morpheme **-íí-** to the verb stem) is not recorded. The data he used to 'illustrate' his argument is realized as the following:

àm- 'go' → àm-íí- 'let go'

dèk'- 'take' → dèk'-íí- 'let take'

In describing passive formation in Borna, Lamberti (ibid: 132-133) mentions that the morpheme **-ey-** is the passive marker. On the other hand, in the present study, passives are formed by

suffixing the morpheme **-éé-** to the verb stem. The following are some of the data he provided to ‘illustrate’ his argument:

□ ’éég-	‘call’	→	□ ’éég-éý-	‘be called’
gèý-	‘search’	→	gèý-éý-	‘be searched’

Contrary to his claim, in the present study, the data he provided (given above) is recorded as the following:

□ èèg-	‘call’	→	□ èèg-éé-	‘be called’
gèj-	‘search’	→	gèj-éé-	‘be searched’

Lamberti’s (ibid) description regarding negation in Borna also needs commenting. Lamberti (ibid: 184) claims that the tense marking morphemes are not neutralized when the negative marking morphemes are attached to the base. For instance, the morpheme **-r** marks past tense in negative constructions. He presents the following data to ‘illustrate’ his examples (p. 185):

1.sg.	àm-r-áts-è	‘I did not go.’
2.sg.	àm-r-áts-í	‘You did not go.’
3.msg.	àm-r-áts-é	‘He did not go.’

Nonetheless, in the present study, it is identified that tense is neutralized in negative constructions. The morpheme **-r** that he claimed as past tense marker is part of the negative marking morpheme **-rá-**. In fact, the morpheme **-r-** marks past tense in affirmative constructions. The data he provided, given above, are recorded in the present study as follows:

(tà)	àm-áts-è	‘I did not go.’
(nèè)	àm-áts-í	‘You(SG) did not go.’
(bí)	àm-áts-é	‘He did not go.’

The morpheme he claimed as a past tense marker, **-r**, also occurs in future tense constructions. Consider the following examples:

tà	wèè-túw-è
I	come-FUT-1SG:DECL
‘I will come.’	

tà	wàà-rá -è
I	come-NEG-1SG:DECL
'I will not come.'	

As shown in the above examples, contrary to Lambert's (ibid: 184-185) argument, -r- is not a tense marker; it is part and parcel of the negative marking morpheme -rá -. (For further analysis, see Chapter six, negation.)

Regarding focus system in Borna, Lamberti (ibid: 8) clearly state that he did not treat focus system in his work due to data scarcity. This is another gap observed in his work; as a focus is morphologically marked on the verb. In the present study, an attempt has been made to fill this gap. (For further discussion on focus, see Chapter seven)

2.2.4 Joswig (2008)

The other sketch description of Borna grammar was made by Joswig (2008), 'A brief grammar of the Borna language'. As can be seen from the topic and as the writer, Joswig (ibid: 1), himself clearly states the purpose of the grammatical description is not to give a full and comprehensive description of Borna language. Rather, it is "to aware the Boro community about the wealth and variation it inherited with Borna". To this end, the writer tried to touch upon various topics like nouns, numerals, demonstratives, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, and adpositions, very briefly. Nonetheless, many forms of the language are not mentioned and some areas of the grammar have been omitted. Furthermore, Joswig (ibid: 1) himself also admit that "this book will disappoint everybody who wants to see a description of Borna according to the latest linguistic models and terminology".

As was noted already, Joswig's work does not provide a thorough analysis of Borna grammar. On top of that, some of his descriptions need commenting. To begin with, one of the drawbacks observed in his work is tone. Tone is inconsistently marked.

The other weakness of his work lies in the way he identified and glossed the morphemes. In his work, the data is not analyzed at morpheme level. Thus, it is difficult to understand the meaning or function of the different forms. In some areas where the morphemes are identified, they are described incorrectly. For instance, Joswig (ibid: 34) provides a wrong description regarding subject reference on the verb. He claims that the subject markers on the verb in Borna are the

following: **-re** 1SG, **-ri** 2SG, **-re** 3SGM, **-ra** 3SGF, **-ro** 1PL, **-r**t 2PL and **-r**no 3PL. However, based on the data collected for this study, the different subject agreement markers he identified are found to be erroneous in three ways. The first, the forms he identified as a single morpheme are combinations of two morphemes, the past tense marker **-r** and the different agreement markers, **-è** 1SG, **-í** 2SG, **-é** 3SGM, **-à** 3SGF, **-ó** 1PL, **-t** 2PL and **-nó** 3PL. Second, since tone is not marked, the **1SG** and **3SGM** is represented by the same morpheme. Third, the claimed morphemes only represent declarative sentences. No description is given that the form of the agreement markers changes when the mood of the verb changes.

The tense markers identified by Joswig (ibid: 34-35) also need commenting. As indicated above, what he identified as agreement markers are a merger of two morphemes. It seems due to this misleading analysis that he described the same morphemes he described as agreement markers as tense markers, as well. According to Joswig (ibid: 35), the past tense marker is **-ra**; but, in the present study, it is identified as **-r**-. Similarly, he mentions the present and future tense is marked by the same morpheme **-twa**. Nonetheless, in the present study, the future tense marker is realized as **-túw**- and the present habitual is realized as **-f**- or **-fò**.

With respect to the tense system of Borna, Joswig (ibid: 35) claims that remote past is marked by **-fo**; and provides the following data for ‘illustration’:

joo bi joko b k’t’fo

‘A long time ago, she cut a rope.’

Contrary to his description, in the present study, it is found out that there is no such distinction as near past and remote past. Morphologically, past tense is represented by the morpheme **-r**-. The morpheme **-fo** he claimed as an indicator of remote past is a present habitual marker. Surprisingly, it is only Joswig and Fekadie (1988) who mentions *remote past* as a type of tense in Borna. Furthermore, the language helpers consulted for this study refused to accept the data he provides; and gave the following instead to refer to habitual action:

bì	ààk-à	bì=k’út’-fò
she	rope-3SGM:COP	3SGF-cut-HAB

‘It is rope, She cuts.’

In his description of Borna verb morphology, Joswig (ibid: 38) notes that “in some verbs the causative element is -iy. In other verbs, the causative element is -z”. The same morpheme identified by Lambert (1993). The following are some of the data he provided to ‘illustrate’ causative in Borna:

dana	→	daniya	learn	→	teach
keewa	→	keewiya	tell	→	make tell
maa	→	maanziya	eat	→	feed (make eat)
beeya	→	beeza	sit	→	make sit
kleea	→	kleeza	sleep	→	make sleep

The claim that Joswig (ibid: 38) made regarding causative marker is correct, except minor transcription error and missing adequate description regarding when these two morphemes are used. As far as the data used for this study reveals, **-íí-** and **-z-** are causatives markers. Nonetheless, the glide /j/ which he claimed as part of the causative marker is a glide inserted to break a sequence of vowels. Consider the following examples:

bèèjà	‘to sit’	bèèzà / bèè-z-à	‘to make sit’
k’èèjà	‘to sleep’	k’èèzà / k’èè-z-à	‘to make sleep’

The causative marker **-z-** is often used with verb stems with a vowel and glides final. When the verb stem is consonant-final, the morpheme **-íí-** is the causative marker. Nonetheless, there are exceptions. For instance, in the following data **-nz-** is used as a causative marker:

màà	‘to eat’	màà-nz-íjà / mèè-j-íí-à	‘to feed’
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In the above example, the word would be meaningless if the /n/ is dropped.

2.2.5 Binyam & Tsehay (2010)

The other work related to the present study, and worth reviewing is Binyam & Tsehay (2010), ‘Notes on agreement marking in Borna (Shinasha). The paper presents a detailed analysis of the various agreement markers for subject agreement in Borna. The findings of Binyam & Tsehay regarding agreement marking in Borna are similar; though not exactly the same with the present study. One area of difference is in the shape of the morpheme used to indicate first person singular agreement marker in the imperative mood. In their description, Binyam & Tsehay (ibid: 168) give two alternatives, **-tà/-à**; in the present study, however, only **-à** is identified.

In describing agreement marking using pronominal proclitics, Binyam & Ashenafi (ibid: 172) have made two categories as ‘shortened pronoun I and shortened pronoun II’. In the present study, it is identified that what they described as ‘shortened pronoun II’ is actually not realized shortened or reduced in form. In addition, they claimed that this ‘shortened pronoun II’ occurs when the verb form is “in negative sentences of the present, future and present habitual” (Binyam & Ashenafi (ibid: 174). Nonetheless, in the present study, it has been identified that they are only used in present habitual verb forms (See Chapter five, §5.1.1.3). Furthermore, Binyam & Ashenafi (ibid: 173) claim that “these pronouns [proclitics] occur in past perfect, present progressive and past habitual in Borna”, nonetheless, the occurrence of the proclitics is also observed when the verb is in future and present/habitual form. Consider the following examples; (a) is in future and (b) is in present habitual verb form:

- a. bí bí=fàr-ó kè-m-à bí=kè-m-í
 he 3SGM-horse-M:ACC sell-3SGM:COP 3SGM-sell-FUT
 ‘He will sell his horse.’ Lit. ‘It is selling, He will sell his horse.’
- b. tà bún-à tì=ún-fò
 I coffee-3SGM:COP 1SG-love-HUB
 ‘I like coffee.’ Lit. ‘It is coffee, I like.’

To sum up, as indicated under the introductory section of this chapter, attempts have been made to describe the grammar of Borna by different people starting from the nineteenth century. These works have deepened and broadened our knowledge of Borna. Nonetheless, as clearly commented in the foregoing paragraphs, there are still areas to be treated. The present study is an attempt to that end.

Chapter three

Sketch grammar

This chapter presents a sketch grammar of the language. The chapter is intended to give background for the rest of the chapters that present the detailed descriptions of Borna verb morphology. The chapter has three main sections: phonology, noun morphology, and basic syntax.

3.1 Phonology

As indicated under Chapter two, Borna phonology has been described by different scholars: Gebre (1986); Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990); Rottland (1990); Lamberti (1993) and Bergfjord (2013). However, the most thorough discussion is that of Bergfjord (2013). Thus, this section presents a sketchy description of Borna phonology that includes the phonemic inventory, phonotactics, and suprasegmentals.

3.1.1 The segmentals

3.1.1.1 Consonants

Previous studies propose a different number of consonant phoneme inventories for Borna. These include 26 phonemes (Rottland 1990:187), 24 phonemes (Gebre 1986), 25 phonemes (Bergfjord 2013:21-41) and 26-28 phonemes (Gebre 2014:64). The number and type of consonant phonemes identified in the present study are quite different from what Rottland (1990), Gebre (1986 & 2014) identified. Nonetheless, it has no much difference from what is identified by Bergfjord (2013:21) except in one phoneme, /s/. In his descriptions, Bergfjord states that “The alveolar fricative [s] is marginal in my data, appearing only in loanwords like sàgàdà to pray (of Muslims), from Oromo sagada pray (noun) and sà:Ntínà wooden box, chest, from Amharic sat’ín wooden box”. Thus, he excluded it from the list of Borna consonants. Nonetheless, in the present study it has been identified that the phoneme /s/ is infrequent in Borna; though not totally inexistent like Bergfjord’s claim. For instance, in the present study, the occurrence of the phoneme /s/ is observed in indigenous words like /sízà/ ‘feces’, /sèp’à/ ‘to strengthen’, /gànsà/ ‘crossroad’, /sírúwà/ ‘civet cat’, and /bàsànsijà/ ‘ant’. Table 3.1 presents the consonant phoneme inventory of Borna:

Table 3.1: Inventory of Borna consonant phonemes

		Labial		Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
		Bilabial	Labiodental				
Plosive	Voiceless	b		t		k	ʔ
	Voiced	p		d		g	
	Ejective	p'		t'		k'	
	Implosive			ɓ			
Fricative	Voiceless		f	s	ʃ		h
	Voiced			z			
	Ejective			ʃ'			
Affricate	Voiceless			ʈ			
	Voiced				ʈʂ		
	Ejective				ʈʂ'		
Nasal		m		n			
Liquids				l			
				r			
Glides		w			j		

3.1.1.1.1 Distribution consonant phonemes and their characteristics

Distribution of phonemes refers to the position in which a sound occurs in a word, word-initially, word-medially or word-finally. In Borna, in their citation form, nouns and verbs terminate in a vowel, with the citation suffix **-à**. Nonetheless, in rare instances, when the morphology requires, some verb stems terminate in consonants without suffixes. This is often observed in interrogative sentences, imperative verb roots, complex verb forms and when suffixes which have a final consonant are suffixed to the verb stem. Thus, in describing the occurrence of Borna consonant phonemes in the word final positions examples are provided solely from verb stems.

a) Stops and their distribution

Stop sounds are produced when articulators come together and fully block the flow of air, for a short time and then abruptly separate (Odden 2005:30). In Borna, this category of consonants consists of sounds produced at labial, alveolar, velar and glottal places of articulation. These sounds are the nasals /m/ and /n/ and the pulmonic stops /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/ and /ʔ/ and the

ejectives /p'/, /t'/, /ʔ/ and /k'/. Table 3.2 shows the distribution of these stops in different positions in a word.

Table 3.2: Borna stops and their distribution

Phoneme	Word-initial	Word-medial	Word-final
/p/	pèràhà 'a type of snake'	ípirà 'fat'	èègè bì=èèp 'Why did she cry?'
/b/	bàlà 'hundred'	àlbèèrà 'tongue'	bì à-ó bì= àb 'She slapped the man'
/t/	túfà 'leg'	ítúwà 'malaria'	(nèè) kòt k'aj '(You) don't lie!'
/d/	dèè à 'touch'	hìndíra 'new'	èègè bì bì=bìid 'Why did she fly?'
/k/	kílà 'hand'	tòkrà 'to sleep'	bì míttà bì=kòòk 'She planted a tree.'
/g/	gùrbà 'knee'	fèngèà 'door'	èègè bì bì=àg 'Why did she build?'
/ʔ/		kúʔà 'to shout'	(nèè) dèʔ '(You) accept!'
/m/	mà à 'woman'	bíimbà 'neck'	(nèè) ím '(You) give!'
/n/	nòònà 'mouth'	íínt'à 'nose'	(nèè) èèn '(You) grow!'
/p'/	p'èlà 'grasshopper'	t'òp'à 'to clap'	(nèè) kòp' '(You) write!'
/t'/	t'òòlà 'limp'	kùt'à 'to cut'	bì òòkà bì=k'ùt' 'She cut a rope.'
/ʔ/	ùmbà 'cloth for carrying children on the back'	gò à 'vagina'	(nèè) ò ò '(You) hit!'
/k'/	k'ílú à 'eyelid'	àk'írà 'stomach'	kònè bì bì=bèk' 'Who did she see?'

As shown in the above table, stops in Borna have wider distributions. The two nasal sounds /m/ and /n/ and the ejectives /p'/, /t'/, /ʔ/ and /k'/' can occur anywhere in a word. Though Gebre (2014:66) claims that /ʔ/ & /p/ do not appear word initially, in the present study their occurrence in those positions is observed, as exemplified above. Similarly, all pulmonic stops, except /ʔ/ which do not occur in word initial position the other pulmonic stops, i.e. /b/, /p/, /g/, /k/, /d/ and /t/ do occur in all positions in a word.

b) Affricates and their distribution

Affricate sounds are produced when two articulators come together and totally cut off the flow of air and then gradually separate (Hayes 2009:10). Borna has four affricate sounds; the pulmonic affricates /tʃ/ and /dʃ/ and the ejective affricates /tʃ'/' and /dʃ'/'/. All the affricate sounds found in Borna are produced only at coronal place of articulation. Table 3.3 shows their distribution.

Table 3.3: Borna affricates and their distribution

Phoneme	Word-initial	Word-medial	Word-final
/tʃ/	-	màtʃ à ‘woman’	bì kàf-ó bì=dàtʃ ‘She caught a bird’
/tʃ/	tʃ ínk’ à ‘back’	-	-
/tʃ/	tʃ ’àtʃ à ‘blood’	k’atʃ ’à ‘to transport’	bì bù=wòtʃ ’ ‘She run’
/tʃ/	tʃ ’íntʃ ’à ‘thin’	àtʃ ’úwà ‘tears’	(nèè) wòtʃ ’ ‘(You) run!’

In Borna, as shown in the above table, the post-alveolar ejective fricative /tʃ/ and the alveolar ejective affricate /tʃ/ occur in all positions. The pulmonic alveolar affricate /tʃ/ does not appear word initially; but it occurs word-medially and word-finally. Contrary to Gebre’s (1986:17) claim that the post-alveolar pulmonic affricate /tʃ/ occurs word-medially, in the present study, it is identified that its distribution is only limited at word-initial position.

c) Distribution of fricatives

Sounds that are produced when two articulators are brought very close to one another, forming a narrow passage through which the air is forced out, resulting in considerable friction in the process are known as fricatives (Odden 2005:30). In Borna, there are four fricative sounds; the voiceless /f/, /tʃ/ and /h/ produced at labial, alveo-palatal and glottal places of articulation respectively and the voiced alveo-palatal fricative /z/. Table 3.4 shows the distribution of Borna fricative sounds in a word.

Table 3.4: Borna fricatives and their distribution

Phoneme	Word-initial	Word-medial	Word-final (imperative form)
/f/	fòkà ‘river’	tʃ òft’ à ‘lung’	(nèè) èèf ‘(You) cry!’
/tʃ/	tʃ èèngà ‘good’	kàtʃ à ‘breath/soul’	(nèè) tíntʃ ‘(You) break!’
/z/	zàànzà ‘fly’	ànzírà ‘intestine’	(nèè) wòz ‘(You) braid!’
/h/	híibà ‘guest’	níhà ‘father’	(nèè) díh ‘(You) fall!’
/s/	sízà ‘feces’	bàsànsìjà ‘ant’	

In Borna, as shown in Table 3.4, given above, there is little restriction to the distribution of the fricative sounds; all the fricatives except /s/ occur in all positions in a word. The phoneme /s/ is very rare in Borna and its occurrence at word final position is not attested.

d) Distribution of approximants

Approximants are produced when two articulators are brought near each other but with a large enough gap between them so that air escapes without causing turbulence (Hayes 2009:9). In Borna, there are four approximants produced at labial and coronal places of articulation. These are two liquids, /r/ and /l/ and two semi-vowels, /w/ and /j/.

Table 3.5: Borna approximants and their distribution

Phoneme	Word-initial	Word-medial	Word-final
/r/	-	fàrà 'horse'	(nèè) gèr '(You) put!'
/l/	lòòmp' 'armpit'	àlbèèrà 'tongue'	(nèè) 'ííl '(You) see!'
/w/	wààzà 'ear'	àwúà 'rain'	(nèè) k'èw '(You) sleep!'
/j/	jòòà 'ancient'	íjànà 'to be sad'	(nèè) új '(You) drink!'

In Borna, as shown in Table 3.5, given above, the lateral /l/ and the semi-vowels /w/ and /j/ can appear at word-initial, word-medial and word-final positions.

3.1.1.2 Vowel phonemes

Consistence with Bergfjord (2013:59-68), ten peripheral and one central vowels are identified in Borna. The ten peripheral vowels are the four front vowels, /i/, /ii/, /e/ and /ee/, two mid low vowels, /a/ and /aa/, and four back vowels, /u/, /uu/, /o/ and /oo/. The one central vowel is /ɘ/. In addition, the language has a schwa, /ə/, with phonetic status. All the vowels, except the two central vowels, contrast for length. Table 3.6 shows Borna vowel phonemes. Long vowels are written with double graphs.

Table 3.6: Borna vowel phonemes

	Short vowels			Long vowels		
	Front	Central	Back	Front	Central	Back
High	I	ɨ	u	ii		uu
Mid	E		o	ee		oo
Low		a			aa	

Though Lamberti (1993:44) claims the existence of diphthongs in Borna, their existence is not attested in the data used for the present study.

3.1.1.2.1 Comments on the central vowels

The inclusion of the central vowel /ɨ/ in the phonemic inventory of Borna vowel system needs a few comments, because of two reasons. The first reason is that in earlier studies, there are differences regarding its phonemic status. For instance, for Gebre (1986:10) and Fekadie (1988:6) Borna has no central vowel at all. They simply described the ten peripheral vowels (five short and five long). Similarly, Rottland (1990:188) included no central vowels in his description of Borna vowel phonemes though he states that “the two short front vowels have a tendency to be centralized ([ɨ]) in quick speech.”

On the other hand, Ashenafi (1989:11) and Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990:349) have identified and included two central vowels, the high central vowel /ɨ/ and the mid central schwa /ə/, to their description of Borna vowel phonemes. For them, both ɨ and ə have phonemic status. For instance, Ashenafi & Wedekind (ibid: 348) provide words like **bí** ‘his’ and **mən** ‘definite marker’ to substantiate their arguments. Nonetheless, in the present study, the schwa is not attested in lexical roots. The demonstrative is realized as **mán** ‘the’ in the variety of Borna used for this study.

Bergfjord (2013:66) and Gebre (2014:65) also recognize the existence of two central vowels, ɨ and ə, in Borna. Yet, the two scholars differ on the status of the two central vowels. Bergfjord recognizes the phonemic status of /ɨ/, but the schwa is phonetic. Gebre, on the other hand, claims that the two central vowels lack phonemic status, only phonetic.

The present study confirms that of Bergfjord’s claims. As indicated above, it has been identified that there are two central vowels with no long counterpart in Borna, the high central vowel /ɨ/

with phonemic status and the schwa, [ə] with phonemic status. Due to its phonologically predictable distribution the schwa is not viewed as a phoneme in Borna. It is often used to break up unacceptable sequence of consonants at morpheme boundaries.

The other reason for further commenting on this central vowel is that its status is difficult in Omotic languages. Though the presence of central vowels is not all in all peculiar to Borna, it is also not common to Omotic languages. For instance, Hellenthal (2010:56) and Amanuel (2014:75) describe the presence of the schwa, [ə], with phonemic status in Sheko and Anfillo, respectively. On the other hand, these vowels are not included in proto-Omotic phonemes described by Bender (1987:28). Similarly, the central vowels are not attested in other Gonga languages like Kafa (Theil 2007:199) and Shekkinoono (Dubale: p.c).

The high central vowel *ɨ* has no long counterpart, and its distribution is limited to the proclitics and case marking when proper nouns occur at a subject position in a sentence (see §3.2.1.2.4. of this chapter). In addition, its occurrence in lexical roots is not attested. Thus, as already mentioned, the present study adopts Bergfjord's (2013:66) analysis.

3.1.1.2.2 Distribution of vowel phonemes

In Borna, all vowels can appear word-initially, word-medially and word-finally. However, as indicated under §2.1.1.1, in their citation form words in Borna usually end in *-à*. And yet with personal pronouns, in interrogative sentences, in imperative verb roots and with suffixes which have final vowels it is possible for other vowels (*i, ɨ, e, u* and *o*) to appear at word final positions. Table 3.7 shows the distribution of vowels.

Table 3.7: Distribution of Borna vowels

Phoneme	Word-initial	Word-medial	Word-final
i	ímà ‘to give’	ɪɪà ‘to listen’	ɪí ‘(You) listen!’
ii	ìrà ‘kidney’	bììdà ‘to fly’	
ɪ	-	bí= ‘his’	-
e	èjɪà ‘goat’	ɛɛà ‘to hug’	ɛè ‘(You) hug!’
ee	èèà ‘big’	ɛ ’èègà ‘to call’	ɛ ’èè ‘(You) call!’
a	àmà ‘to go’	ɛ àgà ‘to shave’	ɛ ’à ‘(You) shave!’
aa	ààtà ‘to ask’	ɛ ààkà ‘to trade’	ɛ àà ‘(You) trade!’
u	úà ‘to drink’	gúkà ‘to bark’	gú ‘(You) bark!’
uu	ùùà ‘five’	fúúgà ‘to blow’	fúú ‘(You) blow!’
o	òtà ‘(to) be’	tòkà ‘to plant’	tò ‘(You) plant!’
oo	òòà ‘yesterday’	fòòkà ‘to sweep’	fòò ‘(You sweep!’

3.1.2 Suprasegmentals

In Borna, features such as consonant gemination, vowel length and tone are phonemic and thus affect meaning. In this section, consonant gemination, vowel length and tone system of Borna is described briefly.

3.1.2.1 Consonant gemination

As indicated above, gemination of consonants is contrastive in Borna. Nonetheless, as far as the data used in this research reveals, gemination of consonants is not common as vowel length, and only limited to two consonants, only /k/ and /t/. Gemination is only possible in word-medial position. The following words show consonant gemination in Borna.

(1)	ikkà	‘one’	míttà	‘wood’
	fòkkà	‘river’	k’èttà	‘throat’
	ɛ òkkà	‘rope’	ɛàttà	‘fear (N)’
	tòkkà	‘to plant’	gòttà	‘to cough’

3.1.2.2 Vowel length

In Borna, vowel length is phonemic, and it is largely independent of pitch. In other words, the pitch being the same, the meaning of words can be distinguished just by vowel length. All the

peripheral vowels can occur short and long, but the high central vowel /ɨ/ is always short. The following minimal pairs are given to illustrate the phonemic status of vowel length. Long vowels are written with double graphs.

Table 3.8: Vowel length contrast

Phoneme	Length	Word-initial position		Word- medial position	
		Word	Gloss	Word	Gloss
i	Short	ílà	‘elbow’	mìà	‘to burn’
	Long	íílà	‘brain’	mììà	‘to laugh’
e	Short	ètà	‘to promise’	tè?à	‘husband’s sister’
	Long	èèdà	‘women’s belt’	tèè?à	‘back of a chair’
a	Short	àwà	‘mother in-law’	Gàwà	‘witness’
	Long	ààwà	‘sun’	Gààwà	‘wound’
u	Short	úà	‘to gather up’	Gùrà	‘mountain’
	Long	úúà	‘five’	gùùrà	‘name of a clan’
o	Short	òà	‘to repeat’	gòndà	‘bad’
	Long	òòà	‘basket’	gòòndà	‘bridge’

3.1.2.3 Tone

A language that uses pitch to distinguish word meaning or to convey grammatical distinctions is said to be a tone language (Katamba 1989:186). In Borna, tone is phonemic; it is used to distinguish lexical meanings and to convey grammatical distinctions. However, the predominant function of tone in Borna is lexical, and grammatical distinction shown by tone is limited (see also Ashenafi 1989:10; Ashenafi & Wedekind 1990:151; 1994:3; and Bergfjord 2013:79).

Since Borna tone is well described in previous works of Ashenafi & Wedekind (1990 & 1994) and Bergfjord (2013), and since this topic is beyond the focus of the present study, only a brief description of the roles played by tone is presented here.

In Borna, there are two phonological tone levels: high (H) and low (L). The high tone is represented by an acute accent (´) and the low tone is represented by a grave accent (`). Examples (2) and (3) illustrate the lexical functions of tone in both monosyllabic and disyllabic words:

a) Monosyllabic words

- (2) bí ‘he’
 bì ‘she’

As the data given above shows, tone has lexical function in Borna. The pair of words has identical consonants and vowels, but differs in meaning. The meaning difference is occurring only due to tone difference.

b) Disyllabic words

- (3) mítà ‘tree’
 mìtā ‘to load’
 màlà ‘necklace’ (Ashenafi & Wedekind 1990:352)
 málà ‘trick’
 māllā ‘to wash’
 mállā ‘to get drunk’
 ìrà ‘army’ (Gebre 2014:67)
 írà ‘relative’

Each pair of the disyllable words given above have identical consonants and vowels, but differ by tone. As a result, they are different in meaning.

As already noted, Borna also uses tone differences to make changes in grammatical meaning. The following examples illustrate the grammatical function of tone:

- (4) a. tà wàà-r-è ‘I came’ tà máá-r-è ‘I ate’
 b. bí wàà-r-é ‘He came’ bí máá-r-é ‘He ate’

In these examples, person agreement distinctions are made on verbs with high tone (**H**) for first person singular and low tone (**L**) for third person singular masculine. This indicates in addition to lexical function, tone in Borna also has grammatical function.

3.1.2.4 Syllable structure

A syllable contains onset (consonant), nucleus (vowel) and coda (consonant). As compared to onset and coda, the nucleus is the only essential element of a syllable. The vowel, which is the

nucleus of the syllable, could be either long or short. There is no clustering of consonants in a single syllable. In other words, Borna has no branching onset¹⁷ or coda.

Syllables of languages can be classified into two: open syllable, which end in vowels and closed syllables, which end in consonants (Katamba 1989:153). Accordingly, Borna has both closed and open syllable types. The following data illustrate the possible syllable structures of morphologically simple words in Borna. (Borna word forms that are printed in bold illustrate the syllable structure types; a hyphen (-) symbolizes a syllable boundary.)

(5)	Templates	Examples	Gloss
a)	V	à-tà	‘medicine’
b)	V ₁ V ₁	àà-wà	‘sun’
c)	VC	ìn-dà	‘arm’
d)	V ₁ V ₁ C	ùùm-p’à	‘to cheat’
e)	CV	ù-nà	‘to like’
f)	CV ₁ V ₁	gèè-pà	‘to worry’
g)	CVC	ù ún-dà	‘navel’
h)	CV ₁ V ₁ C	lòòm-p’à	‘armpit’

The maximum syllable structure of Borna can be summarized as (C)V₁(V₁)(C).

3.2 Morphology

The preceding section has dealt with a general nature of Borna phonology. This section attempts to provide a sketch description of Borna morphology. The section solely focuses on presenting noun morphology of Borna. Since it is the main topic of the present study, a discussion concerning the verb morphology of the language is excluded from this section and will be treated independently in the subsequent chapters.

3.2.1 Noun morphology

Different scholars have studied Borna morphology at different times. For instance, to mention the most relevant works Fekadie (1989); Hayward (1990) and Gebre (2014). Gebre’s work is the most recent and thorough work on noun morphology of Borna. This section deals with inflectional and derivational noun morphology of Borna.

¹⁷ grànzà ‘hyena’ is the only word found with sequence of two consonants at word/syllable initial position

3.2.1.1 Basic forms of nouns

In their citation form, as already indicated, usually words, including nouns have an ending /-à/. The following words illustrate nouns in their citation form:

	Nouns in citation form	Gloss
(6)	àtt-à	‘medicine’
	bòl-à	‘mule’
	mítt-à	‘wood’
	bààk-à	‘hen’
	à-à	‘person’

In Borna, the terminal vowel /-à¹⁸/ attached to nouns in their citation form is also a third person masculine copula marker. In other words, in Borna, a word in its citation form serves as a copula complement and can be interpreted as ‘It is X’. For instance, the word **àttà** means ‘It is medicine’. Consider the following examples, (7a-b):

- (7) a. bí hán-òk-à
 he this-ALLA-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is here.’
- b. bí gò-k-à
 he plow-NMLZ-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is a farmer.’

The terminal vowel /-à/ is dropped when the noun is suffixed (See also Gebre 2014:23). For instance, it is dropped when the plural suffix **-wò** - is added to singular nouns to form plural nouns. The following are illustrative examples:

(8)	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
	mítt-à	‘wood’	mítt-ú-wò -	‘woods’
	dááz-à	‘donkey’	dááz-ú-wò -	‘donkeys’
	kàf-à	‘bird’	kàf-ú-wò -	‘birds’
	kàn-à	‘dog’	kàn-ú-wò -	‘dogs’

¹⁸ Ashenafi and Wedekind (1990:351) call this vowel a ‘citation suffix’ and claim that it is quite common in Cushitic and Omotic languages.

Similarly, it is dropped when the gender marking suffix is added. In Borna, with singular common nouns, /-ó/ and /-ú/ mark gender. /-ó/ shows masculine and /-ú/ shows feminine. The following examples illustrate that the terminal vowel /-à/ of nouns in their citation form is dropped when gender marking suffixes are attached to the singular common nouns.

- (9) a. èè-ó à-ú ú-ír-é
 lion-M person-F kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘A lion killed a woman.’
- b. nà?-ú kúút-ó k’ap-ír-à
 child-F ball-M kick-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘The girl kicked the ball’

In example (9a-b) the common nouns, èèà ‘lion’, àà ‘person’, nà?à ‘child’, and kúútà ‘ball’ dropped their terminal vowel -à when the gender marking morphemes -ó (M) and -ú (F) are attached.

3.2.1.2 Noun inflectional

Nouns in Borna are inflected for number, gender and case. Definiteness is not morphologically marked, it is expressed either by the focus marking morpheme or by demonstratives. In this section, therefore, each of these grammatical categories is discussed.

3.2.1.2.1 Number

There are two ways of number distinction in Borna: singular and plural. Singular nouns are not marked. Plural nouns can be formed from singular nouns in two ways: a) reduplication of the root, and b) affixation of the morpheme -wò - to the root.

a) Plural formation through reduplication

As already mentioned, reduplication is one way of plural noun formation in Borna. This is often done by complete reduplication of the root. The words given below illustrate reduplication type of plural noun formation.

(10)	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
	àà	‘man’	à-à-à	‘men’
	óórà	‘chair’	óór-óór-à	‘chairs’
	ééà	‘lion’	éé-éé-à	‘lions’

k'éénà	'star'	k'één-k'één-à	'stars'
kórà	'pot'	kór-kór-à	'pots'

The above list of nouns illustrates that plural nouns can be formed by doubling the roots of singular nouns. In isolation the final vowel, -à, also appears with the plural nouns.

b) Plural formation by adding the morpheme -wò -

Plural nouns can also be formed by adding the suffix -wò - to singular nouns. Consider the following examples:

(11)	a.	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
		fárà	'horse'	fár-ú-wò -í	'horses'
		máázà	'calf'	mááz-ú-wò -í	'calves'
		ééjìà	'goat'	ééjì-ú-wò -í	'goats'
		góólà	'frog'	góól-ú-wò -í	'frogs'
		íín' à	'rat'	íín' -ú-wò -í	'rats'

The following are sentential examples:

- (12) a. kàn-ú-wò -í grànz-ú-wò -í ú -ír-nó
dog-EPN-PL-NOM hyena-EPN-PL-ACC kill-PST-3PL:DECL
'The dogs killed the hyenas.'
- b. tà'à tòòk-ú-wò -í k'út'-dè?-nì búj-dè?-rí
sorghum head-EPN-PL-ACC cut-take-FOC stroke-take-CNV
k'àl-dè? kàk-à gèr-dè? bú -í bí=t'àk'àm-fò-nì
cut-take bed-ALLA put-take stroke-CNV 3SGM=help-HAB-
FOC
'The heads of the sorghum, cutting, stroking, putting on bed, it is used for.'

(*description of cultural materials.eafT=S35 TranC, B=127340, E=133280*)

- c. nò=índ-ú-wò bí-n òw-dè?-rí-nì
1PL=mother-EPN-PL 3SGM-INST scoop-take-CNV-FOC

'our mothers, scooping it with it...' (*description of cultural materials.eafT=S42 TranC, B=152850, E=154600*)

In (12a) the plural marker **-wò** - is attached to a subject noun; in (12b) it is attached to an object noun; and in (19c) it is attached to possessed kinship term. The nominative and accusative case markers are attached following the plural marker.

According to Gebre (2014:118), the plural marking morpheme **-wò** - can also occur with the reduplicated nouns without affecting grammatical appropriateness. Examples:

- (13) a. ash-ó kaŋ-kan-u-woo -í jot'-r-é (Gebre 2014:118)
 person-m dog-dog-ep-p-acc hit-ep-PT-3ms
 'the man hit the dog'
- b. **kàn-kàn-ó** grànz-ó ú -ír-é
 dog-dog-M hyena-M kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'The dogs killed a hyena.'
- c. **kàn-wò -í** grànz-ó ú -ír-nó
 dog-PL-NOM hyena-M kill-PST-3PL:DECL
 'The dogs killed a hyena.'
- d. **kàn-kàn-wò -í** grànz-ó ú -ír-nó
 dog-dog-PL-NOM hyena-M kill-PST-3PL:DECL
 'The dogs killed a hyena.'

In Borna, the reduplicated plural nouns (13b) act like singular nouns. Thus, the subject agreement marker is the same; in this case, the third person singular masculine agreement marker **-é**. Similarly, when reduplicated nouns also attach the plural marker **-wò** - (13d), the agreement marker is the same with the plural nouns formed only through suffixation (13c), **-nó**. This shows that it is still grammatical to use both reduplication and suffixation at the same time (13d).

3.2.1.2.2 Gender

The gender system of Borna distinguishes masculine nouns from feminine nouns. This distinction could be made by using affixes, tone, pronominal proclitics or lexical means of distinguishing gender.

With common nouns, gender is distinguished morphologically by suffixation: masculine gender is marked by **/-ó/** while feminine gender is designated by **/-ú/**. Example (14a-b) shows gender marking when common noun occurs at subject and object positions.

- (14) a. à-**ó** kàn-**ú** ú-í-r-é
 person-M dog-F kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘A man killed a bitch’
- b. à-**ú** kàn-**ó** ú-í-r-à
 person-F dog-M kill-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘A woman killed a dog (male dog)’

In (14a), the subject noun is masculine, whereas the object noun is feminine. These distinctions are made by attaching **-ó** to the masculine subject and **-ú** to the feminine object. Similarly, in example (14b), the subject noun is feminine and the object noun is masculine. Again, these distinctions are made by attaching **-ú** (F) and **-ó** (M) to the common nouns.

In Borna, the gender of third person singular pronouns and proper names are only expressed by tone: **H** for masculine and **L** for feminine. Examples (15a-b) illustrate masculine and feminine gender in third person singular pronouns:

- (15) a. bí ín-’-ó ú-í-r-é
 he rat-M kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He killed a rat’
- b. bì ín-’-ó ú-í-r-à
 she rat-M kill-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She killed a rat’

The subject pronoun of (15a) is third person singular masculine and that of (15b) is third person singular feminine. The difference in gender of the pronouns is marked by tone; **H** for masculine and **L** for feminine. Similarly, gender is marked by tone when pronominal proclitics are used to mark possessive case. Consider examples (16a-b):

- (16) a. **bí**=kàn-ó mèt-’-ó màà-r-é
 3SGM=dog-Mmeet-M eat-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘His dog ate meet.’
- b. **bì**=kàn-ó mèt-’-ó màà-r-é
 3SGF=dog-M meet-M eat-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Her dog ate meet.’

As illustrated in (16a-b), the third person possessive pronominal proclitic makes a distinction for third person masculine and feminine based on tone. In (16a), the third person masculine possessive proclitic is marked with **H** tone; on the other hand, in (16b) the third person feminine possessive proclitic is marked with **L** tone.

As already indicated, when a proper noun occurs at subject and object positions, the language employs different tone marking for feminine and masculine nominative and accusative cases; **H** marks masculine and **L** marks feminine. Examples (17a-d) show gender marking when proper nouns occur at the subject and object positions:

- (17) a. bògàr-í wàà-r-é
 Bogar-NOM come-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Bogar came’
- b. dàà -ì wàà-r-à
 Datsets-NOM come-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘Datsets came’
- c. bí bògàr-í òt’-í-é
 he Bogar-ACC hit-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He hit Bogaro’
- d. bí dàà -ì ’ég-r-é
 he Datsets-ACC call-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He called Datstets’

In (17a), masculine proper noun occurs at subject position; thus, the nominative case is marked by -í. When feminine proper nouns occur in object position like in (17b), the nominative case is marked by -ì. Similarly, at object position, accusative case is marked by -í (M) and -ì (F), as shown in (17c & d).

In addition, gender of demonstrative pronouns is marked by tone. Consider the following examples:

- (18) a. bí à mán-í ’ég-r-é
 he person the-M call-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He called the man’

- b. bí à màn-ì 'ég-r-é
 he person the-F call-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He called the woman’

Furthermore, in Borna, gender is also expressed lexically. Words referring to entities that have natural sex have different lexical items for masculine and feminine. The following are illustrative examples:

	Masculine	Gloss	Feminine	Gloss
(19)	àbòwà	‘grandfather’	ìndòwà	‘grandmother’
	nìhà	‘father’	ìndà	‘mother’
	kénìjà	‘husband’	mà à	‘wife’
	nájà	‘son’	nì?à	‘daughter’
	éíwà	‘brother’	mìà	‘sister’

The masculine gender is neutral in Borna. Nevertheless, it is also possible to refer to any masculine noun using feminine form, to give a diminutive interpretation. Consider example (20):

- (20) ńú -í k’úp’-à ńú -ì k’úp’-ì
 stone-M hard-3SGM:COP stone-F hard-3SGF:COP
 ‘It is a hard rock’ (M) ‘It is a hard rock’ (small size)

3.2.1.2.3 Definiteness

Definiteness is a complex notion in Borna. In this language, definiteness is not morphologically marked; there is also no independent article that mark definiteness (For a detailed explanation on definiteness, see Gebre 2014:129-132). However, nouns in their citation form, with final -à, can be taken as indefinite. On the other hand, a noun can be considered definite if it attaches the focus marking morpheme -nì, if it occurs with demonstratives, or if it is in plural form (attach -wò -).

As already indicated, a noun can be taken as definite when the morpheme -nì which is a focus marker is attached to it. As shown in (21), whenever the focus marker -nì occurs with common nouns, it always co-occurs with a gender marker, which is a suffix -ó- for masculine and a suffix -ú- for feminine.

(21)	Citation form	Gloss	Definite noun	Gloss
	kàà	‘a dog’	kàà-ó-nì	‘the dog (M)’
	ééà	‘a lion’	éé-ó-nì	‘the lion (M)’
	màà nàʔà	‘a girl’	màà nàʔ-ú-nì	‘the girl (F)’
	màà à	‘a woman’	màà -ú-nì	‘the woman (F)’

Furthermore, a noun can be considered definite when demonstratives occur following it. Example (22) shows when the demonstratives **mán** ‘that’ and **hán** ‘this’ occur following a noun.

- (22) a. kàà **mán**-í gúk-à bí=gúk-ír
dog that-(M)NOM bark-3SGM:COP 3SGM=bark-PROG
‘That dog is barking.’
- b. kàà **hán**-í gúk-à bí=gúk-ír
dog this-(M)NOM bark-3SGM:COP 3SGM=bark-PROG
‘This dog is barking.’

In (22a &b) the addition of the demonstrative **mán** ‘that’ and **hán** ‘this’ changed the noun **kàà** ‘dog’ to definiteness.

Similarly, plural nouns can be taken as definite. The following are illustrative examples:

(23)	Citation from	Gloss	Definite plural noun	Gloss
	kàà	‘dog’	kàà-ú-wò -í	‘the dogs’
	ééà	‘lion’	éé-ú-wò -í	‘the lions’
	màà à	‘woman’	màà -ú-wò -í	‘the women’

3.2.1.2.4 Case

Blake (2004:1) defines the term *case* as “a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads”. Based on this definition, when we see Borna nouns, we can observe that the nouns of this language bear certain relationships with the head verb at a clause level. These relationships are morphologically realized by different affixes according to their syntactic function in constructions.

The case system of Borna is exhaustively described by Gebre (2014:133-183). Nonetheless, in the present study, it is found essential to present some of the core grammatical cases for which Borna nouns are inflected.

3.2.1.2.4.1 Nominative case

The nominative case identifies subject nouns. In Borna, when a singular common noun is the subject of the verb, there is no nominative case marker. In such instances the singular common noun only attaches the gender marker **-ú** (F) and **-ó** (M). Consider examples (24):

- (24) a. **nàʔ-ó** nàʔ-ú t'áj-ír-é
 child-M child-F touch-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'The boy touched the girl.'
- b. **nàʔ-ú** nàʔ-ó t'áj-ír-à
 child-F child-M touch-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'The girl touched the boy.'

In (24a-b), the bold printed parts are in the nominative case. Nonetheless, the subject common nouns are only marked for the gender markers. In such instances, the subject of the clause can be identified in two ways: a) from the agreement markers attached to the verb. For instance, in example (24a) we can understand that the subject of the clause is **nàʔ-ó** 'boy' not **nàʔ-ú** 'girl' from the third person singular masculine agreement marker **-é** attached to the verb. b) It is also possible to understand that the singular common noun that appears at the beginning of the clause is the subject from the word order, since the basic word order in Borna is SOV. Word order is not fixed, though.

Contrary to the singular common nouns, plural common nouns are morphologically marked for nominative case. As demonstrated in (25), plural common nouns are marked with **-í** to mark nominative case.

- (25) a. àndúr-ú-wòí **-í** íní '-ó màà-r-nó
 cat-EPN-PL-NOM rat-M eat-PST-3PL:DECL
 'The cats ate a rat.'

- b. kàn-ú-wò̀ -í àndúr-ó ú̀ -ír-nó
 dog-EPN-PL-NOM cat-M kill-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘The dogs killed a cat.’

Akin to plural common nouns, proper nouns and demonstrative pronouns are also marked for nominative case with -í and -ì. The morpheme -í marks masculine accusative case and the morpheme -ì marks feminine nominative case. Consider the following examples:

- (26) a. gî̀lèd-í wàà-r-é
 Gished-M come-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Gished came.’

- b. dàà̀ é̀ -ì wàà-r-à
 Datsets-M come-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘Datsets came.’

- c. hán-í nò=bòrò-n tàb-à ètt-à
 this-M 1PL=Boro-INST Tabà-3SGM:COP say-3SGM:COP
 ètt-̀̀̀fò
 say-HAB

‘This is called Tabà in Borna.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S8 TranC, B=25970, E=30110)

- d. hàn-ì ètt-̀̀̀fò bí=ú̀ -ó k’úl mà̀ ’èr-à
 this-F say-HAB 3SGM=name-M K’ul Machera-3SGM:COP

‘This is called, its name is K’ul Machera. (Lit. Cutting sickle)’ ([description of cultural materials.eaf](#) T=S27 TranC, B=95760, E=99610)

3.2.1.2.4.2 Accusative case

The accusative case identifies object nouns. In Borna, akin to the nominative case, singular common nouns in object position are not morphologically marked for accusative case. Thus, the accusative case can be understood from the word order or from the agreement marking morphemes. The following examples illustrate when singular common nouns occur at object position.

- (27) a. bòòt'-ó nì=k'ut'-ííò
bamboo-M 2SG=cut-HAB
'You(SG) cut bamboo.' (*How to make Oosha.eaf* T=S1 TranC, B=4150, E=8920)
- b. nàʔ-ó kàn-ú úí -ír-é
child-M dog-F kill-pf-3SGM:DECL
'The boy killed the bitch.'
- c. míz-ó k'èè-z-dèʔ-rí bààk-ó gèr-dèʔ-rí úú-rí
ox-M lay-CAUS-take-CNV hen-M put-take-CNV slaughter-CNV
nò=níh-wòí -í gín-àí è àí -ó gèè-rí-nì ètt-ííò
1PL=father-PL-NOM spear-ADE blood-M put-CNV-FOC say-HAB
'Lay down a bull, slaughter hen; our fathers put the blood on Gina (spear)'
(*description of cultural materials.eaf* T=S71-72 TranC, B=245120, E=251220)

As demonstrated in (27a-c), accusative case is not morphologically marked in singular common nouns. In such cases, it is possible to identify the accusative case syntactically from the word order; as according to the basic word order of Borna the object occurs following the subject noun and preceding the verb. Secondly, morphologically, verbs only agree with subjects; thus, attach agreement markers. Therefore, for instance, with transitive verbs the noun that shows no morphological agreement with the verb is the object noun.

In object position, plural common nouns are marked with -í (28a & b); similarly proper nouns attach -í for masculine (29a) and -ì for feminine (29b) in order to mark accusative case. The following are illustrative examples:

- (28) a. àí-ó mááz-wòí -í gíí-ír-é
man-M calf-PL-ACC chase-PST-3SGM:DECL
'The man chased the calves.'
- b. k'àí 'ín mán-wòí -í bí-n bútt-àr-nì,
small that-PL-ACC 3SGM-INST cut-CNV-FOC
'cutting those small [ones] with it' (*description of cultural materials.eaf* T=S4 TranC, B=11810, E=13770)

- (29) a. bí gîlèd-í 'ég-r-é
 he Gished-ACC call-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He called Gished.'
- b. bì dàà -i 'ég-r-à
 she Datsets-ACC call-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She called Datsets.'

3.2.1.2.4.3 Dative case

Dative case is used when a noun is an indirect object of a di-transitive verb. In Borna, the dative case is marked by the morpheme -i. Consider the following illustrative examples:

- (30) a. bó nà?-ó-bí=úr-ó- bí= 'ót'-ó-
 they child-M-DAT 3SGM=offspring-M-DAT 3SGM=descendant-M-DAT
 bí=kàw-á
 3SGM=luck-DAT-3SGM:JUSS
 'They make good luck for the children, his offspring and descendant.' (*funeral and grave preparation II*, eafT=S29 TranC, B=123750, E=128830)
- b. k'ò-òk gà' -dè?-nì à-ó- dè?-àm
 utensil-ALLA scoop-take-FOC person-M-DAT take-go
 dùù -mán-í típ'-dè? ím-ffò-nì
 Dutsa-DEM-ACC scoop-take give-HAB-FOC
 'Pouring down to utensil, scoop and serve the Dutsa to people.' (*Description of cultural materials*, T=S43 TranC, B=154600, E=158600)
- c. kà -dè?-rí k'àl-dè?-rí à-ó- ím-ffò-nì
 scoop-take-CNV make-take-CNV person-M-DAT give-HAB-FOC
 'Scooping out, making, given to people.' (*Description of cultural materials*, T=S48 TranC, B=166040, E=168970)

As can be seen in the examples given above, the dative case marker -i is usually attached to the noun to express an indirect object relation of a verb.

3.2.1.2.4.4 Genitive case

Genitive case is used to express possession. In Borna, the genitive case is expressed in three ways: by attaching pronominal proclitics to the possessed noun (phrase), structurally, and by affixing the morpheme **-kó**. Examples (31a-b) show when pronominal proclitic is used as a genitive marker:

- (31) a. **nò**=bàhìl-ó-nì hán-ì ètt-òfò àkúr -à
 1PL=culture-M-FOC this-NOM say-HAB àkúr (ax)-3SGM:COP
 ‘In our culture this is called àkúr à (ax).’ ([description of cultural materials.eaf](#) T=S29 TranC, B=123750, E=128830)

- b. **nò**=índ-wò -ì òò -ó-nì àmàr-àtí-nì hán-í
 1PL=mother-PL-NOM old_time-M-FOC start-CNV-FOC this-ACC
 òòd-dè?-nìjè k'àw-dè? k'ò -ò **bí**=kí -fò-nìjè
 scoop-take-FOC pick-take another-ILL 3SGM=pore-HAB-FOC
 ‘Our mothers, starting from an earlier time, they scoop with this and pour down to another utensil.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S51 TranC, B=175590, E=180650)

In addition to the pronominal clitics shown in (31a-b), the other pronominal clitics **bì**=, **tì**=, **nì**=, **ít**= and **bó**= can also express possession when hosted by nouns. Consider the following copula clauses:

- c. **tì**=fàr -ó nà -à
 1SG=horse-M white-3SGM:COP
 ‘My horse is white.’
- d. **bó**=fàr -ó nà -à
 3PL=horse-M white-3SGM:COP
 ‘Their horse is white.’
- e. **nì**=fàr -ó nà -à
 2SG=horse-M white-3SGM:COP
 ‘Your(SG) horse is white.’

- f. **ít**=fàr-ó nà-à
 2PL=horse-M white-3SGM:COP
 ‘Your(PL) horse is white.’
- g. **bì**=-í-ó gènz-à
 3SGF=hair-M long-3SGM:COP
 ‘Her hair is long.’

As already indicated, in Borna, genitive relation can also be expressed structurally; simply by putting the possessor noun (phrase) before the possessed noun (phrase) in linear order. Consider the following:

- (32) a. hán-í ètt-òfò nò=bòrn-ó-n **ób** èl-à
 this-NOM say-HAB 1PL=Borna-M-INST Ob Shela-3SGM:COP
 ‘In our Borna, this is called Obi Shela (scooping Shela)’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S38 TranC, B=138910, E=142060)
- b. hàn-í ètt-òfò-nì **wàz** **àwàn**-à
 this-NOM say-HAB-FOC ear gold-3SGM:FOC
 ‘This is called ear gold.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S52 TranC, B=185380, E=189490)
- c. dà-’-k’ír-àrí **mínz** **jòò-n** wúr-k’ír-íí
 tie-die-CNV cow dung-INST paint-die-NPST
 ‘After tying it, will be painted with cattle dung.’ ([How to make Oosha.eaf](#) T=S30 TranC, B=89005, E=92170)

As shown in (32a-c), genitive case can be expressed simply by word order; i.e. the possessor noun precedes the possessed noun in their order.

Furthermore, genitive case can also be expressed by suffixing the morpheme **-kó** to a noun. Consider example (33):

- (33) a. kan-ó b-í-nih-í-kó andur-ó bek’-í-r-é
 dog-m he-father-acc-poss cat-m see-ep-PT-sms
 ‘the dog saw his father’s cat’ (Gebre 2014:148)

b.	túf- 	màr-ó-n	bòrì-kó-nì	bòrì
	leg-REL	Maro-M-INST	Boro-POSS-FOC	Boro
	màr-à 	mí -ó	 'úmb-ó	kí -dè?-rí
	maro-ALLA	food-M	Tsubo-M	take_out-take-CNV

‘With leggy (with stand) maro (wooden dish), of the Boro, putting Tsumbo on the Boros’ Maro...’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#), T=S35 TranC, B=157600, E=163130)

3.2.1.2.4.5 Instrumental case

Instrumental case encodes the instrument with which an action is carried out (Blake 2004:176). In Borna the instrumental case is marked by the morpheme **-n**.

- (34) a. mí -ó màr-ó-**n** bòrí màr-ó-**n**
 food-M Mara-M-INST Boro Mara-M-INST
 ‘Food with Mara (wooden dish), with Mara of the Boro.’ ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#) T=S34 TranC, B=153880, E=157590)

b.	tàbà- n	gòj-rí	màà-j-ó	kí -ó- n òhòr-nì
	Taba-INST	plow-CNV	seed-EPN-M	hand-M-INST sow-FOC
	tàbà- n	gòj-rí	màà-j-ó	mèè-fò
	Taba-INST	plow-CNV	crop-EPN-M	eat-HAB

‘Plowing with Taba (hoe), sowing seed by hand, crop (food) is eaten by plowing by hand.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S12-13 TranC, B=40510, E=45240)

c.	bòd-wò -í	bí- n	fúrí-rí	k'àl-nì	t'àk'àm- fò
	grass-PL-ACC	3SGM-INST	cut-CNV	cut-FOC	help-HAB

‘[It] helps to cut the grasses with it.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S6 TranC, B=16115, E=21030)

As can be noted from (34a-c), instrumental case in Borna is marked by the suffix **-n**.

3.2.1.2.4.6 Commutative case

A commutative case expresses accompaniment. In Borna, commutative case is marked by the morpheme **-ntòn**. Here are some illustrative examples:

- (35) a. àñ-ó bí=màñ -ú-ntòn bèè-túw-é
 person-M 3SGM=wife-F-COM live-NPST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The man will live with his wife.’
- b. tà nèè-ntòn àm-túw-è
 I you(SG)-COM go-NPST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘I will go with you.’

3.2.1.2.4.7 Equative case

In Borna, the equative case is marked by the morpheme **-k’ò**. Consider the following examples:

- (36) a. tàbà-n k'àñ'-àrí hán-k'ò bí-n k'àñ'-àrí k'àñ'-àrí
 Taba-INST weed-CNV this-EQ 3SGM-INST weed-CNV weed-CNV
 hán-k'ò bí=bòd-ó k'àw-àrí-ní t'àk'àm-àrí tèñ-ñfò
 this-EQ 3SGM=weed-M pick-CNV-FOC use-CNV remain-HAB
 ‘With taba, like this with this, weeding, weeding, and picking the weed like this,
 we have been using.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S16 TranC, B=49860, E=54720)
- b. èrnà hán-k'ò bòdà-n gèr-dè? hán-k'ò
 then this-EQ weed-INST put-take this-EQ
 òñ'-rí hán-k'ò hán-k'ò hán-k'ò ètt-ñfò
 weed-CNV this-EQ this-EQ this-EQ say-HAB
 ‘Then, the weed like this, weeding like this, like this, like this, it is called like
 this...,’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S18 TranC, B=56725, E=60775)

- c. ùw-ññ -ó-ñ íín-k'ò òrñ -ó-ñ bí=kàwì-ñ
 born-NMLZ-M-DAT descendant-EQ other-M-DAT 3SGM=luck-DAT
 ‘[to wish] good luck for the offspring, descendants and others.’ ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#) T=S26 TranC, B=109605, E=113045)

3.2.1.2.4.8 Locative case

As the name indicates, locative case shows location. It expresses spatial relations. It loosely corresponds to the English prepositions “on”, “in”, “at”, and “by”. In Borna, the locative case is marked by different suffixes with different meanings: adessive **-áñ è**, illative **-òñ**, inessive **-òñ è** and allative **-òk**. (See also Gebre 2014:172.)

As already indicated, -à è is one of the suffixes that mark locative case. Its basic meaning corresponds with the English preposition “on”. It marks the “place on” something is found. Example:

- (37) a. nò=nìh-wò -í gín-à è 'à -ó gèèr-nì ètt-ffò
 1PL=father-PL-NOM spear-ADE blood-M put-FOC say-HAB
 ‘Our fathers put blood on Gina [spear].’ (*description of cultural materials.eaf* T=S72 TranC, B=248240, E=251220)

The other locative case marking is -ò è. It corresponds with the English preposition “in”. It marks the “place in” something is found. Example:

- b. àwún -à àwún -ó-nì dà -ò è í-dè?
 gold-3SGM: COP gold-M-FOC earth-INE dig-take
 kí-éé-k-í mà?àdìnj -à
 take_out-PASS-STAT-3SGF: COP mineral-3SGM: COP
 ‘Gold, gold is a mineral dug out, taken out of the soil.’ (*Description of cultural materials*, T=S56 TranC, B=193990, E=197480)

The morpheme -ò is also a locative marker. It indicates motion towards something. Example:

- c. màà màn-ì gál dòw-ò- ètt-ff-wòò-rí
 woman that-ACC house take-M-DAT say-EP-come-CNV
 bì=bínb-ò àwún -ó tífir-nì íb-ó
 3SGF=neck-ILLA gold-M tie-FOC wire-M
 ‘to take the woman (bride) to home,by tying the gold wire to her neck...’
 (*Description of cultural materials*, T=S60-61 TranC, B=206590, E=210510)

The morpheme -òk has an equivalent meaning with the English ‘at’. Consider the following example:

- d. hàn-k'ò-wà ààj dè?-rí tàw-ó hàn-òk àt'-k'ír-àrí
 this-EQ-FOC very take-CNV fire-M this-ALLA lit_up-die-
 CNV ‘like this, taking it, putting down on fire.’ (*description of cultural materials.eaf* T=S85 TranC, B=294495, E=298135)

3.2.1.3 Noun derivation

Derivation refers to the process and result in which new words are created from already existing words (Lieber 2009:33). This section presents an overview of noun derivation through affixation and conversion.

3.2.1.3.1 Affixation

3.2.1.3.1.1 Agentive nouns

Agentive nominals are nominals that are derived from verbs and have a meaning like ‘the one who does the action of the verb’ (Comrie 1985:351). In Borna, agentive nouns are derived by suffixing the morpheme $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ and $-k$ to the verb stem. Examples:

(38)	Verb	Gloss	Derived agentive noun	Gloss
	ù à	‘to kill’	ú $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ -	‘killer’
	kóótà	‘to lie’	kóót- $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ -	‘liar’
	dúúbà	‘to sing’	dúúb- $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ -	‘singer’
	k’ònà	‘to beg’	k’òn- $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ -	‘beggar’
	wò à	‘to run’	wò à ’- $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ -	‘runner’

In data (38), the morpheme $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ - derives agentive noun from the verb roots. The gender marker - $\acute{o}$ (M) or $-\acute{u}$ (F) is attached following the agentive marking morpheme. The following are sentential examples:

(39)	a.	tà	ú $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ - $\acute{o}$	bèk’-r-è
		I	kill-NMLZ-M	see-PST-1SG:DECL
		‘I saw the killer.’		
	b.	bí	dúúb- $-(\text{m})\text{m}$ - $\acute{u}$	lún-f-é
		she	sing-NMLZ-F	love-HAB-3SGM:DECL
		‘He loves the singer.’		

In copula clauses, when the agentive noun functions as a copula predicate, the morpheme $-(\text{m})\text{k}$ is suffixed to the verb stem to drive the agentive noun. Consider the following examples:

(40)	Verb	Gloss	Derived agentive noun	Gloss
	kàrà	‘to fight’	kàrà- $-(\text{m})\text{k}$ -	‘fighter’
	dúúbà	‘to sing’	dúúb- $-(\text{m})\text{k}$ -	‘singer’

úù à	‘to kill’	úù -ùk-	‘killer’
kóótà	‘to lie’	kóót-ùk-	‘liar’

As can be seen from the illustrative examples (40), the agentive nominal marker *-(ù)k* is suffixed to verbal bases to derive agentive nouns in copula clauses. In such constructions the copula marker occurs following the agentive marker. Example (41) is copula clauses in which the derived noun is used as a copula complement.

- (41) a. bí k’òn-**k**-à
he beg-NMLZ-3SGM:COP
‘He is a beggar.’
- b. bì dúúb-**k**-ì
she sing-NMLZ-3SGF:COP
‘She is a singer.’

3.2.1.3.2 Conversion

Conversion refers to a process of forming new lexemes by simply shifting the category or part of speech of an already existing lexeme without adding an affix (Lieber 2009:49). In Borna, nouns are often created from verbs and adjectives by conversion.

As already indicated, nouns can be formed from verbs by just changing the word category. In (42a-c), new nouns are created from verbs.

- (42) a. wòù ’-ó ààù -ó-ù ùèèng-à
run-M body-M-DAT good-3SGM: COP
‘Running is good for the body.’
- b. ààù -ó úù-ó ùèèng-à
water-M drink-M good-3SGM:COP
‘Drinking water is good.’
- c. àù-ó-ù bííd-ó fàl-ùùráù -é
person-M-DAT fly-M be-NEG-3SGM:DECL
‘For a man flying is impossible.’

In (42a-c) new nouns are formed from verbs. The derived nouns occur at the subject position (42a) or object position (42b & c). Akin to underived common nouns, the derived nouns are not

marked for nominative and accusative case. They simply attach the masculine gender marking morpheme **-ó** as the grammatical gender of these nouns is masculine.

In Borna, new nouns can also be formed from adjectives merely by shifting the category from an adjective into a verb. In (43), the subject noun is derived from an adjective by conversion.

- (43) **geenz-ó** sheeng-a Gebre (2014:202)
 tall-m good-COP (3ms)
 ‘tall is good’

3.3 Pronouns

In the previous section, we have seen the nature of noun inflection and derivations in Borna. The section presents a brief description of personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, reflexive pronouns and interrogative pronouns in the language.

3.3.1 Personal pronouns

Borna personal pronouns distinguish number for all persons, but it only distinguishes gender for third person singular. The nature of subject, object, dative and genitive/possessive personal pronouns in the language is presented in this sub-section.

3.3.1.1 Subject pronouns

Subject personal pronouns are independent; i.e. occur without being attached to other words. As shown in Table 3.9, the subject pronouns distinguish person. Gender is distinct only in the third person singular pronouns. The third person singular feminine and masculine gender pronouns are clearly expressed by tone. In the other pronouns, gender is not distinguished.

Table 3.9: Borna subject pronouns

Person	Subject	Gloss	Person	Subject	Gloss
1SG	tà	I	1PL	nòò	We
2SG	nèè	You	2PL	ítt	You
3SGM	bí	He	3PL	bó	They
3SGF	bì	She			

The following examples illustrate Borna subject pronouns in different constructions.

- (44)
- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----------|--------------------|
| a. | tà | ín ' -ó | ú -ír-è |
| | I | rat-M | kill-PST-1SG:DECL |
| | 'I killed a rat.' | | |
| b. | bì | ín ' -ó | ú -ír-à |
| | she | rat-M | kill-PST-3SGF:DECL |
| | 'She killed a rat.' | | |
| c. | bí | ín ' -ó | ú -ír-é |
| | he | rat-M | kill-PST-3SGM:DECL |
| | 'He killed a rat.' | | |
| d. | nèè | ín ' -ó | ú -ír-í |
| | you(SG) | rat-M | kill-PST-2SG:DECL |
| | 'You killed a rat.' | | |
| e. | ít | ìn ' -ó | ú -ír-ít |
| | you(PL) | rat-M | kill-PST-2PL:DECL |
| | 'You killed a rat.' | | |
| f. | nòò | ìn ' -ó | ú -ír-ó |
| | we | rat-M | kill-PST-1PL:DECL |
| | 'We killed a rat.' | | |
| g. | bó | ìn ' -ó: | ú -ír-nó |
| | they | rat-M | kill-PST-3PL:DECL |
| | 'They killed a rat.' | | |

3.3.1.2 Object pronouns

In Borna object pronouns are formed by attaching the morpheme **-n** to the subject pronouns. Consider Table 3.10:

Table 3.10: Borna object pronouns

Person	Object	Gloss	Person	Object	Gloss
1SG	tà- n	Me	1PL	nòò- n	Us
2SG	nèè- n	You	2PL	íttí- n	You
3SGM	bí- n	Him	3PL	bó- n	Them
3SGF	bì- n	Her			

As described under §3.2.1.2.4.2, in Borna, the accusative case is not morphologically marked with common nouns. Nonetheless, as shown in (45a-f), when personal pronouns occur at object position, the accusative case marker is realized as **-n**. As it is also described under §3.2.1.2.4.5, the morpheme **-n** has an instrumental function when it is suffixed to the common nouns. Typologically, when we see the way the other Gonga languages mark accusative and instrumental cases, the way these two cases are marked in Borna are different from the other Gonga languages. The other Gonga languages mark accusative case with **-n** and instrumental case with **-na** or **-ná**¹⁹. The following constructions illustrate object pronouns in sentential examples:

- (45) a. tà bí-**n** bék'-r-è
 I he-ACC see-PST-1SG:DECL
 'I saw him.'
- b. tà bì-**n** bék'-r-è
 I she-ACC see-PST-1SG:DECL
 'I saw her.'

¹⁹ In Kafinoono, according to Taye (2012:62), the accusative case marker is **-n** and the instrumental case marker is **-ná**. Example: bũf-òó-n gũmbòó-ná t'òóbb-í-t-é child-M-ACC stick-INS hit-THV-PST-3MSG
 'He hit the boy with the stick.' Similarly, in Anfillo, the accusative case is marked with **-n** and the instrumental case is marked by **-na** (Amanuel 2014:113-118). Example: bo hooba gumbo-na bi-n
 butsi-re 3SG today stick-INST 3MSG-ACC hit-PAST 'He hit him with stick today. In Sheekkinoono too, the accusative case is marked with **-n** and the instrumental marker is **-ná** (Dubale p.c). Example: bi tà-n gumbo-ná jètí-f-è he 1SG-ACC stick-INST hit-PST-3SGM 'He hit me with a stick.'

- c. tà bó-**n** bék'-r-è
 I they-ACC see-PST-1SG:DECL
 'I saw them.'
- d. tà ítí-**n** bék'-r-è
 I you(PL)-ACC see-PST-1SG:DECL
 'I saw You.'
- e. nèè tà-**n** bék'-r-í
 you(SG) I-ACC see-PST-2SG:DECL
 'You saw me.'
- f. bó nòò-**n** bék'-ír-nó
 they we-ACC see-pf-3PL:DECL
 'They saw us.'

3.3.1.3 Dative pronouns

In Borna, dative personal pronouns are formed by attaching the dative case marker -*ni* to the subject pronouns. Table 3.10 presents summary of Borna dative pronouns.

Table 3.10: Borna dative pronouns

PERSON	Dative	Gloss	Person	Dative	Gloss
1SG	tà- <i>ni</i>	to/ for me	1PL	nòò- <i>ni</i>	to/ for us
2SG	nèè- <i>ni</i>	to/ for you	2PL	ítí- <i>ni</i>	to/ for you
3SGM	bí- <i>ni</i>	to/ for him	3PL	bó- <i>ni</i>	to/ for them
3SGF	bì- <i>ni</i>	to/ for her			

The following sentences illustrate the different dative pronouns in Borna.

- (46) a. bì tà-*ni* òò-*ni*-ó ím-r-à
 she I-DAT basket-M give-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She gave me a basket.'
- b. bì nèè-*ni* òò-*ni*-ó ím-r-à
 she you(SG)-DAT basket-M give-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She gave you(SG) a basket.'

- c. *bì* *bí-ò* *òò-ó* *ím-r-à*
 she he-DAT basket-M give-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She gave him a basket.’
- d. *bì* *bì-ò* *òò-ó* *ím-r-à*
 she she-DAT basket-M give-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She gave her a basket.’
- e. *bì* *bó-ò* *òò-ó* *ím-r-à*
 she they-DAT basket-M give-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She gave them a basket.’
- f. *bì* *nòò-ò* *òò-ó* *ím-r-à*
 she we-DAT basket-M give-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She gave us a basket.’
- g. *bì* *ítí-ò* *òò-ó* *ím-r-à*
 she you(PL)-DAT basket-M give-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She gave you(PL) a basket.’

3.3.1.4 Possessive pronouns

In Borna, possessive pronouns are expressed by pronominal proclitics. The proclitic are hosted by the possessed nouns. In other words, the possessive pronouns are simply used as a modifier for the head noun. The following examples with the possessed noun **bòlà** ‘mule’ show the possessive forms of the pronouns.

- (47) a. *ìì=bòlà*
 1SG=mule
 ‘my mule’
- b. *nì=bòlà*
 2SG=mule
 ‘your mule’
- c. *bì=bòlà*
 3SGF=mule
 ‘her mule’

- d. **bí**=bòlà
3SGM=mule
'his mule'
- e. **nò**=bòlà
1PL=mule
'our mule'
- f. **ítí**=bòlà
2PL=mule
'your(PL) mule'
- g. **bó**=bòlà
3PL=mule
'their mule'

3.3.2 Demonstrative pronouns

Borna demonstrative pronouns are used mainly to show three different grammatical categories: number, gender and proximity. In this language, gender of demonstrative pronouns is marked by tone, **hán** 'this' (for near masculine singular), **hàn** 'this' (for near feminine singular), **màn** 'that' (for distant feminine singular) and **mán** 'that' (for distant masculine singular). Number on demonstrative pronouns is shown by attaching the plural marking morpheme **-wò** - to the singular demonstrative pronouns. Consider examples (48a-f):

- (48) a. **hán-í** ètt-í fò nò=born-ó-n gín-à
this(M)-NOM say-HAB 1PL=Bor-M-INST spear-3SGM:COP
'In Boro, this is called Gina (spear).' (*description of cultural materials.eaf* T=S66

TranC, B=223500, E=227850)

- b. **hàn-ì** tì=ìnd-ì
this(F)-NOM 1SG=mother-3SGF:COP
'This is my mother.'
- c. **hán-wò** -í wàmbér-kí-nó
this-PL-NOM wambera-POSS-3PL:COP
'These are from Wembera.'

- d. **màn-ì** **tì=ìnd-ì**
that(F)-NOM 1SG=mother-3SGF:COP
‘That is my mother.’
- e. **mán-í** **tì=nìh-í**
that(M)-NOM 1SG=father-3SGM:COP
‘That is my father.’
- f. k’àn’ín **mán-wò** -í bí-n bútt-àrí-nì
small that-PL-ACC he-INST cut-CNV-FOC
‘cutting the small ones with it...’ (*description of cultural materials.eafT=S4 TranC*,
B=11810, E=13770)

3.3.3 Reflexive pronouns

In Borna, reflexive pronoun markers are formed from the word **tòòkà** which literally means ‘head’. As shown in (49), in a clause the reflexive pronoun is preceded by the genitive personal pronoun and is followed by the gender marking morpheme. For example, in the word **tì=tòòk-ó** ‘myself’, the word **tòòk-** ‘head’ is preceded by first person singular genitive proclitic **tì=** and in turn it is followed by the masculine gender marking morpheme **-ó**.

- (49) a. **tà** **tì=tòòk-ó** k’út’-ír-è
I 1SG=head-M cut-PST-1SG:DECL
‘I cut myself.’
- b. **bí** **bí=tòòk-ó** k’út’-ír-é
he 3SGM=head-M cut-PST-3SGM:DECL
‘He cut himself.’
- c. **bì** **bì=tòòk-ó** k’út’-ír-à
she 3SGF=head-M cut-PST-3SGF:DECL
‘She cut herself.’
- d. **bó** **bó=tòòk-ó** k’út’-ír-nó
they 3PL=head-M cut-PST-3PL:DECL
‘They cut themselves.’

- e. **nò** **nò=tòòk-ó** k'út'-ír-ò
 we 1PL=head-M cut-PST-1PL
 'We cut ourselves.'
- f. **nèè** **nì=tòòk-ó** k'út'-ír-ì
 you(SG) 2SG=head-M cut-PST-2SG:DECL
 'You(SG) cut yourself.'
- g. **ítt** **ítí=tòòk-ó** k'út'-r-ít
 you(PL) 2PL=head-M cut-PST-2PL:DECL
 'You(PL) cut yourselves.'

From the above examples, we can observe that since the subject and the object of the sentences are the same person, the reflexive pronoun is co-referential with the subject of the clause in which it occurs.

3.3.4 Interrogative pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are used for asking questions. In Borna, there are many kinds of these types of pronouns. The following are some of interrogative pronouns identified in Borna:

(50)	Interrogative pronoun	Gloss
	kónè	'who'
	éébì	'what'
	àwúré	'when'
	àwúnè	'which'
	éégnè	'how'
	éégòlé	'why'
	àmí ì	'how many'

The following illustrative examples show when interrogative pronouns are used in sentences.

- (51) a. **kónè** mùùzìw-ó màà
 who banana-M eat_PST
 'Who ate the banana?'

- b. **éégnè** ítí=wà
 how 2PL=come_PST
 ‘How did you come?’
- c. **éégòlè** nì=àm
 why 2SG=go_PST
 ‘Why did you go?’
- d. **àwúré** nù=wà
 when 2SG=come-PST
 ‘When did you come?’
- e. **àwúnè** nì=fàr-ó
 which 2SG=horse-ACC
 ‘Which horse is yours?’

3.4 Basic syntax

The preceding section has dealt with a general nature of Borna noun morphology. In this section, we shall deal with how words are patterned in Borna clauses and phrases in a nutshell.

3.4.1 Word order in noun phrases

Phrase is a “constituent which can fill a slot in clause structure-noun phrase in an argument slot and verb phrase in predicate slot” (Dixon 2010a:336). Phrases are formed around a head word that determines the grammatical profile of the whole phrase. Borna noun phrase can consist just of the head noun or pronoun, or it can consist of a noun as head and modifiers accompanying the head. In Borna, modifiers of a common noun as head of a noun phrase usually consist of: demonstratives, adjectives quantifiers and relative clauses. The possible combination of constituents in Borna noun phrase is presented below.

- a) A noun or pronoun functioning as head of the noun phrase

In Borna, as can be seen from examples (52a-b), a noun phrase may consist of just a noun or pronoun.

- (52) a. **gìlèd-í** wàà-r-é
 Gished-NOM come-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Gished came.’

- b. **bí** màà-r-é
 he eat-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He ate.’

b) A head noun and a demonstrative pronoun as a noun phrase

As shown in (53), a noun phrase may consist of a head noun and a demonstrative pronoun. In the presence of the demonstrative pronoun, the head noun precedes the demonstrative pronoun in their linear order.

- (53) a. à **mán-í** èè-ó ú -ír-é
 person that-NOM lion-M kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘That man killed a lion.’
- b. **bààr** **màn-ì** à-ù bèk’-r-à
 girl that-NOM person-F see-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘The girl saw a woman.’

c) Quantifier and a head noun

Quantifiers limit the quantity of heads in terms of size or amount. They are of two types: definite and indefinite. Examples (54) show when both definite and indefinite quantifiers combine with the head noun to form noun phrases in Borna.

- (54) a. tà **kèèz** **ìn** ’-ó-wò -í ú -ír-è
 I three rat-EPN-PL-ACC kill-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I killed three rats.’
- b. **gìt** **à-wò -í** àm-ír-nó
 two man-PL-NOM come-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘Two men came.’
- c. **k’à** **à-wò -í** wàà-r-nó
 some man-PL-NOM come-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘Some people came.’
- d. **ànkàt** **bòl-wò -í** àk’-nó
 most mule-PL-NOM plack-COP:3PL
 ‘Most of the mules are black.’

As exemplified in (54a-d), in noun phrases composed of a head noun and a quantifier, the word order is quantifier-head noun. Though this is the common case, the reverse order is also acceptable, head noun-quantifier. Consider examples (55a-d):

- (55) a. **tà** **ìn** ' **kèèz-wò** -í **ú** -ír-è
 I rat three-PL-ACC kill-PST-1SG:DECL
 'I killed three rats.'
- b. **à** **gít-wò** -í **àm-ír-nó**
 man two-PL-NOM come-PST-3PL:DECL
 'Two men came.'
- c. **à** **k'à** -wò -í **wà-r-nó**
 man some-PL-NOM come-PST-3PL:DECL
 'Some people came.'
- d. **méréèr** **ànkàt-wò** -í **àk'-nó**
 sheep most-PL-NOM plack-3PL:COP
 'Most of the sheep are black.'

d) Combination of adjectives and a noun

A noun phrase can also be formed from adjectives and head noun. In such cases the adjective occurs preceding the head noun. For instance, in (56a), the adjective **àndírà** 'new' occurs before the head noun **tàhà** 'cloth' and together form the noun phrase **àndír** **táh-ó** 'new cloth'. Similarly, in (56b) the adjective **àák'** 'black' occurs before the head noun **àndúr-wò** -í 'cats'.

- (56) a. **bí** **àndír** **táh-ó** **kéw-**í-é
 he new cloth-M buy-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He bought a new cloth.'
- b. **áák'** **àndúr-wò** -í
 black cat-PL-NOM
 'black cats'

e) A relative clause and a head noun

In Borna, a noun phrase may also be formed from a relative clause and a head noun as demonstrated in (57). In such instances, the word order is not fixed; either of the two can occur first in their linear order. In (57), the relative clause occurs before the head noun.

- (57) a. **òò í** **wàà-** à-ó t̩=tòh-à
 yesterday come-REL man-M 1SG=friend-3SGM:COP
 ‘The man who came yesterday is my friend.’
- b. **èèjì** **úmp’-** à-ó t̩=tòh-à
 goat steal-REL man-M 1SG=friend-3SGM:COP
 ‘The man who stole the goat is my friend.’

As exemplified in (57a & b), in a noun phrase consisting a head noun and a relative clause, the head noun can occur following the relative clause. However, as already indicated, the syntactic position of the relative clause in relation to the head noun is not fixed. It is also possible for the head noun to precede the relative clause. Example (57a-b) can be restructured as (58a-b) without affecting the meaning of the sentence.

- (58) a. à-ó **òò í** **wàà-** t̩=tòh-à
 man-M yesterday come-REL 1SG=friend-3SGM:COP
 ‘The man who came yesterday is my friend.’
- b. à-ó **èèjì** **úmp’-** t̩=tòh-à
 man-M goat steal-REL 1SG=friend-3SGM:COP
 ‘The man who stole the goat is my friend.’

3.4.2 Word order in simple sentences

The basic word order in Borna simple declarative sentence with a transitive verb and overtsubject is SOV. However, this word order is not rigid. In actual speech, the subject and object can switch places, i.e. OSV order is possible. It is also possible to drop the subject; as the subject can be understood from the agreement markers or the pronominal proclitics. Example (59) illustrates the structure of a sentence with mono-transitive verb.

- (59) nà?-ó kàn-ó ú -í-é
 child-M dog-M kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 S O V
 ‘The boy killed a dog.’

In simple sentences with intransitive verbs and overt subjects, the word order is that the subject precedes the verb as in (60).

- (60) a. *bì* *míí' -ír-à*
 she laugh-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She laughed.'
- b. *tà* *íún-ír-è*
 I fall-PST-1SG:DECL
 'I fell.'

A sentence can also be constructed from a ditransitive verb and two obligatory noun phrases as complements, one as a direct object and the other as an indirect object. In Borna, the grammatical functions of the two obligatory noun phrases can be distinguished from the type of relationship they bear with the verb.

- (61) a. *àí* *mán-í* ***ambar-ó*** *àí-ú-í* ***ím-ír-é***
 person the-NOM money-M person-F-DAT give-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'The man gave the money to the woman.'
- b. *nàʔ-ó* ***bí=ìnd-íí*** ***íkk-ó*** ***kèm-ír-é***
 boy-M 3SGM=mother-DAT knife-M give-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'The boy sold a knife to his mother.'

In Borna, as described under §3.2.1.2.4.2 and exemplified in (61a-b), when common nouns occur at object positions they are not marked for the accusative case marker. Thus, in (61a-b) the noun phrases that syntactically function as direct object are not marked for accusative case. Nonetheless, the indirect objects are marked by the dative case marker -í. As can be seen from example (61a), the direct object can precede the indirect object and occur immediately following the subject or the indirect object can occur before the direct object immediately next to the subject (61b).

3.4.3 Subordinate clauses

3.4.3.1 Relative clause

A relative clause is a type of clause that is found inside a noun phrase and used to provide additional information about the referent of the head noun (Pavey 2010:247). In Borna, the relative clause is introduced by the morpheme -í - suffixed to the relative verb. In underlying

level, the head noun is a common argument for both the main clause and the relative clause. In Borna it is possible to relativize the subject, object and indirect object noun phrases.

A. Subject relativization

Examples (62a-b) show a type of relative clause construction in Borna, where the relative clause is a modifier of the head noun within a noun phrase which syntactically function as the subject argument in the main clause.

- (62) a. tà **èè** **ú -í** à-ó dàn-f-è
 I lion kill-REL person-M know-HAB-1SG:DECL
 ‘I know the man who killed a lion.’
- b. tà **bú** **màà-** à-ó bèk’-ír-è
 I food eat-REL person-M see-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I saw the man who ate the food.’

In (62a & b), the parts printed in bold are the relative clauses. The relativizer -í - is suffixed to the relative verb. In (62), the relative clause **èè ú -í** ‘who killed a lion’ modifies the common argument **à-ó** ‘man’. Similarly, in (62b), the relative clause **bú màà-** ‘who ate food’ modifies the common argument **à-ó** ‘man’ which is found following the relative clause. This type of relative clause is called a pronominal type of relative clause.

Nonetheless, in Borna, the position of the head noun and that of the relative clause is flexible. As shown in (63) the head noun can also appear preceding the relative clause.

- (63) nà?-ó **mí** **màà-** òd-ú -í-é
 boy-M food eat-REL sick-INCH-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The boy who ate the food is sick.’

B. Object relativization

In Borna, similar to subject relativization, noun phrases that function as a direct and indirect object can also be relativized. Consider (64):

- (64) a. **tà** **tù=ú -í** èè-ó èèn-à
 I 1SG=kill-REL lion-M big-3SGM:COP
 ‘The lion that I killed is big.’

- b. bí àmbàr-ó bí- bí=ím-í à-ó
 he money-M he-DAT 3SGM=give-REL person-M
 bèk'-í-é
 see-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He saw the man to whom he gave the money.'

While the object is relativized in (64a) in (64b) the indirect object is relativization.

3.4.3.2 Conditional clause

In Borna, conditional clauses can occur preceding the main clause or after the main clause. Consider the following examples:

- (65) a. (nèè) nà?-ó bí=èèp-àl èèz-ó ím
 (you(SG)) child-M 3SGM=cry-COND milk-M give
 'If the baby cry, give him milk.'
- b. tà àm-túw-è àwú-ó bú-ó bí=k'àz-àl
 I go-NPST-1SGrain-M fall-M 3SGM=leave-COND
 'I go if it is not raining.'

In (65a) the conditional clause occurs before the main clause. In (65b) the main clause precedes the conditional clause. This indicates that the conditional clause may occur before the main clause or after the main clause. As shown in the examples, conditional clause is marked by the subordinator morpheme -àl.

3.4.3.3 Adverbial clause

In Borna, adverbial clauses are marked by the malfactive/source morpheme -òòkè. The morpheme is suffixed to the verb of the subordinate clause following the relativizer morpheme -àl. Consider the following example:

- (66) a. mò-í àl- -òòkè míínz-ó àl-í
 grass-NOM exist_not-REL-MAL cow-M exist_not-COP:3SGM
 'Where there is no grass, there are no cows.'
- b. fàj-í àl- -òòkè èèn-ó fà?-é
 war-M exist_not-REL-MAL growth/development-M exist-3SGM:DECL
 'Where there is no war, there is development.'

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter presented a sketch grammar of the phonology, morphology and basic syntax of Borna. It has been identified that there are twenty-six consonant phonemes and ten peripheral vowels in Borna. In addition, there is one central vowel, /i/. There also exists one central vowel [ɪ] with phonetic status. As for their distribution, all consonants in Borna can occur in all positions; except /p/, /r/ & /j/ that do not occur word-initially; the phoneme /s/ which does not occur at word finally; and the morpheme /h/ that occur only word initially. Similarly, all the peripheral vowels can occur word-initially, medially and finally. The central vowel /i/ only occur word-finally. It is attested that in addition to the segmental phonemes, consonant gemination, vowel length and tone are phonemic in the language.

Most words in Borna are disyllabic. Monosyllabic and tri-syllabic words are not common. In their citation form, almost all nouns have an ending /-à/. Nouns are inflected for different inflectional morphemes like number, gender, and case. Plural nouns can be formed either by reduplication of the root or affixation of the morpheme **-wò** to the root. Borna distinguishes masculine nouns from feminine nouns. The distinction is made by using morphological or lexical means of distinguishing gender. Nouns in Borna also morphologically mark case. With common nouns, nominative and accusative cases are not marked. The dative case is marked by the morpheme **-ɪ**. The instrumental case is marked by the morpheme **-n**. The morpheme **-ntòn** marks the comitative case. The locative case is marked by five different suffixes **-à**, **-á è**, **-ò**, **-ò è** and **-òk** with different meanings. Similarly, in Borna, new nouns can be derived by attaching different derivational morphemes to already existing words. For instance, the morpheme **-ɪ** or **-k** is used to derive agentive nouns.

The chapter has also presented a description of the different pronouns of the language. The pronouns identified include personal, demonstrative, reflexive and interrogative. It is recognized that in Borna, subject pronouns are independent. Object personal pronouns are formed by attaching **-n** to the subject pronouns. Dative pronouns are formed by attaching the morpheme **-ɪ** to the subject pronouns. The demonstrative pronouns are used mainly to show three different grammatical categories: number, gender, and proximity. It is also identified that, **hán** ‘this’ **hàn** ‘this’ are near masculine and feminine singular demonstrative pronouns respectively. In the same way, **mán** ‘that’ and **màn** ‘that’ show distant feminine and masculine singular demonstrative

pronouns. Number on demonstrative pronouns is shown by attaching the plural marking morpheme **-wò** - to the singular demonstrative pronouns. The interrogative pronouns are independent words. They are, **kónè** ‘who’, **éébì** ‘what’, **àwúré** ‘when’, **àwúnè** ‘which’, **éégnè** ‘how’, **éégòlé** ‘why’, and **àm** **ì** ‘how many’.

Finally, the basic syntax of the language is discussed in this chapter. The word order in Borna simple declarative sentence with a transitive verb is predominantly SOV. Nonetheless, it is also possible to drop the subject. Noun phrases in Borna can consist just of the head noun or pronoun, or it can consist of a noun as head and modifiers accompanying the head. The modifiers that usually accompany the head noun are demonstratives, adjectives, quantifiers and relative clauses.

Chapter four

Verb root and verb derivations

In the preceding chapter, the sketch grammar of Borna is presented. In this chapter, the characteristic properties of Borna verb roots and verb derivations will be presented. In Borna, the verb is the most complex category. It carries the lexical meaning and attaches one or more affixes which can be either derivational, inflectional or both. In this language, prefixes do not exist. The verb attaches only proclitics. On the other hand, suffixation is a common phenomenon. The verb derivations are the passive, causative, reciprocal, middle and inchoative.

4.1 Verb root

The term *root* refers to “the irreducible core of a word, with absolutely nothing else attached to it” (Katamba & Stonham 2006:42). It is an unanalyzable form; it expresses the basic lexical content of the word (Payne 1997:24). In Borna, in their citation form, verbs generally terminate in vowel /-à/. If the terminal vowel is removed, the remaining part will be a root. In Borna, a verb root alone does not constitute a fully understandable word. In other words, either the terminal vowel or affixation of some sort of inflectional or derivational morphemes is always required. Nonetheless, in certain constructions when the grammar necessitates a verb can appear with no terminal vowel or affixes and can still be grammatical. In (1) the verbs are in their root form.

- (1) a. èèbì **wòòt**
what happen_PST
‘What happened?’
- b. tà-nà nàʔ-ú **tòg**
I-COP child-F hit_PST
‘It is me hit the girl.’

In (1a) the verb **wòòt** and in (1b) the verb **tòg** are used in the sentences with no morpheme attached to them. Yet still they are meaningful. Nonetheless, in isolation, the verb roots in (1a & b) do not convey the full meaning or cannot form a word as they are used in these sentences. The terminal vowel /-à/ is required. Lack of understandable meaning is a common nature of verb

roots in many other Omotic languages (Binyam 2008:71). Table 4.1 shows the morpheme order in verbs in Borna.

Table 4.1: Morpheme ordering in morphologically complex words

Morpheme ordering	Examples	Gloss
-	ú á	‘to kill’
-	ú -	- (verb root)
V. root + INFL + INFL	ú -ír-é	kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
proclitic + V. root	bú=ú	3SGM-kill_PST
proclitic + V. root + INFL	bú=ú -ír	3SGM=kill-PROG
V. root + NEG + INFL	ú -ák-é	kill-NEG-3SGM:DECL
V. root + DERV + INFL + INFL	ú -íí-r-é	kill-CAUS-PST-3SGM:DECL
V. root + DERV + INFL + INFL	ú -é-f-é	kill-RECIP-IMP-3SGM:DECL
V. root + DERV + INFL + INFL	ú -éé-r-é	kill-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
V. root + DERV + NEG + INFL	ù -éé-rá -é	kill-PASS-NEG-3SGM:DECL
V. root + DERV + DERV + INFL + INFL	ù -íí-j-éé-r-é	kill-CAUS-EPN-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL

As shown in Table 4.1, in Borna, a verb stem can contain a verb root and one or two inflectional morphemes; or a verb root and one or more derivational morphemes. Both the inflectional and derivational morphemes can either be added to the root or a stem. On the other hand, the derivational morphemes are always close to the root. Yet, a verb stem alone cannot stand alone with meaning; thus, it is always followed by one or two inflectional morphemes to be meaningful. The order of morphemes in the language can be summarized as follows:

- I. **CLITICS - VERB ROOT**; or
- II. **CLITICS - VERB ROOT - INFLECTIONAL MORPHEME(S)**; or
- III. **VERB ROOT - INFLECTIONAL MORPHEME(S)**; or
- IV. **VERB ROOT - DERIVATIONAL MORPHEME(S) - INFLECTIONAL MORPHEME(S)**.

4.1.1 Syllable structure of verb roots

A verb root in Borna can be classified as monosyllabic, disyllabic or polysyllabic. Nonetheless, disyllabic verb roots are the most predominantly found. There are a few monosyllabic verbs. However, there are some disyllabic verbs which change to monosyllabic roots due to deletion of their second consonant. For instance, **àga** → **à-** ‘to build’ in imperative constructions. Polysyllabic verb roots are very rare; limited to reduplication and borrowed verbs. Table 4.2 shows the syllabic patterns of simple verb roots in Borna. The hyphen shows that the verb root is obligatorily followed by the terminal vowel /-à/ in a citation form or inflectional element to form a word.

Table 4.2: CV patterns of Borna verb roots

CV	Verb root	Gloss	CV	Verb root	Gloss
CV	mà-	‘to eat’	VC₁C₂	úmp’-	‘to steal’
VC	àm-	‘to go’	VC₁C₁	ètt-	‘to say’
V₁V₁C	èèp-	‘to cry’	CVCVC	kàwúl-	‘to split’
CVC	gúf-	‘to boil’	CVC₁C₂	gónk-	‘to meet’
CV₁V₁C	íí’l-	‘to see’	CVC₁C₂VC	kòtkòt-	‘to squat
			CVC₁C₂VC	í’úngút’-	‘to pinch’

As shown in Table 4.2, in Borna, verb roots can begin or end either in a consonant or vowel. Similarly, the sequential occurrence of consonants is limited in number, consonant clusters larger than two consonants is not recorded. Moreover, the combination of consonants is also limited. The sequence of consonants usually recorded is NC (Nasal-Consonant). The following are some of the examples:

	Verb	Gloss		Verb	Gloss
(2)	úmp’à	‘to steal’		í’úngút’à	‘to pinch’
	gónkà	‘to meet’		íí’nk’à	‘to smell’
	màngíjà	‘to respect’			

4.1.2 Verb form

Based on their form, there are two kinds of verbs in Borna: simple and complex. The *simple verbform* contains a single component; i.e. the verb stem with its different suffixes. The *complex verbform* is comprised of the main verb and an auxiliary or serial verb (two verbs functioning as a single verb). In examples (3-5), the boldly printed parts show each kind of verb form:

a) Simple verb form

- (3) bí **àm-íúw-é**
 he go-NPST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He will go.’

In Bona, the simple verb form contains only one component; i.e. the verb stem with its different affixes. For instance, in (3), the verb **àm-** ‘go’ occurs with the non-past tense marker **-íúw-** and the third person singular declarative agreement marker **-é**.

b) Verbal noun and a verb

- (4) bí **k’èèj-à** **bí=k’èèj-íú**
 he sleep-3SGM:COP 3SGM=sleep-PROG
 ‘It is sleeping, he is sleeping.’

A simple verb can also occur following a verbal noun. The verbal noun is derived from the main verb with which it occurs. In their linear order, the verbal noun always appears before the main verb. As shown in (4), the verbal nouns do not attach any other morpheme other than the verb citation suffix, **-à**. In other words, a verbal noun in Borna is the same as a verb in its citation form. The citation suffix **-à** is also a third person singular masculine copula marker. In compound verbs, the main verbs always occur with all the necessary grammatical markings.

c) Complex verb form

- (5) a. tà dààz-ó **dè -íí-è** **bí=tè**
 I donkey-M have-HAB-1SG:DECL 3SGM=exist_past
 ‘I had a donkey.’
 b. bí fàr-ó **dèk’-ú-wàà-r-é**
 he horse-M take-EPN-come-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He brought the horse.’

c.	à -ó	falfalfal	ètt-ír-é
	water-M	boil:IDEO	say-PST-3SGM:DECL
	‘The water boiled.’		

In (5a), the complex verb is composed of the main verb and an auxiliary verb. In (5b), a sequence of two verbs acts together as a single predicate; in (5c) an ideophone and dummy verb form a predicate. (For detailed explanations on serial verbs & ideophones, see Chapter ten).

4.2 Verb derivation

In the preceding section, the nature of Borna verb root is discussed. In this section, the characteristic properties of Borna verb derivation patterns will be presented. The sub-topics which are included in this section are passives, causatives, reciprocal, middle, inchoatives, and complex verbal derivation.

4.2.1 Passive

Passive is a “valency-reducing syntactic derivation which puts underlying O argument into derived S function and places underlying A argument in a peripheral function” (Dixon 2010b: 429). In Borna, such verbs are morphologically formed by suffixing the morpheme **-ée-** to the transitive verb stem and form intransitive verbs. This is demonstrated in the following examples:

(6)	Verb root	Gloss	Passive verb stem	Gloss
	ú -	kill	ú - ée-	‘be killed’
	àà -	bite	àà - ée-	‘be bitten’
	úmp’ -	cheat	úmp’ - ée-	‘be cheated’
	ún -	love	ún - ée-	‘be loved’
	k’è -	open	k’è - ée-	‘be opened’
	fókk -	sweep	fókk - ée-	‘be swept’
	k’út’ -	cut	k’út’ - ée-	‘be cut’
	àg -	build	àg - ée-	‘be built’
	tíí -	break	tíí - ée-	‘be broken’
	mà -	eat	m - ée-	‘be eaten’

As is apparent from (6), in Borna, the morpheme **-ée-** is the passive marker. It is suffixed to the verb root to form a passive verb stem.

As Dixon (2010b: 429) states, passivization promotes an object of a transitive clause into a subject and demotes the subject to oblique. Likewise, in Borna, in passive constructions, the subject of a transitive verb is demoted whereas the object is promoted. Compare the active sentences in (7a, 8a & 9a) with those passive sentences in (7b, 8b & 9b). Note the verbs are in different tense form.

- (7) a. àṁ mán-í ééṁ-ó úṁ -ír-é
 person the-NOM lion-M kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The man killed a lion.’
 b. ééṁ-ó àṁ mání-n úṁ -éé-r-é
 lion-M person the-INST kill-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘A lion was killed by the man.’
- (8) a. bì àṁ mán-í ṁún-íf-à
 she person the-ACC love-IMP-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She loves the man.’
 b. àṁ mán-í bì-n ṁún-éé-r-é
 person the-ACC she-INST love-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The man is loved by her.’
- (9) a. bì fàṁ-ó kèw-ítúw-à
 she horse-M buy-NPST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She will buy a horse.’
 b. fàṁ-ó bì-n kèw-éé-túw-é
 horse-M she-INST buy-PASS-NPST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘A horse will be bought by her.’

Sentences (7a, 8a & 9a) are active sentences, and (7b, 8b & 9b) are passive sentences. When sentences (7a-9a) are compared with (7b-9b) sentences, the agents in (7a-9a), àṁ-**mán-í** ‘the man’, **bì** ‘she’ are subjects and ééṁ-ó ‘the lion’, àṁ-**mán-í** ‘the man’, and fàṁ-ó ‘the horse’ are objects. However, in the passive version, (7b-9b), the objects are promoted to subject and the subjects are demoted to instrumental. In such cases, both promoted object and the demoted agent are morphologically characterized via case marking and subject agreement markers. The demoted subject is suffixed with the instrumental case marking morpheme, **-n**. In addition, verbs

of the passive constructions are marked for the passive marking morpheme **-ée-**, but in active constructions, no such marker is required.

In the passive constructions given above, the agent that is responsible for the action is overtly expressed. However, in Borna, it is also possible to form a passive construction with a covert agent. Consider the following examples.

- (10) **éé-ó** **ú -ée-r-é**
 lion-M kill-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘A lion was killed.’

- (11) **bí** **àà ’-ée-r-é**
 he bite-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He was bitten.’

In Borna, as shown by examples (10-11), it is possible to avoid the overt expression of the agent and still be grammatical.

As already mentioned, in Borna, the passive marker is suffixed to the verb root. However, following the passive marker different inflectional morphemes can occur. For instance, as the examples given below illustrate, (12), the Borna negative marking morpheme **-rá -/á-** occurs outside of the passive marking morpheme. Compare the active negative declarative sentences in (12a&13a) with those passive sentences in (12b&13b). The verbs are in non-past form.

- (12) a. **tà** **óó-ó** **wóz-á -è**
 I basket-M make-NEG-1SG:DECL
 ‘I will not make a basket.’
 b. **óó-ó** **tà-n** **wóz-ée-rá -è**
 basket-M I-INST make-PASS-NEG-1SG:DECL
 ‘A basket will not be made by me.’
- (13) a. **bì** **fàr-ó** **kèw-rá -à**
 she horse-M buy-NEG-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She will not buy a horse.’

- b. fàr-ó bì-n kèw-ée-rá -é
 horse-M she-INST buy-PASS-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘A horse will not be bought by her.’

The examples given above, (12 & 13), illustrate that in negative declarative sentences, the negative marker **-rá** **-/á** is suffixed to the verb root (12a & 13a). Nonetheless, in negative passive constructions, the negative marker is attached to the verb stem following the passive marker. The different subject agreement marking morphemes occur following the negative marking morpheme. This shows that derivational morphemes occur closer to the verb root than inflectional morphemes.

With interrogative constructions as well, the same morpheme **-ée-** is used to form a passive stem. Akin to the passive declarative sentences, verbs in passive interrogative constructions simply add the passive marker, tense/aspect marker, and the agreement/mood marker respectively. Compare the active interrogative sentences in (14-15a) with those passive interrogative sentences in (14-15b).

- (14) a. bí óó-ó wóz-ítúw-á
 he basket-M make-NPST-3SGM:Q
 ‘Will he make a basket?’
 b. óó-ó bí-n wóz-ée-túw-á
 basket-M he-INST make-PASS-NPST-3SGM:Q
 ‘Will a basket be made by him?’
- (15) a. tà bí-n bèk’-ír-tà
 I he-ACC see-PST-1SG:Q
 ‘Did I see him?’
 b. bí tà-n bèk’-ée-r-tà
 he I-INST see-PASS-PST-1SG:Q
 ‘Was he seen by me?’

As in (14 & 15), in passive interrogative constructions, the morpheme **-ée-** is directly attached to the verb root presiding the non-past tense marking morpheme **-túw-** in (14b) and the past tense marker **-r-** in (15b). Following the tense markers, the agreement/mood morphemes **-á** in (14b) and **-tà** in (15b) are immediately attached.

Similarly, in negative passive interrogative constructions, the morpheme **-ée-** is attached to the verb root. The negative marking morpheme follows the passive morpheme. Finally, the agreement marking morpheme is attached. Compare the negative passive sentences in (16a & 17a) with those passive negative interrogative sentences in (16b & 17b).

- (16) a. t̃=mò-ó bì-n fók-ée-rá -é
 1SG-house-M she-INST sweep-PASS-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘My house is not cleaned by her.’
- b. t̃=mò-ó bì-n fók-ée-rá -à
 1SG=house-M she-INST sweep-PASS-NEG-3SGM:Q
 ‘Is my house not cleaned by her?’
- (17) a. á mán-í bì-n lún-ée-rá -é
 person the-ACC she-INST love-PASS-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The man is not loved by her.’
- b. á mán-í bì-n lún-ée-rá -à
 person the-ACC she-INST love-PASS-NEG-3SGM:Q
 ‘Is the man not loved by her?’

As indicated by (16 & 17), in the passive negative interrogative sentences, the passive marking morpheme **-ée-** presides the negative marking morpheme which in turn presides the agreement morpheme.

Likewise, in jussive constructions, the passive forming morpheme **-ée-** is used to form passive-stems. In such cases, the passive marker is attached to the verb root to form passive stem to which the jussive marking morphemes are attached. Compare the active imperative sentences, (18a & 19a), with those jussive sentences in (18b & 19b) below.

- (18) a. (nèè) fèngè mán-í k’è
 (you(SG)) door the-ACC open
 ‘(You(SG)) open the door!’
- b. fèngè mán-í k’è-ée-w-à
 door the-ACC open-PASS-EPN-3SGM:JUSS
 ‘Let the door be opened.’

- (19) a. (nèè) dàwúnz màn-í ú
 (you(SG)) snake the-ACC kill
 ‘(You(SG)) kill the snake.’
- b. dàwúnz màn-í ú -ée-w-à
 snake the-ACC kill-PASS-EPN-3SGM:JUSS
 ‘Let the snake be killed.’

As in (18 & 19), the passive marking morpheme **-ée-** is used in jussive constructions. In the above examples, the passive marker **-ée-** occurs presiding the third person agreement marking morpheme, **-à**, in jussive construction in morpheme order.

With auxiliary verbs, the passive marking morpheme **-ée-** is attached to the main verb; whereas the different inflectional morphemes attach to the auxiliary verb. Compare the examples under (18-19a), with those under (20-21b) below.

- (20) a. bí bó-n úmp’-ó fàl-í-f-é
 he they-ACC cheat-M can-HAB-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He can cheat them.’
- b. bó bí-n úmp’-ée-j-ó fàl-ítúw-nó
 they he-INST cheat-PASS-EPN-M can-NPST-3PL
 ‘They can be cheated by him.’
- (21) a. nòò gèm kótt-ó dèl-í-f-ó
 we forest protect-M exist-HAB-1PL
 ‘We must protect forests.’
- b. gèm-ó kótt-ée-j-ó dèl-í-f-é
 forest-M protect-PASS-EPN-M exist-HAB-3SGM
 ‘Forests must be protected.’

As stated above, in constructions containing an auxiliary verb, the passive marking morpheme is attached to the main verb. For instance, as indicated by the above examples, (20-21), the passive marking morpheme **-ée-** is attached to the main verbs **úmp’-** ‘to cheat’ in (20b) and **kótt-** ‘to protect’ in (21). The other inflectional morphemes are attached to the auxiliary verbs.

With some verb roots, passivization causes an alternation on the final consonant of the verb root. Compare data (22a) with (22b):

- (22) a. bógàr-í fèngè mán-í tíí -ír-é
 Bogaro-NOM door the-ACC break-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Bogaro broke the door.’
- b. fèngè mán-í bógàr-n tíí-ée-r-é
 door the-ACC Bogar-INST break-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The door was broken by Bogaro.’

As stated above, the addition of the passive marking morpheme **-ée-** can bring change on the final consonant of some verbs. For instance, in the above example, the final consonant of the verb root **tíí** - ‘break’ is changed to **tíí-** due to the addition of the passive marking morpheme **-ée-**.

Similarly, on some verb roots with vowel final, the addition of the passive marking morpheme can cause deletion of the final vowel. Consider the following examples.

- (23) a. àndúr mán-í ín ’ mán-í màà-r-é
 cut the-NOM rat the-ACC eat-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The cat ate the rat.’
- b. ín ’ mán-í àndúr mání-n m-ée-r-é
 rat the-ACC cat the-INST eat-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The rat was eaten by the cut.’

In example (23b), the final vowel of the verb **mà-** ‘to eat’ is deleted. Thus, the verb stem is changed to **m-ée-**.

To sum up, in Borna, one generalization that can be made regarding the order of morphemes in passive constructions is that that derivational morphemes tend to appear closer to the verb root than inflectional morphemes. In other words, passive markers immediately follow the verb stem. The order of morphemes in passive verbs looks like the following: **VERB ROOT-PASS-TENSE/ASPECT-AGREEMENT/MOOD**. In negative constructions, the order of morphemes is **VERB ROOT-PASS-NEG-AGREEMENT/MOOD**.

4.2.2 Causatives

Causativization is a valency-increasing derivation which signals the addition of a new subject argument to the function structure of the verb, which semantically is the causer of the action (Lieber 2009:147). Following Dixon (2010b:239), in this context, the term *causer* refers to someone or something (which can be an event or state) that initiates or controls the activity.

Causatives can be expressed formally in three ways: lexically, morphologically, and periphrastically/analytically (Payne 1997:182; Katamba & Stonham 2006:286). In Borna, for some verbs that lack morphological causative, semantically equivalent causative counterpart can be expressed by an independent lexical verb. For instance, causatives (like **úà** ‘to kill’, **kíà** ‘to show’) lack any morphological relationship to their corresponding intransitive (like, **k’irà** ‘to die’, **bèk’à** ‘to see’) verbs. In comparison to the morphological causatives, lexical causatives are unproductive in Borna.

In addition to lexical causatives, Borna also shows causative analytically (periphrastically). In order to form analytic causatives, Borna involves a separate causative verb **òà** ‘to make’. For example:

- (24) **tà** **bí-n** **bí=mí** ’-úw-ó-k’ó **òà-ír-è**
 I he-ACC 3SGM=laugh-NPST-EPN-EQU make-PST-1SGM:DECL
 ‘I made him laugh.’

As shown in (24), Borna has an analytic alternative to the morphological expression of causatives. This syntactic alternative has the status of the lexical unit and exhibit different syntactic information. In this study, an emphasis is only given to morphological causatives.

In Borna, morphological causatives are quite productive. It can be derived by using four different morphemes: **-íí-**, **-z-**, **-l-** and **-n-**. The morpheme **-íí-** is the most productive causative marker which can be attached to both intransitive and transitive verb roots. The causative marker **-z-** is also attached to verb stems. Nonetheless, like **-íí-** it is not productive. Causative derivation with morpheme **-n-** can make use of both adjective and verb roots. The data show that the morpheme **-l-** also derives verbs from adjectives.

As already indicated, causatives can be direct or indirect. In direct causatives, “the causer is directly, instantly, and probably physically responsible for the effect” (Payne 1997:181). On the

contrary, in indirect causatives, the subject of the sentence has indirect control over the action. Borna has no productive direct causative morphology. Thus, it is not morphologically marked. It is rather lexically represented. For instance, in (25), the verb **ú** à ‘kill’ is a lexical causative that expresses direct causation. In the sentence, the subject **tà** ‘I’ is directly involved in the act of killing.

- (25) **tà** **dàwúnz-ó** **ú -ír-è**
 I snake-M kill-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I killed a snake.’

On the other hand, from the corpus, it is attested that derivation of indirect causative is quite productive for it can be suffixed to any verb stem, intransitive, transitive and adjectives.

As has been noted earlier, causative stems can be derived from both intransitive and transitive verb roots. The following examples illustrate causative stems derived by **-íí-** based on intransitive verbs.

- (26) a **nèè** **bó-n** **dúúb-íí-r-í**
 you(SG) they-ACC sing-CAUS-PST-2SG:DECL
 ‘You made them sing.’
 b. **nèè** **bí-n** **t’ól-íí-r-í**
 you(SG) he-ACC jump-CAUS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘You made him jump.’
 c. **bí** **nóó-n** **bèèj-íí-r-é**
 he we-ACC sit-CAUS-PST-3SG:DECL
 ‘He made us sit down.’

As can be seen from (26a-c), the verbs **dúúbà** ‘to sing’, **t’ólà** ‘to jump’, and **bèèjà** ‘to sit’ are inherently intransitive verbs; thus, they have only one argument, the subject. On the other hand, due to the suffixation of the causative morpheme **-íí-** to the verb roots the verbs are transitivized. Hence, each verb gained one more argument in agent function (causer) than the caused predicates. In other words, the intransitive verbs are changed to mono-transitive verbs. An external causer is introduced as the subject of the sentence. Therefore, the original subject of the intransitive verb is displaced from its subject status and become the new object of the derived causative verb when causativized.

Similarly, the morpheme **-íí-** can be employed to form causative derivation from transitive verb roots. As shown in (27), the addition of the morpheme **-íí-** to the transitive verbs has caused the introduction of a new argument, the causer.

- (27) a. tà gín mán-í bí-n tíí -íí-r-è
 I spear the-ACC he-INST break-PASS-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I made him break the spear.’
- b. bì nèè-n èèz-ó úí -íí-r-à
 she you-INST milk-M drink-CAUS-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She made you(SG) drink milk.’
- c. nèè bì-n tà- dímb-ó ím-íí-r-í
 you(SG) she-INST I-DAT dimb-M give-CAUS-PST-2SG:DECL
 ‘You(SG) made her give me a bracelet.’

Examples (27a-c) illustrate a very common pattern through which causatives are morphologically marked from transitive verbs in Borna. From the above examples, verbs **tíí à** ‘to break’ in (27a) and **uíà** ‘to drink’ in (27b) are mono-transitive verbs. Thus, each of them has two arguments. However, when the causative suffix **-íí-** is added to the verbs, a third argument, causer, is added to each of them. Due to this, the original subjects become objects in the causative constructions. Thus, the suffixation of the morpheme **-íí-** changed a transitive verb with two arguments into a verb with three arguments.

Similarly, in (27c), the verb **ímà** ‘to give’ has three arguments. When the causative suffix **-íí-** is added, a fourth argument is introduced and it becomes the new subject. In such cases, the agent of the original verb receives the instrumental case marker **-n** and the patient of the original verb receives the dative case marker, **-í**.

As indicated above, in some verbs, the causative element **-z-** is used to form causative verb stems. Nonetheless, such causative formation is not frequent.

- | | | | | |
|------|-------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| (28) | Verb | gloss | verb stem | gloss |
| | k'èèjà | ‘to lay’ | k'èè-z-à | ‘to make lay’ |
| | bèèjà | ‘to sit/live’ | bèè-z-à | ‘to make sit’ |

màà	‘to eat’	mààn-z-íjà	‘to feed’
tíjà	‘ta be awake’	tíí-z-à	‘to make awaken’

The following are sentential examples:

- (29) a. tà bí-n k’èè-z-túw-è
 I he-INST lay-CAUS-NPST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I will make him sleep/laid.’
- b. bì bí-n bèè-z-ír-à
 she he-INST sit-CAUS-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She made him sit.’

The causative marker **-z-** is often attached to verb roots that end in the glied /j/. In such instances, the glied sound /j/ gets deleted and the causative marker is simply attached to the remaining vowel.

Furthermore, as indicated above, some verbs and adjectives form causative stems by attaching the morpheme **-í**.

(30)	Verb & adjective	gloss	cause verb stem	gloss
	kàwà	‘to wish’	kàw-í-à	‘to make wish’
	kíndà	‘to enter’	kínd-í-à	‘to make enter’
	tòkírà	‘to sleep’	tókír-í-à	‘to make sleep’
	múk’à	‘small’	múk’-í-à	‘to make small’
	èèná	‘tall’	èèn-í-à	‘to make long’

Consider the following sentential examples:

- (31) a. bì tà-n mèè-j-í kínd-í-r-à
 she I-INST house-EP-ILLA enter-CAUS-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She made me enter the house.’
- b. bì bí-n tòkír-í-túw-à
 she he-INST sleep-CAUS-NPST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She will make him sleep.’
- c. kèèz èèlt-ó-nì íkk-ó òò-ó kèè-í-fò
 three bamboo-M-FOC one-M basket-M make-CAUS-HAB

‘Three [of it] make one basket.’ (*How to make Oosha.eaf* T=S7 TranC, B=20355, E=23045)

In Borna, causative verbs can also be formed by attaching the morpheme -*à* - to adjective roots.

(32)	Adjective	gloss	caus. verb stem	gloss
	àjínà	clean	àjín-à	‘to make clean’
	gàwnà	far/wide	gàwn-à	‘to make far/wide’
	k’awnà	short	k’awn-à	‘to make short’
	èènnà	full	èènn-à	‘to make full’

The following are sentential examples:

- (33) a. bí tà-n mò-ó mí-à -ír-é
 he I-INST house-M burn-CAUS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He made me burn the house.’
- b. tà bì-n kòr-ó tíí-à -r-è
 I she-INST pot-M break-CAUS-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I made her break the pot.’

In Borna, when we see the order of morphemes in relation to the verb root, the causative marking morpheme comes immediately following the verb stem; which in turn is followed by inflectional suffixes aspect/tense and agreement/mood.

4.2.2.1 Causerless/Impersonal causatives

In Borna, there are cases where causative structures appear without overtly stated causer. Such structures are formed based on the verb root **gèèjà** ‘need, want’. The verb **gèèjà** is a transitive verb which normally needs an additional argument, subject when a causative morpheme -*íí*- is added to it. Nonetheless, as shown in the following examples, (34), there is no explicit causer introduced following the addition of the causative morpheme. In causative structures of this type, the verb marks third person singular masculine as a default subject. Consider examples (34):

- (34) a. tà-n kà-ó gèèj-íí-r-é
 I-INST rest-M need-CAUS-PST-3SGM
 ‘It makes me need rest.’
- b. nèè-n k’èè-j-ó gèè-j-íí-r-é

you(SG)-INST sleep-EPN-M need-EPN-CAUS-PST-3SGM
 ‘It makes you(SG) need sleep.’

- c. *bì-n* *éép-ó* *gèè-j-íí-r-é*
 she-INST sleep-M need-EPN-CAUS-PST-3SGM
 ‘It makes her need crying.’

Examples (34a-c) are causerless causatives. In these examples, *kàlà* ‘to rest’ *k’èèjà* ‘to sleep’ and *éépà* ‘to cry’ are patients; *tàn* ‘me’, *nèèn* ‘you(SG)’ and *bìn* ‘her’ are the causee. Here there is no explicit subject. However, a third person singular masculine agreement marking morpheme, *-é*, is suffixed to the verb stem to show the default subject.

4.2.2.2 Causatives that do not increase (alter) argument

Contrary to the type of causatives that increase valency, described above, in Borna, there are instances where the causative derivation doesn’t signal the addition of a new subject. This happens when the causer acts the action upon itself. Consider the following examples:

- (35) a. *nèè* *nì=tóók-ó* *dèk’-íí-r-í*
 you(SG) 2SG=head-M take-CAUS-PST-2SG
 ‘You(SG) convinced yourself.’
 b. *bì* *bì=tóók-ó* *kím-íí-r-à*
 she 3SGF=head-M dirt-CAUS-PST-3SGF
 ‘She dirtied herself.’
 c. *tà* *tì=tóók-ó* *èèn-íí-r-è*
 I 1SG=head-M big-CAUS-PST-1SG
 ‘I made myself big.’

As illustrated in (35a-c), the addition of the causative morpheme *-íí-* to the verb doesn’t always trigger the addition of new subject. When the subject acts the action upon itself, the number of arguments remains the same.

4.2.3 Reciprocals

The reciprocal verb expresses an action performed by two or more participants who are both agents and patients at the same time (Katamba & Stonham 2006:290). As the name depicts, in reciprocal constructions, participants involved reciprocate each other in the action expressed by

the verb. Furthermore, reciprocals are inherently plural, since reciprocal actions presuppose the presence of two or more participants in the action denoted by the verb.

In Borna, reciprocal actions can be expressed in two ways. First, it can be expressed by making use of the independent word **tóókà** ‘head’ with the main verb. Second, it can be expressed morphologically by suffixing the morpheme **-é-** to the verb root. Consider the following examples:

- (36) a. bó òún-é-f-nó
 they love-RECIP-HAB-3PL:DECL
 ‘They love each other.’
- b. bó bó=tóók tóók-ó òún-é-f-nó
 they 3PL=head head-M love-RECIP-HAB-3PL:DECL
 ‘They love each other.’

As in (36a-b), reciprocals in Borna can either be formed by suffixing the morpheme **-é-** to the verb root like in (36a) or by using the word **tóókà** ‘head’ with the main verb which also carry the reciprocal marking morpheme **-é-** in the same sentence like in (36b). In this study, emphasis is given to the reciprocal formation through affixation. Some additional sentential examples of reciprocals in Borna are given below.

- (37) a. bó òí-é-r-nó
 they hate-RECIP-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They hate each other.’
- b. nòò dàn-é-f-ò
 we know-RECIP-IPF-1PL:DECL
 ‘We know each other.’

In (37a-b), the reciprocal marker **-é-** indicate that agent and patient are co-referential. In example (37a) two or more participants equally act upon each other, **bó** ‘they’, i.e., they are agents and patients of one and the same event at the same time. Thus, each of them is both the hater and the hated. Similarly, in (37b) **nòò** ‘we’ is both the agent and patient. Table 4.3 presents additional examples of reciprocal verb stems:

Table 4.3: Reciprocals

Verb root	Gloss	Reciprocal v. stem	Gloss
gíí-	‘chase’	gíí-é-	‘chase each other’
fàkí-	‘divorce’	fàkí-é-	‘divorce each other’
kààr-	‘fight’	kààr-é-	‘fight each other’
èè -	‘hug’	èè -é-	‘hug each other’
óób-	‘kiss’	óób-é-	‘kiss each other’

When we see the morpheme order in relation to the root verb, as the different examples given above reveal, in Borna, the reciprocal marker is suffixed to the verb root. Following the reciprocal marking morpheme, different morphemes can occur. For instance, as the examples given below illustrate, the Borna negative marking morphemes **-rá** **-/-rák-** occur following the reciprocal marking morpheme.

- (38) a. **nòò** **dàn-é-rák-ò**
we know-RECIP-NEG-1PL:DECL
‘We do not know each other.’
- b. **bó** **óób-é-rá** **-nó**
they kiss-RECIP-NEG-3PL
‘They did/will not kiss each other.’

As in (38a-b), reciprocal marking morpheme **-é-** is attached to the verb root to derive reciprocal verb stem. The negative marking morpheme **-rá** **-/-rák-** and the different agreement marking morphemes get attached to the verb stem respectively.

4.2.4 Middle

It seems that there is no generally accepted definition of the term *middle*. Various scholars define or characterize it differently (for example, Kemmer (1993:1); Payne (1997:216); and Mel’čuk (2006:213)). Nonetheless, in this study, the term *middle* is used to refer to an action which is performed by the subject for his/her own benefit (Payne 1997:216). In Borna, the middle derivation is expressed by a serial verb. The main verb is followed by the verb **dèk’à** which expresses ‘to take, to believe’. The following are some examples of middle derivation in Borna:

- (39) **Verb root** **Gloss** **Verb stem** **Gloss**

mà-	‘wash’	mà- dèk’ -	‘wash for own benefit’
k’út’-	‘cut’	k’út’- dèk’ -	‘cut for own benefit’
gó-	‘plow’	gó- dèk’ -	‘plow for own benefit’
fìn-	‘work’	fìn- dèk’ -	‘work for own benefit’

The following are sentential examples of the middle construction in Borna:

- (40) a. bó mà mán-í àg-**dèk’**-ír-nó
they house the-M build-take:MID-PST-3PL:DECL
‘They built the house for themselves.’
- b. bì mì mán-í k’à’-**dèk’**-ír-à
she food the-M cook-take:MID-PST-3SGF:DECL
‘She cooked the food for herself.’
- c. bí bí=tóók-í kèèw-ù-**dèk’**-ír-é
he 3SGM=head-DAT talk-EPN-take_MID-EPN-PST-3SGM:DECL
‘He spoke for himself.’ Lit. ‘He spoke for his own benefit.’

As examples (40a-c) show, the middle voice indicates that the subject is the beneficiary of the action expressed by the verb. As indicated earlier, in Borna, the middle derivation is expressed by verb serialization. It always involves two verbs, V₁ which expresses the action or the event and V₂ ord**dèk’**à that shows that the action is done for one’s benefit. For instance, in (40a), the subject **bó** ‘they’ did the action (building) for their own benefit. Similarly, in (40b), the subject **bì** ‘she’ does the cooking for her own benefit. In (40c) as well, the subject **bí** ‘he’ did the action (talking) for the benefit of him. (For detailed analysis on serial verb constructions, see Chapter ten, §10.1.)

4.2.5 Inchoative

In Borna, it has been noted that inchoative verbs, which express the state of becoming something or getting into a certain state can be formed from adjectives and nouns in two ways: one, by simply dropping the final vowel of the adjectives; two, by suffixing the morpheme -**é**- or -**ú** -.

As already indicated, in Borna, some adjectives are simply converted to verbs without the addition of any morpheme. Akin to any other verbs, the adjectives drop their terminal vowels to form inchoative verb stems. Some examples are given below:

(41)	Adjective	Gloss	Inchoative stem	Gloss
	nàà 'à	'white'	nàà '-	'to become white'
	lèèngà	'good'	lèèng-	'to become good'
	ààk' à	'black'	ààk' -	'to become black'
	bíírà	'red'	bíír-	'to become red'
	k' àwúnà	'short'	k' àwún-	'to become short'

The following are sentential examples inchoative verb stems formed through conversion:

- (42) a. tì=gàà-ó nàà ' -ír-é
 1Sg=teeth-M white-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'My teeth became white.'
- b. t àh-ó kíím-ír-é
 cloth-M dirty-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'The cloth became dirty.'

In addition to conversion, the inchoative marker -úú -can also be used to drive inchoative verb stems from adjectives. For examples:

(43)	Adjective	Gloss	Inchoative v. stem	Gloss
	úúúk' à	'dry'	úúúk' -úú -	'to become dry'
	nàfà	'weak'	nàf-úú -	'to become weak'
	ààk' à	'black'	ààk' -úú -	'to become black'
	èèà	'tall/big'	èèà-úú -	'to become big/grow'

The following are some sentential examples on the occurrence of inchoative verbs:

- (44) a. mùùzìj-ó k àà -úú -íí-é
 banana-M ripe-INCH-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'The banana is ripened.'
- b. maar-wòò -í úúúk' -úú -íí-nó
 leaf-PL-NOM dry-INCH-PST-3PL:DECL
 'The leaves became dry.'

- c. tà mààw-ú -rúw-è
 I weak-INCH-NPST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I am getting weak.’

The examples in (44a-b) show that the inchoative forms are used as verbs and that they also carry tense and subject agreement marking morphemes.

It is worth noting here that the inchoative stem formation is not only limited to adjectives. They can also be derived from nouns by suffixing the morpheme **-é-**.

(45)	Noun	Gloss	Inchoative stem	Gloss
	à 'à à	‘blood’	à 'à -é-	‘to bleed’
	òòdà	‘disease’	òòd-é-	‘to be sick’
	kàkà	‘player’	kà-é-	‘to be a player’
	nà?à	‘child’	nà?-é-	‘to be a child’

4.2.6 Complex verbal derivations

In the previous sub-sections, the different simple verbal derivations are described. In this sub-section, the combinatorial possibilities of the simple derivations described in the preceding section shall be examined.

4.2.5.1. Causative-passive

In Borna, causatives and passives can be combined to form a complex verbal derivation. In the language, when causatives and passives combine in a construction to form complex verbal derivation, the causative marking morpheme, **-íí-**, precedes the passive marker, **-éé-**. The following examples illustrate the sequence of morphemes in the causative passive derivation:

(46)	Verb root	Gloss	Causative stem	Gloss	Causative passive	Gloss
	ú-	drink	ú-íí-	made drink	ú-íí-j-éé-	made to be drunk
	kèw-	buy	kèw-íí-	made buy	kèw-íí-j-éé-	made to be bought
	k'út'-	cut	k'út'-íí-	made cut	k'út'-íí-j-éé-	made to be cut
	àg-	build	àg-íí-	made build	àg-íí-j-éé-	made to be built
	ù-	kill	ù-íí-	made kill	ù-íí-j-éé-	made to be killed

The causative passive is formed by attaching the passive morpheme, **-ée-**, to the causative stem, which is formed by suffixing the morpheme **-íí-** to the verb root. Since the sequence of more than two vowels is not allowed in the language, a consonant sound /j/ is inserted between the two morphemes to break apart the two morphemes. The order of morphemes looks like the following: **Verb root + CAUS + PASS + TENSE/ASPECT + PERSON**. The following sentential examples illustrate the use of some of the causative passive verbs listed above:

- (47) fàr-ó nèè-n tà-n kèw-íí-j-ée-r-é
horse-M you(SG)-INST I-INST buy-CAUS-EPN-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
‘I was made buy a horse by you.’
- (48) dàwúnz-ó nèè-n nòò-n ú-íí-j-ée-r-é
snake-M you(SG)-INST we-INST kill-CAUS-EPN-PASS-
3SGM:DECL ‘We were made kill a snake by you.’

4.2.5.2 Passive-inchoative

In Borna, passives and inchoatives can also be combined to form a complex verbal derivation. In such cases, the passive marker **-ée-** always occurs preceding the inchoative marker **-ú-**. The order of morphemes looks like the following: **VERB ROOT + PASS + INCH + TENSE/ASPECT + PERSON/MOOD**. Consider the following sentential examples:

- (49) a. kòr-ó à mání-n tíí-ée-w-ú-íí-r-é
pot-M person the-INST break-PASS-EPN-INCH-PST-3SGM:DECL
‘The pot became broken by the man.’
- b. fèngè-ó à mání-n íí’-ée-w-ú-íí-r-é
door-M person the-INST close-PASS-EPN-INCH-PST-3SGM:DECL
‘The door become closed by the man.’

4.3 Chapter summary

To summarize, in this chapter, some fundamental properties of verb root and verb derivations in Borna are described. The verb roots in Borna have no understandable meaning. Verbs need to affix the citation suffix **-à** or some sort of inflectional or derivational morphemes to convey meaning. The terminal vowel is always deleted whenever inflectional or derivational morphemes are attached to the verb.

It has been also identified that a verb root in Borna can be monosyllabic, disyllabic or polysyllabic in their syllable structure. However, there are a few monosyllabic verbs, yet disyllabic verb roots are the most predominantly found. Furthermore, based on their formal appearance verbs in Borna can be classified as a simple verb (that contains a single component) and complex verb (comprises main verb and auxiliary, serial verbs, ideophone based predicates).

Concerning the verb derivation in Borna, morphologically complex verbs also carry different morphological markings that affect the valency of a verb. It has been identified that the passive, causative, reciprocal and the middle are morphologically marked by the verb. The passive is formed by suffixing the morpheme **-éé-** to the verb stem. In the same way, the causative is formed by suffixing one of the causative forming morphemes **-íí-**, **-z-**, **-ɔ-** or **-ɛ-** to the verb root. The reciprocal is morphologically formed by suffixing the morpheme **-é-** to the verb. The middle is derived from a serial verb involving the main verb and the verb **dèk'á** 'to take or to believe'. The inchoative can be derived from adjectives by conversion or suffixing the morpheme **-ú** - or from nouns by suffixing the morpheme **-é-**. In a morphologically complex verb composed of multiple inflectional and derivational morphemes the derivational morphemes always occur preceding the inflectional morphemes in their linear order.

Chapter five

Verb inflections

In the preceding chapter, the nature of verb root and verb derivation in Borna is discussed. In this chapter, the categories of Borna verb inflections shall be discussed. Different researchers have tried to study Borna verb inflection at different times. For example, Rottland (1990), Lamberti (1993) and Binyam & Tsehay (2010) (B & T hereafter) have described the nature of verb inflections in the language. As a step towards describing Borna verb morphology, taking note of the previous works, this chapter attempts to present an in-depth description of the various inflectional systems of Borna verbs. Verbs in Borna inflect for different grammatical categories; such as agreement (i.e. person, number, and gender), tense, aspect, mood, and negation. In what follows, except negation which is treated in a separate chapter (Chapter six) the other inflectional categories in Borna are discussed.

5.1 Agreement and mood

In Borna, verbs mark a syntactic relation with the subject noun in three ways: by attaching agreement marking suffixes, by using pronominal proclitics and by using full personal pronouns attached to the copula. When suffixes are used to show syntactic agreement with the subject noun, the form of the agreement morphemes correlates with the mood of the sentence. In this study, following Bybee (1985:22) mood refers to “what the speaker wants to do with the proposition in a particular discourse context”. The major mood categories are the declarative, imperative, and interrogative. In Borna, a single morpheme expresses information from both agreement and mood. This sub-topic attempts to present how these two kinds of information are encoded by verbal morphology and how they conflate.

5.1.1 Agreement suffixes

One of the methods through which a verb in Borna shows agreement with the subject of a clause is by affixation. Different agreement marking suffixes are attached to the verb stem to show agreement with the subject. Accordingly, a verb in the language distinguishes three types of persons. Namely, they are, first, second and third persons. The three types of persons can be further sub-divided into plural and singular. Furthermore, in the case of the third person singular

the language marks gender in the third person singular as third person singular feminine and masculine. In Borna, as already indicated, these agreement marking morphemes correlate with the mood of the sentence in which they are used. In other words, the mood of the sentence dictates the form of the agreement marker to be used. Hence, the language employs different agreement markers for declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences.

a) Agreement suffixes in declarative/indicative mood

In declarative/indicative mood, verbs in Borna indicate agreement with the subject by attaching different suffixes. As shown in (1a & b), the suffixes **-è** and **-ò** indicate first person singular and plural subjects, respectively. Second person singular and plural subjects are marked by **-í** and **-ít** respectively, (1c & d). Third person singular masculine and feminine subjects are marked by **-é** and **-à**, respectively (1e & f). The suffixes **-nó** shows the third person plural subject as in (1g). The bold printed morphemes in (1a-g) show agreement-mood:

(1) Affirmative declarative (Past tense)

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|---------|-------------------|
| a. | tà | túú-ó | màà-r- è |
| | I | bread-M | eat-PST-1SG:DECL |
| | ‘I ate bread.’ | | |
| b. | nòò | túú-ó | màà-r- ò |
| | we | bread-M | eat-PST-1PL:DECL |
| | ‘We ate bread.’ | | |
| c. | nèè | túú-ó | màà-r- í |
| | you(SG) | bread-M | eat-PST-2SG:DECL |
| | ‘You(SG) ate bread.’ | | |
| d. | ítt | túú-ó | màà-r- ít |
| | you(PL) | bread-M | eat-PST-2PL:DECL |
| | ‘You(PL) ate bread.’ | | |
| e. | bí | túú-ó | màà-r- é |
| | he | bread-M | eat-PST-3SGM:DECL |
| | ‘He ate bread.’ | | |
| f. | bì | túú-ó | màà-r- à |
| | she | bread-M | eat-PST-3SGF:DECL |

‘She ate bread.’

- g. bó tú-ó màà-r-**nó**
they bread-M eat-PST-3PL:DECL
‘They ate bread.’

Verbs in negative declarative sentences also employ suffixes of the same form with verbs in affirmative declarative sentences to mark agreement. Examples (2a-g) demonstrate agreement markers in negative declarative sentences.

(2) Negative declarative (Simple past/non-past²⁰)

- a. tà dàwúnz-ó ú-á-**-è**
I snake-M kill-NEG-1SG:DECL
‘I did/will not kill a snake.’
- b. nèè dàwúnz-ó ú-á-**-í**
you(SG) snake-M kill-NEG-2SG:DECL
‘You(SG) did/will not kill a snake.’
- c. bí dàwúnz-ó ú-á-**-é**
he snake-M kill-NEG-3SGM:DECL
‘He did/will not kill a snake.’
- d. bì dàwúnz-ó ú-á-**-à**
she snake-M kill-NEG-3SGF:DECL
‘She did/will not kill a snake.’
- e. nòò dàwúnz-ó ú-á-**-ò**
we snake-M kill-NEG-1PL:DECL
‘We did/will not kill a snake.’
- f. ítt dàwúnz-ó ú-á-**-ít**
you(PL) snake-M kill-NEG-2PL:DECL
‘You(PL) did/will not killed a snake.’
- g. bó dàwúnz-ó ú-á-**-nó**

²⁰ In Borna, negation neutralizes tense. Detailed explanations on how negation operates in Borna is given in Chapter six

they snake-M kill-NEG-3PL:DECL
 ‘They did/will not killed a snake.’

As demonstrated in (2a-g), the same forms of suffixes used in the affirmative declarative sentences are also used in negative declarative sentences to mark agreement. Hence, the morpheme **-è** and **-ò** are attached to the verb stem to mark subject agreement with first person singular and plural subjects respectively in both affirmative and negative declarative sentences. The suffixes **-í** and **-ít** respectively show second person singular and plural in both affirmative and negative declarative sentences. The morphemes **-à** and **-é** respectively indicate third person singular feminine and masculine in both affirmative and negative sentences. Similarly, third person plural of both affirmative and negative sentences is marked by the suffix **-nó**.

b) Agreement markers in the interrogative mood

In interrogative sentences, verbs in Borna mark subject agreement with a different set of suffixes from the ones used in declarative sentences. As already indicated, when the moods of the sentences change, the agreement markers change accordingly. Hence, in interrogative mood, the morpheme **-tà** and **-né** respectively mark first and second person singular. Third person singular feminine and masculine subjects are marked by **-nà** and **-á**, respectively. Similarly, the morphemes **-nò**, **-té** and **-nó** respectively mark first, second and third person plural subjects. Examples (3a-g), show agreement marking in affirmative interrogative sentences:

- (3) a. tà èè-ó bèk’-ír-tà
 I lion-M see-PST-1SG:Q
 ‘Did I see a lion?’
- b. nèè èè-ó bèk’-ír-né
 you(SG) lion-M see-PST-2SG:Q
 ‘Did you(SG) see a lion?’
- c. bí èè-ó bèk’-ír-á
 he lion-M see-PST-3SGM:Q
 ‘Did he see a lion?’
- d. bì èè-ó bèk’-ír-nà
 she lion-M see-PST-3SGF:Q

- ‘Did she see a lion?’
- e. nòò èè-ó bèk’-ír-**nò**
 we lion-M see-PST-1PL:Q
 ‘Did we see a lion?’
- f. ítt èè-ó bèk’-ír-**té**
 you(PL) lion-M see-PST-2PL:Q
 ‘Did you see a lion?’
- g. bó èè-ó bèk’-ír-**nó**
 they lion-M see-PST-3PL:Q
 ‘Did they see a lion?’

Similar to verbs in affirmative interrogative sentences, verbs in negative interrogative sentences attach the same set of morphemes to mark syntactic relation with the subject. Consider (4a-g):

- (4) a. tà fàr-ó kéw-írá -**tà**
 I horse-M buy-EPN-NEG-1SG:Q
 ‘Didn’t/Won’t I buy a horse?’
- b. nèè fàr-ó kéw-írá -**né**
 you(SG) horse-M buy-EPN-NEG-2SG:Q
 ‘Didn’t/Won’t you buy a horse?’
- c. bí fàr-ó kéw-írá -**á**
 he horse-M buy-EPN-NEG-3SGM:Q
 ‘Didn’t/Won’t he buy a horse?’
- d. bì fàr-ó kéw-írá -**nà**
 she horse-M buy-EPN-NEG-3SGF:Q
 ‘Didn’t/Won’t she buy a horse?’
- e. nòò fàr-ó kéw-írá -**nò**
 we horse-M buy-EPN-NEG-1PL:Q
 ‘Didn’t/Won’t we buy a horse?’
- f. ítt fàr-ó kéw-írá -**té**
 you(PL) horse-M buy-EPN-NEG-2PL:Q

‘Didn’t/Won’t you buy a horse?’

- g. bó fàr-ó kéw-árá -nó
 they horse-M buy-EPN-NEG-3PL:Q
 ‘Didn’t/won’t they buy a horse?’

As can be seen from (4a-g), the language has agreement suffixes of the same form for affirmative and negative interrogative sentences.

c) Agreement markers in imperative/jussive mood

As already indicated, in affirmative imperative/jussive constructions the verb attaches a different series of subject agreement marking morphemes from the other two verb moods described earlier. In examples (5a-g), the verb *újà* ‘drink’ is used to demonstrate the agreement markers in imperative/jussive mood. Note the final consonant of the verb is alternated; i.e. /ɲ/ → /j/.

- (5) a. *új-à*
 drink-1SG:IMP
 ‘Let me drink.’
 b. *új*
 drink-2SG:IMP
 ‘Drink!’
 c. *új-á*
 drink-3SGM:IMP
 ‘Let him drink.’
 d. *új-ì*
 drink-3SG:IMP
 ‘Let her drink.’
 e. *új-ó*
 drink-1PL:IMP
 ‘Let us drink.’
 f. *új-áá*
 drink-2PL:IMP
 ‘Drink! (PL)’

- g. **új-nó**
 drink-3PL:IMP
 ‘Let them drink.’

As shown in (5a-g), verbs in imperative/jussive mood employ different sets of agreement markers from the ones used in declarative and interrogative sentences. In second person singular imperative sentences, there is no single morpheme constantly attached or suffixed to the verb to mark agreement. In other words, different verbs employ different forms of agreement suffixes or even do not overtly mark to express reference to the subject. Consider the examples given below:

- h. **úí -í** ‘Kill!’ **úmp’-á** ‘Cheat!’ **dàn** ‘Learn!’
 míí -í ‘Burn!’ **kéw-á** ‘Buy!’ **àm** ‘Go!’
 k’út’-í ‘Cut!’ **wóí-á** ‘Send!’ **dúú** ‘Sing!’

In Borna, negative imperative/jussive constructions are formed by using the negative auxiliary verb **k’ázà** ‘to leave’. As in (6), the agreement marking morpheme used in negative imperative/jussive formed using the negative auxiliary verb **k’ázà** is the same with the form of the agreement morphemes used in affirmative imperative/jussive constructions. Note the final consonant of the verb **k’ázà** is alternated; i.e. /z/ → /j/.

(6) Negative imperative sentences formed using **k’ázà**

- úí** **k’áj-à** ‘Let me leave drinking.’
úí **k’áj** ‘Leave drinking!’ (2SG)
úí **k’áj-á** ‘Let him leave drinking.’
úí **k’áj-ì** ‘Let her leave drinking.’
úí **k’áj-ó** ‘Let us leave drinking.’
úí **k’áj-íí** ‘Leave drinking!’ (PL)
úí **k’áj-nó** ‘Let them leave drinking.’

The following table summarizes agreement marking suffixes identified in the present study:

Table 5.1: Borna agreement marking suffixes

Person	Subject agreement marking suffixes
--------	------------------------------------

				Declarative		Interrogative		Imperative/Jussive
				Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative
Singular	1SG			-è	-è	-tà	-tà	-à
	2SG			-í	-í	-né	-né	—
	3SG	3M		-é	-é	-á	-á	-á
		3F		-à	-à	-nà	-nà	-ì
Plural	1PL			-ò	-ò	-nò	-nò	-ò
	2PL			-ít	-ít	-té	-té	-íí
	3PL			-nó	-nó	-nó	-nó	-nó

In Borna, due to the presence of these subject-agreement marking morphemes on the verb, it is possible to drop a subject of a sentence. The subject of a sentence can be understood just from the different agreement markers. Such linguistic phenomenon is called *prodrop* and the languages that display such features are known as *prodrop languages*.

In all contexts, the agreement markers are found on the right most position of the verb root. In other words, when the main verb hosts more than one suffix, i.e. both derivational and inflectional, the agreement markers are the last morpheme to be suffixed. The affixes occur in the following linear order: **VERB ROOT - DERIVATIONAL AFFIX - INFLECTIONAL AFFIX**

5.1.2 Pronominal proclitics

The second strategy through which a verb in Borna shows agreement with the subject noun is by hosting pronominal proclitic. The agreement marking proclitics are phonologically reduced personal pronouns. According to Hirut (2003:138), agreement marking by using reduced personal pronouns is also observed in many other Omotic languages. In Borna, the proclitics are used in complex verbal constructions consisting main verb and auxiliary/existential verb, in complex verbal constructions involving verbal nominal and a main-clause verb, in content questions, and in cleft constructions. B & T (2010:172) call this strategy “short pronoun I”. The proclitics are used to mark the subject agreement, regardless of the verb form to which they are attached. In (7a-g), the bold printed are the proclitics. The verbs are in past tense form.

- (7) a. tà òò -à fàr -ó **tì**=kèw
 I yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 1SG=buy_PST

- ‘I bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, I bought a horse.’
- b. **nòò** **òò** -à **fàr**-ó **nò**=kèw
 we yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 1PL=buy_PST
 ‘We bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, we bought a horse.’
- c. **nèè** **òò** -à **fàr**-ó **nì**=kèw
 you(SG) yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 2SG=buy_PST
 ‘You(SG) bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, you bought a horse.’
- d. **ítt** **òò** -à **fàr**-ó **ítí**=kèw
 you(PL) yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 2PL=buy_PST
 ‘You(PL) bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, you bought a horse.’
- e. **bí** **òò** -à **fàr**-ó **bí**=kèw
 he yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘He bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, he bought a horse.’
- f. **bì** **òò** -à **fàr**-ó **bì**=kèw
 she yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 3SGF=buy_PST
 ‘She bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, she bought a horse.’
- g. **bó** **òò** -à **fàr**-ó **bó**=kèw
 they yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 3PL=buy_PST
 ‘They bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, she bought a horse.’

As in (7a-g), the pronominal proclitics **tì**=, **no**=, **nì**=, **ítí**=, **bí**=, **bì**= and **bó**= are hosted by the verbs to show 1SG, 1PL, 2SG, 2PL, 3SGM, 3SGF and 3PL subject respectively. In terms of their form, the pronominal proclitics differ from their independent counterparts; because, segments that occur at the final positions of the independent pronouns are absent from the proclitics. In addition, since the pronominal proclitics are reduced in form, they are not autonomous and are always hosted by the verb. Thus, they cannot be interchangeably used with their independent counterparts.

As already indicated, the proclitics are also used to mark subject agreement in non-verbal clauses. In (8a-g), they are attached to the past existential/auxiliary verb **tèlà** ‘exist_past’.

- (8) a. **tà** **àk**- **tì**=tè
 I trade-NMLZ 1SG=exist_past

- ‘I was a merchant.’
- b. nèè àk- **nì**=tè
 you(SG) trade-NMLZ 2SG=exist_past
 ‘You(SG) were a merchant.’
- c. bí àk- **bí**=tè
 he trade-NMLZ 3SGM=exist_past
 ‘He was a merchant.’
- d. bì àk- **bì**=tè
 she trade-NMLZ 3SGF=exist_past
 ‘She was a merchant.’
- e. nòò àk- **nò**=tè
 we trade-NMLZ 1PL=exist_past
 ‘We were merchants.’
- f. ítt àk- **ítí**=tè
 you(PL) trade-NMLZ 2PL=exist_past
 ‘You were merchants.’
- g. bó àk- **bó**=tè
 they trade-NMLZ 3PL=exist_past
 ‘They were merchants.’

As can be seen from (8a-g), the proclitics are attached to the auxiliary verbs to show subject agreement across the paradigm. Like their independent counterparts, they refer to the person, gender and numbers of the subject.

Based on the type of the initial sound of the host verb to which they are attached; first, second and third person pronominal proclitics can be realized in different forms. First person singular proclitic can be realized as **tì**= before consonants and as **ti**= before front vowels, /i/, /e/, and /a/. Similarly, the second person singular proclitic is realized as **nì**= before consonants and **ni**= before front vowels. The third person singular masculine and feminine proclitics are realized as **bí**= and **bì**= before consonants and as **bí**= and **bì**= before front vowels, respectively. When they appear before back vowels and /w/, the proclitics are realized as **tù**=, **nù**=, **bú**= and **bù**= for first,

second and third person singular masculine and feminine respectively. (Detailed explanations are given in Chapter eight, Morphophonemics)

5.1.3 Second occurring unreduced personal pronoun

The third way of subject-agreement marking is by using unreduced personal pronouns. Such structure is observed in complex verbal structures consisting of the main clause verb and a copula, and in copula clauses. These agreement marking pronouns differ from the proclitics described under §4.1.1.2 in three ways. First, unlike the proclitics which are weak forms of the personal pronouns these pronouns, are not reduced in form. Second, unlike the proclitics that are used across all subjects, the full personal pronouns (unreduced forms) are only used with first and second person subjects. They are not used in constructions with third person subjects. Third, these unreduced pronouns always attach the copula morphemes (9a-d). B& T (2010:174) call these type pronouns used to mark agreement, “short pronoun II”. However, in the present study, it has been identified that these pronouns are not ‘short’ or reduced in form. In addition, B&T claim that “The short pronouns II occur in negative sentences of the present, future and present habitual”; nonetheless, as presented in (9 & 10), these pronouns of agreement marking is only observed when the verb form is in present habitual form. In other words, contrary to their claim, the occurrence of these pronouns when the verb is in its future form is not attested. Sentences in future verb form follow a different way of negation formation.(See Chapter six, negation.)

As indicated in the previous paragraph, in complex negative verbal structures involving the main clause verb and a copula, the unreduced personal pronouns always occur attaching to the copula. In such constructions, the main clause verb which occurs preceding the copula is only suffixed for negation. Such morphological structure is observed in negative declarative and negative interrogative constructions and when the verb form of the main clause is in present habitual form. Consider the following examples:

- (9) a. tà mèè -ó màà-rák **tà**-nà
 I meet-M eat-NEG 1SG-COP:DECL
 ‘I do not eat meat.’
- b. nòò mèè -ó màà-rák **nòò**-nà
 we meet-M eat-NEG 1PL-COP:DECL
 ‘We do not eat meat.’

- c. nèè mèè -ó màà-rák **nèè-nà**
 you(SG) meet-M eat-NEG 2SG-COP:DECL
 ‘You do not eat meat.’
- d. ítt mèè -ó màà-rák **íttí-nà**
 you(PL) meet-M eat-NEG 2PL-COP:DECL
 ‘You(PL) do not eat meat.’

As in (9a-d), the unreduced forms of the pronouns for first and second person (singular and plural) subjects attach copula morpheme, **-nà**. Interestingly, in Borna, sentences with the third person subject follow different agreement marking strategy. In the case of the third person singular masculine and feminine the copula morphemes **-à** and **-ì** are suffixed to the main verb, respectively. Third person plural is marked by **-nó**. (For a detailed explanation, see Chapter nine)

Note that the suffixes used to show agreement with the third person singular subjects (both feminine and masculine) are the same in form with the forms used in imperative/jussive constructions (see §5.1.1.1). Thus, in this study, these suffixes are identified as copula markers. In addition, the suffixes used in such constructions are suffixed to the verb; not to the copula. Consider the following examples:

- e. bí mèè -ó màà-rák-à
 he meat-M eat-NEG-3SGM:COP
 ‘He does not eat meat.’
- f. bì mèè -ó màà-rák-ì
 she meat-M eat-NEG-3SGF:COP
 ‘She does not eat meat.’
- g. bó mèè -ó màà-rák-nó
 they meat-M eat-NEG-3PL:COP
 ‘They do not eat meat.’

As indicated above, the unreduced personal pronouns are also used to mark agreement in negative interrogative constructions when the verb is in present/present habitual form. The following examples are interrogative counterparts of examples (9a-d):

- (10) a. tà mèèè -ó màà-rák **tà-nè**
 I meat-M eat-NEG 1SG-COP:Q
 ‘Don’t I eat meat?’
- b. nòò mèèè -ó màà-rák **nòò-nè**
 we meat-M eat-NEG 1PL-COP:Q
 ‘Don’t we eat meat?’
- c. nèè mèèè -ó màà-rák **nèè-nè**
 you(SG) meat-M eat-NEG 2SG-COP:Q
 ‘Don’t you(SG) eat meat?’
- d. ítt mèèè -ó màà-rák **íttí-nè**
 you(PL) meat-M eat-NEG 2PL-COP:Q
 ‘Don’t you(PL) eat meat?’

Akin to their declarative counterparts exemplified by (10a-d), negative interrogative constructions in present habitual verb forms show agreement by unreduced personal pronouns.

In the case of the third person singular masculine and feminine, the agreement marking suffixes -**é** and -**nè** suffix to the main verb, respectively. The third person plural marker -**nó** remains the same for both negative and affirmative interrogative constructions. The morphemes that are used to mark agreement for third person singular feminine and masculine in negative interrogative constructions are different from the ones that are used in declarative constructions. In addition, they are also different from the ones used in imperative/jussive constructions. Note that in negative declarative, the morpheme -**à** and -**ì** are used. Consider the following examples:

- e. bí mèèè -ó màà-rák-**é**
 he meat-M eat-NEG-3SGM:Q
 ‘Doesn’t he eat meat?’
- f. bì mèèè -ó màà-rák-**nè**
 she meat-M eat-NEG-3SGM:Q
 ‘Doesn’t she eat meat?’
- g. bó mèèè -ó màà-rák-**nó**

they meat-M eat-NEG-3PL
 ‘Don’t they eat meat?’

Similarly, in affirmative copula clauses, the unreduced personal pronouns attach the copula markers as suffixes to the copula complement. See the following examples:

- (11) a. tà bòr **tà**-nà
 I Boro 1SG-COP:DECL
 ‘I am Boro.’
- b. nèè bòr **nèè**-nà
 you(SG) Boro 2SG-COP:DECL
 ‘You(SG) are a Boro.’
- c. nòò bòr **nòò**-nà
 we Boro 1PL-COP:DECL
 ‘We are Boros.’
- d. ítt bòr **íttí**-nà
 you Boro 2PL-COP:DECL
 ‘You(PL) are Boro.’
- e. bó bòr **bó**-nà
 they Boro 3PL-COP:DECL
 ‘They are Boro.’

As shown in (11a-e), the unreduced personal pronouns attach the copula morphemes to show subject agreement. However, in the case of third person singular masculine and feminine there is no unreduced pronoun to mark the subject of the sentence. In such cases, the copula is suffixed to the copula predicate. Consider the following examples:

- (12) a. bí bòr-à
 he Boro-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is Boro.’
- b. bì bòr-ì
 she Boro-3SGM:COP
 ‘She is Boro.’
- c. bó bòr-**nó**

they Boro-COP:3PL
‘They are Boro.’

Table 5.2: Summary of Borna subject agreement markers

Person			Agreement marking suffixes					Proclitics	Unreduced personal pronoun	
			DECL		INTER		IMP/ JUSS		Copula clauses	
									DECL	INTER
			Affirm.	Neg.	Affirm.	Neg.	Affirm.		Neg.	
Singular	1SG	-è	-è	-tà	-tà	-à	tì=	tà-	tà-	
	2SG	-í	-í	-í/-né	-í/-né	_	nì=	nèè-	nèè-	
	3SG	M	-é	-é	-à	-à	-à	bí=	-à	-é
		F	-à	-à	-nà	-nà	-ì	bì=	-ì	-nè
Plural	1PL	-ò	-ò	-nò	-nò	-ò	no=	nòò-	nòò-	
	2PL	-ít	-ít	-té	-té	-íí	ít=	ítt-	ítt-	
	3PL	-nó	-nó	-nó	-nó	-nó	bó=	-nó	-nó	

5.2 Tense and aspect

This subsection deals with the way verbs in Borna morphologically indicate tense and aspect. As a morphological system, tense and aspect are grammatically expressed on the verb and they interact with other verb inflection sub-systems like person agreement markers and negation. The discussion of tense and aspect in this section is divided into two subsections. First, the various tense marking systems will be presented. Second, the nature of aspect in the language will be discussed.

5.2.1 Tense

Bhat (1999:13) defines the term *tense* as “an inflectional marker of the verb used for denoting the temporal location of an event (or situation)”. Similarly, Comire (1985:1) refers to the term *tense* as “the grammaticalisation of location in time”. Tense always make use of some other event as a reference point in order to temporally indicate a given event or situation. This reference point

could be “absolute” or “relative” (Comrie *ibid*: 36). Tense which specifies the location in time of an event with respect to the moment of uttering the sentence that is under consideration is known as ‘absolute tense’. On the other hand, the tense that indicates temporal location of an event in relation to any other time implied in the sentence itself is called ‘relative tense’. Thus, for instance, taking the moment of utterance as a point of reference tense can be categorized as past tense (when event time is before utterance time), present tense (when event time and utterance time overlap) and future tense (when event time comes after utterance time).

When we see the verbal system of Borna, it makes distinctions between two tenses: past and non-past (with the non-past covering present and future). The distinctions are made by using inflectional system applied to the verb or by using combinations of a main verb with auxiliaries in periphrastic constructions. Furthermore, in Borna, temporal adverbs can also be used to give additional information about the tense of the event denoted by the verb. In the following subsections, the way Borna verbs grammatically mark past and non-past tenses will be described.

5.2.1.1 The past tense, -r/-Ø

Taking moment of utterance as a center of reference, the past tense locates a situation prior to the moment of speaking (Comrie 1985:41). Borna is a language that grammatically expresses the past tense by inflecting the verb. In Borna, the past tense is expressed in two ways. In simple verbal constructions, it is morphologically marked by -r- (also realized as -í- or -r-). While in focused sentences, cleft constructions and content interrogative sentences, there is no morpheme that is realized to mark past tense. Thus, it is zero morpheme, Ø.

As already indicated, in simple verbal construction the past tense is marked by the morpheme -r-. Consider the illustrative examples (13a-c):

- (13) a. tà òò wàà-r-è
 I yesterday come-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I came yesterday.’
- b. k’àn-ó bè-í-r-à bè-í-rá-é ètt-í
 K’an-M Besha-PST-3SGM:Q Besha-NEG-3SGM:DECL say-NPST
 ‘Did he do Ken Besha? “He did not do” [they] will say.’ (funeral and grave

preparation II.eaf T=S64 TranC, B=248675, E=250385)

- c. à mán-í nà? mán-í dímb-ó ím-í-r-é

person the-M(NOM) child the-DAT bracelet give-PST-2SG:DECL
 ‘The man gave a bracelet to the child.’

The time reference of the verbs used in the examples (13a-c) expresses past time or prior to the utterance time. In all cases, it is indicated by the morpheme **-r-**. As already indicated this morpheme is used with constructions with simple verbs and it occurs next to the verb-root and is always followed by the agreement/mood marking morphemes.

As already noted, in complex structures involving cleft constructions where a certain constituent of the construction is focused and in past tense content interrogative sentences the past tense is expressed by zero morpheme, **Ø**. In such constructions, the verb hosts the proclitics to mark subject agreement. For instance, the verbs used in (14a-d) express past event, nonetheless there is no overt morpheme that represents the tense of the verb.

- (14) a. tà èè-à tì=bèk’-Ø
 I lion-3SGM:COP 1SG=see-PST
 ‘I saw a lion’. Lit. ‘It is a lion, I saw.’
- b. bì tì=íúw ààw-ó-nì bì=ún-Ø
 she 1SG-brother eye-M-FOC 3SGF=love-PST
 ‘She loved my brother’s eye’. Lit. ‘It is my brother’s eye, she loved.’
- c. bó jòò-à fàr-ó bó=kèw-Ø
 they yesterday-3SGM:COP horse-M 3PL=buy-PST
 ‘They bought a horse yesterday.’ Lit. ‘It is yesterday, they bought a horse.’
- d. èèbì bì- nì=ím-Ø
 what she-DAT 2SG=give-PST
 ‘What did you give her?’

The verbs in (14a-d) are in their past tense form. Nonetheless, there is no overt morpheme that marks the tense of the verb. As already indicated, this often happens in content interrogative sentences (14d), when a constituent of the construction is focused (14b) and in cleft constructions (14a & c). In cleft constructions, the highlighted constituents of the sentences are found in their citation form; i.e. with the terminal vowel **-à** which is also a third person copula

marker. For instance, in (14a) *èèlā* ‘lion’ and in (14c) *jòòl ā* ‘yesterday’ are the highlighted constituents. Thus, in this context, these constituents have the reading ‘*it is... X*’; i.e. *èèlā* ‘it is a lion’ and *jòòl ā* ‘it is yesterday’ in (14a) and (14c), respectively.

Contrary to the affirmative declarative constructions, in negative declarative sentences, verbs are not inflectionally marked for tense. In other words, in negative declarative sentences, the verb is only inflected for the negative marking morpheme *-á* *-/rá* - or *-ák/-rák*-and the different person agreement marking morphemes respectively. The following sentences exemplify this situation:

- (15) a. *tà* *dàwúnz-ó* *ú* *-á* *-è*
 I snake-M kill-NEG-1SG:DECL
 ‘I did/will not kill a snake.’
- b. *bí* *àl-ó* *tòw-á* *-é*
 he person-M kick-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He did/will not kick the man.’
- c. *bì* *k’èè-rá* *-à*
 she sleep-NEG-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She did/will not sleep.’

As can be observed from (18a-c), in Borna, there is no independent morpheme that marks past tense in negative declarative sentences. Out of context, the examples given under (15) could be interpreted as past tense or non-past tense (For a detailed explanation, see Chapter six).

5.2.1.3 The non-past, *-túw/-t*

In Borna, the non-past tense covers the present and future tenses. It is indicated on the verb by the morphemes *-túw-* or *-t*. The morpheme *-túw-* is used in simple verbs; whereas the morpheme *-t* (also realized as *-t*) is used in cleft constructions, focused constructions and in content interrogative questions.

As already indicated, the morpheme *-túw-* is used in clauses with a simple verb. It is suffixed to the verb root and is itself followed by the person marking suffixes. The following illustrative examples are in the future tense:

- (16) a. nòò jàà wèè-**túw**-ò
 we tomorrow come-NPST-1PL:DECL
 ‘We will come tomorrow.’
- b. à mán-í òò-ó wòz-**túw**-é
 person that-(M)NOM basket-M make-NPST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The man will make a basket.’
- c. tà bì- àmbàr-ó ím-**túw**-è
 I she-DAT money-M give-NPST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I will give her money.’

As in (16a-c), the non-past tense marking morpheme in Borna is **-túw-**. As already indicated, the non-past tense in Borna is also used to describe the present event. Consider the following examples:

- (17) a. bó bòrn-ó kèèw-**túw**-nó
 they Born-M speak-NPST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They speak Borna.’
- b. tà búlèn-ì bèè-**túw**-è
 I Bulen-ILLA live-NPST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I live in Bulen.’
- c. nòò àràk’ìj-ó ú-**túw**-ò
 we alcohol-M drink-NPST:DECL
 ‘We drink alcohol.’

On the other hand, in a structure consisting of a focused constituent (18c), in cleft constructions (18a-b), and in future tense content interrogative sentences (18d), the future tense marker is realized as **-t**.

- (18) a. k’ír-àrí dè?-rí bì=kí-**t**
 Kir-CNV take-CNV 3SGF=take_out-NPST
 ‘She will take out preforming [Mish] Kira.’ ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#)
 T=S47 TranC, B=193080, E=195785)
- b. tà tì=fàr-ó kè-m-à tì=kè-m-**t**
 I 1SG=horse-M sell-3SG:COP 1SG=sell-NPST

‘I will sell my horse.’ Lit. It is selling I will sell my horse.’

- c. bí=mà bàr-ú-nì mán k’ír-íí
 3SGM=woman girl-F-FOC that Kir-NPST

‘It is his daughter [who] will do that K’ira.’ (*funeral and grave preparation II.eaf* T=S46

TranC, B=188670, E=193080)

- d. nèè jàà èèbì nì=fíín-ít
 you(SG) tomorrow what 2SG=work-NPST

‘What will you(SG) work/do tomorrow?’

As shown in (18a-d), the future tense marker can also be realized as **-t**. Unlike **-túw-**, which is attached to the verb root and followed by the agreement marker, the future tense marker **-t** always occurs as a terminal morpheme. As shown in the examples, in such constructions, the proclitics are used to show agreement with the subject.

In example (18b), the verbal noun **kèmà** ‘selling’ occurs before the verb from which it is derived. In Borna, the verbal noun is the citation form of the verb; thus, it occurs with the terminal vowel **-à**. In this context, the verbal noun **kèmà** has the reading ‘it is selling’. In Borna, a construction where the verbal noun occurs preceding the main verb is very common. In such instances, the verbal noun always occurs with the terminal vowel; whereas the verb from which the verbal noun is derived always hosts the tense marker and the different grammatical morphemes.

To sum up, in Borna both the past tense and the non-past tenses are morphologically marked. In simple verbal structure, when the main verb form contains both tense markers and agreement marking suffixes, the morpheme order is **VERB ROOT-TENSE AFFIX-AGREEMENT/MOOD AFFIX**. In complex verbal structures and cleft constructions the morpheme order of the verb is **PROCLITIC-VERB ROOT-TENSE AFFIX**.

5.2.2 Aspect

The notion of *aspectis* associated with the way in which the event occurs in time. According to Comrie (1976:3), *aspect* refers to the “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation”. Based on their temporal structures, events can be categorized into two groups: perfective and imperfective (Comrie 1976:3; Dahl 1985:77 and Bhat 1999:45). The following sub-sections present how the two categories of aspect are realized in Borna.

5.2.2.1 Perfective aspect

Dahl (1985:78) describes a *perfective aspect* as “a perfective verb will typically denote a single event, seen as an unanalyzed whole, with a well-defined result or end-state, located in the past.” Thus, according to Dahl’s definition, perfective aspect describes an event as being a single unified, or as a unit completed in the past. Similarly, Comrie (1976:16) describes the *perfective aspect* as “the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation.” Therefore, from the two descriptions given here, we can understand that perfective aspect does not go into analyzing the interior composition of an event. Rather, it regards a situation in its entirety.

In Borna, a perfective verb denotes the completion of an action or a process in the past. And it is expressed by the morpheme **-r-** (also realized as **-r/-ír-**). Sentences (19a-c) exemplify the way perfective aspect is constructed in Borna:

- (19) a. tà gòtt-**ír**-è
 I cough-PFV-1SG:DECL
 ‘I coughed.’
- b. nòò dàwúnz-ó ú **ír**-ò
 we snake-M kill-PFV-1PL:DECL
 ‘We killed a snake.’
- c. bí à-ú- àmbàr-ó ím-**ír**-é
 he person-F-DAT money-M give-PFV-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He gave money to the woman.’

The verbs in (19a-c) express an event completed in the past. In all cases, the event is viewed as a single whole. Therefore, there is no distinction made to the different separate stages that make up that situation. Or nothing is said about the temporal structure of the event denoted by the verb. Therefore, in all cases, in affirmative declarative constructions, the perfective aspect is independently marked by **-r-**. The morpheme **-r-** in this case has double function (see §4.2.1.1). On one hand, it indicates past event, on the other hand, it indicates that the action is completed. Such phenomenon, where the past tense directly coincides with the perfective aspect and refers to completed actions is not unique to Borna. Similar cases have been reported in Anfillo, a Gonga language (Amanuel 2014:145).

5.2.2.2 Imperfective aspect

Imperfective aspect is the other way of describing or viewing a given event. Unlike perfective aspect, that describes an event as a whole or bounded, the imperfective aspect presents the situation as having continuity without boundaries. Comrie (1976:4) defined imperfective aspect as an aspect that “looks at the situation from inside, and as such is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation”. Comrie notes further that languages can have single or multiple distinct categories to express imperfectivity. Similarly, Payne (1997:233) subdivides the imperfective aspect into two categories. These are namely, progressive and habitual aspects. From these two arguments, we can understand that imperfective aspect does not have a distinct morphological realization. Rather, it is expressed by the different morphological realizations of its subcategories. In Borna, the imperfective verb has two distinct forms, namely the habitual and the progressive. In the following sub-sections, both categories of imperfective aspect are described and exemplified as they are observed in Borna.

5.2.2.2.1 Progressive aspect, **-íír/-rúw-**

According to Payne (1997:239), the progressive aspect, either in the present or past tense, generally implies an on-going or a dynamic process. In Borna, the present progressive aspect is formed by suffixing the morpheme **-rúw-** or **-íír** to the verb. On the other hand, the past progressive aspect is formed by a complex verb structure consisting of the present progressive marker and an auxiliary verb showing past tense.

The present progressive marker **-íír** is used in complex constructions where one of the constituents is focused and in cleft constructions. The morpheme **-íír** is always a terminal morpheme. When the progressive marking morpheme **-íír** is used, the verb is procliticized to indicate subject agreement. Consider the following examples.

- (20) a. *bì míí ’-à* *bì=mííí ’-íír*
 she laugh-3SGM:COP 3SGF=laugh-PROG
 ‘She is laughing.’ Lit. ‘It is laugh, she is laughing.’
- b. *bí túí-ó* *mà-à* *bí=mèè-j-íír*
 he bread-M eat-3SGM:COP 3SGM=eat-EPN-PROG
 ‘He is eating bread.’ Lit. ‘It is eating, he is eating bread.’
- c. *tà túí-ó-nì* *tì=mèè-j-íír*

I bread-M-FOC 1SG=eat-EPN-PROG
 ‘I am eating bread.’ Lit. ‘It is the bread I am eating.’

As indicated above, the **-rúw-** is also a present progressive aspect marker. Unlike the other present progressive marker, **-íír**, this morpheme is not used in a complex verbal construction. It is rather used in simple verbs and suffixed to the verb root. It is also the terminal morpheme in a linear ordering of morphemes attached to the verb. The subject agreement marking morphemes occur following this progressive aspect marking morpheme. In such constructions, the proclitics cannot be used; instead, the agreement suffixes are used. Consider the following examples:

- (21) a. bí mí ' **-rúw-é**
 he laugh-PROG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He is laughing.’
- b. bó tú-ó mètè-**rúw-nó**
 they bread-M eat-PROG-3PL:DECL
 ‘They are eating bread.’
- c. bì mí-ó bó- ím-**írúw-à**
 she food-M they-DAT give-PROG-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She is giving them food.’

The verbs in (21a-c) express an action in progress and unfinished at the time of speaking. The tense of the verbs is the same with the examples given under (20a-c). Nonetheless, the morphemes used in both examples are different in form. This indicates that the two morphemes have a similar function, marking present progressive aspect; but in different structures. The progressive aspect marker **-íír** occurs as a terminal morpheme in complex structure, whereas the morpheme **-rúw-** is attached to the verb root and followed by the agreement-mood markers.

On the other hand, past progressive tense is expressed analytically by a complex verb structure consisting of the main verb and an auxiliary verb **tèlà** ‘exist_past’. In such constructions, the main verb is suffixed with the progressive aspect marker **-íír** and the auxiliary verb denotes that the action started in the past time. Consider examples (22a-b):

- (22) a. bú à bí=bú -íír bí=tè
rain 3SGM=rain-PROG 3SGM=exist_past
‘Rain was raining.’
- b. bì fúúr-ó íínk’-à bì=íínk’ -íír bì=tè
she butter-M smell-3SGM:COP 3SGF=smell-PROG 3SGF=exist_past
‘She was smelling the butter.’

As shown in (22a-b), past progressive aspect is shown by complex verb structure. In (22a-b), the events, *raining* and *smelling* have happened in the past and are in progress. Here, the present progressive marking morpheme **-íír** combined with the auxiliary verb **tè** in order to express past progressive aspect. The morpheme **-íír** shows the progressive aspect; while the auxiliary verb **tè** indicates past time.

5.2.2.2.2 Habitual aspect, -f/-fò

According to Comrie (1976:27-28), the habitual aspect describes a recurring event or ongoing state which is a characteristic property of a certain period of time. In Borna, present habitual aspect is marked by **-fò** or **-f**. The morpheme **-fò** is always a final morpheme suffixed to the verb stem. While **-f** is followed by the agreement marking morphemes. Examples (23a-c) show the formation of habitual aspect with the morpheme **-fò**:

- (23) a. íkk-ó òò-ó kèè-í-fò
one-M basket-M make-CAUS-HAB
‘One [of it] makes a basket.’ ([How to make Oosha.eaf](#) T=S7 TranC, B=20355, E=23045)
- b. bòòt’-ó nì=k’út’-í-fò bòòt’-ó k’út’-r-nì
bamboo-M 2SG=cut-HABbamboo-M cut-PST-FOC
‘You cut bamboo; after you cut bamboo...’ ([How to make Oosha.eaf](#) T=S1 TranC, B=4150, E=8920)
- c. nò=ním-ó-n nò=tèr-ó-n nò=bòr ním-ó-nì
1PL=-culture-M-INST 1PL=value-M-INST 1Pl=Boro culture-M-FOC
nò=bòr tèr-ó-nì k’ál-í-fò fà?-è
1PL=Boro value-M-FOC make-HAB exist-3SGM
‘In our culture, in our value, in our Boro value, there is a thing done.’ ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#) T=S2 TranC, B=6160, E=11870)

As already indicated, habitual aspect can also be formed by attaching the morpheme **-f-** to the verb root. It is used in structures with a simple verb and it always suffixed to the verb root followed by agreement marking morphemes. Consider the following examples:

- (24) a. bó ̀ àm ààw-ó g̀ìzìj-ó-n bòd-̀f-nò
 they all day-M time-M-INST reach-HAB-3PL:DECL
 ‘They always reach on time.’
- b. nèè bì-n ̀ àm ààw-ó ̀ ’èèg-**f**-í
 you(SG) she-ACC all day-M call-HAB-2SGM:DECL
 ‘You(SG) call her always.’
- c. nòò ̀ àm ààw-ó bí-n àmbàr-ó àtt-**f**-ò
 we all day-M he-ACC money-M ask-HAB-1PL:DECL
 ‘We always ask him for money.’

The verbs used in (24a-c) are in their present habitual imperfective form. As already indicated, with simple verbs the morpheme **-f-** is employed to mark present habitual aspect.

In referring to habitual actions in the past, the auxiliary verb **tè̀̀à** ‘exist_past’ is used in addition to the main verb in order to show that the event used to happen in the past. The habitual marking morpheme **-f-** remains the same. Consider the following examples:

- (25) a. bí túmbàk-ó ̀ ’úw-íí-**f**-é bí=̀̀tè̀̀
 he tobacco-M smoke-CAUS-HAB-3SGM 3SGM=exist_past
 ‘He used to smoke tobacco.’
- b. bì nòò-̀ túrúúr-ó kééw-ú-**f**-à bí=̀̀tè̀̀
 she 1PL-DAT story-M tell-EPN-HAB-3SGF 3SGM=exist_past
 ‘She used to tell us a story.’

As shown in (25a-b), past habitual events are expressed using complex verb structure, i.e., main verb and an auxiliary verb. In such constructions, the tense distinction is shown by the auxiliary verb **tè̀̀à** which is used to show past time, whereas the aspect distinction is made by the aspect suffix **-f-** that is suffixed to the main verb. The proclitics attached to the auxiliary verb remains the same with different subjects, **bí=**.

5.2.2.3 Periphrastic expressions of aspect

In addition to the grammatical expressions (using inflectional markers) of aspect presented in the sections above, in Borna, aspect can also be expressed by periphrastic means. In the periphrastic way of expressing aspect, the notion of aspectual variation is not grammaticalized. It is rather expressed by analytic structures involving two verbs: the main verb expressing the event and a second verb expressing the aspect. Three types of periphrastic aspects have been identified: inceptive, completive and prospective.

5.2.2.3.1 Inceptive aspect

Inceptive aspect denotes the beginning point of an event (Payne 1997:240). In Borna, the inceptive aspect is periphrastically expressed by placing the verb **túwà** ‘to stand/rise up’ following the main verb which is in its nominal form suffixed with dative case marking morpheme -**ɔ**. The verb **túwà** is inflected for tense/aspect and agreement. Consider the following examples:

- (26) a. tà àm-ó-**ɔ** túw-r-è
 I go-M-DAT stand-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I started to go.’
 b. bó wó^h ’-ó-**ɔ** túw-r-nó
 they run-M-DAT stand-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They started to run.’

The examples in (26a-b) illustrate when the inceptive aspect is expressed periphrastically. As shown by the examples, the main verb is in its nominalized form and takes the dative suffix -**ɔ**. Following the main verb, the verb **túwà** occurs and it is suffixed for the tense marker and agreement marking morphemes. The expression of inceptive aspect given here contradicts with Lamberti’s (1993:150) explanation that inceptive aspect is marked with the auxiliary verb **jamar-** ‘to begin’ which is a loanword from Amharic.

5.2.2.3.2 Completive aspect

The completive aspect expresses the completion of an event (Payne 1997:240). In Borna, the completive aspect is expressed by multi-verb structure (SVC) placing the verb *íà* ‘to finish’ next to the main verb. Consider the following examples:

- (27) a. *tà* *tì=àmbàr-ó* *mà-í-ír-è*
I 1SG=money-M eat-finish-PST-1SG:DECL
‘I finished spending my money.’ Lit. ‘I finished eating my money.’
- b. *kàf-wóó-í* *sínd-w-ó* *mà-í-ír-nó*
bird-PL-NOM wheat-EPN-M eat-finish-PST-3PL:DECL
‘The birds finished eating the wheat.’

As illustrated by (27a-b), the completive aspect is periphrastically expressed by a combination of two verbs, the main verb and the verb *íà* in its perfective form.

5.2.2.3.3 Prospective aspect

The prospective aspect relates a state to some subsequent situation (Comrie 1976:64). For instance, it shows when someone is in a state of being about to do something. In Borna, the prospective aspect is periphrastically expressed by placing the verb *èttà* ‘to say’ next to the main verb. Consider the following examples:

- (28) a. *bí* *màà-ó* *dèk’-í-à* *bí=ètt-ír* *bí=tè*
he wife-M take-DAT-3SGM: COP 3SGM=say-PROG 3SGM=exist_PST
‘He was about to marry.’
- b. *bí* *màà-ó* *dèk’-í-à* *bí=ètt-ír*
he wife-M take-DAT-3SGM:COP 3SGM=say-PROG
‘He is about to marry.’
- c. *bí* *àm-í-è* *bí=ètt-ír*
he go-DAT-3SGM:COP:Q 3SGM=say-PROG
‘Is he about to go?’

The three examples in (28a-c) show the periphrastic way of expressing prospective aspect in Borna. Example (28a) shows a past prospective aspect, example (28b) shows a present prospective aspect and example (28c) shows an interrogative prospective aspect. In all the

examples, the verb attaches the dative suffix -**à** is suffixed to it. When the sentence is in the declarative mood as in (28a-b), the 3SGM copula marker -**à** is suffixed to the nominal following the dative marker and when the sentence is in interrogative mood as in (28c) the 3SGM interrogative copula -**è** is suffixed to the nominal. Following the nominalized verb, the verb **èttà** ‘to say’ occurs and it is prefixed with the proclitics and suffixed with the progressive tense marker -**íir**. When referring to a past prospective aspect, the past existential auxiliary verb **tèlà** is used as in (30a).

5.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has identified and discussed the nature verb inflection in Borna. It started out with discussions of the main inflectional affixes of the verb include agreement, mood, tense, and aspect. It has been demonstrated that verbs in Borna morphologically mark their relationship with the subject argument in three ways: by suffixation, pronominal proclitics and by using second occurring (unreduced) personal pronouns. It has been also identified that agreement marking and mood of a sentence are correlated. Accordingly, in declarative mood, -**è** and -**í** mark first and second person singular respectively. The third person singular masculine and feminine is marked by -**é** and -**à**, respectively. The morphemes -**ò**, -**ít** and -**nó** respectively mark first, second and third person plural.

The study has shown that in interrogative mood, the morphemes -**tà** and -**nò** mark first person singular and plural, respectively. Similarly, the morphemes -**á** and -**nà** respectively mark third person singular masculine and feminine. Second person singular is marked by -**né**. Likewise, the morphemes -**té** and -**nó** respectively mark second and third person plural subjects.

It is also identified that in jussive/imperative mood verbs attach the morpheme -**à** to show agreement with the first person singular. The morphemes -**á** and -**ì** respectively mark third person singular masculine and feminine in affirmative jussive/imperative mood. First, second and third person plural jussive/imperative is marked by -**ò**, -**íir** and -**nó**, respectively. The second person in affirmative jussive/imperative mood is not overtly marked. Negative imperative/jussive is formed by the verb **k’ázà** ‘leave’.

It has been also described that, in Borna, verbs show agreement by pro-cliticizing. This is often done with the main verb in complex verbal constructions, i.e., main verb and an auxiliary verb,

in cleft sentences and focused constructions. The pronominal clitics are **tì=** (1SG), **nì=** (2SG), **bí=** (3SGM), **bì=** (3SGF), **no=** (1PL), **it=** (2PL) and **bo=** (3PL).

It has also been identified that verbs in Borna are also inflected for tense, aspect, and mood. In simple affirmative declarative sentences, the past and non-past tenses are morphologically marked by **-r-** and **-túw-**, respectively. In cleft and focused constructions the past tense is marked by zero morpheme and the non-past tense is marked by **-t**.

In Borna, it has been identified that aspect is also morphologically marked. The perfective aspect is expressed by the morpheme **-r-**; the same morpheme used to mark past tense. The imperfective aspect is marked by more than one morpheme. The progressive aspect is marked by **-íír** or **-rúw-**. The present habitual aspect is marked by **-fò** or **-f-** (**-íf-**). It is also identified that, in this language, aspect can also be expressed periphrastically. The verbs **túwà** 'to stand/rise up', **ílà** 'to finish' and **èttà** 'to say' are placed next to the verb to indicate the inceptive, completive and prospective aspects, respectively.

Chapter six

Negation

Negation is a universal linguistic property of natural languages (Miestamo 2005:5; Bond 2007:39 & Zeijlstra 2013:793). That is to say, there is no language without the concept of negation. Thus, based on this notion, it is the purpose of this chapter to examine and present detailed descriptions of the morpho-syntactic properties of negation in Borna. More specifically, the issues that shall be discussed in this chapter are the following: strategies of negation expression, scope of negation, negation of subordinate clauses, and negation using ñ àmón ‘never’.

6.1 Strategies for expressing negation

Every language has some device at its disposal to express negation explicitly (Miestamo 2007:553). This means, languages employ some negatively marked overt element, i.e., word or affix, to express negation. There are various ways of expressing negation. According to Payne (1997:282-284), languages in the world can express negation in four major ways: lexical, morphological, and analytical. The analytical negation is of two kinds: negative particles and finite negative verbs. Though Dahl (1979:98) suggests the existence of languages expressing negation by changing the word order, Miestamo (2007:554); Dixon (2012:94) & Zeijlstra (2013:793-796) counter argue that negation cannot be solely expressed by merely shifting the word order of a language. Payne (1997:284) and Dixon (2012:93) claim that some languages use at least one, and others use more than one strategy of expressing negation.

In Borna, there appear to be two most common ways of achieving negation. They are (a) lexically, by using the lexically-negative auxiliary verb, **ál-**; (b) morphologically, by suffixing negative forming morphemes, **-ák-/rák-**, or **-áñ -/ráñ** - to the verb root. In the subsequent subsections, the morphological properties of both ways of negation expressions will be discussed and exemplified.

6.1.1 Lexically-negative existential verb, **ál-**

As mentioned above, one of the two ways through which negation is commonly expressed in Borna is by using the negative verb of existence, **ál-**. The lexically-negative verb is used to express negation in non-verbal clauses; i.e. copulas and existential clauses. Nonetheless, the

lexically-negative verb bears slightly different meaning in both constructions. In existential sentences, it bears the meaning ‘exist_not’; thus, it is a lexically-negative existential verb. On the other hand, with copula constructions, it has the meaning of ‘be_not’. Compare the following affirmative and negative existential sentences:

- (1) a. àṣ -ó fàʔ-é
 water-M exist-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Water exists.’ Lit. ‘There is water.’
- b. àṣ -ó ál-í
 water-M exist_not-3SGM
 ‘Water does exist_not.’ Lit. ‘There is no water’.
- (2) a. ík’ -ó fàʔ-é
 Iko/God-M exist-3SGM:DECL
 ‘God exists.’ Lit. ‘There is God.’
- b. ík’ -ó ál-í
 Ik’o/God-M exist_not-3SGM
 ‘Ik’o/God exists_not.’ Lit. ‘There is no Ik’o/god.’

The examples above, (1-2), are existential constructions. As can be seen, the negative existential constructions, (1b & 2b), exhibit an interesting negation pattern different from the verbal negation (see §6.1.2). Here, negation is expressed by suppletive form. In other words, **ál-**, a lexically negative existential verb replaces the totally different non-negative existential verb **fàʔ-** ‘exist’. Thus, **ál-** is a negative counterpart of the existential verb **fàʔ-**. The other interesting property of the existential clauses in Borna is that the affirmative and the negative existential clauses attach different agreement markers. For instance, in examples (1a-b) and (2a-b) in affirmative existential clause (1a & 2a), the morpheme **-é** marks a third person singular masculine, while in negative existential clause (1b & 2b), the third person masculine marker is **-í**²¹.

As indicated above, copulas show similarities with existential sentences in the way they exhibit negation. In both types of constructions, the same form **ál-** is used to express negation. In Borna copula clauses, the predicate can be a noun phrase, an adjective, or a locative construction. In

²¹ For a detailed explanation on this issue, see Chapter nine

such constructions, **ál-** has the meaning ‘be_not’. Compare the following copula clauses with different predicates:

- (3) a. bó úmp’-úú -nó
 they cheat-NMLZ-3PL:COP
 ‘They are thieves.’
 b. bó úmp’-úú -nó **ál-í**
 they cheat-NMLZ-3PL:COP be_not-3SGM
 ‘They are NOT thieves.’
- (4) a. bó hàn-òk-nó
 they here-ALLA-3PL:COP
 ‘They are here.’
 b. bó hàn-òk-nó **ál-í**
 they here-ALLA-3PL:COP be_not-3SGM
 ‘They are NOT here.’
- (5) a. bó kúp’-nó
 they strong-3PL:COP
 ‘They are strong.’
 b. bó kúp’-no **ál-í**
 they strong-3PL:COP be_not-3SGM
 ‘He is NOT strong.’

Examples (3-5) show negation of copula constructions with different predicates, a noun phrase (3), a locative construction (4), or an adjective (5). In all cases, the same form **ál-** is used to express negation. Since the auxiliary verb **ál-** is lexically-negative, it does not take any of the other negative forming morphemes.

In past tense negative existential and copular constructions, the past existential verb **bí=tè** ‘exist_past’ is used to indicate that the copula construction is in its past tense form. Consider the following examples:

- (6) a. bí hàn-òk-à bí=tè
 he here-ALLA-3SGM:COP 3SGM=exist_past
 ‘He was here.’
- b. bí hàn-òk-à ál-í bí=tè
 he here-ALL-3SGM:COP be_not-3SGM 3SGM=exist_past
 ‘He was NOT here.’
- (7) a. bì àk- -ì bì=tè
 she trade-NMLZ-3SGF:COP 3SGF=exist_past
 ‘She was a merchant.’
- b. bì àk- -ì ál-ì bì=tè
 she trade-NMLZ-3SGF:COP be_not-3SGF 3SGF=exist_past
 ‘She was NOT a merchant.’

In future existential declarative clauses, the lexically-negative existential verb, **ál-**, is not used to express negation. In such constructions, negation is marked morphologically (This will be explained in the following subsection). Nonetheless, in interrogative future clauses with verb to-be, the lexically-negative existential verb can be used to express negation. Consider the following examples:

- (8) a. bì hàn-òk-ì ál-nè
 she here-ALLA-3SGF:COP exist_not-COP:Q
 ‘Is she NOT here?’
- b. bó hàn-òk-nó ál-nè
 they here-ALLA-3PL:COP exist_not-COP:Q
 ‘Are they NOT here?’

Akin to existential sentences, in non-copula constructions, particularly in cleft constructions when verbal noun occurs before the main verb from which it is derived, negation of the focused constituent is expressed by **ál-**. In such constructions, the focused constituent is marked by third person masculine copula marker **-à** and the main verb is simply inflected for the other grammatical categories. For instance, in (9-10), the negative existential verb **ál-** is inserted between the verbal noun and the verb.

- (9) a. tà k'èèj-à t̃=k'èèj-íír
 I sleep-3SGM:COP 1SG=sleep-PROG
 'I am sleeping' Lit. 'It is sleeping, I am sleeping.'
- b. tà k'èèj-à **ál-í** t̃=k'èèj-íír
 I sleep-3SGM:COP be_not-3SGM 1SG=sleep-PROG
 'I am NOT sleeping.' Lit. I exist_NOT sleeping.'
- (10) a. bí wà-à bú=wèè-j-íír
 he come-3SGM:COP 1SG=come-EPN-PROG
 'He is coming.' Lit. 'It is coming, he is coming.'
- b. bí wà-à **ál-í** bú=wèè-j-íír
 he come-3SGM:COP be_not-3SGM 1SG-come-EPN-PROG
 'He is NOT coming.' Lit. 'He exist_NOT coming.'

As can be seen from the examples (9-10) when **ál-** is introduced immediately following the verbal noun and preceding the main verb; thus, the affirmative clauses changed into their negative counterparts. According to Amanuel (2014:189), the morpheme **-allo** is used as a negative copula in Anfillo, a Gonga language closely related to Borna.

The negative existential verb **ál-** can also attach verb related grammatical features such as person. Consider the following examples:

- (11) a. grànz-ó-wò -í gèèm mán-à ál-nó
 hyena-EPN-PL-NOM forest that-ALLA exist_NOT-3PL
 'There are NO hyenas in the forest.'
- b. kàf-ó-wò -í mít mán-à ál-nó
 bird-EPN-PL-NOM tree that-ALLA exist_NOT-3PL
 'There are NO birds on the tree.'

6.1.2 Morphological-suffixing, -rák-/-ák-, -rá -/-á -

The second strategy through which negation can be expressed in Borna is through morphological negation. It is realized by the process of verbal affixation. Negation through a morphological process is the most common and productive way of expressing negation in Borna. Similarly,

Dryer (1988:96) & Dixon (2012:97) claim that such a way of negation expression is the most common way of negation marking in the languages of the world.

One significant feature of Borna is that it has more than one negation marking morphemes. These negation forming morphemes are **-rák-/-ák-** and **-rá -/ -á -**. They are suffixed to the verb stem to form negation in non-copula constructions. The variation on these negative morphemes is controlled by the tense and mood of the sentence. Present habitual verb forms employ different negation morphemes from past and non-past verb forms. Similarly, verbs in the imperative mood attach a different negation marker from the declarative and interrogative verb moods. The occurrence of these negation markers is discussed in the subsequent subsections.

6.1.2.1 Negation with **-rák-/-ák-**

As stated above, in Borna, negation can be morphologically marked by **-rák-** or by its allomorph **-ák-**. Both **-rák-** and **-ák-** are used to mark negation when the verb is in present-habitual form. The distribution of these two negation marking morphemes is phonologically conditioned. The morpheme **-ák-** is suffixed to the verb roots that end in consonants (often with verb roots that undergo consonant alternation), whereas the morpheme **-rák-** is suffixed to verb roots that end in vowels. The following examples (12-18) show negation formation with **-rák-/-ák-** in present habitual constructions (both affirmative and negative constructions are given for the sake of comparisons):

- (12) a. tà mètè -ó màà-f-è
 I meat-M eat-HAB-1SG:DECL
 ‘I eat meat.’
- b. tà mètè -ó màà-rák tà-nà
 I meat-M eat-NEG 1SG-COP
 ‘I do NOT eat meat.’
- (13) a. fàr -ó mò -ó màà-f-é
 horse-M grass-M eat-HAB-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Horse eats grass.’ Lit. ‘Horses eat grass.’

- b. kàn-ó mò' -ó màà-rák-à
 dog-M grass-M eat-NEG-3SGM:COP
 'Dog does NOT eat grass.' Lit. 'Dogs do NOT eat grass.'
- (14) a. nòò mèè' -ó màà-f-ò
 we meat-M eat-HAB-1PL:DECL
 'We eat meat.'
- b. nòò mèè' -ó màà-rák nòò-nà
 we meat-M eat-NEG 1PL-COP
 'We do NOT eat meat.'
- (15) a. bì èèp-íf-à
 she cry-HAB-3SGF:DECL
 'She cries.'
- b. bì èèf-ák-ì
 she cry-NEG-3SGF:COP
 'She does NOT cry.'
- (16) a. nèè bì-n àm ààw-ó 'èèg-í
 you(SG) she-ACC every day-M call-HAB-2SG:DECL
 'You(SG) call her always.'
- b. nèè bì-n àm ààw-ó 'èèh-ák nèè-nà
 you(SG) she-ACC every day-M call-NEG 2SG:COP
 'You(SG) do NOT call her always.'
- (17) a. ítt àm ààw-ó àm-f-ít
 you(PL) every day-M go-HAB-2PL:DECL
 'I always go.'
- b. ítt àm ààw-ó àm-ák íttí-nà
 you(PL) every day-M go-NEG 2PL-COP
 'I do NOT go always.'

- (18) a. bó àm ààw-ó gízìjò-n bòd-íf-nó
 they every day-M time-INST reach-HAB-3PL:DECL
 ‘They reach on time every day.’
- b. bó àm ààwó gízìjò-n bòd-**ák**-nó
 they every day time-INST reach-NEG-COP
 ‘They do NOT reach on time every day.’

The examples given above show negation formation using **-rák-** and **-ák-** in present habitual verb form. As can be seen from the examples, the two morphemes are in complementary distribution; i.e. the morpheme **-rák-** attaches to the verb roots that end in vowels like in (12b & 13b). On the other hand, **-ák-** is suffixed to verbs that end in consonants (15b, 16b, 17b & 18b).

One noteworthy feature of negation formation using affixation is that tense/aspect marking morphemes is not allowed in negative sentences. In other words, unlike the affirmative clauses that distinctively mark tense/aspect, negation neutralizes morphological tense distinction. For instance, in the examples (12-18), the present habitual aspect marker **-f-** which is used in the affirmative constructions is not used in the negative counterparts. One can understand the tense of the negative construction at least in two ways: a) from the type of the negative markers (i.e. **-ák-/rák-** is used when the verb is in the habitual aspect form), and b) from the context or presupposition (as negative sentences generally happen in the context of presupposition). The following are additional examples:

- (19) a. hán-í ál-nó nò=bòr-ó màà -ú dè?-**ák**-à
 this-NOM exist_not-3PL 1PL-Bor-M wife-F take-NEG-3GM:COP
 ‘This exist not, our Boro [man] does NOT marry a wife.’ ([description of cultural materials.eaf](#) T=S64 TranC,B=217600,E=219535)
- b. k'àb-ó bèè-f-é gú -ó
 senior_son-M exist-HAB-3SGM:DECL youngest_son-M
 úh-**ák**-à
 slaughter-NEG-3SGM:COP
 ‘[If] the oldest son is present, the youngest son does NOT slaughter.’ ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#) T=S1 TranC,B=93105,E=95015)

The other fascinating feature about negation in the present habitual verb form marked by **-ák/-rák-** is that unlike their affirmative counterparts that mark subject agreement with morphemes of the declarative constructions, the negative constructions involve copula to show agreement with the subject or they are replaced by the copula. This phenomenon is expressed in two ways: a) with first and second person subjects (both singular and plural), agreement is shown by a complex verbal structure consisting main verb and a copula. In such cases, the copula is attached to the second occurring pronoun, like in (14b), (16b) & (17b). b) With third person subjects (both singular and plural), the copula is simply suffixed to the verb to show subject agreements as in (12b), (13b), (15b), & (18b). Table 6.1 provides additional examples of negation formation using the morpheme **-ák/-rák-**:

Table 6.1: Negation with -ák/-rák-

Verb root	Gloss	NEG PST form	Gloss
ú-	drink	új-ák-	drink-NEG-
ún-	love/like	ún-ák-	love/like-NEG-
éép-	cry	ééf-ák-	cry-NEG-
mà-	eat	màà-rák-	eat-NEG-
fíin-	work	fíin-ák-	work-NEG-

6.1.2.2 Negation with -rá -/á -

The other negation marking morpheme is **-rá -** or its allomorph **-á -**. The morphemes **-rá -/á -** are used when the verb is in past tense, present progressive or in the non-past tense form. Like the former types of negation morphemes, the distribution of these allomorphs is phonologically conditioned, too. Generally speaking, the morpheme **-rá -** is suffixed to either un-derived or derived verb stems ending with a vowel. Yet, it can also occur with verb stems ending in consonants if epenthetic vowel /ɪ/ or /i/ is inserted between the verb stem and the negation marking morpheme. On the other hand, the morpheme **-á -** is suffixed to the verb roots that end in consonants, often with verb roots that experience consonant alternation. As indicated above, Borna negative verb forms make no tense/aspect distinctions. Anfillo, an Omotic language of the Gonga sub-group, also uses the suffix **-ra e-** as a negative marker (Amanuel 2014:194).

Consider the following examples of verbs in past tense form and with underived verb stems:

- (20) a. nèè búlén-í búlén-í bèle-r-í
 you(SG) Bulen-INE live-PST-2SG:DECL
 ‘You lived in Bulen.’
- b. nèè búlén-í bèle-**rá** -í
 you(SG) Bulen-INE live-NEG-2SG:DECL
 ‘You did NOT live in Bulen.’
- (21) a. bì tàw-ó fúúg-ír-à
 she fire-M blow-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She blew the fire.’
- b. bì tàw-ó fúúh-**á** -à
 she fire-M blow-NEG-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She did NOT blow the fire.’

As already indicated, the negative marking morphemes **-rá** **-/á** - can also be used in sentences with present progressive verb form marked **-rúw-**. With complex verbal structure involving present progressive marker **-ír**, a different way of negation formation is employed (see §6.1.1). Examples:

- (22) a. bí k’éej-rúw-é
 he sleep-PROG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He is sleeping.’
- b. bí k’ée-**rá** -é
 he sleep-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He is NOT sleeping.’
- (23) a. bì tàw-ó fúúg-írúw-à
 she fire-M blow-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She is blowing the fire.’
- b. bì tàw-ó fúúh-**á** -à
 she fire-M blow-NEG-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She is NOT blowing the fire.’

The following examples illustrate negation with **-rá** **-/á** - in non-past tense verb forms.

(24) a. nèè wèè-túw-í
 you(SG) come-NPST-2SG:DECL
 ‘You will come.’

b. nèè wàà-rá -í
 you(SG) come-NEG-2SG:DECL
 ‘You will NOT come.’

(25) a. ítt àm-túw-út
 you(PL) go-NPST-2PL:DECL
 ‘You(PL) will go.’

b. ítt àm-á -ít
 you(PL) go-NEG-2PL:DECL
 ‘You(PL) will NOT go.’

The negative marking morpheme -rá - is also used to mark negation in derived verb stems ending in a vowel. Consider the following examples with causative verb stems:

(26) a. nèè tà-n mǐ ’-íí-r-í
 you(SG) I-ACC laugh-CAUS-PST-2SG:DECL
 ‘You made me laugh.’

b. nèè tà-n mǐ ’-íí-rá -í
 you(SG) I-ACC laugh-CAUS-NEG-2SG:DECL
 ‘You did NOT make me laugh.’

(27) a. bì tà-n dààm-íí-r-à
 she I-ACC go-CAUS-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She made me go.’

b. bì tà-n dààm-íí-rá -à
 she I-ACC go-CAUS-NEG-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She did NOT make me go.’

As shown by the examples (26-27), the negative marker comes following the causative marking morpheme-íí-.

Similarly, with derived passive constructions the negation marking morpheme **-rá** - is attached. Compare the following examples with derived passive verb stems:

- (28) a. bí àà -ée-r-é
 he bite-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He was bitten.’
- b. bí àà -ée-rá -é
 he bite-PASS-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He was NOT bitten.’
- (29) a. bí=fàr-ó úmp’-ée-r-é
 3SGM-horse-M steal-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘His horse was stolen.’
- b. bí=fàr-ó úmp’-ée-rá -é
 3SGM-horse-M steal-PASS-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘His horse was NOT stolen.’

In the same way, in complex verb derivations ending in a vowel, the morpheme **-rá** - is used to mark negation. Consider the following examples:

- (30) ééz-ó bì-n tà-n ú-í-j-ée-rá -è
 milk-M she-INST I-ACC drink-CAUS-EPN-PASS-NEG-1SG:DECL
 ‘I was NOT made drink milk by her.’
- (31) fàr-ó nèè-n tà-n kéw-í-j-ée-rá -è
 horse-M you(SG)-INST I-ACC buy-CAUS-EPN-PASS-NEG-1SG:DECL
 ‘I was NOT made buy a horse by you.’

On the other hand, as indicated above, the morpheme **-á** - is always attached to verb stems that end in consonants. Compare the following examples when the verb form is in past tense:

- (32) a. bí éé-ó bék’-r-é
 he lion-M see-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He saw a lion.’

- b. bí éé-ó bék'-á -é
 he lion-M see-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 'He did NOT see a lion.'
- (33) a. nòò bí-n 'ég-r-ò
 we he-ACC call-PST-1PL:DECL
 'You called him.'
- b. nòò bí-n 'éj-á -ò
 we he-ACC call-PST-1PL:DECL
 'We did NOT call him.' (There is consonant alternation occurring here, the final
 consonant of the verb 'ég- 'to call' has changed to 'éj- when the negative marking morpheme
 -à - is suffixed to it.)

With present progressive verb forms formed by -**ruw**-, the negation marking morpheme -**á** - is used if the verb stem ends in consonant. Consider the following examples:

- (34) a. ítt kééw-ruw-ít
 you(PL) speak-PROG-2PL:DECL
 'You are speaking.'
- b. ítt kééw-á -ít
 you(PL) speak-NEG-2PL:DECL
 'You are NOT speaking.'
- (35) a. nòò dàwúnz-ó ú -ruw-ò
 we snake-M kill-PROG-1PL:DECL
 'We are killing a snake.'
- b. nòò dàwúnz-ó ú -á -ò
 we snake-M kill-NEG-1PL:DECL
 'We are NOT killing a snake.'

As indicated above, negation markers -**á** -/**-rá** - are also used when the verb is in the non-past tense form. Consider the following examples:

(36) a. bó mít̩t màn-í k'út'-ítúw-nó
 they tree that-ACC cut-NPST-3PL:DECL
 'They will cut the tree.'

b. bó mít̩t màn-í k'út'-á̃ -nó
 they tree that-ACC cut-NEG-3PL:DECL
 'They will NOT cut the tree.'

(37) a. nòò wèè-túw-ò
 we come-NPST-1PL:DECL
 'We will come.'

b. nòò wàà-rá̃ -ò
 we come-NEG-1PL:DECL
 'We will NOT come.'

To sum up, in addition to the difference in the tense form of the verb to which they are suffixed, negative sentences formed with **-rá̃ -/á̃** - also structurally differ from the ones formed with **-rák-/á̃k-** in two ways: a) they don't involve complex verbal structure; i.e. subject agreement markers are simply suffixed to the verb; b) they don't attach copulas. Also, consider the following examples from the texts:

(38) a. èègè k'àn-ó bè̃-rá̃ -é à̃ mání-nìè
 why K'an-M Besha-NEG-3SGM:DECL person that-FOC
 'Why, that man did NOT carry out K'en Besha.' ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#) T=S63 TranC,B=245525,E=248675)

b. k'àn-ó bè̃-à̃-rà bè̃-rá̃ -é ètt-à̃
 K'an-M Besha-PST-3SGM:Q Besha-NEG-3SGM:DECL say-NPST
 'Did he do K'en Besha? He did NOT do; [they] will say.' ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#) T=S64 TranC,B=248675,E=250385)

6.2 Scope of negation

The *Scope of negation* refers to "the part or variable portion of a clause that is negated" (Payne 1997: 293). Syntactically, negation can have two scopes: clausal negation and clausal constituent

negation. This subsection aims at describing the nature of the two scopes of negation as observed in Borna.

6.2.1 Clausal negation

Negation is said to be *clausal negation* when it takes scope over the entire clause (Payne, 1997:293). For the purpose of describing negation in Borna, it is important to categorize clausal negation into two, namely the verbal clausal negation and verbless (non-verbal) clausal negation. In the following paragraphs, both categories are described and exemplified.

6.2.1.1 Verbal clausal negation

In Borna, verbal clauses are negated by suffixing the negator morphemes to the verb stems. Different types of clauses, declarative, interrogative and imperative are negated through this strategy.

6.2.1.1.1 Negative verbal declaratives

In Borna, the verbal declarative clauses are negated by attaching the negative morpheme **-rák/-ák-** or **-rá -/á -** to the verb stem. These are illustrated below with sentences of different tense/aspect verb forms:

- (39) gìn àjìdèlèm bí=fíín-í gònd-ó fà?-é
 but be_not 3SGM=work-REL bad-M exist-3SGM:DECL
 òtt-í-rá -é
 be-EPN-NEG-3SGM:DECL

‘But it is not; there is his bad work; it will NOT be.’ ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#)T=S92-93 TranC, B=363722, E=367707)

- (40) nò=níh-wò -í àndì mètìr-à ètt-í -ó dàn-á -nò
 1PL=father-PL-NOM now meter-3SGM:COP say-REL-M know-NEG-1PL

‘Our fathers do NOT know what we call meter now.’ ([funeral and grave preparation II.eaf](#)T=S100 TranC, B=392937, E=395232)

- (41) bì-í mí-ó k’ír-í-rák-à bì-í
 she-DAT Mish-M Kir-EPN-NEG-3SGM:COP she-DAT
 mán-k’ò k’ír dè?-àm gàns-à -à tàràsàsàj-nà
 this-EQ K’ira take-go crossroad-ALLA-3SGM:COP similar-COP

‘NO Mish Kira for her; for her K’ira will be done like this at a crossroad; it is the same.’
 (funeral and grave preparation II.eaf^T=S71 TranC, B=283245, E=287345)

- (42) kàn-wò -í méé -ó màà-rák-nó
 dog-PL-NOM meat-M eat-NEG-3PL:Q
 ‘Do dogs NOT eat meat?’

6.2.1.1.2 Negative verbal interrogatives

Borna distinguishes two types of verbal interrogatives: yes/no and content interrogatives. The two types of interrogatives are negated differently. Yes/no interrogative clauses can be negated either by affixation or by using **k’àzà** ‘to leave’. Yes/no verbal interrogative clauses in past and non-past verb forms are negated by affixation; the same way declarative sentences are negated. The same negator forms used in negative declarative, **-rák/-ák-** or **-rá -/á -**, are used in negative verbal interrogative constructions. Consider the following yes/no verbal interrogatives negated by affixation:

- (43) a. tà bì-n ùn-íf-tà
 I she-ACC love-HAB-1SG:Q
 ‘Do I love her?’
 b. tà bì-n ùn-á -tà
 I she-ACC love-NEG-1SG:Q
 ‘Do NOT I love her?’
- (44) a. nèè màà-r-í
 you(SG) eat-PST-2SG:Q
 ‘Did you eat?’
 b. nèè màà-rá -í
 you(SG) eat-NEG-2SG:Q
 ‘Did NOT you eat?’
- (45) a. kàn-ó-wò -í mò -ó màà-f-nó
 dog-EPN-PL-NOM grass-M eat-HAB-3PL:Q
 ‘Do dogs eat grass?’

- b. kàn-ó-wò̀ -í mò̀ -ó màà-**rák**-nó
 dog-EPN-PL-NOM grass-M eat-NEG-3PL:Q
 ‘Do NOT dogs eat meat?’
- (46) a. àndúr-wò̀ -í àà -ó ú-**f**-nó
 cat-PL-NOM water-M drink-HAB-3PL:Q
 ‘Do cats drink water?’
- b. àndúr-wò̀ -í àà -ó új-**ák**-nó
 cat-PL-NOM water-M drink-NEG-3PL:Q
 ‘Do NOT cats drink water?’
- (47) a. bó kééw-túw-nó
 they speak-NPST-1PL:Q
 ‘Will they speak?’
- b. bó kééw-**á** -nó
 they speak-NEG-1PL:Q
 ‘Will NOT they speak?’

On the other hand, as indicated above, unlike yes/no verbal interrogatives, content verbal interrogative clauses are not negated by affixation; rather they are negated by using the auxiliary verb **k’ázà** ‘to leave’. Consider the following examples:

- (48) a. bì kóné bì=ún
 she who 3SGF=love
 ‘Whom does she love?’
- b. bì kóné ún-ó bì=**k’áz**
 she who love-M 3SGF=leave
 ‘Whom does she NOT love?’
- (49) a. nèè kónè mèè nì=dàn
 you(SG) whose house 2SG=know
 ‘Whose house do you know?’

- b. nèè kónè mèè dàn-ó nì=k'áz
 you(SG) whose house know-M 2SG=leave
 'Whose house do you NOT know?'
- (50) a. àmbàr màn-í kóné dék'-í
 money that-ACC who take-2SG:Q
 'Who take the money?'
- b. àmbàr màn-í kóné dék'-ó k'áz
 money that-ACC who take-M leave
 'Who does NOT take the money?'
- (51) a. (nèè) àk'úwé nù=wàà
 (you(SG)) how 2SG=come_PST
 'How did you come?'
- b. (nèè) àk'úwé wò-ó nì=k'áz
 (you(SG)) how come-M 2SG=leave
 'How did NOT you come?'

Examples (48-51) illustrate how negative content verbal interrogative clauses are negated. As demonstrated by the examples, in Borna, such constructions are negated by using the auxiliary verb **k'ázà** 'leave'.

6.2.1.1.3 Negative imperatives/optative

In Borna, negation of imperative/optative sentence is expressed by putting the auxiliary verb **k'ázà** 'to leave' immediately following the main verb (realized as **k'àj** in the examples due to verb-final consonant alternation). It is important to note here that this way of imperative negation is totally different from the way negative declarative/interrogative sentences are constructed. Negative imperative/optative formations are illustrated in Table 6.2, given below. The verb **ú à** 'to kill' is used for exemplification.

Table 6.2: Negative imperatives

Person		Positive IMP/OPT	Neg. IMP/OPT with k'àj 'leave'
1 st person	SG	úú -w-à	úú k'àj-à
		kill-EPN-1SG:IMP	kill leave-1SG:IMP
	PL	úú -w-ó	úú k'àj-ó
		kill-EPN-1PL:IMP	kill leave-1PL:IMP
2 nd person	SG	úú -í	úú k'àj
		kill-2SG:IMP	kill leave
	PL	úú -w-úú	úú k'àj-úú
		kill-EPN-2PL:IMP	kill leave-2PL:IMP
3 rd person	SG	M úú -w-á	úú k'àj-á
		kill-EPN-3SGM:IMP	kill leave-3SGM:IMP
	F	úú -w-ì	úú k'àj-ì
		kill-EPN-3SGF:IMP	kill leave-3SGF:IMP
	PL	úú -ú-nó	úú k'àj-nó
		kill-EPN-3PL:IMP	kill leave-3PL:IMP

As shown in Table 6.2, the auxiliary verb **k'ázà** always comes after the main verb to negate the event designated by the main verb. As illustrated by the examples, the auxiliary verb is suffixed with one of the different imperative/jussive marking morphemes used inaffirmative jussive/optative mood: **-à** 1SG; **-ó** 1PL; **-úú** 2PL; **-á** 3SGM; **-ì** 3SGF; **-nó** 3PL. Amanuel (2014:193) claims that Anfillo, a sister language of Borna, also uses **-k'eh** 'not' to form negative imperative sentences.

6.2.1.2 Non-verbal clausal negation

Non-verbal clausal negation refers to the negation of clauses in which the predicate is not a lexical verb (Dahl 2010:27). It has been mentioned under §6.2.1 that, in Borna, non-verbal and verbal clauses follow different strategies of clausal negation. Verbal clauses are negated by affixation whereas non-verbal clauses are negated by using the negative existential verb **ál-** 'exist_not' or 'be_not'. In the following sub-sections, negation in non-verbal declaratives and interrogatives is presented.

6.2.1.2.1 Negative non-verbal declaratives

As mentioned above, the non-verbal declarative clauses are negated by using the negative verb, **ál-**. The lexically-negative verb is used to express negation in copulas and existential sentences. Consider the following examples.

- (52) a. bí géénz á-à
 he tall man-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is a tall man.’
- b. bí géénz á-à ál-í
 he tall man-3SGM:COP be_NOT-3SG
 ‘He is NOT a tall man.’
- (53) a. bí dóg-à
 he fool-COP:3SGM
 ‘He is a fool.’
- b. bí dóg-à ál-í
 he fool-COP:3SGM be_NOT-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is NOT a fool.’
- (54) a. hán-í nèè-à
 this-NOM you(SG)-DAT-3SGM:COP
 ‘This is for you.’
- b. hán-í nèè-à ál-í
 this-NOM you(SG)-DAT-3SGM:COP be_NOT-2SG:COP
 ‘This is NOT for you.’

The declarative existential clauses are also negated in the same way copula clauses are negated. Consider the following existential clauses.

- (55) a. één-ó fà?-é
 peace-M exist-3SG:DECL
 ‘Peace exists.’ Lit. ‘There is peace,’

- b. $\emptyset$ één-ó ál-í
 peace-M exist_NOT-3SG:COP
 ‘Peace does NOT exist.’ Lit. ‘There is NO peace.’

6.2.1.2.2 Negative non-verbal interrogatives

Akin to non-verbal declarative clauses, non-verbal interrogative clauses in present progressive verb forms are negated by using **ál-**. Consider the following negative interrogative copula clauses:

- (56) a. *bì* *léléng-ì-nè*
 she *beautiful-EPN-3SGF:COP:Q*
 ‘Is she beautiful?’
- b. *bì* *léléng* *ál-nè*
 she *beautiful* *be_NOT-3SGF:COP:Q*
 ‘Is she NOT beautiful?’
- (57) a. *bì* *òòd-ì-ì-nè*
 she *disease-NMLZ-3SGF:COP:Q*
 ‘Is she sick?’
- b. *bì* *òòd-ì-ì í* *ál-nè*
 she *disease-NMLZ* *be_NOT-3SGF:COP:Q*
 ‘Is she NOT sick?’

As can be seen from (56-57), negation in non-verbal interrogative clauses is formed by using the negative existential **ál-**. In affirmative interrogative copula constructions, the copula marker **nè** is suffixed to the copula complement. Nonetheless, in non-verbal negative interrogative constructions, it is suffixed to the negative existential or auxiliary **ál-**.

Similarly, mechanism method is also used in forming negative interrogative existential sentences. Consider the following examples:

- (58) a. ìk'-ó fàʔ-à
 god-M exist-3SGM:Q
 'Does God exists?'

- b. ík'-ó ál-né
 god-M exist_not-COP:Q
 'Does God NOT exists?'
- (59) a. àwú-ó fà?-á
 rain-M exist-3SGM:Q
 'Does rain exists?'
- b. àwú-ó ál-né
 rain-M exist_not-COP:Q
 'Does rain NOT exists?'

6.2.2 Negating a clausal constituent

In the previous section, (§6.2.1.), the nature of clausal negation in Borna is presented. This subsection deals with the nature of negation at clausal constituent level. Payne (1997:281) states that “a clausal constituent negation has a scope over a particular constituent of the clause”. In Borna, a clausal constituent can either be negated by affixation or by using the negative existential verb **ál-**

Constituent negation in non-verbal clauses is made by placing **ál-** next to the constituent that is negated. The following examples illustrate the formation of clausal constituent negation in non-verbal clauses with different complements:

- (60) a. à mán-í géénz-à
 man that-NOM tall-3SGM:COP
 'The man is tall.'
- b. à mán-í **géénz-à** **ál-í**
 man that-NOM tall-3SGM:COP be_NOT-3SGM
 'The man is NOT tall.'
- (61) a. bì ééng à-ì
 she good person-3SGF:COP
 'She is a good person.'

- b. bí òééng à-ì ál-í
 she good person-3SGF:COP be.NOT-3SGM
 ‘She is NOT a good person.’

The examples given above, (60-61), are copula clauses. As shown by the examples, in the negative copula clauses, (60b & 61b), the copula complements are negated simply by putting **ál-** following the copula complement.

Similarly, in verbal clauses, different constituents of a clause can be negated by putting **ál-** immediately following the constituent to be negated. The following sentences illustrate negation cleft constructions.

- (62) a. bí éjí-à bí=úúk
 he goat-3SGM:COP 3SGM=slaughter_PST
 ‘[It is a goat] he slaughtered.’
 b. bí **éjí-à** **ál-í** bí=úúk
 he goat-3SGM:COP be.NOT-3SGM 3SGM=slaughter_PST
 ‘[It is NOT a goat] he slaughtered.’
- (63) a. bí fàr-à bí=kéw
 he horse-3SGM:COP 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘[It is a horse] he bought.’
 b. bí **fàr-à** **ál-í** bí=kéw
 he horse-3SGM:COP be_NOT-3SGM 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘[It is NOT a horse] he bought.’

In the examples given above (62-63), **éjí-à** ‘a goat’(62b) and **fàr-à** ‘a horse’ (63b) are the constituents that are negated.

6.2.3 Negating a subordinate clause

In the previous section, the nature of negation formation in independent clauses is presented. It is the purpose of this sub-section to briefly present the nature of negation formation in subordinate clauses. Dixon (2012:93) claims that “in most languages every variety of subordinate clauses may be negated”. The following examples show negation of different subordinate clauses in Borna.

6.2.3.1 Negation in relative clauses

Negative relative clauses, in Borna, are formed by suffixing the morpheme **-ràw-/-àw-** to the relativized verb to mark both negation and relativization. The morphemes **-ó** and **-ú** occur following the negative marker to show the gender (masculine or feminine) of the subject respectively. Consider the following relativized verbs.

- (64) a. tà ṭ=ún-í nàʔ-ó wàà-r-é
 I 1SG=love-REL child-M come-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The child whom I love has come.’
- b. tà ṭ=ún-àw-ó nàʔ-ó wàà-r-é
 I 1SG=love-NEG:REL-M child-M come-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The child(M) whom I do NOT love has come.’
- c. tà ṭ=ún-àw-ú nàʔ-ú wàà-r-à
 I 1SG=love-NEG:REL-F child-F come-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The child(F) whom I do NOT love has come.’
- d. tà t’áf-í-ràw-ó fàr-ó dà-í-rà-é
 I lose-EPN-NEG:RELT-M horse-M find-EPN-NEG-3SGM
 ‘I did NOT find the horse that was NOT lost.’

Examples (64a-d), given above, show negation in relative clause construction. As indicated above, the negative markers are either **-ràw-** or **-àw-**.

6.2.3.2 Negation in conditional clauses

Negation in conditional clauses is not morphologically formed. Instead, it is formed by using lexically negative verbs like **k’ázà** ‘leave’, **t’út’a** ‘lack’, etc. Consider the following examples:

- (65) a. tà nèè-n gàrgààí-túw-è àmbàr-ó nì=t’út’-àl
 I you-ACC help-NPST-1SG:DECL money-M 2SG=lack-
 COND ‘I will help you if you do NOT have money.’
- b. tà àm-túw-è àwú-ó bú-ó bí=k’áz-àl
 I go-NPST-1SG:DECL rain-M fall-M 3SGM=leave-COND
 ‘I go if it is NOT raining.’

- c. (nèè) nàʔ-ó èèp-ó bí=k'áz-àl èèz-ó ím
 (you) child-M cry-M 3SGF=leave-COND milk-M give
 k'àj
 leave

'If the baby does NOT cry, do NOT give him milk.'

In the above conditional sentences, (65a-b), negation is marked by negative verbs. **t'út'à** 'tolack' in (65a) and **k'ázà** 'to leave' in (65b) are lexically negative verbs used to form negative conditional clauses. Negation is part and parcel of the lexical semantics of these verbs. **k'ázà** 'to leave' is used always as an auxiliary verb. Example (65c) is an imperative construction where both the main clause and the conditional clauses are negative. The negative auxiliary verb **kàjà** 'to leave' is used with the verb **ímà** 'to give' to mark negation of the main clause. Note, both verbs are in imperative form.

6.2.4 Negation in indefinites/negative quantifiers

Borna employs morphological negative markers accompanied with negative quantifiers. As illustrated by the following examples, (66-68), the verbs are suffixed with the different negation forming morphemes. Consider the following examples:

- (66) **kóníwóór** úw mán-í dàn-á -é
 nobody secret the-ACC know-NEG-3SGM
 'Nobody knows the secret.'

- (67) tà **kónínóórí** béʔ-á -è
 I nobody see-NEG-1SG
 'I saw no one/nobody.'

- (68) **éégór** díh-á -é
 nothing fall-NEG-3SGM
 'Nothing fell down.'

6.2.5 Negation using àmón 'never'

In Borna, denial of a particular fact can be formed by the word **àmón** 'never'. It is used to make complete denials. The word **àmón** is always accompanied by the main verb followed by negative auxiliary verb **k'ázà** 'to leave'. The negative adverb **àmón** is always in its imperative

form. Thus, it is possible to claim that it functions as an adverb that modifies the event designated by the verb. Every sentence in which this word occurs has a negative meaning. Consider the following examples:

- (69) (nèè) ò àmón kòt kàj
 (you(SG)) never lie leave_IMP
 ‘Never lie!’
- (70) (ítt) ò àmón kòt k’áj-òò
 (you(PL)) never lie leave-2PL:IMP
 ‘Never lie!’

The two examples given above, (69-70), are negative imperative sentences. In addition to the word ò **àmón**, the negative imperative forming word **k’ázà** ‘leave’ is also used. Nonetheless, in negative declarative sentences with ò **àmón**, the verbs are negated differently from the imperative sentences with ò **àmón**. Consider the following examples:

- (71) tà ò **àmón** kóó-rá -è
 I never lie-NEG-1SG
 ‘I never lie.’
- (72) nòò ò **àmón** néé -òò-rá -ò
 we never stop-EPN-NEG-1PL
 ‘We will never stop.’
- (73) bì ò **àmón** bí-n bé?-á -à
 she never he-ACC see-NEG-3SGF
 ‘She never saw him.’

The word ò **àmón** cannot be a response to a question like the English equivalent word ‘never’. For instance, in English ‘never’ can be a response to the question ‘Do you lie?’. None the less, in Borna, it is meaningless to say ò **àmón** to a similar question. Consider the following data:

- (74) a. Q: nèè kòt-f-í
 you(SG) lie-HAB-2SG:Q
 ‘Do you lie?’
- A: *ò àmón

The correct response to the question given in (74a) would be one of the following:

- b. tà àmón kòòr-á -è
 I never lie-NEG-1SG:DECL
 ‘I never lie.’
- c. tà kòòr-ák tà-nà
 I lie-NEG 1SG-COP
 ‘I do NOT lie.’

6.3 The expression of ‘nothing other than X’

In Borna, the notion of ‘nothing other than X’ is expressed by the combination of two words, **bàkó** ‘other_than’ and **éégórí** ‘nothing’ as in the following examples.

- (75) bí màà bàkó éégór fíín-á-rák-à
 he eat other_than nothing work-EPN-NEG-3SGM :COP
 ‘He does nothing other than eating.’
- (76) bó méé à bàkó éégór màà-rák-nó
 they meat other_than nothing eat-NEG-3PL:COP
 ‘They eat nothing other than meat.’

6.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the different ways through which negation is expressed in Borna is analyzed. The findings show that, in Borna, negation is expressed in two ways: through lexically-negative existential verb **ál-** and by suffixing morphemes **-ák-**/**-rák-** or **-á** **-/rá** - to the verb.

The lexically-negative existential verb is mainly used in non-verbal predicates; i.e. copulas, existential sentences. In addition, it is also used to make constituent negation in cleft and focus constructions.

The morpheme **-rák-** or its allomorph **-ák-** mark negation in verbal constructions, particularly when the verb is in its present habitual aspect form. The occurrence of these morphemes is phonologically conditioned. The morpheme **-ák-** is suffixed to the verb roots that terminate in consonants, and the morpheme **-rák-** is suffixed to verb roots that end in vowels.

The other negation marking morpheme is **-rá** - or its allomorph **-á** -. The morpheme **-rá** **-/-á** - is used when the verb is in past tense, present progressive, and in the non-past tense form. Their distribution is phonologically conditioned, too. The morpheme **-rá** - is suffixed to either underived or derived verb stems ending in a vowel. On the other hand, the morpheme **-á** - is suffixed to consonant-final verb stems.

In imperative sentences, negation is expressed lexically by using the lexically negative verb **k'ázà** 'to leave'. The verb **k'ázà** can also inflect for the different grammatical morphemes.

As to the scope of negation, it has been identified that either the whole clause or a portion of a clause can be negated. It has been also identified that a variety of subordinate clauses can also be negated, in Borna. In relative clauses, negation is expressed by the morpheme **-ràw/-àw-** which is suffixed to the relativized verb to mark both negation and relativization. On the other hand, in conditional clauses, negation is not morphologically marked. Rather, it is expressed by lexically negative verbs like **k'ázà** 'leave', **t'út'à** 'lack', etc.

Chapter seven

Focus

This chapter presents the focus system in Borna. The aims of the chapter are twofold. The first aim is to explore the grammatical realization of focus in Borna. The second aim is to describe the pragmatic function of focus constituent in a sentence. The chapter is structured into four sections: In the first section, the definition of focus is presented. Then, in the second section, the different strategy through which focus is marked in the language is presented. In the third section, the different constituents of a sentence that can be focus-marked are discussed. In the last section, the types or pragmatic functions of focus construction are presented.

7.1 Defining focus

In the contemporary linguistic literature, the term *focus* has been broadly discussed and defined from various perspectives. For instance, from a pragmatic perspective, focus refers to “the most important or salient information in the sentence, and usually is the information that the speaker assumes the hearer does not share with him or her” (Watters 2000:214). From a semantic perspective, the term focus is defined as “the semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition” (Lambrecht 1994:213). Thus, according to Lambrecht’s definition, the sentence is divided into two complementary parts: the assertion or the focused and the presupposition or the non-focused. In this study, the notion of *focus* is understood as a pragmatic function that interrelates with grammar. Therefore, this study concentrates on identifying the grammatical expressions of focus and the pragmatic function of the focused constituent in a sentence. The definition of focus provided by Watters (2000:214) is adopted in this study.

It follows from this definition of focus, based on their status, information given in a sentence is divided into two: the ‘most important or salient’ in one hand, and ‘the shared information’ or the non-most important on the other hand. An expression is said to be most important or salient if it is either new or contrasted with another element in the preceding or subsequent discourse. On the other hand, the information shared by the speaker and the hearer, the out of focus part, is referred

to as the “*presupposed*, or simply, the *presupposition* of that utterance” (Hyman & Watters 1984:237).

7.2 Focus marking strategies

Focus marking refers to the overt realization of focus by special grammatical means. Depending on their typological differences, the way languages grammatically mark focus also differs across languages. According to Hyman & Watters (1984:238), Payne (1997:271), and Watters (2000:214), focus can be realized in three major ways: prosodically, morphologically and syntactically. Syntactically focus marking can further be divided into two: by using cleft construction or by reordering the focused element to a special focus position within the sentence. For instance, English primarily uses prosody and pitch accent to mark focus. Specifically, higher pitch is used to emphasize one word or phrase over the other in a sentence (Hyman & Watters 1984:238; Watters 2000:214). Morphologically, languages can signal focus by assigning certain morphological elements such as affixes or some other overt marker to the focused constituent. In Koorete (Binyam 2008:165) and Anfillo (Amanuel 2014:206), for instance, the focus is morphologically marked by affixation. Some languages signal focus by reordering the constituents of a sentence. For instance, in addition to prosody, English employs cleft construction to express focus (Payne 1997:279 and Watters 2000:214). Depending on the language, combinations of the different strategies of focus marking given above can also be used. For instance, according to Baye (1988:378) and Taha (1990:36), Afan-Oromo displays all the three types of focus marking.

7.2.1 Focus marking strategies in Borna

Borna employs three strategies in order to express focus grammatically: morphologically, by means of attaching focus marking morphemes to the focused constituent of the sentence, by cleft construction, and by movement. Hirut (2003:112) claims morphological means of focus marking is common in Cushitic and Omotic languages of Ethiopia. In the following sections, each way of focus realizations is described and exemplified.

7.2.1.1 Focus marking morphologically

One of the methods through which Borna expresses focus grammatically is by attaching certain focal bearing morphemes to the focalized word or phrase. The language identifies two types of

focus marking morphemes. These are the focus marker **-nì** and the copula markers **-nà**. It has been identified that in addition to the focus marker **-nì**, the language also employs copula markers to add emphasis to a different constituent of a clause (For further explanations on the function of copula, see Chapter nine). Similar ways of focus marking are also found in other Omotic languages; for instance, in Haro (Hirut 2003:212), Koorete (Binyam 2008:164) and Anfillo (Amanuel 2014:206).

The examples given below, (1), illustrate the structure of focus construction in Borna. Example (1a) is a question to which (1b) and (1c) are contextually possible responses. In (1b) the subject is focus-marked; thus, it is suffixed with the focus/copula marker **-nà**. Example (1c) shows a basic sentence (focus-neutral).

- (1) a. kònè tù-ó màà
 who bread-M eat_PST
 ‘Who ate bread?’
- b. **bí-nà** tù-ó màà
 he-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘HE ate bread.’
- c. bí tù-ó màà-r-é
 he bread-M eat-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He ate bread.’

As can be seen from (1a-c), the focused sentence, (1b), has the same word order with the basic/canonical sentence, (1c). Nonetheless, the subject focused construction, (1b), differs from the canonical construction in two ways: first, the focused subject is suffixed with the focus/copula marking morpheme **-nà**. Second, in the focused construction, the verb is in its citation form with no tense/aspect and person/moodmarking morphemes. In the non-focused construction, (1c), however, the verb is suffixed with tense and person agreement marking morphemes.

In focus construction, the copula **-nà** is used when pronouns are the focused constituents. When the focused constituent of the clause is a common noun or noun phrase, the focus is marked by the morpheme **-nì**. Thus, for question (1a), the following (1d-e) could be possible answers.

- d. nàʔ-ó-**nì** tú-ó màà
 child-M-FOC bread-M eat_PST
 ‘THE BOY ate bread’
- e. nàʔ-ú-**nì** tú-ó màà
 child-F-FOC bread-M eat_PST
 ‘THE GIRL ate bread’

Examples (1d-e) show that Borna employs different focus marker when common noun is the focused constituent. As shown by the examples, when the focused constituent is a common noun the focus marker **-nì** appears following the gender marker (1d-e). The following are additional examples:

- f. bí=ú-**nì** tàb-à ètt-à ètt-òfò
 3SGM=name-FOC Taba-3SGM:COP say-3SGM:COP say-HAB
 ‘ITS NAME is called Taba.’ ([description of cultural materials.eaf](#) T=S17 TranC,
 B=54720, E=56720)

- g. kèèz èlt-ó-**nì** íkkí òò-ó kèè-ò-í
 three bamboo-M-FOC one basket-M make-CAUS-NPST
 ‘Three BAMBOO will make one basket.’ ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S8 TranC,
 nB=23055, nE=25635)

- h. bí=nòòn-à gèr-í-rí mán-í úk-í-**nìjè**
 3SGM=mouth-ALLA put-CNV that-NOM slaughter-NPST-FOC
 bí=nàj-í k'àb-ó-**nì**
 3SGM=son-NOM first-M-FOC
 ‘Who SLAUGHTERS and put in his mouth is his OLDEST SON.’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#), T=S19 TranC, B=83440, E=88150)

Nonetheless, the focus marker **-nì** cannot be used with plural nouns. According to Amanuel (2014:206), the morpheme **-nì** is used in Anfillo to mark focus.

Verb focus in Borna is expressed by a combination of two verbs. The focus marker **-nì** is suffixed to the first verb stem; and the other grammatical markers are hosted by the second verb. This focus marking morpheme is consistently suffixed to verbs in perfective and progressive aspects.

(2) a. èèbì jòòò nì=fíín
what yesterday 2SG=work_PST
'What did you do yesterday?'

b. tà tùù-ó **màà-nì** tì=k'ír
we bread-M eat-FOC 1SG=die_PST
'I ATE bread.'

c. tà tùù-ó màà-r-è
we bread-M eat-PST-1SG
'I ate bread.'

A similar structure is also observed when the verb form is in its present progressive form. Compare the following examples; example (3a) is focused and (3b) is canonical:

- (3) a. nòò mítt-ó **k'út'í-nì** nò=k'ír-íír
 we tree-M cut-FOC 1PL=die-PROG
 'We are CUTTING tree.'
- b. nòò mítt-ó k'út'-à nò=k'út'-íír
 we tree-M cut-3SGM:COP 1PL=cut-PROG
 'We are cutting tree.'

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common to observe the focus marking **-nì** attached to different serial verbs. Consider the following:

- c. bí=t'íj-òò ì k'èmb-ó ààn òòk-ó-n òòr-dè?-rí-nì
3SGM=edge-ILLA handle-M again rope-M-INST knit-take-CNV-FOC
gèr-dè?-nì kúr-òfò
put-take-FOC carry-HAB
'On its edge, again, KNITTING with rope, PUTTING it and carry' ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S35 TranC, B=99015, E=102535)
- d. nò=índ-wòò-ì òò -ó-nì òò àmàr-àtí-nì hán-í
1PL=mother-PL-NOM old_day-M-FOC start-CNV-FOC this-NOM
òòd-dè?-nìjè²² k'àw-dè? k'òò-òò bí=ki-fo-nìjè
scoop-take-FOC pick-take utensil-ILLA 3SGM=pour-HAB-FOC
'Our mothers STARTING from EARLIER DAYS, with this, they SCOOP and POUR DOWN [it] to other utensils.' ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S51 TranC, B=175590, E=180650)

7.2.1.2 Focus making by cleft construction

In addition to the strategy of focus marking discussed in the previous section, in Borna, it is also possible to express focus by clefting. A *cleft construction* is a type of predicate nominal consisting of a noun phrase and a relative clause that relativizes that noun phrase (Payne 1997:280). According to Watters (2000:216), expressing focus through cleft construction probably exists in all African languages. In expressing focus through clefting, the focused constituent is suffixed with one of the focus marking morphemes and modified by a relative clause. The relativizer -*ni* - is suffixed to the verb. In Borna, all the arguments, i.e. subjects, objects, and adjuncts can be focused by the process of clefting.

7.2.1.2.1 Subject focusing

In Borna, as shown in (4a-b), when the subject is the focused constituent, in cleft constructions, the copula **-nà** is suffixed to the focused noun and the verb is suffixed with the relativizer morpheme **-i**. The focused subject is followed by the relative clause.

²² The focus marker –nì is sometimes realized as –nìjè in natural speech

- (4) a. tù-ó màà- -ó **tà-nà**
 bread-M eat-REL-M I-COP
 ‘It is ME who ate the bread.’
- b. tù-ó màà- -ù **bì-nà**
 bread-M eat-REL-F she-COP
 ‘It is HER who ate the bread.’

As shown in (4a-b), cleft constructions follow different word order from the morphologically marked focus constructions. For instance, as shown in the above examples, when the subject is focused using cleft constructions, the subject moves from sentence-initial position to sentence-final positions and it is suffixed with the focus marking morpheme **-nà**.

7.2.1.2.2 Object focusing

In Borna, the object noun phrase can also be focused with clefting. As shown in the following examples, when the object is the focused constituent the third person singular masculine copula is suffixed to the focused constituent. Consider the following examples:

- (5) a. bí bí=kèw-ú- -ó **fàr-à**
 he 3SGM=buy-EPN-REL-M horse-3SGM:COP
 ‘It is A HORSE that he bought.’
- b. bì bì=màà-fò **tú-à**
 she 3SGF=eat-HAB bread-3SGM:COP
 ‘It is BREAD that she eats.’

As shown in (5a-b), in cleft construction where the direct object is focused, the third person singular masculine copula **-à** is attached to the noun (phrase). When the verb is in its past tense form (5a) the relativizer **-** is attached to the verb; nonetheless, in present habitual verb form, the relativizer is dropped (5b). Similarly, as shown in (5c-d), indirect object focus in cleft construction has the same structure with the direct object focus shown in (5a-b).

- c. tà bì- tì=ím- -ó àmbàr-à
 I she-DAT 1SG=give-REL-M money-3SGM:COP
 ‘It is MONEY that I gave her.’

- d. tà bó- tì=kèèw-ú- -ó túrúr-à
 I they-DAT 1SG=tell-EPN-REL-M story-3SGM:COP
 ‘It is STORY that I told them.’

7.2.1.2.3 Postpositional phrase focusing

The following data shows when the postpositional phrase is focused in Borna. As illustrated by the example, the focus marking morpheme **-nà** is attached to the focused postpositional phrase following the locative (allative) case marker **-à** -.

- (6) a. tà **bògàr-à -nà** fàr-ó tì=kèw
 I bogar-ALLA-COP horse-M 1SG=buy_PST
 ‘It is FROM BOGARO that I bought a horse.’
- b. bí **wòmber-à -nà** bòn-ó bí=kèw
 he Wombera-ALLA-COP coffee-M 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘It is FROM WOMBERA that he bought coffee.’

In (6), the focus marker copula **-nà** which occurs only with personal pronouns not with proper nouns is used to mark focus with a proper name in postpositional position in cleft construction.

7.2.1.3 Focus making by movement (word order)

In Borna, focus can also be expressed by word order. As already indicated, word order in Borna is SOV. Other ways of word order can bring focus. Consider the following:

- (7) a. tà nà ’ fàr-ó wàmbàr-n kèw-è
 I white horse-M Wambara-INST buy-PST-1SG:DECL
 1 2 3 4 5
 ‘I bought a white horse from Wombera.’

As shown in (7a), the basic word order in Borna is 1-2-3-4-5. Nonetheless, the following reordering on the above example can show focus on the constituent that comes immediately before the verb.

- b. 1-4-2-3-5 ‘I Wambara white horse bought’
 c. 4-2-3-1-5 ‘Wambara white horse I bought’

7.3 Scope of focus

Scope of focus refers to the part of a sentence where the most important or salient information is placed (Lambrecht 1994:220). According to this view, focus can be placed on the sentence as a whole or on a constituent of a sentence. Lambrecht (ibid: 223) makes a distinction between three focus scopes: narrow, predicate, and sentence focus. Focus is said to be narrow when a single constituent of the sentence such as an NP is focused. When the predicate is the focused element of the sentence and the subject is the shared information, it is named *predicatefocus*. In sentence-focus, the entire sentence is in focus.

In Borna, focus can be assigned to the whole sentence or constituents in a sentence. Nonetheless, more than one constituent of a simple sentence cannot be focus marked at the same time. In order to identify the scope of focus, WH-question-answer pairing means of elicitation is used as a reliable means. According to Gundel (1999:295), the focus of an utterance “is the part of the sentence that answers the relevant WH-question in the particular context in which the sentence is used”. It is assumed that the part of the answer that fills in the information requested in the WH-question is in focus. In the following sub-section, WH-question means of scope of focus identification is employed to identify the scope of focus and to create context.

7.3.1 Narrow focus

As already indicated above, a focus is termed *narrow-focus* when it involves a single constituent of a sentence, such as an NP, (it can be subject, object or oblique) is focused. The narrow focus has also been called *argument focus* (van Putten 2014:94).

7.3.1.1 Subject focus

As already stated, the subject focus is a type of narrow focus. The subject NP of a sentence is in focus when it carries the most important or salient information in the sentence. In Borna, focus on subject NP is marked by means of suffixing the focus morphemes-**nì**, and the copula marker -**nà**.

In the WH-question sentence given under (8) below, for instance, the speaker requests an appropriate response from the addressee which can fill the subject slot. In other words, the speaker knows that ‘the bread is eaten’ but does not know WHO ate it. At the same time, the speaker assumes that the addressee knows that ‘the bread is eaten’-shared information, and at the

same time WHO ate it-the most important or salient information. Thus, the sentences given under (8a-k) can be contextually appropriate replies by the addressee. In all cases, the subject NPs are focus-marked and the rest of the constituents carry shared information.

When the focused subject is a proper noun, there is no focus marker attached. The proper noun is only marked with the nominative case marking morphemes **-ì** and **-í** for feminine and masculine subjects, respectively.

- (8) Q: kònè tò-ó màà
 who bread-M eat_PST
 ‘WHO ate bread?’
- A: a. **èdàr-ì** tò-ó màà
 Edare-NOM bread-M eat_PST
 ‘EDARE ate the bread.’
- b. **bògàr-í** tò-ó màà
 Bogaro-NOM bread-M eat_PST
 ‘BOGARO ate the bread.’

As can be seen from (8a & 8b), it is only the subject NP that provides the not shared information (new information) from the question sentence. Thus, it is salient information. Nonetheless, the subject proper noun is unmarked for focus.

In a similar manner, when the focused subject is a noun phrase, the morphemes **-nì** is the focus marker for both feminine and masculine subjects respectively. Consider the following examples:

- c. bí=mà-ì **bàr-ú-nì** mán-í k’ír-
 3SGF=woman-NOM girl-F-FOC the-ACC K’ira-NPST
 ‘His DAUGHTER does that [Mish] K’ira.’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#),
 T=S46 TranC,B=188670,E=193080)
- d. bí=nàj-í k’ààb-ó mán-í bí=
 3SGM=son-NOM first_born-M the-ACC 3SGM=slaughter-HAB
 bí=nàj-í **k’ààb-ó-nì**
 3SGM=son-NOM first_born-M-FOC

‘His senior son slaughters; it is his first born son.’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#), T=S1 TranC, B=88170, E=93105)

e. kèèz èlt-ó-nì íkkí òò-ó kèè-í-íí
 three bamboo-M-FOC one basket-M make-CAUS-NPST

‘Three bamboo will make one basket.’ ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S1 TranC, B=23055, E=25635)

As demonstrated by (8c-e), when the focused constituent is a subject noun phrase, **-nì** is suffixed to it following the gender marking morpheme, **-ó** (M) and **-ú** (F).

When the focused noun phrase is a pronoun, the copula morpheme **-nà**, which is a copula marker, is used as a focus marker. Consider the following examples:

f. **bí-nà** tù-ó màà
 he-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘It is HE [who] ate bread.’

g. **bì-nà** tù-ó màà
 she-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘It is SHE [who] ate bread.’

h. **tà-nà** tù-ó màà
 I-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘It is I [who] ate bread.’

i. **bóó-nà** tù-ó màà
 they-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘It is THEY [who] ate bread.’

j. **nòò-nà** tù-ó màà
 we-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘It is WE [who] ate bread.’

k. **nèè-nà** tù-ó màà
 you(SG)-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘It is YOU(SG) [who] ate bread.’

l. **íttí-nà** tù-ó màà
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you(PL)-COP bread-M eat_PST
 ‘It is YOU(PL) [who] ate bread.’

The data given above, (8f-l), illustrate narrow focus where the focused subject, is a pronoun. In such instances where the new or the salient element of the clause is the subject the morpheme -**nà** is suffixed to the pronouns to show that the information expressed by it is the most important part of the sentence.

7.3.1.2 Direct object focus

Akin to subject focus, direct object focus is also realized morphologically. When the part of a sentence that functions as a direct object is the most important part of the sentence, that part is suffixed with the focus marking morpheme -**nì**. For instance, for the ‘WH-word’ question given below, (9), the reply given under (9a & b) is a case of narrow focus where the object NP is in focus.

- (9) Q: èèbì nì=màà
 what 2SG=eat_PST
 ‘WHAT did you(SG) eat?’
- A: a. tà **tù-ó-nì** tì=màà
 I bread-M-FOC 1SG=eat_PST
 ‘I ate BREAD.’ Lit. ‘It is BREAD I ate.’
- Q: èèbì íí=màà
 what 2PL=eat_PST
 ‘WHAT did you(PL) eat?’
- A: b. nòò **tù-ó-nì** nò=màà
 we bread-M-FOC 1PL=eat_PST
 ‘We ate BREAD.’ Lit. ‘It is BREAD we ate.’

In the above examples, the speaker knows that it is the addressee who ate something, but he/she doesn’t know what that something the addressee ate. The subject (the addressee) and the predicate are the shared information in the WH-word question. On the other hand, there is information not shared by the speaker and the addressee. Therefore, in the reply, the addressee

includes the information, that is not shared, in his/her response. That not shared information is BREAD, the focus. The following is an additional example from text data:

- b. màà 'ó-**nì** tí mèè-ó-**nì** ùh-rì
 honey-M-COP and sheep-M-FOC slaughter-CNV
 ‘Honey and slaughtering a sheep...’ ([Funeral & grave preparation](#), T=S1
 TranC,B=76080,E=80705)

7.3.2 Predicate focus

As indicated above, in predicate focus, the predicate/verb is morphologically focus-marked by the morpheme **-nì**. Nonetheless, focus marking in the non-past tense verb form is not identified. Consider the following examples:

- (10) Q: (nèè) èèbì nì=fììn
 (you(SG)) what 2SG=work_PST
 ‘WHAT did you do?’

- A: a. tà tú-ó **màà-nì** tì=k’ìr
 I bread-M eat-FOC 1SG=die_PST
 ‘I ATE bread.’ (Lit. ‘I finished eating bread.’)

- Q: (ítt) èèbì ítt=fììn
 (you(PL)) what 2PL=work_PST
 ‘WHAT did you(PL) do?’

- A: b. nòò tú-ó **màà-nì** nò=k’ìr
 we bread-M eat-FOC 1PL=die_PST
 ‘We ATE bread.’ (Lit. ‘We finished eating bread.’)

As can be seen from (10), the WH-question is concerned with the addressee’s action, what he/she/they did, so the addressee replies with what he/she/they did. In other words, it provides the salient information, that he/she/they ATE bread. As already stated under §7.2, predicate focus involves verb serialization where the focus marker **-nì** suffixes to the first verb.

The predicate focus marker **-nì** is also used when the form of the verb is in its present continues form. Consider the following examples present progressive verb form:

- (11) a. tà tú-ó **màà-nì** t̩=k'ìr-íír
 I bread-M eat-FOC 1SG=die-PROG
 'I am EATING bread.'
- b. nòò tú-ó **màà-nì** nò=k'ìr-íír
 we bread-M eat-FOC 1PL=die-PROG
 'We are EATING bread.'

As shown in (11), akin to the verbs in past tense form, when the verb is in progressive form, a second verb **k'ira** is needed to carry the different grammatical morphemes. The first verb only attaches the focus marker.

7.3.3 Sentence focus

The third type of focus structure is sentence focus. It is also called *athetic* sentence. Unlike narrow focus and predicate focus explained above, in sentence focus, the entire sentence is focused. In other words, sentence focus presents entirely new information.

In Borna, in sentence focus, the focus falls on the subject. Thus, structurally, subject focus constructions in Borna confirm to Lambrecht's (1994:230) claim that when the subject noun phrase is the focus marked, the scope of the focus is the entire sentence. Thus, a subject focus can also serve to express sentence focus. Like the two types of focus identification given above, a WH-question is used in order to identify sentence focus. Nonetheless, as shown below, (12), in the case of sentence focus, where the speaker and the addressee have no shared information or presupposition, for instance, in an all-new event the subject is suffixed for focus. Consider the following examples:

- (12) Q: èèbì óót?
 What happened_PST
 'WHAT happened?'
- A: a. **grànz-ó-nì** dààz-ó màà
 hyena-M-FOC donkey-M eat_PST
 'A HYENA ate a donkey.'
- b. **bógàr-í** nà?-ú tóg
 Bogaro-NOM child-F hit_PST
 'BOGARO hit the girl.'

- c. **bì-nà** nàʔ-ú tóg
 she-COP child-F hit_PST
 ‘SHE hit the girl.’

The examples in (12a-c) show an event report where the whole information is new. The speaker has no knowledge of what has happened; thus, he/she shares no information with the addressee. Similarly, the addressee cannot assume any shared information with the speaker when he/she replies. Thus, all the information is equally important. In such event reporting, where there is no shared information, the subject noun phrase is focus marked.

As indicated under §7.3, in Borna, in a simple sentence, more than one constituent of a sentence cannot be focus marked at a time. For instance, the following construction is ill-formed:

- ***bì-nà** tù-ó-**nì** màà-**nì** bì=k'ír
 3SGF-COP bread-ACC-FOC eat-FOC 3SGF=finish_PST

Nonetheless, in serial verb constructions, it is possible to observe more than one focused constituent of a complex sentence. Consider the following data:

- (13) a. tàʔ tòòk-wò-í k'út'-dèʔ-**nì** búj-deʔ-rì
 sorghum head-PL-NOM cut-take-FOC stroke-take-CNV
 k'àl-dèʔ kàk-à gèr-dèʔ bú-àrí bí=t'àk'àm-**fò-nì**
 cut-take bed-LPC put-take stroke-CNV 3SGM=help-HAB
 ‘It is used to cut the heads of sorghum, put on a bed and stroke.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S35 TranC,B=127340,E=133280)

- b. tàʔ k'úl-**fò-nì** bí-n hání-nà
 sorghum cut-HAB-FOC 3SGM-INST this-COP
 k'àl-**fò-nì** k'úlí mà-èrà
 cut-HAB-FCOK'ul Machera

‘The sorghum is cut with it, it is cut with this, K'ul Machera.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S1 TranC,B=135400,E=138900)

7.3.4 Focus in converbs

The other type of predicate focus construction that is encountered in the data concerns converb constructions. In such constructions, the focus marker-**nì** occurs following the converb marking

morpheme **-(à)ń** or **-ń**. An instance where the main verb is focus-marked is not identified. Consider the following examples:

- (14) a. *tà* *dàwúnz-ó* **bèk’-àń-nì** *tè=tèk’*
 I snake-M see-CNV-FOC 1SG=scare_PST
 ‘After seeing the snake, I got scared.’
- b. *tà* *kààr* **ń-ń-nì** *tù=wèè-t*
 I quickly finish-CNV-COP 1SG=come-FT
 ‘I will finish it quickly and then I will come.’

In converb constructions with multiple finite verbs, the focus marker can either be attached to one of the verbs, often the last finite verb or to all the finite verbs except the main verb. Consider the following examples:

- (15) a. *bí* *bí=mó-ó* **ń’-àń-nì** *fàr-à*
 he 3SGM=house-M close-CNV-FOC house-ALLA
 kà-ń-nì *gàwúj-ó* **àm-ń-nì** *dààz-ó*
 mount-CNV-FOC market-M go-CNV-FOC donkey-M
 kèw-àń-nì *mó-ók* *bú-wàà*
 buy-CNV-FOC house-LOC 3SGM-go_PST
 ‘He closed his house, mounted on the horse, went to the market, bought a donkey and returned home.’
- b. *bí* *dàwún-ó* *ún-àń* *àr’k’-ń-ó* *ún-ń*
 he localbeer-M drink-CNV arek’e-M drink-CNV
 mà-àń *díh-ń* **ń-àń-nì** *bí=àm*
 drunk-CNV fall-CNV break-CNV-FOC 3SGM=come
 ‘He came broken after drinking *dawunsa*, *arak’e* got drunk, fall down.’

7.4 Type of focus

Apart from differences in the size of the focused element, focus can also be categorized into different pragmatic focus types. In the contemporary linguistic literature, two broad types of focus are widely assumed: presentational focus and exhaustive listing/contrastive focus (Payne

1997:268; Kiss 1998:245; Green & Jaggar 2003:188). The following sub-sections try to describe and provide examples for each of these focus types as they are manifested in Borna.

7.4.1 Presentational focus type

The function of a focus is said to be *presentational* when it introduces a new constituent into the discourse (Green & Jaggar 2003:188). Presentational focus generally introduces the non-shared or the most important part of an utterance. Example (16) exemplifies presentational focus:

- (16) a. Q: èèbì bógàr bú=ù
 what bogaro 3SGM=kill_PST
 ‘What did Bogaro kill?’
- b. A: bí grànz-ó-nì bú=ù
 he hyena-M-FOC 3SGM=kill_PST
 ‘He killed A HYENA.’ Or ‘It is A HYENA Bogaro killed.’

The examples in (16a-b) illustrate how the presentational focus is constructed in Borna. From the examples, we can understand that the speaker, (16a), has information gap and asks the addressee which he/she assumes has the information. Accordingly, the addressee, (16b), tries to present the information that the speaker lacks. The phrase **grànz-ó-nì** ‘a hyena’ given by the addressee, (16b), is not mentioned previously in the speaker’s, (16a), utterance. Thus, it is not known to the speaker, (16a). Therefore, the addressee presents it as salient information or the focus. The addressee, (16b), marks out the phrase with the morpheme **-nì** so that it is interpreted as the most important information in the sentence. The following is an additional example of informative focus:

- (17) a. bì èèbì bì=fíín
 she what 3SGF=work_PST
 ‘What did she do?’
- b. bì móów-ó màà-nì bì=k’ír
 she forage-M eat-FOC 3SGF=die
 ‘She ate FORAGE.’ Or ‘It is FORAGE she ate.’

7.4.2 Exhaustive listing focus type

According to Green & Jaggar (2003:188), exhaustive listing focus specifies an exhaustive set of which the proposition holds true, and excludes other possibilities. Example (18) is a type of exhaustive listing focus:

- (18) a. *bògàr-í* *èè-ó* *ù -ír-é*
 Bogaro-NOM lion-M kill-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘Bogaro killed a lion.’
- b. *hàj* *bògàr* ***grànz-ó-nì*** *bú=ù*
 no; Bogaro hyena-M-FOC 3SGM=kill_PST
 ‘No! Bogaro killed A HYENA.’ Or ‘No, it is A HYENA [that] Bogaro killed.’

7.4.2.1 Contrastive focus

Contrastive focus can be viewed as a sub-case of exhaustive listing focus. A focus is said to be ‘contrastive’ (also referred to as ‘corrective’ Gussenhoven (2007:91)) type when the focus marks a constituent that is a direct rejection of an alternative, either spoken by the speaker himself (‘Not A, but B’) or by the hearer (Baye 1988:371). The following examples illustrate contrastive focus:

- (19) a. *bí* *fàr-ó* *kèw-ír-é*
 he horse-M buy-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He bought a horse.’
- b. *hàj* *bí* ***ból-ó-nì*** *bí=kèw*
 no he mule-M-FOC 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘No! He bought A MULE.’ Or ‘No, it is A MULE he bought.’

As can be seen from (19a-b), the speaker, (19a), assumes that the addressee knows or shares the information that he/she is speaking. Nonetheless, the addressee rejects part of the information given by the speaker and replaces it with new information. In this case, the word ***ból-ó-nì*** ‘A MULE’ is contrastively focused because it contrasts with the object noun phrase in the sentence asserted by the speaker in a previous utterance, (19a). Accordingly, the replacing information is marked for focus. The following are additional examples of contrastive focus:

- (20) a. *bì* *tú-ó* *màà-r-à*
 she bread-M eat-PST-3SGF
 ‘She ate bread.’
- b. *hàj* *bì* ***móów-ó-nì*** *bì=màà*
 no she forage-M-FOC 3SGF=eat_PST
 ‘No! She ate FORAGE.’ Or ‘No, it is FORAGE she ate.’

From the examples given above, we can understand that one of the functions of focus is to make a contrastive emphasis of the given and new information. Contrastive focus rejects the given information and replace with new and emphasized information.

7.4.2.2 Selective focus

In selective focus, the speaker presents two juxtaposed alternative information one of which is correct but does not know which one. Thus, he/she proposes to the addressee to select the correct information. In Borna, the information selected by the addressee is always focus marked. Consider the following example:

- (21) a. *bí* *fàr* *mó* *ból* *bí=kèw*
 he horse or mule 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘Did he buy a horse or a mule?’
- b. *bí* ***ból-ó-nì*** *bí=kèw*
 he mule-M-FOC 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘He bought A MULE.’ Or ‘It is A MULE he bought.’

In (21a-b), the focused element ‘A MULE’ in (21b) is not a new information; rather it has been introduced by the speaker already, (21a). Thus, the speaker, (21a), knows that the addressee, (21b), either bought a horse or a mule. In this specific example, what the addressee does is simply selecting one of the alternatives given and eliminates the other alternative. Accordingly, the focus marking morpheme is suffixed to the selected constituent, ***ból-ó-nì*** ‘a mule’, in the sentence. The following is an additional example of selective focus:

- (22) a. *bì* *tú* *mó* *móów* *bì=màà*
 she bread or forage 3SGF=eat_PST
 ‘Did she eat bread or forage?’

- b. *bì* **móów-ó-nì** *bì=màà*
 she forage-M-FOC 3SGF=eat_PST
 ‘She ate FORAGE.’ Or ‘It is FORAGE she ate.’

7.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has been a discussion of how focus is realized and its pragmatic functions in Borna. In the light of the present analysis, in Borna, focus can be realized in three ways: by using focus marking morphemes, by word order, and by cleft constructions.

Morphologically, focus can be expressed in two ways: a) with the focus marker **-nì**; and b) with the copula marking morpheme **-nà**. With a narrow focus, subject or object, either **-nì** or **-nà** is the focus marker. When the focused constituent is a pronoun, the copula morpheme **-nà** is used; and when the focused constituent is a noun phrase, the morpheme **-nì** is the focus marker. In predicate focus, the morpheme **-nì** is the only focus marker.

It has been also described that in Borna, a nominal, a predicate, or the whole sentence can be focused. However, in a simple sentence, it is only one constituent of a sentence that can be focus marked at a time. When a sentence presents entirely new information, the subject is the only constituent that is marked for focus. On the other hand, in converb constructions with multiple finite verbs, the focus marker can either be attached to one of the verbs, often the last finite verb or to all the finite verbs except the main verb. Similarly, in serial verb constructions, the focus marker is attached to the V₂.

Finally, according to their pragmatic role, three types of focus have been identified in Borna: the presentational focus has a pragmatic role of introducing or presenting a new constituent into the discourse. The contrastive/corrective focus has the function of marking a constituent that is a direct rejection of an alternative. Selective focus presents alternatives of two juxtaposed information where only one of which is correct; thus, focus marked.

Chapter eight

Morphophonemic processes

This chapter presents a descriptive analysis of the different morphophonemic processes attested in Borna. The chapter solely presents morphophonemic processes related to the verb morphology of the language under study. In this study *morphophonemic process* is defined as a “change in one or more phonemes triggered by the phonological properties of a neighboring morpheme” (Kroeger 2005:292). The data collected for this study attest that Borna makes use of many morphophonemic operations that modify the structure of verbs; either by adding some element or by deleting existing elements or by making a certain modification of form, etc. The different morphophonemic processes attested in Borna and described in this chapter include insertion, deletion, assimilation, internal change and consonant alternations.

8.1 Insertion

One of the commonest phonological processes that apply in morpheme boundaries and that is attested in Borna is an insertion. The term *insertion* refers to the procedure of inserting a sound into a word that is not present previously (Shukla & Connor-Linton 2006:293). In this respect, *insertion* refers to the addition of both vowel and consonant sounds. The insertion of a vowel sound is usually called *epenthesis*; whereas a consonant insertion is called *excrecence* (Jensen 1990:161). In Borna, insertion is used as a means of regulating both impermissible sequences of consonants and vowels at morpheme boundaries. In the data, depending on the type of sound inserted, two types of insertion are attested, schwa insertion and glide insertion.

8.1.1 Insertion of schwa /ə/

Insertion of a vowel sound /ə/ is a very familiar instance of morphophonemic processes in Borna. It is often triggered when an impermissible sequence of consonant structure is encountered in a morpheme boundary between a consonant(s)-final verb stem and a consonant(s)-initial suffix. Such phenomenon is often observed when the negative markers **-rá** **-/rák-**, the past tense marker **-r-**, and the present habitual tense marker **-f-** is suffixed to the consonant(s) final verb stems.

As already indicated, an instance where the schwa /ə/ is inserted is between the verb stem and negation marking morphemes, **-rá** /-**rák**-. As demonstrated in the following examples, (a), when the verb root ends in a sequence of two consonants or geminated consonants the epenthetic vowel /ə/, is inserted in between the base verb and the negative marking morpheme **-rá** /-**rák**- in order to avoid a sequence of three consonants which is impossible by the language's phonotactics.

(1)	Verb	negation suffix in past & non-past	negation suffix in present habitual	gloss
	ótt-	ótt-ərá -	ótt-ərák-	be-EPN-NEG-
	bàtt-	bàtt-ərá -	bàtt-ərák-	forget-EPN-NEG-
	úmp'-	úmp'-ərá -	úmp'-ərák-	steal-EPN-NEG-
	tòkr-	tòkr-ərá -	tòkr-ərák-	sleep-EPN-NEG-
	íínk'-	íínk'-ərá -	íínk'-ərák-	smell-EPN-NEG-
	gòtt-	gòtt-ərá -	gòtt-ərák-	cough-EPN-NEG-
	gònk-	gònk-ərá -	gònk-ərák-	meet-EPN-NEG-
	hàwúnt-	hàwúnt-ərá -	hàwúnt-ərák-	yawn-EPN-NEG-
	kààr-	kààr-ərá -	kààr-ərák-	fight-EPN-NEG-
	àb-	àb-ərá -	àb-ərák-	slap-EPN-NEG-
	míl'k'-	míl'k'-ərá -	míl'k'-ərák-	disappear-EPN-NEG-

As shown by the above examples, the verb roots end either in a consonant, sequence of two consonants or geminated consonants. In all cases, the vowel /ə/ is inserted between the final consonant of the verb stem and the negation marker morpheme **-rá** /-**rák**-. Thus, the basic reason for the insertion of the schwa vowel is to prevent the occurrence of clusters of consonants that violate syllable structure constraints in the language. The following are sentential examples:

- (2) a. bì bí-n gònk-ərá -à
 she he-ACC meet-EPN-NEG-3SGF:DECL
 'She did/will not kiss him.'
- b. bì bí-n úmp'-ərák-ì
 she he-ACC cheat-EPN-NEG-3SGF:COP
 'She does not cheat him.'

Similarly, the vowel /ɔ/ is also used to break the sequence of consonants when the present habitual aspect marking morpheme **-f** is added to a verb stem that ends in a consonant/consonants. Consider the following examples:

(3)	Verb	Present habitual marker, -f-	Gloss
	úmp’-	úmp’-ɔ-f-	steal-EPN-HAB-
	ótt-	ótt-ɔ-f-	be-EPN-HAB-
	bàtt-	bàtt-ɔ-f-	forget-EPN-HAB-
	tòkr-	tòkr-ɔ-f-	sleep-EPN-HAB-
	ɔ óób-	ɔ óób-ɔ-f-	kiss-EPN-HAB-
	ɔ ’àg-	ɔ ’àg-ɔ-f-	shave-EPN-HAB-
	fíín-	fíín-ɔ-f-	work-EPN-HAB-
	gíí-	gíí-ɔ-f-	chase-EPN-HAB-
	hàt’-	hàt’-ɔ-f-	stab-EPN-HAB-
	k’àk’-	k’àk’-ɔ-f-	hungry-EPN-HAB-
	àà -	àà -ɔ-f-	hug-EPN-HAB-
	k’àà’-	k’àà’-ɔ-f-	cook-EPN-HAB-
	kààr-	kààr-ɔ-f-	fight-EPN-HAB-
	t’ól-	t’ól-ɔ-f-	jump-EPN-HAB-
	kúʔ-	kúʔ-ɔ-f-	shout-EPN-HAB-
	nèè -	nèè -ɔ-f-	stand-EPN-HAB-

The following are sentential examples:

- (4) a. bì bí-n ɔ àm ààw-ó ɔ óób-ɔf-à
 she he-ACC all day-M kiss-EPN-HAB-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She kisses him always.’
- b. bì ɔ àm ààw-ó mì-ó k’àà’-ɔf-à
 she all day-M food-M cook-EPN-HAB-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She cooks food always.’

Furthermore, in Borna, when the past tense marking morpheme **-r-** is inflected to a verb stem that terminates in a sequence of two consonants or geminated clusters, the epenthetic vowel /ɐ/, is used to break the impermissible sequence of consonants. Consider the following examples:

(5)	Verb	with suffix	gloss
	úmp'-	úmp'-ɐ-r-	steal-EPN-PST-
	ótt-	ótt-ɐ-r-	be-EPN-PST-
	fíín-	fíín-ɐ-r-	work-EPN-PST-
	gíí-	gíí-ɐ-r-	chase-EPN-PST-
	hàt'-	hàt'-ɐ-r-	stab-EPN-PST-
	k'èt-	k'èt-ɐ-r-	chew-EPN-PST-
	k'àk'-	k'àk'-ɐ-r-	hungry-EPN-PST-
	wóɐ' -	wóɐ' -ɐ-r-	run-EPN-PST-
	k'àɐ' -	k'àɐ' -ɐ-r-	cook-EPN-PST-
	kààr-	kààr-ɐ-r-	fight-EPN-PST-
	t'ól-	t'ól-ɐ-r-	jump-EPN-PST-
	kúʔ-	kúʔ-ɐ-r-	shout-EPN-PST-
	wííí-	wííí-ɐ-r-	engage-EPN-PST-

The following are sentential examples:

- (6) a. bí mìí-ó k'àɐ' -ɐɐr-à
 she food-M cook-EPN-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She cooked food.'
- b. bí kàn-ó gíí-ɐɐr-é
 he dog-M chase-EPN-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He chased a dog.'

Thus, as shown by the above examples, (1-6), the schwa vowel /ɐ/ is inserted to resolve the constraint against a sequence of consonants. Though the insertion of the schwa vowel /ɐ/ is predominantly observed in verbal stems terminating in two consonants (geminate or consonant cluster) to which verbal suffixes with consonant-initial are added, sometimes it is also inserted in between verbal stems ending in one consonant and a suffix with a consonant-initial.

8.1.2 Insertion of /u/

When a verb that terminates in a glide /w/ is suffixed with a consonant morpheme or consonant-initial morpheme the vowel /u/ is inserted to break the impermissible sequence of the consonants. For instance, in (7) when the past tense marking morpheme **-r-** is attached /w/ final verbs the vowel /u/ is used to break the sequence of consonants at word-final position. Consider the following examples:

(7)	Verb root	gloss	Verb + past tense morpheme, -r-	Verb + present tense, -f or -fò
	kèèw-	speak	kèèw- u -r-	kèèw- u -f-
	gààw-	remember	gààw- u -r-	gààw- u -f-
	túw-	stand up	túw- u -r-	túw- u -f-
	kèw-	buy	kèw- u -r	kèw- u -f-

The following are sentential examples:

- (8) a. tà bí-n gàw-ù-r-è
 I he-ACC recognize-EPN-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I recognized him.’
- b. tà túw-ù-r-è
 I stand_up-EPN-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I stood up.’
- c. bó tà-n gààw-à gààw-ù-fò
 they I-ACC remember-3SGM:COP remember-EP-HAB
 ‘They remember me.’ Lit. ‘It is remembering, they remember me.’

Similarly, in copula constructions, insertion of the vowel /u/ is attested as an epenthetic vowel to break the impermissible sequence of consonants specifically when the verb-final sound is a glide /w/. Consider the following examples:

- (9) a. bí gènèw-ú-k-á
 he happy-EPN-NMLZ-COP:3SGM
 ‘He is happy.’

- b. nèè mààw-**ú**-k-á nì=àr
 you(SG) tired-EPN-NMLZ-COP 2SG=look/seem
 ‘You(SG) look/seem tired.’

Generally, as shown by the examples given above, (1-9), when the verb base ends in two contiguous consonants and if a vowel is not inserted, the result might be a consonant sequence that is not permissible in syllable structure of Borna. Thus, insertion of either /**ɪ**/ or /**u**/ is often required to break the impermissible sequence of consonants.

8.1.3 Glide insertion

In Borna, the glide sounds /**j**/ and /**w**/ are commonly inserted in morpheme boundaries to break up impermissible sequences of vowels occurring because of the suffixation of some vowel-initial morphemes to a verb stem that ends in vowels. The choice between the two glides depends on the quality (front/back) of the vowels with which the verb stem ends. Both types of insertion are described and exemplified in the following sub-sections.

8.1.3.1 Insertion of /**j**/

In many cases, when front vowels, /**i**/ or /**e**/, are followed by another front vowel in verb stem final position, the glide /**j**/ is inserted in between the two in order to break the impermissible sequence of vowels. Thus, the occurrence of the glide /**j**/ is determined by the phonetic nature of the preceding vowel. Particularly, the insertion of /**j**/ is commonly observed to break up a sequence of vowels that are formed as the result of verb derivational morphology. For instance, when the causative morpheme -**íí**- or the passive marking morpheme -**éé**- are added to a verb stem that terminates in one of the front vowels or when the two morphemes follow each other in morphologically complex verb derivation, the glide /**j**/ is inserted. Consider the following examples:

- (10) a. nèè tà-n tù-ó mèè-**j**-íí-r-í
 you(SG) I-ACC bread-M eat-EPN-CAUS-PST-2SG:DECL
 ‘You fed me bread.’
- b. bì íttá-n k’èè-**j**-íí-r-à

she you(PL)-ACC sleep-EPN-CAUS-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She made you(PL) sleep.’

As shown by examples (11a-b), the glide /j/ is inserted in between the final vowel of the verb roots and the causative marking morpheme -íí-. Similarly, with complex verb derivations, the glide /j/ is used to break up an impermissible sequence of vowels. Consider the following examples:

- (11) a. mò-ó bì-n bí-n àg-íí-j-ée-r-é
 house-M she-INST he-ACCbuild-CAUS-EPN-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He was made build a house by her.’
- b. mètèt-ó nèè-n nóó-n òók-ìì-j-ée-r-é
 sheep-M you(SG)-INSTwe-ACC slaughter-CAUS-EPN-PASS-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘We were made slaughter a sheep by you.’

As shown by examples (11a-b), the glide /j/ is inserted in between the causative morpheme -íí- and the passive marker -ée-.

The glide /j/ is also inserted in between the progressive marking morpheme -íír and the final vowel of the verb stem to avoid an impermissible sequence of vowels. Consider examples (12a-b) given below:

- (12) a. tà mà-à tì=mèt-ì-j-íír
 I eat-3SGM:COP 1SG=eat-EPN-PPROG
 ‘I am eating.’ Lit. ‘It is eating, I am eating.’
- b. bó wà-à bó=wèt-ì-j-íír
 they come-3SGM:COP 3PL=come-EPN-PPROG
 ‘They are coming.’ Lit. ‘It is coming, they are coming.’

In general, the insertion of the glide /j/ serves to break up a sequence of vowel sounds that would otherwise be problematic to utter or even impermissible according to the phonotactics patterns of the language.

8.1.3.2 Insertion of /w/

Akin to glide /j/ insertion, in Borna, the insertion of /w/ is also determined by the phonetic nature of the preceding vowel. In many cases, when back vowels, /u/ or /o/ is followed by another

vowel, the glide /w/ is inserted to break the inappropriate sequence of vowels. Consider the following examples:

- (13) a. ítt àm-rí wòò-w-
 you(PL) go-CNV come-EPN-2PL:JUSS
 ‘Let you(PL) go and come.’
- b. ítt mòò-w-
 you(PL) eat-EPN-2PL:JUSS
 ‘Let you(PL) eat.’
- c. nóó dúú-w-ó
 we sing-EPN-1PL:JUSS
 ‘Let us sing.’
- d. ítt t’ú-w-
 you(PL) push-EPN-2PL:JUSS
 ‘Let you(PL) push.’

As shown in the above examples, (13a-d), the glide /w/ is inserted to break the sequence of vowels at the morpheme boundary when the verb stem-final vowel is a back vowel and the suffixed morpheme begins with a vowel.

8.2 Deletion

In Borna, not only can sounds be inserted, sometimes they can also be deleted. A very common kind of deletion often observed is apocope, deletion of a consonant at the end of a verb. For example, some verbs show final consonant deletion because of the suffixation of the negation marking morpheme **-rá** **-/-rák-** and in imperative constructions. Consider the following illustrative examples:

- | (14) | Verb root | gloss | verb + negation morpheme |
|------|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| | àg- | ‘to build’ | à-rá -/-rák- |
| | ’èèg- | ‘to call’ | ’èè-rà -/-rák- |
| | ’àg- | ‘to shave’ | ’à-rá -/-rák- |
| | gúk’- | ‘to hung’ | gú-rá -/-rák- |
| | dóów- | ‘to bring’ | dóó-rá -/-rák- |

k'èèj-	'to sleep'	k'èè-rá -/-rák-
bèèj-	'to live/sit'	bèè-rá -/-rák-
gèèj-	'to want/need'	gèè-rá -/-rák-

Some sentential examples are given below:

- (15) a. mú ' -ó dà -à è bèè-rá -é
 fish-M earth-ADE live-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 'Fish cannot live on earth.'
- b. nòò àmbàr-ó gèè-rá -ò
 we money-M want-NEG-1PL:DECL
 'We did NOT want money.'

In some instances, the glide /j/ is inserted to break the impermissible sequence of vowels that would occur because of deleting the final consonant. This is often observed when sentences are negated with -á -/-ák-. Consider the following examples:

(16)	Verb	gloss	verb + negation morpheme
	'ààg-	to shave	'àà-j-á -/-ák-
	'èèg-	to call	'èè-j-á -/-ák-
	íí-	to hear	íí-j-á -/-ák-
	kéí-	to escape	ké-j-á -/-ák-
	kààí-	to play	kàà-j-á -/-ák-
	íí-	to dig	íí-j-á -/-ák-
	góí-	to produce	gó-j-á -/-ák-

The following are sentential examples:

- (17) a. nèè bí-n 'èè-j-á -í
 you(SG) he-ACC call-EPN-NEG-2SG:DECL
 'You(SG) did not call him.'
- b. nèè à-j-á -í
 you(SG) build-EPN-NEG-2SG:DECL
 'You(SG) will not build.'

As mentioned above, in some cases, the final consonant of some verbs is deleted in imperative constructions as well. Consider the following examples:

(18)	Verb	gloss	imperative form
	dúúb-	‘to sing’	dúú
	tóg-	‘to hit’	tó
	ɲ ààg-	‘to shave’	ɲ àà
	ɲ ààk-	‘to trade’	ɲ àà
	tòk-	‘to plant’	tò
	gúk’-	‘to hung’	gú
	kèɲ-	‘to escape’	kè
	ɲèɲ -	‘to hug’	ɲè

Some sentential examples of imperative constructions are given below, (19a-b):

(19)	a.	(néé)	tó
		you(SG)	hit_IMP
		‘(You(SG))	hit!’
	b.	(néé)	dú
		you(SG)	sing_IMP
		‘(You(SG))	sing!’

8.2.1 Elision of lexical tones in verbs

Morphotonological change in Borna is very rare, and the only morphotonemic processes observed is elision. In Borna, the verb-final lexical tone (the citation suffix **-à**) can be high or low. This verb-final lexical tone sometimes disappears when suffixes other than the citation suffix **-à** is attached to the verb. This process is observed when both derivational and inflectional suffixes are added to the verb stems. For example, the final lexical tone of a verb also drops when inflectional suffixes such as tense/aspect affixes are suffixed to the verb stem. Consider the following examples when the non-past aspect **-(ɪ)túw** is suffixed to the verb stem:

(20)	Verb	gloss		sentential e.g.	gloss
	tìgà	‘to filter’	→	tà tìg-ítúw-è	‘I will filter.’
	tògà	‘to beat’	→	tà tòg-ítúw-è	‘I will hit.’

úà ‘to drink’ → tà ú-ítúw-è ‘I will drink.’

Similarly, when the passive suffix, **-ée-**, with high tone is suffixed to the verb stem, the final tone of the verb root will be dropped and the high tone of the passive suffix takes its place. Consider the following examples:

(21)	Verb	gloss		passive form	gloss
	k'ùt'à	‘to cut’	→	k'ùt'-ée-r-é	‘it was cut’
	úà	‘to kill’	→	ú-ée-r-é	‘it was killed’
	òt'à	‘to hit’	→	òt'-ée-r-é	‘it was hit’
	kéwà	‘to buy’	→	kéw-ée-r-é	‘it was bought’
	ímà	‘to give’	→	ím-ée-r-é	‘it was given’

In the same way, the verb root final tone is deleted when the negation marking morpheme **-á-** is suffixed to the verb stem. Consider the following examples:

(22)	Verb	gloss		sentential e.g.	gloss
	ímà	‘to give’	→	tà ím-á-è	‘I did/will not give.’
	kéwà	‘to buy’	→	tà kèw-á-è	‘I did/will not buy.’
	k'ùt'à	‘to cut’	→	tà k'ùt'-á-è	‘I did/will not cut.’
	úà	‘to kill’	→	tà ú-á-è	‘I did/will not kill.’

8.3 Assimilation

Another commonly observed morphophonemic process in Borna is assimilation. Assimilation occurs when sounds come to be more like each other in terms of some aspect of their phonetic characteristics (Lieber 2009:159). Assimilation can be partial, or it can be total. In both cases, it is often made for ease of articulation (Fasold & Connor-Linton 2006:291).

8.3.1 Vowel assimilation

In Borna, vowel assimilation takes place when singular pronouns, **tà** ‘I’, **nèè** ‘you’, **bí** ‘he’ and **bì** ‘she’, come before a verb that starts with a back vowel; i.e., /u/ and /o/ as a proclitic. In such cases, the vowels of the singular pronouns, /a/, /e/ and /i/ undergo complete assimilation except length. Consider the following examples:

- (23) a. **tà** → **tù=** **tà** **àà** -à **tù=ú**-íír
 I water-3SGM:COP 1SG=drink-PPROG
 ‘I am drinking water.’ Lit. ‘It is water, I am drinking’
- b. **nèè** → **nù=** **nèè** **àà** -à **nù=ú**-íír
 you(SG) water3SGM:COP 2SG=drink-PPROG
 ‘You(SG) are drinking water.’ Lit. ‘It is water, you (SG) are drinking’
- c. **bí** → **bú=** **bí** **àà** -à **bú=ú**-íír
 he water-3SGM:COP 3SGM=drink-PPROG
 ‘He is drinking water.’ Lit. It is water, he is drinking.’
- d. **bì** → **bù=** **bì** **àà** -à **bù=ú**-íír
 she water-3SGM:COP 3SGF=drink-PPROG
 ‘She is drinking water.’ Lit. It is water, she is drinking.’

As shown in the above examples, the vowels of the singular pronouns, **tà** ‘I’, **nèè** ‘you (SG)’, **bí** ‘he’ and **bì** ‘she’, change from front vowel to the high back vowel, /**u**/, before a verb with back high vowel-initial.

In Borna, the high central vowel, **i**, of the third person singular masculine and feminine, first person singular and second person singular, **bí=**, **bì=**, **tì=** and **nì=** proclitic, changes to the front high vowel, **i**, before non-back vowels. Consider the following examples:

- (24) a. **bí=** → **bí=** **bí** **fingi**-ó **í** -à **bí=í** -íír
 she door-M close-3SGM:COPSGF=close-PROG
 ‘She is closing a door.’
- b. **tì=** → **tì=** **tà** **èèp**-à **tì=èèp**-íír
 I cry-3SGM:COP 1SG=cry-PROG
 ‘I am crying.’ Lit. ‘It is crying, I am crying.’
- c. **bí=** → **bí=** **bí** **èè**-à **bí=àz**-íír
 He lion-3SGM:COP 3SGM=hunt-PROG
 He is hunting for a lion.’ Lit. It is a lion, he is hunting.’

- d. nì= → nì= nèè àg-à nì=àg-íír
you(SG) build-3SGM:COP 2SG=build-PROG
'You are building.' Lit., 'It is building, he is building.'

8.3.2 Vowel raising

The front vowels /i/, /e/ and /a/ of the singular pronouns rise to the back vowel /u/ before /w/. Consider the following examples:

- (25) a. bí fàr-ó dèk'-tì-nì bú=wàà-fó
he horse-M take-CNV-FOC 3SGM=come-HAB
'He brings the horse.'
- b. bì guúr àm-tì-nì kóó' bù=wàà
she morning go-CNV-FOC evening 3SGF=come
'She goes in the morning and comes in the evening.'
- c. àwùrè nù=wàà
when you(SG)=come_PST
'When did you(SG) come?'
- d. tà wò' -à tù=wò' -íír
I run-3SGM:COP 1SG=run-PROG
'I am running.' 'Lit. It is running, I am running.'

As shown in the above examples, the front vowels /i/, /e/ and /a/ got raised to /u/ before /w/.

8.4 Internal change

The term *internal change* refers to a process of substituting one non-morphemic segment for another to show a grammatical contrast (O’Grady, de Guzman & Aronoff 1997:125). In Borna, internal change is very rare. As illustrated in the following examples, in verbs **màà** ‘to eat’ and **wàà** ‘to come’ the vowel /a/ changes to /e/ to form present progressive and non-past tense verb forms.

- | | | | | |
|------|------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (26) | Verb stem | Gloss | Present prog. tense | Gloss |
| | mà- | ‘to eat’ | nòò míí-à nò= mèè -j-íír | ‘We are eating food.’ |
| | | | we food-3SGM:COP 1PL=eat-EPN-PPROG | |

(27)	Verb stem	Gloss	Future tense	Gloss
	mà-	‘to eat’	bó míí-ó mèè -túw-nó they food-ACC eat-NPST-3PL	‘They will eat food.’
	wà-	‘to come’	bó wèè -túw-nó they come-NPST-3PL	‘They will come.’

As illustrated in the examples, (26 & 27), there is an internal change of the vowels of in the verb roots used in the sentences. In fact, it is difficult to conclude that the grammatical contrast made is simply due to vowel alternation. Because, the verbs attach the different tense marking morphemes; i.e. the present progressive **-íír** and the non-past tense marker **-túw-**. On the other hand, adding these inflectional morphemes without changing the vowels of the verb roots results in an unacceptable utterance.

Another instance where internal change is attested is when the verb **dòòwà** ‘to bring’ is used in affirmative imperative/jussive constructions. In this specific instance, the non-morphemic segment /o/ changes to /e/. Consider the following examples:

- (28) a. (tà) **dèèw-à**
I bring-1SG:JUSS
‘Let me bring.’
- b. (nòò) **dèèw-ò**
we bring-1PL:JUSS
‘Let us bring.’
- c. (nèè) **dèèw**
(you(SG)) bring
Bring!

As shown above, in its citation form the verb is pronounced as **dòòwà**; nonetheless, when the verb is used in imperative/jussive construction the non-morphemic segment, /o/, changes to /e/ and the verb is pronounced as **dèèw**. Since this is the only word identified in this study that involves an internal change to make grammatical alternation, it will not be sound claim to consider it as umlaut, the fronting of a vowel under the influence of a front vowel.

8.5 Consonant alternation

In Borna, consonants rarely occur at word-final position. In citation form, all verbs end in a vowel, /-à/. Nonetheless, verb stems can end either in consonant or vowel. In some grammatical contexts where the morphology necessitates it, like in imperative constructions and in past tense content interrogative sentences, some verb stems terminate in consonants. In such cases, some verbs exhibit stem-final consonant alternations, a morphophonemic process where a verb stem-final consonant sound (non-geminate) alternate. Such alternation is also observed in negative constructions where the verb stem-final consonant alternates before the suffixation of the negative marking morphemes -á /-ák-.

Consonant alternation is not the property of all consonants in Borna. Some consonants do not occur at word-final position. For instance, the affricate /tʃ/ is not found in word-final position; thus, alternation is not expected. Other consonants do occur at word-final position, but do not participate in alternations. For instance, alternation of the following consonants is not identified, /m, n, ʔ, ɲ, ɲ', f, h, r, l, w, j/. The alternation of consonants is commonly made for simplifications (weakening) or like Fleming (1976b:375) states it is made for 'softening or lenition'.

To begin with, in Borna, alternations happen due to consonant weakening process; i.e. replacing stronger segments with relatively less strong segments. According to Murray (1997:299), the scale of consonantal strength ranges from the stronger voiceless stops to the weaker glides. In between these two extremes, there are voiceless fricatives & voiced stops, voiced fricatives, and nasals, liquids in decreasing order of strength.

As already indicated and illustrated in the following examples, in Borna, verb-final consonant alternations happen by replacing strong sounds by less strong sounds; i.e. weakening. Consider the following examples in negative and imperative constructions:

(29) /p/ → /f/

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
èèp-	'to cry'	→	èèf-á /-ák-	èèf
típ-	'to tie'	→	tíf-á /-ák-	tíf
k'àp-	'to kick'	→	k'àf-á /-ák-	k'àf

In the above examples the strong sound /p/, since it is a voiceless stop, is replaced by the fricative sound /f/, which is less strong, fricative. Thus, such alternation can be termed as *fricativization*.

Verb stem-final alternations also occur with some verbs ending in voiced bilabial plosive, /b/. In some verbs, /b/ alternates with the voiced labial-velar approximant/w/. Consider the following examples:

(31)

/b/		→	/w/	
Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
dúúb-	‘to sing’	→	dúúw-á -	dúúw
k’èb-	‘to listen’	→	k’èw-á -	k’èw

The alternation of the relatively strong sound /b/ with the weak sound /w/ can be termed as *gliding*. It should be noted that, contrary to Bergfjord’s (2013:58) claim that the consonant /b/ alternate in all native words, in the present study, it is found out that the alternation of /b/ does not affect all verbs stems with /b/ final. For instance, in the following words, it remains not-alternated:

(32)

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
□ óób-	‘to kiss’	→	□ óób-□rá -	□ óóbà
□ àb-	‘to slap’	→	□ àb-□rá -	□ àbà

In Borna, contrary to Bergfjord (2013:28) claim that “the /t/ does not alternate with any other sound when being the final root consonant in verbs”, in the present study, it has been identified that the phoneme /t/ alternates with /r/ in negative and imperative constructions as shown in the following examples:

(33)

/t/		→	/r/	
Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
kót-	‘keep/wait’	→	kór-á -/-ák-	kór
kòt-	‘lie’	→	kòr-á -/-ák-	kòr

Akin to sound /t/, the sound /d/ also alternates with /r/ in verb-final position in negative and imperative constructions. Such alternation is called *flapping*. Consider the following examples:

(34) /d/ → /r/

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
bód-	‘reach’	→	bór-á -/-ák-	bór
gèd-	‘put’	→	gèr-á -/-ák-	gèr
ú-d-	‘spit’	→	úr-á -/-ák-	úr
bùd-	‘to fly’	→	bùr-á -/-ák-	bùr

Contrary to Bergfjord’s (2013:30) claim that “/k/ does not alternate when it is the root-final consonant of a verb”, it is identified in the present study that /k/ alternates with the glottal fricative sound /h/ in negative constructions. Such alternation is called *fricativization*. In fact, in singular imperative constructions, it alternates with zero, it is deleted. Consider the following examples:

(35) /k/ → /h/

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
gààk-	‘to destroy’	→	gààh-á -/-ák-	gàà
fòòk-	‘to sweep’	→	fòòh-á -/-ák-	fòò
úk-	‘to slaughter’	→	úh-á -/-ák-	ù
dúk-	‘to bury’	→	dúh-á -/-ák-	dú

As can be seen in the examples given above, (35), in imperative construction the sound /k/ alternate with zero or deleted. In some verbs, the /k/ does not alternate with any other sound. For instance, in **wààkà** ‘to swim’ and **gónkà** ‘to meet’ it remains the same.

In Borna, there are three plosive ejectives, **p’**, **t’** & **k’**. Akin to the other plosive sounds described above, the ejectives also alternate when they occur in verb-stem final positions. For instance, as

shown in the following examples, the bilabial ejective sound /p'/ alternates with the voiced labial-velar approximant /w/ in some verbs.

(36)

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
ᵐàp'-	'to throw'	→	ᵐàw-á -/-ák-	ᵐàw
tèp'-	'to support'	→	tèw-á -/-ák-	tèw
k'óp'-	'to write'	→	k'ów-á -/-ák-	k'ów

However, in some verbs, it does not alternate. For instance, in **úmp'à** 'to cheat', **t'úp'à** 'to explode' and **gíp'à** 'to hit' it remains unaltered.

Similarly, the alveolar ejective sound /t'/ alternates with the post-alveolar implosive sound /ɖ/ in some verb-final positions. Consider the following examples:

(37)

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
nèèt'-	'to kick'		nèèɖ -á -/-ák-	nèèɖ
ᵐít'-	'to hate'		ᵐíɖ -á -/-ák-	ᵐíɖ
gààt'-	'to tear'		gààɖ -á -/-ák-	gààɖ
ɖ ót'-	'to hit'		ɖ óɖ -á -/-ák-	ɖ óɖ

Nonetheless, in verbs like **hàt'à** 'to stab', **k'ùt'à** 'to cut' and **ɖ 'ùngùt'à** 'to pinch' it does not alternate.

The other ejective sound that alternates at a verb stem-final position is /k'/. In verb stem-final positions, the /k'/ alternates with the glottal stop /ʔ/. This alternation is not widely attested. Consider the following example:

(38)

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
dèk'-	'to accept'		dèʔ-á -/-ák-	dèʔ

In the same manner, in Borna, fricatives and affricates also undergo a verb stem-final consonant alternation. For instance, as shown by the following examples, (39), the alveolar affricate sound /tʃ/ alternates with the voiceless post-alveolar fricative sound /ç/. The following examples show where it alternates:

(39) /tʃ/ → /tʃ/

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
dé -	‘to catch/posses’	→	dé-á -/-ák-	dé
tíí -	‘to break’	→	tíí-á -/-ák-	tíí

However, in some verbs, for instance, in **gèè** à ‘to pull’, **èè** à ‘to hug’ and **mù** à ‘to burn’ it does not alternate.

As shown in the above examples, (39), the affricate sounds lost the stop portion of their phonological property and changed to fricative in imperative sentences and when the negative marking morpheme **-á -/-ák-** is suffixed to the verbs. Fleming (1976b:375) calls such morphophonemic process ‘softening or lenition’. It is a morphophonemic process where verb roots of certain classes (non-geminate) change their second consonant, usually from stop to continuant in some morphological environments.

In a similar manner, in some instances, the alveolar ejective affricate sound /tʃ/ alternate with the post-alveolar ejective affricate sound /tʃ/. This often happens when used in negative and imperative constructions. Consider the following examples:

(40) /tʃ/ → /tʃ/

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
mù -	‘to suck’	→	mù -á -/-ák-	mù
í -	‘to close’	→	í -á -/-ák-	í
ààà -	‘to sting’	→	ààà -á -/-ák-	ààà
wò -	‘to run/flow’	→	wò -á -/-ák-	wò

The post-alveolar fricative sound /tʃ/ alternates with /j/ in some verbs. Consider the following examples:

(41) /tʃ/ → /j/

Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
-----------------	-------	--	------------	------------

ú-	‘to drink’	→	új-ák-/-ák-	új
éé-	‘to urinate’	→	ééj-á -/-ák-	ééj
ké-	‘to scape’	→	kéj-á -/-ák-	kéj
í-	‘to dig’	→	íj-á -/-ák-	íj

Similarly, the alveolar fricative /z/ alternates with /j/ in some verbs and does not alternate in some verbs used in negative and imperative constructions. The following examples show where it alternates:

(42)

	/z/	→	/j/	
Indicative stem	gloss		Verb + NEG	Imperative
k'àz-	‘to leave’	→	k'àj-á -	k'àj
bàz-	‘to refuse’	→	bàj-á -	bàj

In some verbs, for instance, in verbs like **k'éézà** ‘to make sleep’, **wòzà** ‘to braid’ and **àzà** ‘to create’ it does not alternate.

8.6 Chapter summary

In the present chapter, some of the major morphophonemic processes observed in the verb morphology of Borna are analyzed. It was found out that the main morphophonemic processes that operate in Borna verb morphology are an insertion, deletion, assimilation, internal change and consonant alternation.

Borna employs insertion of both vowels and consonants to correct impermissible sequence of consonants and vowel structures that are encountered in morpheme boundaries. The schwa, /ə/, and the high back vowel /u/ are often used to correct impermissible sequence of consonants. The glide /j/ and /w/, on the other hand, are used to break a sequence of consonants. Contrary to insertion, certain sounds are deleted at morpheme boundary. A very common kind of deletion observed is apocope, deletion of a consonant at verb-final position. This is often observed in imperative constructions and negative formation with **-rá** -/**-rák**-.

Assimilation is also the other morphophonemic process commonly observed in Borna. The commonest type of vowel assimilation relates to the pronominal proclitics. The vowels of 1SG,

2SG, and 3SG proclitics assimilate to back vowels /**u**/ and /**o**/ when they get attached to a verb that starts with these back vowels. In very rare case internal change is also observed in Borna.

It was identified that some consonants that occur at word-final position often alternate in imperative constructions. The consonant phonemes that often alternate include, /**p**, **b**, **p'**, **t**, **t'**, **d**, **ʔ**, **ʔ'**, **z**, **ʃ**, **k**, **k'** and **g**/. The alternation of these consonants is commonly made for simplifications.

Chapter nine

Copulas and copula clauses

This chapter discusses copulas in Borna. It attempts to account for the type, function and morphosyntactic properties of copulas in Borna. The chapter also presents a brief description of the syntactic category of the copula predicates and their semantic functions. An attempt is also made, in this chapter to show the structural similarity between copula clauses and existential clauses. In copula constructions, the main function of the copula is to ‘fasten or link’ the rest of the predicate to the subject (Givón 2001:119 & Dixon 2010:159). In Borna, there is no independent copula verb. The link between a copula subject and that of a copula predicate is marked by copula marking bound morphemes.

9.1 The copulas and their predicate types

In Borna, copula clauses generally have two components, the copula subject, and the copula predicate. In their linear order, the copula subject precedes the copula predicate. As the following examples show (1a-h), the copula predicate of a copula clause can be, an adjective (1a), a noun (1b & 1d), a post-position (1c), a demonstrative (1e), a pronoun (1f) or a proper noun (1g & 1h). Combination of verbs with copulas in predicate position is not attested, or verbs do not copularize. In copula structure, the link between the subject and the predicate is expressed by using copula marking bound morphemes directly suffixed to the non-verbal predicate or second occurring pronoun. Thus, in Borna, copulas add no semantic content to the predicate they are attached to; they simply function as a linker between the subject and the predicate. The following copula constructions illustrate the types of copula and their predicates, the order of the copula subject in relation to the copula predicates and how the link between the two is expressed in Borna.

- (1) a. b̀ì èèn-ì
 She tall/big-3SGF:COP
 ‘She is tall/big.’

- ‘I am a farmer.’
- b. nòò gòò-k nòò-**nà**
 we plow-NMLZ 1PL-COP:DECL
 ‘We are farmers.’
- c. nèè gòò-k nèè-**nà**
 you(SG) plow-NMLZ 2SG-COP:DECL
 You(SG) are a farmer.’
- d. ítt gòò-k íttí-**nà**
 you(PL) plow-NMLZ 2PL-COP:DECL
 ‘You(PL) are farmers.’

As shown in (2a-d), the copula marker **-nà** always occurs when the copula subject is a first and second person (both singular and plural). In all its occurrences, the copula marker is suffixed to the second occurring personal pronoun found to the right of the predicate. This copula marker remains the same regardless of the word category of the copula predicate. It appears with nouns, adjectives and post-positional phrase. Consider examples (3a-b):

- (3) a. tà dòw tà-**nà**
 I kind 1SG-COP:DECL
 ‘I am kind.’
- b. tà màà mán-í tà-**nà**
 I house the-INE 1SG-COP:DECL
 ‘I am in the house.’

In addition, in verbal clauses, the copula **-nà** is also attached to nouns as in (4a-c) to add emphasis.

- (4) a. mán k’ír-íffò-nìjè gír kíí-ó-**nà**
 that K’ira-PRS-FOC left hand-M-COP
 ‘The [Mish] K’ira is done with the left hand.’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#),

T=S49 TranC, B=199865, E=202120)

- b. k’àn-ó-n kíí k’ír-í a míí-ó-n gír
 right-M-INST hand K’ira-REL person food-M-INST left
 kíí-ó-**nà** k’ír-íffò

hand-M-COP K'ira-PRS

‘ [Not] by the right hand; it is with left hand that K'ira is done for the person (deceased).’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#), T=S50 TranC, B=202120, E=207480)

- c. gìn nò=bór bàhàlw-ó-**nà** hán-í gòòd-à
but 1PL=Boro culture-M-COP this-NOM Goda-3SGM:COP
ètt-à ètt-íffò-nìjè
say-3SGM:COP say-PRS-FOC

‘but, in Boro culture, this is called Goda’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S7 TranC, B=21030, E=25970)

In the examples given above, (4a-c), the copula **-nà** is attached to common nouns. Nonetheless, in these contexts, as described in Chapter seven, this copula functions as a focus marker, to add emphases to the focused constituent.

On the other hand, when the subject of the copula clause is a third person singular feminine, the morpheme **-ì** always marks the copula relation between the subject and the predicate. Examples:

- (5) a. bì bór-**ì**
she Boro-3SGF:COP
‘She is a Boro.’
b. bì gèènz-**ì**
she tall-3SGF:COP
‘She is tall.’
c. bì gòò-k-**ì**
she plow-NMLZ-3SGF:COP
‘She is a farmer.’
d. bì hàn-òk-**ì**
she here-ALLA-3SGF:COP
‘She is here.’

As shown above, (5a-d), the copula marker **-ì** is used when the copula subject is a **3SGF**. The copula marker is consistently added to all the copula predicates regardless of their type, N(P), Adj(P), and PP.

When the subject of the copula clause is a third person singular masculine, the link between the copula subject and the copula predicate is marked by **-à**. Consider examples (6a-d):

- (6) a. bí gènèw-k-à
 he happy-NMLZ-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is happy.’
- b. bí gèènz-à
 he tall-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is tall.’
- c. hán-í nò=born-ó-n ètt-ɲfò-nì nò=born-ó-n gòòd-à
 this-NOM 1PL=Borna-M-INST say-PRS-FOC 1PL=Borna-M-INST Gooda-
 3SGM:COP ‘In our language, Borna, this is called Gooda.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#),
 T=S1 TranC, B=100,E=3500)
- d. bí hán-òk-à
 he here-ALLA-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is here.’

As shown by examples (6a-d), third person singular masculine copula subjects can be linked to their copula predicate using the morpheme **-à**. In copula construction with third person plural, the link between the copula subject and predicate is represented by the morpheme **-nó**. Examples:

- (7) a. bó bòr-nó
 they Boro-3PL:COP
 ‘They are Boros.’
- b. bó gò-ki-nó
 they plow-NMLZ-3PL:COP
 ‘They are farmers.’
- c. bó èèní-nó
 they big-3PL:COP
 ‘They are big.’
- d. bó hàn-òk-nó

they here-ALLA-3PL:COP
 ‘They are here.’

As noted above, with a third person plural subject the copula **-nó** marks the link between the subject and predicate. This morpheme is regularly used without formal change with nominal (7a-b) and adjective (7c) predicates. As described under §4.1.1.1, **-nó** is also used as a subject agreement marker of third person plural.

Note that as has been described in Chapter six, the copula markers **-à**, **-ì** and **-nó** are also used to mark 3SGM, 3SGF, and 3PL person respectively in negative verbal constructions when the verb form is in the present habitual tense. The following examples are presented here as a reminder:

- (8) a. àndúr-ó àà -ó új-ák-à
 cat-M water-M drink-NEG-3SGM:COP
 ‘Cat does NOT drink water.’
- b. kàn-ó-wò -í mò -ó màà-rák-**nó**
 dog-EP-PL-NOM grass-M eat-NEG-3PL:COP
 ‘Dogs do NOT eat grass.’
- c. bì mèè -ó màà-rák-ì
 she meat-M eat-NEG-3SGF:COP
 ‘She does NOT eat meat.’

9.2 Tense in copula constructions

In Borna, a copula construction can be in present, past or in a future tense. When the copula clause is in the present tense, the link between the two nominals is marked by the different copula markers which are directly suffixed to the copula predicate. On the other hand, in the past tense copula clauses, in addition to the different copula markers, an auxiliary verb **tèà** ‘to exist_past, to wait or to be let’ is introduced to give the copula clause a past tense meaning. In future tense copula construction, there is no copula that shows the link between the copula subject and predicate. Instead, the verb **(w)óttà** ‘be/become’ is used to render the clause a future tense meaning. The following sub-sections describe the nature of copula constructions in Borna in different tenses.

9.2.1 Present tense copula constructions

In Borna, when the copula clause is in the present tense, it consists of only two core arguments: the copula subject and the copula predicate, in a linear order. There is no tense marking morpheme attached to the predicate like the verbal clauses. As shown in the following examples, (9a-g), the subject and the predicate are simply connected by the copula marking morphemes.

- (9)
- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|-------------------|---------|
| a. | bí | lèèng-à | |
| | he | handsome-3SGM:COP | |
| | ‘He is handsome.’ | | |
| b. | bì | bór-ì | |
| | she | Boro-3SGF:COP | |
| | ‘She is Boro.’ | | |
| c. | bó | k’úp’-nó | |
| | they | strong-3PL:COP | |
| | ‘They are strong.’ | | |
| d. | tà | gèènzí | tà-nà |
| | I | tall | 1SG-COP |
| | ‘I am tall.’ | | |
| e. | nèè | òd-ì | nèè-nà |
| | you(SG) | disease-NMLZ | 2SG-COP |
| | ‘You(SG) are sick.’ | | |
| f. | ítt | dòòg | íttí-nà |
| | you(PL) | fool | 2PL-COP |
| | ‘They are fools.’ | | |
| g. | nòò | bòr | nòò-nà |
| | we | Boro | 1PL-COP |
| | ‘We are Boros.’ | | |

The examples given above represent copula clauses with a present tense reading. Each of the clauses consists of a subject noun followed by a copula predicate. The link between the two is marked by the different copula morphemes suffixed to the predicates. As can be seen from the examples, the copulas are not inflected for tense.

9.2.2 Past tense copula constructions

In Borna, copula clauses with copula predicate referring to the past time are expressed using slightly different syntactic constructions from the present tense copula constructions. In past tense constructions, in addition to the copula subject and copula predicate, the language makes use of the past existential verb **tèlà** ‘to wait, to be let’ to bear the tense. In this context, the past existential verb has the meaning ‘to exist_{past}’. Consider the following copula constructions:

- (10) a. **nòò** **gòò-í** **nòò-nà** **bí=tè**
 we plow-NMLZ we-COP 3SG=exist_PST
 ‘We were farmers.’
- b. **nèè** **gènèw-ú** **nèè-nà** **bí=tè**
 you(SG) happy-NMLZ you(SG)-COP:2SG 3SG=exist_PST
 ‘You(SG) were happy.’
- c. **tà** **èèn** **tà-nà** **bí=tè**
 I fine I-COP 3SG=exist_PST
 ‘I was fine.’
- d. **bí** **nàà-à** **bí=tè**
 he leader-COP 3SGM=exist_PST
 ‘He was the leader.’
- e. **bì** **gòò-ì** **bí=tè**
 she plow-NMLZ-COP 3SGF=exist_PST
 ‘She was a farmer.’
- f. **bó** **òd-ó** **-nó** **bí=tè**
 they disease-NMLZ-COP 3SGM=exist_PST
 ‘They were sick.’
- g. **ítt** **gàl-ó** **íttí-nà** **bí=tè**
 you(PL) wealth-NMLZ 2PL-COP 3SGM=exist_PST
 ‘You(PL) were rich.’

As shown in the examples (10a-g), in past tense copula constructions, the auxiliary verb **tèlà** immediately follows the copula nominal. The introduction of the past tense auxiliary verb **tèlà** to the copula constructions makes the clauses to have past tense meaning. Without the addition of

this auxiliary verb, the meanings of the clauses change from past tense to present tense. Note that, the third person singular masculine agreement marking proclitic **bí=** is consistently prefixed to verb **tèl̀à** regardless of the person and number of the copula subject.

9.2.3 Future tense copula construction

In Borna, future tense copula clauses totally follow a different structure. Unlike the present and past tense copula clauses, in future tense copula constructions, there is no copula marking morpheme suffixed to the copula predicate to show the link with the copula subject. In other words, the copula is dropped. In future tense copula constructions, a verb **(w)óttà** ‘to be/become’ is introduced to carry the different necessary grammatical information. The following examples illustrate copula construction in the future tense.

- (11) a. ítt gó-í óttí-túw-ít
 you(PL) plow-NMLZ be-NPST-2PL:DECL
 ‘You(PL) will be farmers.’
- b. nòò kúp’ óttí-túw-ò
 we strong be-NPST-1PL:DECL
 ‘We will be strong.’
- c. tà níh óttí-túw-è
 I father be-NPST-1SG:DECL
 ‘I will be a father.’
- d. bì índ óttí-túw-à
 she mother be-NPST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She will be a mother.’
- e. bí gál-ííí óttí-túw-é
 he wealth-NMLZ be-NPST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He will be rich.’
- f. bó màà mán-íí óttí-túw-nó
 they house that-INE be-NPST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They will be in the house.’
- g. nèè búlèn-íí óttí-túw-í

you(SG) Bulen-INE be-NPST-2SG:DECL
 ‘You(SG) will be in Bulen.’

In future tense copula constructions, the verb (**w**)**óttà** follows the predicate. Thus, it is possible to assume that **óttà** functions as a future tense copula. As can be seen in the examples, verb **óttà** has the morphosyntactic properties that characterize verbal clauses in Borna. In other words, it is inflected for tense/aspect and person/mood. In Anfillo, a Gonga language, a morpheme **wott-** is used to mark copula clause in the future tense (Debela 2007:122).

9.3 Negative copula construction

In Borna, negative copula constructions are formed by using the inherently negative existential verb **ál-** ‘exist_not/be_not’. The following examples are negative copula clauses of different tenses:

- (12) a. nèè gò- nèè-**nà** ál-í
 you(SG) plow-NMLZ you(SG)-COP be_NOT-3SGM:COP
 ‘You(SG) are not farmers.’
- b. bì gònd-ì ál-ì
 she ugly-3SGF:COP be_NOT-3SGF:COP
 ‘She is not ugly.’
- c. bí wódm-à ál-í bí=tè
 he clever-3SGM:COP be_NOT-3SGM:COP 3SGM=exist_PST
 ‘He was not clever.’
- d. bí gènèw-ú ótt-á -é
 he happy-NMLZ be-EP-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He will not be happy.’

The examples given above are negative copula clauses. Negation in present tense and past tense copula constructions is marked by the negative auxiliary verb **ál-** ‘be_not’, (12a-c). In past tense negative copula clause (12c), the past tense auxiliary verb **tè** ‘exist_past’ is introduced to the clause to give the construction a past tense reading, which occurs to the right of the negative auxiliary verb **ál-** in a linear order. Future tense negative copula (12d) is expressed by using an independent verb **óttà** ‘to be/become’. Thus, unlike the negative copula constructions of the past

and present tense, the future tense negative copula is morphologically marked. The verb to be **óttà** is inflected for negation, **-rá** **-/á** -, and mood/subject agreement markers respectively.

9.4 Interrogative copula construction

Interrogative copula constructions use different copula markers from the declarative copula constructions. Except with third person singular masculine and third person plural, which use **-é** and **-nó** respectively, with the rest of the persons, the morpheme **-nè** is the interrogative copula marker. The following examples (13a-g), show affirmative interrogative copula constructions in the present tense:

- (13) a. **nèè** **gó-í** **nèè-nè**
 you(SG) plow-NMLZ you(SG)-COP:Q
 ‘Are you(SG) a farmer?’
- b. **bì** **óód-í -nè**
 she disease-NMLZ-COP:Q
 ‘Is she sick?’
- c. **tà** **géénz** **tà-nè**
 I tall I-COP:Q
 ‘Am I tall?’
- d. **bí** **k’úp’-é**
 he strong-3SGM:COP:Q
 ‘Is he strong?’
- e. **nòò** **gò-í í** **nòò-nè**
 we plow-NMLZ we-COP:Q
 ‘Are we farmers?’
- f. **ítt** **gó-í í** **íttí-nè**
 you(PL) plow-NMLZ you(PL)-COP:Q
 ‘Are you(PL) farmers?’
- g. **bó** **gó-í í-nó**
 they plow-NMLZ-3PL:COP:Q
 ‘Are they farmers?’

As shown in the above examples, (13a-g), the morpheme **-nè** is used as an interrogative copula marker with **1SG**, **1PL**, **2SG**, **2PL**, and **3SGF**. The interrogative copula marker **-nè** is suffixed to the second occurring personal pronoun. With **3SGM**, the morpheme **-é** is the interrogative copula marker. Similarly, the morpheme **-nó** is the interrogative copula marker with **3PL**.

Note that in interrogative copula construction, the **3SGF** copula marker is the same in form with the **1SG**, **1PL**, **2SG**, and **2PL** copula. As indicated under §9.1.2, in declarative copula constructions, the **3SGF** copula marker is different in form from the rest. Recall also that as described in Chapter five §5:1, the interrogative copula markers **-é**, **-nè** and **-nó**²³ are also used as **3SGM**, **3SGF**, and **3PL** person agreement markers in negative interrogative verbal constructions; specifically, when the verb is in present verb form.

On the other hand, the negative interrogative copula constructions follow relatively a complex structure from the affirmative interrogative copula constructions described in the preceding paragraphs. In addition to the copula subject and predicate, the clause also involves the negative existential verb **ál-** ‘exist_not’ which appears to the right of the predicate. In all instances, the copula complements are suffixed with the declarative copula markers: **-nà**, **-à**, **-ì** or **-nó**. Furthermore, the negative existential verb **ál-** is suffixed consistently with the interrogative copula **-nè**. Examples:

- (14)
- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| a. | tà | gó- í | nà- nà | ál- nè |
| | I | plow-NMLZ | I-COP | be_not-COP:Q |
| | ‘Am I NOT a farmer?’ | | | |
| b. | nòò | gó- í | nòò- nà | ál- nè |
| | we | plow-NMLZ | we-COP | be_not-COP:Q |
| | ‘Are we NOT farmers?’ | | | |
| c. | bí | gó- í - à | ál- nè | |
| | he | plow-NMLZ-COP | be_not-COP:Q | |
| | ‘Is he NOT a farmer?’ | | | |
| d. | bì | gó- í - ì | ál- nè | |
| | she | plow-NMLZ-COP | be_not-COP:Q | |

²³ The interrogative copula markers **-é**, **-nè** and **-nó** can also be realized as **-éjà**, **-nèjà** and **-nówà** respectively to add emphasis. For instance, **bí k’úp’-èjà** ‘Is he strong?’; **bì k’úp’-nèjà** ‘Is she strong?’ and **bó k’úp’-nówà** ‘Are they strong?’

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| | ‘Is she NOT a farmer?’ | | |
| e. | ítt | góí-ííí | íttí- nà ál- nè |
| | you(PL) | plow-NMLZ | you(PL)-COP be_not-COP:Q |
| | ‘Are you(PL) NOT farmers?’ | | |
| f. | nèè | góí-ííí | nèè- nà ál- nè |
| | you(SG) | plow-NMLZ | you(SG)-COP be_not-COP:Q |
| | ‘Are you(SG) NOT a farmer?’ | | |
| g. | bó | góí-ííí - nó | ál- nè |
| | they | plow-NMLZ-3PL:COP | be_not-COP:Q |
| | ‘Are they NOT farmers?’ | | |

In past interrogative copula constructions, the auxiliary verb **tə̀l̀a** ‘exist_past’ is used to show past time. The auxiliary verb appears immediately following the copula predicate. On the other hand, negative past tense interrogative copula clauses follow different copula forms from the negative present tense copula clause formation. For examples:

- | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-------|
| (15) | a. | bí | wódm-à | ál-nè | bí=tè | |
| | | he | clever-COP | be_not-COP:Q | 3SGM=exist_PST | |
| | | ‘Was he not clever?’ | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | b. | bó | búlèn-í -nó | ál-nè | bí=tè | |
| | | they | Bulen-ILLA-COP | be-not-COP:Q | 3SGM=exist_PST | |
| | | ‘Where they not in Bulen?’ | | | | |
| | c. | bì | bí-mà -ì | ál-nè | bí=tè | |
| | | she | 3SGM-wife-COP | be_not-COP:Q | 3SGM=exist_PST | |
| | | ‘Was she not his wife?’ | | | | |
| | d. | nòò | gènèw-ú | nòò-nà | ál-nè | bí=tè |
| | | we | happy-NMLZ we-COP | be_not-COP:Q | 3SGM=exist_PST | |
| | | ‘Were we not happy?’ | | | | |

The structure of past tense negative interrogative copula clauses involves the coordination of two types of copula markers. These are the affirmative declarative copula markers which are suffixed to the non-verbal complements, and the interrogative copula marker which is suffixed to the

negative existential verb **ál-**. The past existential auxiliary verb, **tè̀à**, appears at the right most of the clauses to offer a past tense meaning to the clauses.

9.5 Copula predicates and their semantic functions

In Borna, as indicated under §9.1, a copula clause involves of two parts: the copula subject and the non-verbal copula predicate. The copula predicate of a copula clause can be an Adj(P), N(P) or postpositional phrase. Since copula is marked by a bound morpheme, in Borna, the semantic load of the predication is mainly carried by the word used as non-verbal predicates. Thus, there exists a correlation between the syntactic category of the words serving as a copula predicate and its semantic function. Kroeger (2005:174) and Payne (1997:114) identified three types of copula clauses with non-verbal predicates: *attributive*, *equative* and *locative*. In Borna, all the three clause types are formed by using the different copula markers explained in the foregoing sections.

A copula clause in which the predicate is an adjective, generally describes a quality or attribute of the copula subject. These types of copula clauses are generally known as *attributive clauses* (Kroeger 2005:175). Examples:

- (16) a. bí dòw-à
 he kind-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is kind.’
 b. bì èèn-ì
 she tall-3SGF:COP
 ‘She is tall.’

Copula clauses like (16a-b), in which the part of speech of the words serving in the complement is an adjective, generally provides a description of a quality or attribute of the subject which is said to be true. On the other hand, a copula clause as in (17a-b), in which the predicate is a noun phrase, is termed as *equative clause* (Payne 1997:114).

- (17) a. bògàr-í nò=nàà-à
 Bogaro-NOM 1PL=leader-3SGM:COP
 ‘Bogaro is our leader.’

- b. èdàr-ì bí=mà -ì
 Edar-NOM 3SGM=wife-3SGF:COP
 ‘Edare is his wife.’
- c. bì bààr-ì
 she girl-3SGF:COP
 ‘She is a girl.’

As illustrated in (16) & (17), in Borna, copula clauses with adjectival predicates and nominal predicates are similar, both employing the same type of copula markers.

Based on the definiteness of the predicate noun phrase, equative clause types can be further grouped into two semantic subtypes: definite and indefinite (Payne 1997:114; Kroeger 2005:175). If the predicate noun phrase is definite like (17a-b), the equative copula clause states that the copula subject and the copula complement refer to the same individual. On the other hand, if the predicate noun phrase is indefinite like (17c), the equative clause states that the copula subject is a member of the class specified by the copula predicate.

The third common type of copula clause with a nonverbal predicate is that of a locative expression, as in (18). A copula clause in which the semantic predicate is expressed by the prepositional phrase is called *locative clause* (Kroeger 2005:175). Examples:

- (18) a. t’èè mán-í bí=màngìr-ò -à
 gun that-NOM 3SGM=shoulder-ILLA-3SGM:COP
 ‘The gun is on his shoulder.’
- b. bí màà mán-í -à
 he house the-INE-3SGM:COP
 ‘He is in the house.’

As shown by (18a-b) and as the name suggests, locative copula clauses are used to identify the location of the copula subject. As already indicated, in Borna, the same type of copula marker used with adjectival and/or nominal predicates is employed with copula clauses with a locative predicate. The copula markers occur following the locative marking morpheme.

9.6 Existential clauses

This subsection briefly describes existential clauses of Borna. Existential clauses are used to assert either the existence or the nonexistence of some entity (Kroeger 2005:190). In Borna, existential clauses have a similar morphosyntactic property with the copula clauses. Nonetheless, unlike copula clauses with non-verbal predicates, in existential clauses, overt verb is required. In affirmative existential clauses, the subject agreement marking morphemes are simply suffixed to the verb. On the other hand, in negative existential clauses, the copula markers are suffixed to the negative existential verb **ál-**.

In this study, three existential verbs have been identified; these are, the affirmative **fàʔà** ‘exist’, affirmative past **tè̀à** ‘exist_past’ and the negative existential verb **ál-** ‘not_exist’. The negative existential verb **ál-** can also show negation when it occurs with a main verb. (For a detailed discussion, see Chapter six, negation.). Examples (19a-g) show affirmative existential clauses.

- (19) a. tà fàʔ-è
 I exist-1SG:DECL
 ‘I exist.’
- b. nòò fàʔ-ò
 we exist-1PL:DECL
 ‘We exist.’
- c. nèè fàʔ-í
 you(SG) exist-2SG:DECL
 ‘You(SG) exist.’
- d. ítt fàʔ-t
 you(PL) exist-2PL:DECL
 ‘You(PL) exist.’
- e. mèj-à ètt-̀̀fò fàʔ-é bòr-ó-n
 Mej-3SGM:COP say-PRS exist-3SGM:DECL Boro-M-INST
 bí=tàrikìj-ó-nì
 3SGM=culture-M-FOC
 ‘There is called *Meja* (ghost) by [in] Boro culture.’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#), T=S27 TranC,B=113060,E=120370)

- f. *bì* *fàʔ-à*
 she exist-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She exists.’
- g. *mítí* *k’à* *’ín-wò* *-í* *fàʔ-nó*
 tree small-PL-NOM exist-3PL:DECL
 ‘There exist small trees.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S3 TranC,
 B=6400, E=11810)

Unlike the affirmative existential clauses, that attach person agreement marking suffixes, negative existential clauses follow a similar structure with copula clauses. Thus, the negative existential verb *ál-* attaches the different copula markers. The following examples are negative counterparts of data (19):

- (20) a. *tà* *ál* *tà-nà*
 I exist_not I-COP
 ‘I am not present/I do not exist.’
- b. *nòò* *ál* *nòò-nà*
 we exist_not We-COP
 ‘We are not present/We do not exist.’
- c. *nèè* *ál* *nèè-nà*
 you(SG) exist_not you(SG)-COP
 ‘You(SG) are not present/You do not exist.’
- d. *ítí* *ál* *ítí-nà*
 you(PL) exist_not you(PL)-COP
 ‘You(PL) are not present/ You do not exist.’
- e. *ík’-ó* *ál-í*
 God-Mexist_not-3SGM:COP
 ‘There is no God/God does not exist.’
- f. *bì* *ál-ì*
 she exist_not-3SGF
 ‘She is not present/She does not exist.’
- g. *bó* *ál-nó*

they exist_not-3PL

‘They are not present/They do not exist.’

As shown in (19 & 20), the affirmative and the negative existential clauses follow different markers. While the affirmative existential clauses attach the person agreement markers, the negative existential clauses add the different copula markers.

In existential clauses, the first element is the subject, which may be followed by a locative postposition, like (21). Nonetheless, like (19 & 20), the existential clauses can also be used to predicate existence without specifying any location. The following examples show both affirmative and negative existential clauses.

- (21) a. kàf-ó-wò ò-í mít mán-à ò ò fàʔ-nó
 bird-EP-PL-NOM tree that-ALLA exist-3PL:COP
 ‘There are (exist) birds on the tree.’
- b. kàf-ó-wò ò-í mít mán-à ò ò ál-nó
 bird-PL-NOM tree that-ALLA exist_not-3PL:COP
 ‘There are no birds on the tree.’

In (21a) **fàʔ**, shows the existence of the subject, **kàfó** ‘bird’, in some specified location, **mít mán-à ò ò** ‘on the tree’. On the other hand, example (21b) has negative existential meaning.

The structure of the past tense existential clauses is different from the present tense existential clauses. In past tense existential clauses in addition to the verbs **fàʔà** ‘exist’ and **ál-** ‘not_exist’ additional past tense auxiliary verb **tè** ‘exist_past’ is introduced to the clause to give the clause a past tense meaning. Consider the following examples:

- (22) a. bún-ó fàʔ-é bí=tè
 coffee-M exist-3SGM:DECL 3SGM=exist_PST
 ‘There was coffee.’
- b. bún-ó ál-í bí=tè
 coffee-M exist_not-3SGM:COP 3SGM=exist_PST
 ‘There was no coffee.’

Example (22a) is an affirmative existential clause in past tense form. In this sentence, in addition to the existential verb **fàʔ** ‘exist’ a past tense auxiliary verb **tè** ‘exist_past’ is added to give the

clause a past tense meaning. In such instances, the copula suffix is added to the existential verb, not to the auxiliary verb. Similarly, in (22b) the past tense auxiliary verb **tèl̀à** is added following the negative existential verb **ál-** to give the clause a past tense existential meaning.

9.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the nature of copulas and copula clause formation in Borna is described. The findings suggest that Borna makes use of bound morphemes to show the link between the copula subject and the non-verbal copula predicates. In the language, there are many copula markers whose selection is governed by the copula subject and suffixed to the copula complement. In affirmative copula clauses, the copula markers are **-nà**, **-à**, **-ì** and **-nó**. The selection of these copulas is solely governed by the copula subject. When the subject is a first and second person both singular and plural, the copula is **-nà** and it is suffixed to the second occurring personal pronoun. The copula morpheme **-à** is selected by third person singular masculine, and it is suffixed to the non-verbal copula predicate. With a third person singular feminine, the copula marker is **-ì**. The copula **-nó** is suffixed to the predicate when the subject is a third person plural. What is fascinating about the copulas selected by the third person (both singular and plural) is that they do not need the second occurring of the personal pronouns; in other words, they are directly suffixed to the predicate.

Negative copula clauses are simply formed by introducing the negative existential verb **ál-** ‘exist_not/be_not’ to the copula clause. The copula markers are suffixed to either the copula complement or the second occurring pronoun. Interrogative copula clauses, on the other hand, make use of different copula markers from the declarative copula markers. The copula **-nè** is used when the subject is a first and second person (both singular and plural) and third person singular feminine. With third person masculine singular, the morpheme **-é** is selected. **-nó** is suffixed to the predicate when the subject is a third person plural.

Based on the syntactic category of the non-verbal predicate, copulas in Borna have the semantic function of attributive, equative or locative.

Chapter ten

Multi-verb constructions

This chapter provides a description and structural account of how a sequence of verbs function together in Borna. In particular, the chapter presents three types of multi-verb constructions: a) multi-verb forms with no dependence or overt marking of coordination or subordination, i.e. serial verb constructions; b) ideophones and ideophone based multi-verb constructions; and c) multi-verb constructions where there exist dependent verb forms, i.e. converbs²⁴. The chapter also attempts to compare and contrast SVCs with converbs.

10.1 Serial verb constructions

In this study, the definition of SVC is based on the following definition given by Aikhenvald (2006:1): “a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any other sort”. Serial verb construction (SVC) is very common in the world’s languages. According to Dixon (2010a:109), a third of the world’s languages have SVC. The data collected for this research also strengthens Dixon’s claim; SVCs are also very common in Borna (cf. §Borna texts). In this section, the nature of SVC construction in Borna is analyzed in relation to Aikhenvald’s (ibid: 3) parameters: composition, contiguity, word-hood of components, and marking.

In terms of their composition, the components of SVCs in Borna are in an asymmetrical relationship. In other words, from the two verbs that form the SVC, the verb one (V₁) always comes from semantically and grammatically unrestricted subclass of verbs. On the other hand, the second verb (V₂) is always from a restricted subclass of verbs (e.g. a motion, completion, or a posture verb). Examples (the SVCs are printed in boldface):

- | | | | | | | |
|----|----|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1) | a. | díh-í | mítt | mán-wò -nà | bí-n | k'ànzì-dè? |
| | | fall-REL | tree | the-PL-COP | he-INST | cut-take |
| | | k'ànzì-dè? | k'ànzì-dè? | màlà-màl-dè? | gò | tàrw-ò è |
| | | cut-take | cut-take | trim-take | plow | field-INE |

²⁴ Constructions with auxiliary verbs are also multi-verb constructions; as they are formed from a lexical verb and an auxiliary verb. Nonetheless, they are not included in this chapter as they are described in chapter five and six.

bí-n dòn-èk'-fò
he-INST prepare-take-HAB

‘After cutting, falling down it [the tree]; those trees, with it we cut, cut , cut, and trim; with this we prepare land for plowing.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S23 TranC, B=78220, E=84850)

b. bí=à dè-dè? tàw mán-í mí -dè?-rí
3SGM=ALLA catch-take fire the-NOM roast-take-CNV

kà -dè?-rí ànàn-í-dè?-rí ànàn-í-dè?-rí ànàn-í-dè?-rí
cook-take-CNV rotate-take-CNV rotate-take-CNV rotate-take-CNV
wèè-t íb-ó- k'àw-dè? ím-rí
come-NPST guest-M-DAT pick-take give-CNV

‘Holding on it, grilling it on fire;grilling it, rotating... rotating... rotating it; by serving to the coming guest...’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S86-88 TranC, B=298135, E=305415)

In (1a &b), there are a number of SVCs. In all cases, the second verb (V₂) **dèk'á** ‘to take’ consistently occurs with different V₁. In other words, the V₁ comes from a different subclass of verbs; thus, not restricted. On the other hand, in the data collected for this study, there are limited V₂s. In addition, semantically, the two verbs that form the SVC do not have equal semantic status. In other words, the V₂s are semantically limited to verbs of state, posture, and motion. Thus, it conforms to Aikhenvald (2006:47) claim that “for asymmetrical SVCs, the basic verbs of motion, direction, posture, and location occur most frequently, from a cross-linguistic point of view, in the minor verb slot”. The V₁ describes the event while the V₂ simply modifies the event designated by V₁ providing specification, like direction (e.g. **àmà** ‘to go’ **wàà** ‘to come’) aspectual meaning, or motion. Thus, in terms of their compositions, it is possible to conclude that SVCs in Borna are in an asymmetrical relationship. In the following examples, the verb **wàà** ‘to come’ in (2a) and **àmà** ‘to go’ in (2b) describe the direction of movement.

(2) a. bí fàr-ó dèk'-ú-wàà-r-è
he horse-M catch-EP-come-PST-3SGM:DECL
‘He brought the horse.’

- b. k'à' k'ò-òk gà' -dè?-nì à-ó-
 utensil utensil-ALLA scoop-take-FOC person-M-DAT
dè?-àm dúú mán-í típ'-dè? ím-ffò-nì,
 take-go Dutsa the-ACC scoop-take give-HAB-FOC

‘Pouring it down into another utensil, serve the Dutso to people.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S43 TranC, B=154600, E=158600)

In Borna, as already indicated, the V₂s also function by expressing aspectual meaning. For instance, in (3a), the V₂ modifies V₁ by conveying completive aspect. Similarly, in (3b), the V₂ describes a completion of an event.

- (3) a. kí-ó-nì **dè-dè?** hán-í **k'út'-dè?** **k'àl-ì-dè?-rí**
 hand-M-FOC catch-take this-NOM cut-take cut-take-CNV
 nì=ún- nàà-ó fín-ò nì=fín-ffò
 2SG=like-REL type-M work-REL 2SG=work-HAB

‘Holding with hand, cutting with this, cutting it, you make use of it for whatever work you like.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S25 TranC, B=88490, E=92550)

- b. bí-n **t'à' 'ì-dè?-nì** **gúúr-dè?** **dà' 'ì-k'ír-ít**
 he-INST tie-take-FOC around-take tie-die-NPST
dà' 'ì-k'ír-àrí mínz jòn **wúr-k'ír-ít**
 tie-die-CNV cow dung paint-die-NPST

‘... with it, tie around it; after tying it, it will be painted with cattle dung.’ ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S29-30 TranC, B=85240, E=92170)

The following are some of the V₂s frequently observed in the data:

- (4) a. àmà ‘to go’
 wàà ‘to come’
 dèk'à ‘to take’
 k'írà ‘to die’
 kèà ‘to go_out’
 bèèjà ‘to live, to sit, to exist’

As already indicated, SVCs in Bornaisan are an asymmetrical type of serial verb construction. Nonetheless, as demonstrated in example (5), verbs from the restricted subclass of verbs which occur as V_2 can also occur as V_1 .

- (5) hán-k'ò-n kibirij-ó-n **dèèn-dè?** **dè?-àm** bó lí àbó kí-í-fò
 this-EQ-INST honour-M-INST escort-take take-go mule on mount-
 HAB 'like this, with honor mount him on a mule.' ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S75
 TranC, B=260310, E=263420)

In example (5), the verb **dèk'à** 'to take' (realized as **dè?**) which often functions as V_2 appears twice. In its first appearance, it occurs as the second verb in a sequence; thus, restricted. In its second occurrence, it appears as the first verb in a sequence; thus, restricted.

As to their contiguity, the components of SVCs in Bornaisan are in contiguity; i.e. the verbs always occur next to each other without allowing any morpheme to intervene between them. Examples:

- (6) a. kí-ó-nì **dè-dè?** hán-í **k'út'-dè?** **k'àl-ì-dè?-rí**
 hand-M-FOC catch-take this-NOM cut-take cut-take-CNV
 nì=fíín-í nààr-ó fíín-ò nì=fíín-fò
 2SG=like-REL type-M work-REL 2SG=work-HAB
 'Holding with hand, cutting with this, cutting it, you make use of it for whatever
 work you like.' ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S25 TranC, B=88490, E=92550)

- b. tà?a tòòk-wò-í **k'út'-dè?-nì** **búj-dè?-rí**
 sorghum head-PL-NOM cut-take-FOC stroke-take-CNV
k'àl-dè? kàk-à **gèr-dè?** bú-í bí=t'àk'àm-fò-nì
 cut-take bed-ALLA put-take stroke-CNV 3SGM=use-HAB-FOC
 'The seeds from above, cutting it from the sorghum, stroking, putting it, it is used
 for.' ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S35 TranC, B=127340, E=133280)

- c. àà-ó **fú 'í-k'ír-àrí** ún mán-í **fú 'í-k'ír-àrí**
 water-M clean-die-CNV all the-ACC clean-die-CNV
fú-k'ír-àrí àà-ò i gèd-í
 dry-die-CNV water-ILLA put-NPST

‘After cleaning all that from water; clean it and put [it] in water’ ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S14 TranC, B=37800, E=42680)

As demonstrated in (6a-c), the SVC in Borna is contiguous; i.e. there is no constituent that interferes between V_1 and V_2 . In addition, though the SVCs are formed from two verbs, they function as a single predicate and together describe a single event. Hence, as a single syntactic unit, the two agree in the inflectional morphemes (e.g. agreement/mood, tense and aspect) attached to the V_2 . Furthermore, they have the same subject. Nonetheless, as already indicated, the meaning of the sentence is determined by the meaning of V_1 .

Regarding the word-hood of the components of the SVCs in Borna, the SVCs are composed of two independent words which can occur as the main verb in other constructions. As already indicated, the serial verbs are composed of two verbs but form a one-word sequence of verb root. Furthermore, the verbs taking part in the SVC formation can form distinct grammatical and phonological words, i.e., each verb can independently function elsewhere in the language.

As already indicated, SVCs in Borna involve two main verbs that form a single predicate and share their arguments. In addition, they have shared grammatical markings like tense/aspect, mood, and focus as they denote a single event. The following examples show that in Borna SVC, person/mood, tense and aspect information are hosted by the second verb:

- (7) a. **k'à** **k'ò-òk** **gà' -dè?-nì** **à-ó-**
 tool utensil-ALLA scoop-take-FOC person-M-DAT
 dè?-àm **dúú** **mán-í** **típ'-dè?** **ím-ífò-nì,**
 take-go Dutsa the-ACC scoop-take give-HAB-FOC
 ‘Pouring it down into another utensil, serve the Dutso to people.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S43 TranC, B=154600, E=158600)

- b. **kà -dè?-rí** **k'àí-dè?-rí** **à-ó-** **ím-ífò-nì(jè)**
 scoop-take-CNV make-take-CNV person-M-DAT give-HAB-FOC
 ‘Scoop [with]it, make [it] and give [it] to people.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S48 TranC, B=166040, E=168970)

As demonstrated by the different examples given so far, in Borna, it is V_2 of the serialized verbs that hosts the different bound morphemes. For instance, in example (7a) the focus marker **-nì** is

attached to V₂ of the SVC **gà̀ 'dè?-nì** ‘scoop-take-FOC’; similarly in (7b) the converb marker –**rí** is attached to the V₂ of the serialized verbs **kà̀ -dè?-rí** ‘scoop-take-CNV’ and **k'álí-dè?-rí** ‘make-take-CNV’. There is no instance where any constituent interferes between the two and attaches to V₁. This clearly shows that the two verbs forming the SVC function as a single verb and share their arguments. Similarly, in the following data, the serialized verbs share the same tense marker, non-past tense -**íí**:

- (8) a. **bí-n** **t'à̀ 'ì-dè?-nì** **gúúr-dè?** **dà̀ 'ì-k'ír-íí**
 he-INST tie-take-FOC around-take tie-die-NPST
 dà̀ 'ì-k'ír-àrí **mínz jòn** **wúr-k'ír-íí**
 tie-die-CNV cow dung paint-die-NPST
 ‘... with it, tie around it; after tying it, it will be painted with cattle dung.’ ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S29-30 TranC, B=85240, E=92170)

- b. **k'úrí-dè?** **k'úrí-dè?** **k'úrí-dè?** **èèè** **wóz-íf-é**
 bend-take bend-take bend-take then work-HAB-3SGM
 wóz-íf-é **wóz-íf-é** **dè?-àm** **kà̀ í-k'ír-íí**
 work-HAB-3SGM work-HAB-3SGM take-go continue-die-NPST
 ‘[You(SG)] bend, bend, bend then, you work, you work, you continue working.’
 ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S21 TranC, B=61000, E=64995)

As demonstrated by the different examples given so far, the SVCs in Borna have one grammatical category marking like tense/aspect, negation, and mood per SVC. In the following examples, the negative marking morpheme is attached to V₂.

- c. **bí** **fà̀-ó** **dèk'-ú-wàà-rá̀ -é**
 he horse-M take-EP-come-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He did/will not bring the horse.’
 d. **tà** **àmbà̀-ó** **dèk'-ú-wàà-rá̀ -è**
 I money-M take-EP-come-NEG-1SG:DECL
 ‘I did/will not bring the money.’

This property of SVC that it functions as a single verb clearly shows that SVCs form a one-word serial verb construction. In addition, it demonstrates that the relationship between the two verbs forming the SVC is not that of subordination or coordination.

10.2 Ideophones and ideophone based multi-verb constructions

This section describes ideophones and their structure in multi-verb constructions. Dingemanse (2012:654) defines ideophones as “marked words depictive of sensory imagery found in many of the world’s languages. They are noted for their special sound patterns, distinct grammatical properties, and sensory meanings”. As indicated in the definition given by Dingemanse, ideophones are found widely in many languages of the world. The existence of ideophones throughout the languages of Africa is also well documented (Childs 2003:118). There is also a large inventory of ideophones in Omotic languages, to which Borna belongs, though it is not well-documented and rarely integrated into linguistic descriptions (Azeb 2001:49; 2010:259). Similarly, in Borna, ideophones represent a remarkable part of the language’s grammar. In the present study, emphasis is given only to the predicative type of ideophones that occur with dummy verbs like that illustrated in (9a & b):

- (9) a. bí tà-n kí-ó-n ɸ ’uwa²⁵ ò-ír-é
 he I-ACC hand-M-INST slap:IDEO make-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He slapped me.’
- b. kàf-ú **birr...** ètt-àtí dí-ír-à
 bird-F fly:IDEO say-CNV fly-PST-3SGF:DECL
 ‘The bird flew birr....’

In the above examples, ɸ ’uwa in (9a) and **birr...** in (9b) are predicative ideophones. These types of ideophones always occur with dummy verbs èttà ‘to say’ and ò-à ‘to make’. In Borna, these ideophones have structural similarities with the serial verb constructions described under §10.1. Akin to the SVCs, the predicative ideophones consist of two parts; i.e. an ideophone that occurs as V₁ and a dummy verb that functions as V₂. In example (10a-b), the V₁ is an ideophone and V₂ is a verb to say or to make.

- (10) a. à-ó **falfalfal** ètt-ír-é
 water-M boil:IDEO say-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The water boiled.’

²⁵ Tone is not marked for the ideophones, as it is impossible to capture the ideophones with the two-tone system. Further study is needed.

- b. bí t'èè-ó **tah** òò-ír-é
 he gun-M fire:IDEO make-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He fired a gun.'

In (10a), the ideophonic verb **falfalfal** 'to boil' is the V₁. Similarly, in (10b), the ideophone **tah** 'to fire a gun' occurs as a V₁. In all instances, the ideophones are always followed by a dummy V₂ **èttà** 'to say' or **òòà** 'to make'. Thus, the ideophone and the dummy verb that follows it together form a multi-verb predicate. The verbal ideophones (V₁) carries the full semantic load; whereas the semantic contribution of the V₂ is not clear. In addition, the V₁ is not inflected for any of the grammatical elements of a verb form like agreement/mood, tense and aspect markers. All the necessary grammatical elements are hosted by V₂. Furthermore, the ideophonic V₁ are not restricted; nonetheless, the V₂s are very limited. It is either **èttà** 'to say' or **òòà** 'to make'. The verb **èttà** 'to say' is used in an intransitive multi-verb constructions (10a); whereas, the verb **òòà** is used in a transitive multi-verb construction (10b). Thus, besides hosting the different grammatical elements, the V₂s also determine the transitivity of the multi-verb construction.

Multi-verb constructions like (9) & (10) that involves ideophones can also occur with converb markers in Borna. In such structures, the converb marker is suffixed to the V₂. Consider examples (11a-b):

- (11) a. bí **taar** ètt-àtí wòò ' -ír-é
 he run_away:IDEO say-CNV run-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He ran away (swiftly).'
- b. bí **taf** ètt-àtí-nì bí=túw
 he stand_up:IDEO say-CNV-FOC 3SGM=stand_up_PST
 'He stood up (abruptly).'

In Borna, the verbal ideophones can also combine as a V₁ with SVCs occurring as a V₂. In (12a-b), the V₂ is composed of two verbs, **òòà** 'to make' and **dèk'à** 'to take', that function as a single verb.

- (12) a. bí úmp'- -ó **sanj** òò-dèk' dè -r-é
 he cheat-NMLZ-M catch:IDEO make-take catch-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He grabbed the thief.'

- b. *bì* *tàh-ó* **tarr...** *òò-dèk'* *gàt'-r-à*
 she cloth-M tear:IDEO make-take tear-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She teared down the clothes.'

In (12a-b), the ideophones are followed by SVCs that is composed of two verbs. In such instances, the SVC takes the verb *òò-à* 'to make' as V₁ and the verb *dèk'-à* 'to take' as V₂. Furthermore, the ideophones reoccur by their equivalent lexical verb which has the same meaning with the ideophone. In (12a), the ideophonic verb **saŋ** 'to catch' corresponds with the verb *dè-à*. Similarly, in (12b), the ideophonic verb **tarr...** 'to tear' corresponds with *gàt'-à*.

10.2.1 Properties of ideophones in Borna

In terms of their phonological property, ideophones in Borna are largely formed from the same phonemes that are used to form other words (non-ideophones). Nevertheless, in a very rare case phonemes which are not part of the normal phonological inventory are attested in Borna ideophones. For instance, the phoneme /ŋ²⁶/ in **saŋ** 'to bite', **saŋ** 'to tightly tie/hold' and /ɿ/ in **il il** 'sound of metal coin' and **u u** 'sound to call a goat/sheep' are only found in ideophones. In addition, in one instance, with phoneme /r/, a distinct distributional pattern is observed. As described in Chapter three, §3.1.1.1.1, the phoneme /r/ does not occur at word-initial position. Nonetheless, in an ideophone **riif** 'denoting something big falling' the phoneme /r/ occurs at such position.

As to their morphological property, ideophones in Borna are characterized by the limited morphological display as they bear no affixes. As a result, there is no word that is derived from ideophones. Furthermore, an instance of ideophones derived from other words (non-ideophonic) is not observed. Hence, they are clearly different from the other words like verbs and nouns that can be derived from other words by affixation. The only productive morphological process associated with ideophones in Borna is reduplication. In Borna, certain ideophones, especially onomatopoeic words undergo reduplication and sometimes triplicated. For instance, **kakaka** 'to cackle', **falfalfal** 'sound of boiling water' and **t'uwat'uwa** 'noise of clapping hand' are formed by reduplication. The reduplicated ideophones usually show duration and that the action was done more than once.

²⁶ Nonetheless, /n/ can be realized as [ŋ] due to homorganic assimilation

Regarding their syntactic characteristic feature, Borna ideophones are characterized by their limited syntactic function and distribution. Verbal ideophones such as (13a-b) do not occur independently. They are always immediately followed by dummy verbs like **òṣà** ‘to make’ and **èttà** ‘to say’. It is to these dummy verbs that the different grammatical affixes are attached. In addition, in their occurrence, the ideophones commonly appear in declarative sentences.

- (13) a. bàk-ó **kokiliko** ètt-ír-é
 rooster-M crow:IDEO say-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The rooster crowed.’
- b. bó kíṣ-ó **t’uwat’uwa** òṣ-ír-nó
 they hand-M clap:IDEO make-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They clapped their hands.’

As far as their semantics is concerned, ideophones in Borna are more descriptive and give a more vivid picture of an event or a state than lexical verbs. For instance, when we compare (14a) with (14b), utterance (14a) is more expressive and vivid than utterance (14b).

- (14) a. ṣàn-ó t’áf-ír-é
 light-M went_of-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The light went-of.’
- b. ṣàn-ó **niṣ** ’ ètt-ír-é
 light-M went_of:IDEO say-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘The light went of (suddenly).’

Similarly, utterance (15b) is more expressive than (15a):

- (15) a. bó mííṣ ’-ír-nó
 they laugh-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They laughed.’
- b. bó **kakaka** ètt-ír-no
 they laugh:IDEO say-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They laughed (cackled).’

Another aspect of the semantics of Borna ideophones is that some ideophones imitate sounds in nature or are onomatopoeic forms. Thus, show non-arbitrary relations between sound and

meaning. For instance, the noise of animals as in **p’ogum** ‘monkey noise’ **kokiliko** ‘sound of rooster’ **wuwu** ‘dog barking’ and sound of an object like **guwa** ‘sound of collision’, **kililil** ‘sound of a bell ringing’ are imitations of sounds produced by the animals or the objects.

According to Childs (1994:189), sound symbolism can be further subdivided into three subtypes; these are onomatopoeia, synesthesia, and conventional (or language-specific) sound symbolism. The first two types, onomatopoeic and synesthesia are identified and described in the following paragraphs as they are manifested in Borna.

Onomatopoeic forms directly imitate sounds in nature. The following are some examples of onomatopoeic forms in Borna:

(16) Onomatopoeic (imitative) ideophones

ʼuwa	‘to hit/slap heavily’
t’izz...	‘to buzz, for beetles’
guwa	‘sound of collision’
p’ogum	‘monkey noise’
k’a k’a	‘sound of eating crispy food’
p’at’ p’at’	‘sound of cutting something’

The other type of non-arbitrary matching of sound and meaning is synesthesia. Synesthesia refers to “the pairing of certain words with non-auditory sensation” (Childs 1994:191). It is metaphorical extensions of onomatopoeia to sight, touch, and taste. The following are some instances of synesthesia in Borna:

sololol	‘movement of snake (slithered)’
haŋ	‘to bite’
ha	‘to crush’
hanka	‘to open mouth widely’
ol	‘to pick up suddenly’
lok’od	‘tall persons walk’

10.3 Converbs

The third type of multi-verb construction treated in this chapter is converbs. The term *coneverb* can be defined as “a nonfinite verb form whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination” (Haspelmath 1995:3). Haspelmath goes on to say that converbs lack tense, aspect, mood and agreement markers, and are thus nonfinite. This sub-section tries to provide a descriptive analysis of the form and function of converbs in Borna. The following example, (17), shows that converb is a very typical linguistic property of Borna:

- (17) hán-í òàrààr-à ètt-òfò gina-nì wò-ó
 this-NOM Sharar-3SGM:COP say-HAB spear-FOC Wosha-M
 úk-wòò-**rí** hán-k'ò k'òn 'k'ír-**àrí**-nì míz-ó
 slaughter-go-CNV this-EQ impale-die-CNV-FOC ox-M
 k'èèz-dè?-**rí** bààk-ó gèèr-dè?-**rí** úú-**rí** nò=níh-wò-í
 make_lay-CNV hen-M put-take-CNV slaughter-CNV 1PL=father-PL-NOM
 gìn-à 'à-ó gèè-**rí**-nì ètt-òfò
 spear-ALLA blood-M put-CNV-FOV say-HAB

‘This is Sharara [type of] spear; when [animals are slaughtered] for Wosha, it is impaled like this; when a bull is laid down (like to slaughter), hen is slaughtered; our fathers put the blood on this Gina/spear.’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S70-71 TranC,B=237810, E=251220)

Example (17) shows a typical structure of converb in Borna. As shown by the example, there are several events juxtaposed in their sequential order of occurrence. Apart from the final finite verb which is suffixed for person/mood and tense, the converbs are non-finite verbs; thus, do not receive any of the verbal categories.

In Borna, there are two morphologically distinct coneverb marking morphemes directly suffixed to the verb stems: **-(à) tí** and **-rí**. The morpheme **-(à) tí** is suffixed to perfective verb stems; and **-rí** is suffixed to imperfective verb stems. Examples (18a-c) illustrate the realization of the converb marking morpheme **-(à) tí**.

- (18) a. bì bì=mò-ó í ' **-àtí** gàwúj-ó mán-á àm-ír-à
 she 3SGF=house-M close-CNV market-M the-ALLA go-PFV-3SGF:DECL
 ‘She closed her house and went to the market.’

- b. bí mèè-ó kíí-tí màà-r-é
 he meet-M cook-CNV eat-PFV-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He cooked the meat and ate it.’
- c. nò=índ-ú-wò-í òò-ó-nì àmàr-àtí-nì hán-í
 1PL=mother-PL-NOM long_ago-M-FOC start-CNV-FOC this-ACC
 òòd-dè?-nìjè k'àw-dè? k'ò-ò bí=kí-fò-nìjè
 scoop-take-FOC pick-take another-ILLA 3SGM=pour_down-HAB-FOC
 ‘Starting long ago, our mothers with this they scoop and pour down to another

[utensil]’ ([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S51 TranC, B=175590, E=180650)

The perfective converb **-(à)tí** is suffixed to perfective verb stem to form a perfective converb. It is used to describe an event that is completed either before the event described by the verb of the main clause or in simultaneous contexts in the past. When the verb stem is a consonant final like (18a & 18c), the morpheme is realized as **-àtí** and with vowel final verb stems it is realized as **-tí**.

On the other hand, the morpheme **-rí** is used to mark converb in imperfective verb forms. The following examples illustrate the formation of converbs in the non-past tense (19a & b) and habitual actions (19e):

- (19) a. bòòt'-ó nì=k'ut'-fò bòòt'-ó k'út'-írí-nì
 bamboo-M 2SG=cut-HAB bamboo-M cut-CNV-FOC
 ‘You cut bamboo; after you cut the bamboo’ ([How to make Oosho](#), T=S2 TranC, B=4150, E=8920)

- b. àà mán-è k'èèb gājè gúúr-dè? àmàr-àrí-nì
 water the-INE night pass morning-take start-CNV-FOC
 ‘After putting in a water for a night, the next morning it will be started.’ ([How to make Oosha](#), T=S16 TranC, B=44415, E=49105)

- c. bì bì=fíín-rí bèèw-ó-à
 she 3SGF=work-CNV live-M-DAT-3SGM:COP
 ‘She works to live.’ Lit. ‘It is to live, she works.’
- d. bí=mà-ì bàr-ú-nì mán k'ír-ít
 3SGM=woman-NOM girl-F-FOC the K'ira-NPST
 k'ír-àrí de?-rí bì=kí-ít

K'ir-CNV take-CNV 3SGF=take_out-NPST

‘His daughter will make the [Mish] *K'ira*; she takes out preforming [Mish] *K'ira*.’

([Funeral and grave preparation](#), T=S46-47 TranC, B=188670, E=195785)

As already indicated, the morpheme **-rí** is used with verbs in imperfective aspect. In other words, actions that take place simultaneously with the main event in the present time and events in non-past tense are described by the imperfective converb.

As can be seen from the examples given so far, converbs in Borna are only expressed by converbal affixes attached to a verb. In other words, they don't exhibit markers of tense/aspect or agreement/mood that appear on the finite verbs. Such grammatical information is directly obtained from the finite verb in the main clause.

As indicated in Chapter three, §3.4, Borna is an SOV language. Likewise, in a complex structure consisting one or more converbs, the converbs always occur preceding the finite verb in the main clause; i.e., the finite verb takes a sentence-final position. In such cases, all the verbs except the last one (main verb) will be represented by a converb. The main verb carries all the necessary grammatical information. Observe the following examples.

- (20) a. bí dímb-ó òàp'-àtí tíí -ír-é
 he bracelet-M throw-CNV break-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He broke the bracelet throwing it.’
- b. bó tów-àtí í n-tí k'éj-íí-tí àm-ír-nó
 they spend-CNV stay-CNV sleep-EP-CNV go-PST-3PL:DECL
 ‘They spent the day and the night and went home.’
- c. bì à -ó kít-àtí tàh-ó mà -àtí
 he water-M fetch-CNV clothe-M wash-CNV
 mò-ó fók-àtí míí-ó k'à -àtí
 house-M sweep-CNV food-M cook-CNV
 gàwúj-ó bì=àm
 market-M 3SGF-go_PST

‘She fetched water, washed clothes, cleaned the house, cooked food and went to the market.’

- d. à làk'-í nú -ó-n làk-dè? índ-í-dè?-rí
 person waist-M equal-M-INST measure-take measure-take-CNV
 índ-í-dè?-rí índ-í-dè?-rí làk'-í nú -ó-n
 measure-take-CNV measure-take-CNV waist-NOM equal-M-INST
 bí=nòòn làk'-í nú -ó-n gèd-
 3SGM=mouth waist-NOM equal-M-INST make-NPST

‘Measuring, measuring up to a person’s waist; measuring, measuring the [grave’s] mouth, measured equal to the waist of a man.’ ([Funeral and grave preparation](#), T=S106-107 TranC, B=405007, E=416540)

As one can see from the above examples, (20a-c), a complex construction may contain one (e.g. 20a), two (e.g. 20b) or more (e.g. 20c & d) converbs. In all cases, the converb always precedes the main verb.

Converbs in Borna is dependent on the finite main verb in two ways. Semantically, a converb alone cannot convey a full meaning. Thus, they cannot function as the main clause verb. Syntactically, they are always used in sentences along with the finite main verbs. Hence, they depend on the finite verb for all the necessary grammatical information. As demonstrated by the examples (21a-b) given below, it is possible to conclude that they are inherently subordinate.

- (21) a. *tà à -ó kít-àtí
 I water-ACC fetch-CNV
 b. tà à -ó kít-àtí àm-ír-è
 I water-M fetch-CNV go-PST-1SG:DECL
 ‘Having fetched the water I went.’

Example (21a) lacks the finite verb; thus, it is ungrammatical. Example (21b) is acceptable; there is a finite verb on which the converb depends both for meaning and the necessary grammatical information. Thus, from the examples, we can conclude that the converb alone cannot form a complete sentence. (The asterisk signals unacceptability/ungrammaticality.)

10.3.1 Semantic functions of converb

Based on their type and function, converbs can be categorized into different categories. For instance, Ebert (2008:8-13) categorize converbs as general and special. The general type is a

“versatile form used both for subordination and clause-chaining”; and the special ones are used for “conditional, causal, and for various temporal subordinations”.

As stated earlier, there are two converb forms in Borna: **-(à)ṭí** and **-rí**. These two forms are used both for subordination and clause-chaining in perfective and imperfective aspects, respectively. Thus, in the light of Ebert’s (2008) classifications, Borna converbs belong to the general converb type.

Ebert (2008:9) further states that in adverbial function, the connection that the general converbs establish is vague and it can usually be interpreted in various ways. In the same way, in Borna, the general converbs can assume many interpretations in relation to the finite verb. For instance, converbs are used to show simultaneity of events. Simultaneous converbs describe “the manner in which an action is carried out or an activity accompanying the main action” (Ebert 2008:10). In Borna, simultaneity in perfective aspect is marked by **-(à)ṭí**; and in imperfective aspect, it is marked by the morpheme **-rí**. Consider the following examples with the main verb in different verb forms:

- (22) a. bí mò mán-í wó ‘-àṭí àm-ír-é
 he home the-ALLA run-CNV go-PST-3SGM:DECL
 ‘He went home running.’
- b. bó màà-rí ú-ṭúw-nó
 they eat-CNV drink-EP-FT-3PL
 ‘They will eat and drink.’

Example (22a) shows simultaneous event of a perfective aspect. Thus, the morpheme **-ṭí** is suffixed to the verb stem **wó** ‘-run’ to form a converb **wó** ‘-àṭí. In this example **wó** ‘-àṭí ‘having run’, though it expresses the manner of going, it is assumed to take place simultaneously with **àm-ír-é** ‘he went’, the main verb. Example (14b) shows simultaneous converb construction in future tense verb form. In this instance, the imperfective converb marking morpheme **-rí** is suffixed to the verb stem **màà** ‘to eat’. Though the two events happened at the same time only the first verb is suffixed for converb. The second verb is used as the main verb, so it is inflected only for tense and person markers.

In Borna, converbs can also have a causal function. The following are some examples of converb with causal function.

- (23) a. bí fàr-à fè-àtí k'ír-ír-é
 he horse-ALLA fall-CNV die-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He fell from the horse and died.'
- b. bí bí=mà-ú bèk'-àtí aj gènèw-í-é
 he 3SGM=wife-F see-CNV very happy-PST-3SGM:DECL
 'He saw his wife and is very happy.'
- c. bí ńóód-àtí bí=k'ír
 he illness-CNV 3SGM=die_PST
 'He died due to illness.'

In Borna, converbs can also serve to indicate the sequence of events. In such cases, the converb expresses an action that took place before the event expressed by the finite verb. The following two examples, (24a & b), show a sequential converb with the main verb in perfective aspect.

- (24) a. bì díbàt'í àm-àtí k'ír-ír-à
 she Dibat go-CNV die-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She went to Dibati and died.'
- b. bì bì=mò-ó íí '-àtí gàwúj-ó mán-í àm-ír-à
 she 3SGF=house-M close-CNV market-M the-ALLA go-PST-3SGF
 'She closed her house and went to the market.'

As shown in the above two examples, (24a & b), converbs can also be used to express a sequence of events. In such structures, the converb expresses an event completed before that of the main verb. Thus, in example (24a), the event expressed by the main verb **k'ír-ír-à** 'she died' happened after the event expressed by the converb, **àm-àtí** 'having gone', is completed. Similarly, in (24b), the subject of the sentence did the action expressed by the converb, **íí '-àtí** 'having closed' before the event expressed by the main verb, **àm-ír-à** 'she went'.

Converbs may also show an event viewed as the first stage of a complex event whose second stage is expressed by an independent verb form. Consider the following examples:

- (25) a. bì mètè-ó kíí-tí màà-r-à
 he meet-M cook-CNV eat-PST-3SGF:DECL
 'She cooked the meat and ate it.'

- b. tà dàwúnz-ó bék’-àtí t̩=ték’
 I snake-M see-EP-CNV 1SG=sacre_PST
 ‘After seeing the snake, I got scared.’

As shown in the following examples, (26a-b), converbs may also show habitual actions. The habitual converb refers to events which took place prior to the event described by the main verb whereby the entire situation described by such sentences is considered as a habitual or repetitive situation.

- (26) a. bí gúúr àm-tí kóó’ bú=wàà
 he morning go-CNV evening 3SGM=come_PST
 ‘He goes in the morning and comes in the evening.’
 b. bì t’ú-ó òr-àtí t̩h-ó fíín-àtí
 she cotton-M spin-CNV cloth-M work-CNV
 t̩h-ó kém-àtí bì=bée-fò
 cloth-M sell-EP-CNV 3SGF=live-PRT
 ‘She lives by spinning cotton, making clothes and selling clothes.’

Similar to declarative converb constructions, interrogative converbs are suffixed with converbal morphemes **-(à)tí** or **-rí**. Consider the following examples:

- (27) a. bí fàr-ó kém-tí èèbí bí=kèw
 he horse-M sell-CNV what 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘He sold a horse, and what did he buy?’
 b. bí fàr-ó kém-rí èèbí bí=kèw
 he horse-M sell-CNV what 3SGM=buy_PST
 ‘Having sold a horse, what is he going to buy?’

The converbal morphemes **-(à)tí** and **-rí** can also be attached to adjective bases. Consider the following examples:

- (28) a. bí ’àd-àtí één-tí bú=wàà
 he fat-CNV big-CNV 3SGM=come_PST
 ‘Lit. He came grown and adding weight.’

- b. bí k'ààk'-**àtí** bí=àm
 she hungry-CNV 3SG=go_PST
 'She went, because she is hungry.'

10.3.2 Negative converbs

In Borna, the negative converbs do not correspond to the two positive converbs; i.e., **-(à)tí** and **-rí**. The negative converb is marked by the morpheme **-ràw-** which is suffixed to the verb. The negative converb **-ràw-** has the meaning, 'without V-ing' or 'without having V-ed'. Consider the following examples:

- (29) a. bí bí=k'ej bí=màà-**ràw**-ó
 he 3SG=sleep_PST 3SGM=eat-CNV:NEG-M
 'He slept without eating.'
- b. bí bí=àm éégóór bí=kèèw-ú-**ràw**-ó
 she 3SGF=go nothing 3SGF=speak-EP-CNV:NEG-M
 'She went without speaking anything.'
- c. kónúwóórí bí=fíín-**ràw**-ó màà-**rà** -é
 nobody 3SGM=work-EP-CNV:NEG-M eat-NEG-3SGM:DECL
 'One should not eat without working.'

As shown in the above examples, (29a-c), in Borna, the morpheme **-ràw-** is the negative converb marker. It is suffixed to the verb stem to form a negative converb. The negative converb is used when the event expressed by the verb in the subordinate clause is not carried out, but the event expressed by the verb of the main clause is.

10.4 SVCs vs. converbs in Borna

Serial verb constructions and converbs in Borna show certain similarities and differences. In Borna, it has been identified that converbs show the linear arrangement of events in their sequential order of happening. On the other hand, the multi-verbs in serial verb constructions do not show the linear arrangement of events; rather the two verbs express a single event and the verbs have no syntactic dependency. Furthermore, the SVCs are simply juxtaposed; the relation of the verbs is unmarked. Nonetheless, converbs are morphologically marked for dependency. Likewise, contrary to the sequence of verbs that form serial verb constructions, the sequence of

verbs in converbs, cannot form a clause on their own. In other words, they cannot occur as a main predicate of an independent clause. This happens because converb is expressed morphologically in this language. In converb construction, it is the verb of the main clause (the finite one) that only can form a clause; hence, it is the only verb that can be inflected for different grammatical categories. Furthermore, converbs in Borna involve clause-chaining; nonetheless, serial verbs only form a single clause. In verb serialization, the verbs are in asymmetrical relation; i.e. the V_2 come from a limited class of verbs. In contrast, in converbs, there is no limit to the verbs in sequence as they describe different events. On the other hand, the two multi-verb constructions can occur in the same clause. Consider the following examples the bold printed words show SVC and converbs:

- (30) a. hán-k'ò-wà **ààj-dè?-rí** tàw-ó hán-òk **àt'-k'ír-àrí**
 this-EQ-FOC make-take-CNV fire-M this-ALLA lit_up-die-CNV
 bí=à dè-dè? tàw mán **mí -dè?-rí**
 3SGM=body catch-take fire the roast-take-CNV
 ‘like this, putting it, putting it on fire, holding its body, grilling on fire’

([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S85-86 TranC, B=294495, E=300210)

- b. **kà -dè?-rí** **ànàní-dè?-rí** **ànàní-dè?-rí** **ànàní-dè?-rí**
 cook-take-CNV rotate-take-CNV rotate-take-CNV rotate-take-CNV
 wèè-t íb-ó- k'àw-dè? ím-rí
 come-NPST guest-M-DAT pick-take give-CNV
 ‘cooking it, rotating, rotating, rotating [it], ‘serving for a guest [who] will come’

([Description of cultural materials](#), T=S87-88 TranC, B=300210, E=305415)

As already indicated and as shown in examples (30a-b), in Borna multi-verb constructions, both SVC and converbs can appear together in a clause. In such instances, the converb is attached to V_2 of the SVC. The occurrence of a converb attached to V_1 or its occurrence between V_1 and V_2 of the SVC is not attested. This further strengthens the claim that in Borna, the serial verbs act as a single verb and no morpheme or constituent is allowed to occur between the two verbs forming the SVC.

10.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has touched on three types of multi-verb constructions in Borna: serial verb constructions, ideophone based multi-verbs and converbs. It is found out that In Borna, verb serialization is constructed from two verbs in a sequence in a single clause without allowing any morpheme to intervene between them. Nonetheless, the two verbs have unequal semantic and syntactic status. V_1 belongs to an unrestricted subclass of verbs; on the other hand, V_2 is from a restricted class. Thus, the SVC in Borna is an asymmetrical type of SVC. It has been identified that the verbs that form V_2 are verbs of motion, direction or posture. Some of the verbs that form V_2 are, **àmà** ‘to go’, **wàà** ‘to come’, **dèk’à** ‘to take’, **k’írà** ‘to die’, **kèlà** ‘go_out’, **bèèjà** ‘to live, to sit, exist’. It has been also identified that the serialized verbs form a single predicate and share their arguments. In addition, the two verbs that form the serial verb only express a single event or form a single predicate and share their arguments. Nonetheless, the two components of the SVCs can occur as a main verb in other constructions.

In Borna, multi-verbs are also constructed by combining ideophones with dummy verbs. In such instances, the ideophones always occur preceding the dummy verb. The ideophones occur in bare form as they do not attach affixes. The different affixes are hosted by the dummy verb which has no semantic contribution to the whole construction. The dummy verbs that are frequently combined with the ideophones are **òlà** ‘to make, do’ and **èttà** ‘to say’. In addition to hosting the different affixes, the dummy verbs determine transitivity of the ideophones. The verb **òlà** gives transitive meaning; whereas the verb **èttà** gives intransitive meaning to the ideophones.

In addition to SVCs, Borna also makes use of extensive converb constructions. Two morphologically distinct converb marking morphemes are identified in this study: **-(à)ń** and **-rí**. The two forms are used both for subordination and clause-chaining. The morpheme **-(à)ń** is suffixed as a converb marker when the main clause verb is in past tense or perfective aspect form. On the other hand, the converb marker **-rí** is used when the main verb is in its non-past tense form.

Chapter eleven

Summary and recommendations for further research

This chapter presents a summary of the most important findings of the study. It also gives some recommendations for further research.

As stated in the introductory chapter, Chapter one, the main objective of this study was to document and describe the verb morphology of Borna, a North Omotic language spoken by less than half a million people in Ethiopia. The language and the speakers have been called by different pejorative and unrepresentative names. In the present study, based on the speakers' preference, *Boro*, the people's name, and *Borna*, their language, are used.

This study was conducted on the variety of Borna spoken in Bulen district of the Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional State. The Boros recount that their ancestors were originally from Canaan, Israel. Their forefathers first went to Egypt before they came to Ethiopia. The Boros believed that it was from the Egyptians that they had acquired their knowledge of herbal medicine and healing. The Boros have a clan-based social structure in which the two main clans are *Dowo* and *Gonga*. *Gonga* clan is further divided into two sub-clans, *Indi* and *Inoro*. Some holidays that are colorfully celebrated by the Boros are *Gara*, *Shawuya*, and *Gediwo*. The marriage types that are mainly practiced by the Boros are *Jiya*, *Nata*, *Phuriya*, *Tsitsa*, and *Wida*. The majority of the Boros are followers of Orthodox Christianity. Their main livelihood is cultivation and livestock.

The methods of data collection employed in this study included audio-video recording of texts from different communicative events and elicitation. The examples, the descriptions, the linguistic explanations and generalizations given in this study were drawn from the audio-video recorded texts and the elicitations. This made the analysis to be contextualized. Furthermore, the texts were annotated and included in this study for cross-checking and serve as a data source for further research on the language. The software applications employed were Audacity, Corel Video Studio Pro x7, ELAN version: 4.3.3., and Toolbox.

Chapter two dealt with literature review. The general survey made on previous works on the language showed that there was very little linguistic literature available on the language.

Moreover, the critical review made on the existing literature also revealed that there exists knowledge gap regarding the language and the speakers. Hence, this study was intended to address the issues which have not been dealt with by previous researchers. The study also attempted to enhance our understanding of the grammar of the language in general and the nature of the verb morphology in particular.

In Chapter three, the sketch grammar of the language is presented. The main aims of the Chapter were setting a background for the main topic of the research, and helping readers to have a general overview of the grammar of the language. Accordingly, the sketch description of phonology, noun morphology and syntax was presented. The first section of the Chapter begins with phonology. Here it was revealed that the language has 26 consonant phonemes, ten peripheral vowels, and one central vowel. Concerning the distribution of phonemes, it was found out that the consonant phonemes /*ɲ* / & /*r*/ do not occur word-initially. The findings also showed that the phoneme /*s*/ does not appear word-finally and the phoneme /*ɲ* / is only restricted to word-initial position. As to the distribution of vowel phonemes, except the high central vowel /*ɨ*/ which does not occur word-initially, the other vowels can occur in all positions. The study has also shown that in addition to the segmental phonemes, the supra-segmental features such as consonant gemination, vowel length, and tone are phonemic in Borna. It was also found out that the language exhibits two phonological tone levels: high (H) and low (L) with both lexical and grammatical functions.

In the second section of the Chapter, the noun morphology is analyzed. It was identified that nouns are inflected for number, gender, and case. Plural nouns can be formed either by reduplication of the root or affixation of the morpheme **-wò** - to the root. Regarding gender, the language displays a two-gender system: masculine and feminine. This distinction is made by using tone, morphological marking or lexical means. Morphologically, masculine gender is marked by /**-ó**/ for singular common nouns, while feminine gender is designated by /**-ú**/. Gender is marked by a tone for proper nouns and third person singular pronouns; **H** tone mark masculine whereas **L** tone mark feminine.

Pronouns are discussed in the fourth section of the Chapter. The pronouns identified include personal, demonstrative, reflexive and interrogative. It was recognized, in Borna, that subject personal pronouns are independent; i.e. they occur without being attached to other words. The

other pronouns are formed by suffixing different bound morphemes to the subject pronoun. The object pronoun is formed by attaching the morpheme **-n** to the subject pronouns. Likewise, the dative pronoun is formed by attaching the morpheme **-l** to the subject pronouns.

The nature of the verb root and verb derivation is described in chapter four. It was found out that verb roots in Borna do not constitute a fully understandable word. The citation suffix **-à** or the different inflectional morphemes are always required to give understandable meaning to a verb. It was also unveiled that verb roots attach different derivational suffixes that affect the valency of the verb. These suffixes include passives, causatives, reciprocals, and middle. The passive is formed by suffixing the morpheme **-ée-** to the verb stem. Similarly, it has been identified that causative verb stems can be derived by suffixing one of the causative forming morphemes **-íí-**, **-z-**, **-l-** or **-t-**. The morphemes **-íí-** and **-z-** are attached to the verb roots to derive causative verb stems. The morpheme **-l-** derives causative verbs from adjective and verb stems. The morpheme **-t-** derives causative verb stems from adjectives. The reciprocals are morphologically derived by suffixing the morpheme **-é-** to the verb stem. As to the morpheme order in morphologically complex verbs, the derivational morphemes occur immediately following the verb root and the inflectional morphemes occur following the derivational suffixes.

In chapter five, a detailed description of the nature of verb inflection is presented. The study has identified that Borna is a morphologically rich language. The main inflectional morphemes attached to the verb are tense, aspect and person/mood. The language has an obligatory subject-verb agreement. In a sentence, a verb must agree with its corresponding subject noun phrase in number, person, and gender. This is marked either by suffixing agreement marking morphemes or by using pronominal proclitics. The person agreement marking suffixes are also mood markers; i.e. the agreement markers change following the mood of the sentences. Put differently, each of the three moods, i.e. indicative, imperative and interrogative have different person agreement markers. The proclitics are **tì=**, **nì=**, **bí=**, **bì=**, **nò=**, **ít(í)=** and **bó=**, they respectively mark 1SG, 2SG, 3SGM, 3SGF, 1PL, 2PL, and 3PL.

Similarly, the study has shown that Borna morphologically distinguishes a two-way split system of tenses, the past tense **-r-** and non-past tense **-túw/-t**. In addition, it was discovered that there exist two types of aspectual system in Borna. These were the perfective and the imperfective aspect. The perfective aspect is marked by **-r-**, a portmanteau morpheme which is also used to

mark past tense. The imperfective aspect is further sub-divided into two, the progressive aspect marked by **-úír** or **-rúw-** and the present habitual aspect marked by **-fò** or **-f-**. Whenever these inflectional morphemes occur on the same verb, the tense/aspect marker is attached immediately after the verb root; then it is followed by the person/mood marking morpheme.

Negation formation mechanisms in Borna are identified and described in chapter six. The study revealed that the language generally employs two strategies to express negation: by affixation and by introducing lexically-negative verb to the clause. In non-verbal clauses like copulas and existential clauses, the lexically-negative **ál-** ‘be_not’ or ‘exist_not’ is used to form negative clauses. In verbal constructions, negation is formed through affixation. Hence, there are two morphemes that suffix to the verb to form negation. In present habitual verb form either **-rák-** or **-ák-** is used. The choice among these two morphemes is phonologically conditioned. When the verb stem final sound is consonant, **-ák-** is used; elsewhere **-rák-** is used. The other negation forming morphemes is **-rá** - or **-á** -. These morphemes are used when the verb is in past and non-past tense form. As in the former type morphemes, the distribution of these morphemes is also phonologically conditioned. The morpheme **-á** - is used with verb roots terminating in vowels while the morpheme **-rá** - is suffixed to vowel final verb roots. Negation in imperative sentences is formed by using lexically negative word **k’ázá** ‘to leave’.

In chapter seven, the morphological expressions and the pragmatic functions of focus are analyzed. The study has identified three types of focus on the basis of its pragmatic role; these are presentational, contrastive/corrective and selective. In all the focus types identified, the constituent that expresses the salient information is either morphologically marked or expressed using cleft construction or word order alternation. Morphologically, focus is marked by suffixing the focus marking morpheme **-nì** or the copula **-nà** to the focused constituent. In a narrow focus type, i.e. when subject or object of a sentence is the focused constituent, the focus marking is either **-nì** or **-nà**. When the focused constituent is a personal pronoun, only the copula **-nà** is used. The focus marker **-nì**, on the other hand, is suffixed to focused noun phrases. In predicate focus the focus marker is only **-nì**. The study has also revealed that it is only one constituent of a clause that can be focus marked at a time.

In chapter eight, the morphophonemic processes commonly observed in the verb morphology of Borna is described. It was revealed that when morphemes are combined, there are many

morphophonemic processes that take place. The major morphophonemic processes exhibited include insertion, deletion, assimilation, internal change and verb-final consonant alternation. The data have indicated that both vowels and consonants are inserted at the morpheme boundary to adjust the phonotactics of the language. Similarly, certain sounds can be deleted at the morpheme boundary to form an acceptable sequence of sounds. Furthermore, assimilation of sounds is also made to make articulations easy. Finally, the study has revealed that some verb root-final consonants undertake alternation especially when the verb is in the imperative mood and negation marking morphemes are attached to the verb stem.

Chapter nine presented the analysis of copulas and copula clauses. Accordingly, it has been identified that copula clauses are verb-less clauses in Borna. The copula predicates are all non-verbal, i.e. they are formed from N(P), Adj(P) or PP. The link between the copula subject and the non-verbal copula predicate is shown by bound affixes, **-nà**, **-à**, **-ì**, and **-nó**, that is suffixed to the copula predicate or to the second occurring personal pronouns. The selection of these copula markers is predictable. The copula **-nà** is used when the copula subject is a first and second person. In such cases, it is suffixed to the second occurring subject personal pronoun. When the copula subject is third person singular masculine, the copula marker is **-à**. With a third person singular feminine and third person plural, the copula marker is **-ì** and **-nó**, respectively.

Finally, in chapter ten the analyses of three types of multi-verb constructions: SVC, ideophone based multi-verbs and converbs was presented. It has been revealed that SVCs in Borna are formed from two verbs juxtaposed without the intervention of any other morpheme between them. The two verbs have unequal semantic and syntactic status; i.e. unrestricted V₁ and restricted V₂. Nonetheless, the serialized verbs form a single predicate; thus, they express a single event and share their arguments. Similarly, it was found out that ideophone based multi-verbs are formed by juxtaposing ideophones with dummy verbs **èttà** ‘to say’ and **òlā** ‘to make’. The ideophones occur as V₁ and carry the full semantic load. The semantic contribution of the dummy verbs is not clear. Nonetheless, the different grammatical elements of the verb form like agreement/mood, tense and aspect markers are hosted by the dummy verbs. In this Chapter, the way converbs are constructed in the language is also analyzed. Accordingly, it was identified in Borna that converbs are formed from two morphemes: **-(à)ú** and **-rí**. The morpheme **-(à)ú** is

used when the finite verb is in past tense form while the morpheme **-rí** is used when the finite verb is in its habitual or non-past form.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the present study has provided an insight into the structure of Borna verb morphology. The linguistic descriptions given showed that the language has its own peculiar features and it also shares certain morphological similarities with other Gonga languages.

It is also believed that the present study has bridged the knowledge gap that has been identified. Nevertheless, there are certain issues that need further research. Thus, the following recommendations have been given for further work to be undertaken:

- ✓ The present study has only examined the structure of Borna verb morphology based on data collected from the variety spoken in Bulan. The other varieties of Borna are not treated here. It is believed that confinement to a single variety poses some limitations on the descriptions and generalization of its results. Therefore, further studies that comprise all varieties of Borna are needed to make some sound generalizations on the grammar of the language.
- ✓ The present study has only investigated the verb morphology of Borna. Consequently, it does not give a complete picture of the grammar of the language. Sketch grammar is presented in chapter three, though. Thus, further work on a complete grammar of the language would help us have a complete understanding of the grammar of Borna.
- ✓ An attempted has been made to show how the subject agreement is marked in negative declarative and interrogative constructions. Nonetheless, the way agreement is marked in third person masculine and feminine subjects when the verb form is in the present habitual form is puzzling. In such instances, the interplay of imperative/jussive marker, agreement marker and copula marker is observed. Thus, further research has to be conducted to identify and explain why such phenomenon is only observed in the third person singular.

- ✓ The present study has also attempted to describe the systems of the formation of negation in Borna. Although it has been identified in the present study that morphological way of negation formation neutralizes tense, it was not possible to morphologically discern negative declarative sentences in the past tense verb form from negative non-past tense declarative sentences. Hence, though plausible explanations are presented in the present study on how to discern the two, further research and information on how negation operates in Borna would be worthwhile.
- ✓ Serial verb construction is a very interesting portion of Borna grammar. Two verbs combine to form a single predicate. In the present study, their major morphological features are described. Nonetheless, it is not sufficient. Therefore, more detailed data analysis is needed to better understand the syntactic and semantic features of serial verbs in Borna.
- ✓ The current study has also made an attempt to describe ideophones in Borna. Especially, the study emphasized on identifying the properties of Borna ideophones and their properties in multi-verb formation. Nonetheless, the study only described the predicate type of ideophones. Therefore, the descriptions given here are not complete. It would be interesting if further research is undertaken on the other types ideophones that were not addressed in the present study.

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²⁷Haspelmath's (2014) "The Generic Style Rules for Linguistics" style of referencing is adopted, yet Ethiopian authors are listed with their personal name first, father's name second and no comma in between.

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Appendix A

Wordlist

Appendix B

Annotated texts

Appendix C

Note on the language consultants and resourceful people