

# N-Words in Dawurotsuwa

Aklilu Abera Naba  
Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Abstract**—This article investigates n-words in Dawurotsuwa, which is classified under the Omotic language family under the Afroasiatic phylum. Speakers of the language are found in Ethiopia, specifically in the southwest part of the country. The study aims to describe n-words in this language, which is one of the scarcely described languages in the area. N-words in the language are formed by suffixing the morpheme *-kka/-nne* to content question words. These morphemes also mark indefiniteness in the language. These formed n-words express negation in fragmented answers but don't in a complete main clause. In the main clause, they are accompanied by sentential negative markers to transfer negative meanings. In Dawurotsuwa, n-words are not inherently negative. These n-word-forming morphemes *-nne* and *-kka* are also used for coordinating conjunction and emphatic coordination, respectively. The morpheme *-kka* also serves as a scalar focus suffix. They also express a specificity that is indefinite, but when the specificity is definite, the last vowel changes to *-o* and becomes only *-kko*. Thus, n-words can be named indefinite pronouns.

**Index Terms**—n-word, negative, scalar, indefinite

## I. INTRODUCTION

This article investigates n-words in Dawurotsuwa, which belongs to the Omotic language family, and is a member of the Afroasiatic phylum. Köhler (2020) says that Omotics are located solely in the Southwest part of Ethiopia. Dawurotsuwa, the language of the current study, is found in the North Omoto cluster under the North Omotic family (Bender, 1976; Fleming, 1976).

It was Laka who created the term *n-word* for the first time. It was used in the work to label those expressions in Romance that are allowed to occur with a standard negative marker or express negation by themselves even in the absence of the standard negative marker. The name 'n-words' was given to these expressions because most of them begin with *n-* (Lake, 1990). The equivalent in Dawurotsuwa can be named *nne/kka*-words as these morphemes are suffixed to the base to form n-words. Haspelmath (1997) uses 'negative indefinite pronoun' for special indefinite pronouns that are only used in negative sentences and always express negation; in some languages, these indefinite pronouns are sufficient to express sentential negation by themselves. The term 'negative polarity items' is also used to refer to those indefinite pronouns which can occur in the absence of the negative operator, such as within conditionals and interrogatives (Haspelmath, 1997).

N-words in Dawurotsuwa are formed by attaching morpheme *-nne/-kka* to content questions words like *ʔáy áá* 'what'. There are similar examples in the world's languages like Polish which marks by means of suffixes such as *-s*, *-kolwiek* (Haspelmath, 1997).

This article is organized as follows: in Section (II) n-words will be discussed. Under this section, their occurrences, scalar meanings, and types will be dealt with. Then in Section (III), the relation between the focus marker and the negative operator will be discussed. In the last section, a brief etymological source of the negative markers will be provided.

## II. N-WORDS

It is not easy to describe the occurrences and meanings of n-words because they are diverse in the world's languages. This diversity makes it difficult for n-words to formulate the structural or meaning characteristics to identify them. However, there are some points to identify their occurrences (Giannakidou, 2006). Thus, in this article, n-words in Dawurotsuwa are identified based on the following definition:

### (1) **N-word:**

An expression  $\alpha$  is an n-word iff:

- (a)  $\alpha$  can be used in structures containing sentential negation or another  $\alpha$ -expression yielding a reading equivalent to one logical negation; and
- (b)  $\alpha$  can provide a negative fragment answer (Giannakidou, 2006, p.328)

Penka (2006) says n-words consist of both negative and indefinite meanings. When a negative marker and two or more n-words in a clause result in a single negative interpretation, it is named 'Negative Concord' (NC) (Giannakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017). The following table gives the standard negation markers in Dawurotsuwa. This paradigm will help to note the relation between the negative markers and n-words forming morphemes morphologically.

TABLE 1  
STANDARD NEGATIVE MARKER

Persons	Verb Paradigm	Negative Morpheme
1SG	<i>b-á-b éíkk-e</i>	-kk-
2SG	<i>b-á-b éíkk-a</i>	-kk-
3SGF	<i>b-á-b éíkk-u</i>	-kk-
3SGM	<i>b-íb éénn-a</i>	-nn-
1PL	<i>b-íb éíkk-o</i>	-kk-
2PL	<i>b-íb éíkk-íta</i>	-kk-
3PL	<i>b-íb éíkk-ino</i>	-kk-

In (2), morpheme *-nn-* is a sentential negative marker for 3SG.M. For the remaining persons, it is *-kk-*. There is no other element found in this sentence that expresses negation. On the other hand, in (3), *ʔáyáá-nne/-kka* ‘nothing’ functions as a negative reply to an affirmative interrogative. As we can see, the indefinite pronoun consists of elements similar to the sentential negative marker *-nn/-kk-*. However, *ʔáyáá-nne/-kka* which expresses negation in the fragment fails to express negation when it occurs with the sentential negation as in (4a). It has been functioning as a negative reply in (3). It should be noted that the gloss ‘nothing’ doesn’t represent the equivalent meaning for the Dawurotsuwa *ʔáyáá-nne/-kka* version. The reason is that the English version is always or inherently negative, but the Dawurotsuwa’s is not. This is a foundation for the discussion in (C). In addition to the negative fragment answers, n-words express negation in omitted predication in disjunction and coordination. In (4b&c), *-nne/-kka* doesn’t co-occur with a sentential negative marker, but it does express negation.

- 2) *dáán- í* *laatsa-a* *m- éénn-a*  
D áána-NOM lunch-ACC eat-3SG-NEG-DECL  
‘Daana doesn’t eat lunch’
- 3) Q: *dáán- í* *ʔáyáá* *m- íí*  
D áána-NOM what eat-3SG.M.IPFV.Q  
‘What does Dana eat?’  
A: *ʔáyáá-nne/-kka*  
what-INDF  
‘Nothing’
- 4a) *dáán- í* *ʔáyáá-nne/-kka* *m- éénn-a*  
D áána-NOM what- INDF eat-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
‘Dana doesn’t eat anything’
- b) *táán í* *ʔaŠu-a* *m- áná* *wókkó h árá*  
1SG.NOM meat-ACC take-FUT or other  
*ʔaya-nne/-kka*  
who- INDF  
‘I will eat meat or nothing else’
- c) *n één í* *darua* *ʔakk- áá-dd-a*  
2SG.NOM a lot take-2SG-PFV-DECL  
*poli* *ʔáyá-nne/-kka*  
Pola.NOM what- INDF  
‘You have taken a lot, and Pola nothing!’

#### A. Functions of *-nne/-kka* Morpheme

Before going into details, let us observe various occurrences of the morpheme *-nne/-kka* in the language. In Dawurotsuwa *-nne/-kka* has multiple meanings. These various functions can’t be represented with a single marker in the glossing. Thus indefinite aspect will be glossed in this study.

One of the functions is that it is utilized as a coordinating suffix. Only *-nne* serves this function; *-kka* is not employed for this. In (5a), *-nne* functions as a connecting suffix while the use of *-kka* makes it unacceptable, as in (5b).

- 5a) *dáán- énné* *ʔánjóór- á* *deʔ-iino*  
Dana-NOM-and Anjore-NOM exist-3PL.IPFV.DECL  
‘Dana and Anjore are students’
- b) *\*dáán- ékka* *ʔánjóórá* *deʔ-iino*  
Intended: ‘Dana and Anjore exist’

The morpheme *-kka* is also used for emphasized coordination, as in (6a). When the coordinates are more stressed than other elements of the sentence, the morpheme *-kka* is attached to both nominals in the coordination. The morpheme *-nne* is not used in this context because it is used in ordinary coordination, and not attached to two coordinates at the

same time, as in (6b).

- 6a) *d áán- íkka* *ʔánjóór- ákka* *ʔá*  
 Dana-NOM-and.EMP NOM-and.EMP 3SG.M.ACC  
*ʔer- éédd-ino*  
 know-3PL-PFV-DECL  
 'Both Dana and Anjore have known him'
- b) \* *d áán- ínne* *ʔánjóór- á-nne* *ʔá ʔer- íkk-ino*  
*Intended: 'Both Dana and Anjore don't know him'*

In Dawurotsuwa, the morpheme *-kka* also describes emphatic negative coordination, as in (7). Although the nominals that are attached with this morpheme, i.e., *d áán- í* and *ʔánjóór- á* in the example (7) below are negative alternatives that none of them knows the person referred to, the standard negative marker *-kk-* is suffixed to the main verb. As we can see, in both affirmative (6a) and negative (7) emphatic coordination, the same morphological element *-kka* is used. The difference lies in the attachment of the negative marker to the main verb.

- 7) *d áán- íkka* *ʔánjóór- ákka* *ʔá*  
 Daana-NOM-and.EMP Anjore-NOM-and.EMP 3SG.M.ACC  
*ʔer- íkk-ino*  
 know-3PL-NEG-DECL  
 'Neither Dana nor Anjore knows'

In addition, *-kka* morpheme is used to represent omitted elements that may agree or disagree with an antecedent. In (8a), the sentence is affirmative. The second speaker in (8b) attaches *-kka* to 1SG.NOM by omitting the predicate to express that he shares the same situation as in (a).

- 8a) *g újj- í* *laas 'a-a* *m- éédd-a*  
 Guj-NOM lunch-ACC eat-3SG.M-PFV-DECL  
 'Gujja has eaten the lunch.'
- b) *t áán íkka*  
 1PL.NOM-also  
 'Me too'

Moreover, the same morpheme *-kka* is used to represent the omitted negative antecedent predicate. In (9a) the sentence is negative. The second speaker in (9b) attaches *-kka* to 1SG.NOM by omitting the negative predicate to express that he shares the same situation as in (a). As we can see, the same morphological element *-kka* is used for representing both affirmative (8b) and negative (9b) predications when they are omitted.

- 9a) *g újj- í* *laas 'a-a* *m- íb éénn-a*  
 Guj-NOM lunch-ACC eat-3SG.M-PFV-DECL  
 'Gujja has not eaten the lunch.'
- b) *t áán íkka*  
 1PL.NOM-also  
 'Neither me'

There is another morpheme *-kko* which is similar to the *-nne/-kka* phrase morpheme *-kka* in element *-kk-* but different in its final vowel *-o* and *-a*. This morpheme *-kko* is used to express vocative. It describes a direction in which something or someone heads on as in (10). On the other hand, this morpheme is also used for expressing specific indefinite situation as in (10b).

- 10a) *dug ékko*  
 down-VOC  
 'in down word direction'
- b) *ʔóóna-kko* *soo-n* *deʔ-ee*  
 Who-INDF home-LOC exist-3SG.M.DECL  
 'Somebody is at home'

Moreover, morpheme *-kka* is used to express addition to what is already available. In example (11), Guja is just an additional person to those who are already in the house. In this usage, it is not possible to use *-nne*. This shows that *-nne* and *-kka* overlap functionally to a certain extent but they are not synonymous.

- 11a) *g újj- íkka* *soo-n* *deʔ-ee*  
 Gujja-NOM-also home-LOC exist-3SG.M.DECL  
 'Gujja also exists at home'
- b) \**g újj- ínne* *soo-n* *deʔ-ee*  
*Intended: 'Gujja also exists at home'*

Furthermore, *-kka/-nne* is used for forming indefinite pronouns which serve for both affirmative and negative environment. Morpheme *-nne/-kka*<sup>1</sup> combines with content question words or numeral *ʔ tt úú* 'one' to form the negative indefinite pronoun *ʔ tt ú-nne/-kka*<sup>1</sup> 'no one' as in (12) below. This will be discussed in detail in the following section

<sup>1</sup> This has scalar implicature

(C.1).

Scalar meaning is also transferred by the morpheme *-nne/-kka*. This function is formed by attaching *-nne/-kka* to a nominal. Haspelmath (1997) labels this usage as a negative scalar focus suffix. This suffix is attached to the word *ʔttúʔttí* or nominals to offer this scalar interpretation. Scalar interpretation involves comparison with a set of contextually-specified alternative propositions that are ordered in terms of ranking order.

- 12) *ʔittú-nne/-kka*                      *y- íb éénn-a*  
 one- INDF                                  come-3SG-PFV-NEG-DECL  
 'Not even one came'

The above discussion shows that multiple functions of the morpheme can be found in a single clause. It is difficult to propose a single gloss for all those morphemes with identical elements, but it is easier to gloss the functions over consistently. In (13), the first *-nne* which is attached to *marota* is functioning as a connector while the second *-nne* which is suffixed to *galla* is serving as a scalar focus suffix. The scalar *-kka* which can substitute scalar *-nne* in (13), can't take the place of the first *-nne* which is used as a conjunctive. In the scalar position, *-nne* and *-kka* substitute each other as they are presented. Dawurotsuwa doesn't employ different elements for expressing conjunction and scalar meaning. For both functions, the same morphological elements are used.

- 13) *marota-nne*                      *dar-i*                      *ʔttí*  
 Marota.NOM-and                      Dari.NOM one  
*galla-nne/-kka*                      *ʔatt-i-kk-ino*  
 day-INDF                                  work-3PL-NEG-DECL  
 'Marote and Daro don't miss class even for one day'

### B. Scalar Morpheme

Indefiniteness in a lot of languages is expressed by an item that intends to convey 'even' which is a 'scalar focus particle' (Haspelmath, 1997). The meaning of 'also' and 'even' is the same to the extent of even impossible to distinguish the two. If the indefiniteness marking element is similar to an element that carries the meaning of 'also', then the root cause for this indefiniteness is the scalar function 'even' (Haspelmath, 1997). This phenomenon is clearly visible in Dawurotsuwa; 'also' and 'even' marking elements are completely the same morphologically.

In the above, we mentioned that scalar usage of *-nne/-kka* is one of the functions of this morpheme. They are used to form indefinite pronouns as well. These indefinite pronouns, which are formed by combining this morpheme and the interrogative pronoun, always co-occur with verbal negation in Dawurotsuwa, as in (13) above. This scalar meaning forming element is used for forming indefinite pronouns, which is one of the n-words.

For example (14) *-kka* is used as the focus *even* in the affirmative. In this example, *Dánsa* is the least likely person to eat the honey among persons who are expected to eat it. The scalar *-kka* is suffixed to the person named '*Dánsa*'. This element shows a hierarchy of persons in numbers who are expected to eat from the most likely to the least likely person. In this usage, *-nne* is not used. It shows that all people have eaten the honey. In the negative, as in (14b), the pragmatic scale is reversed. In (14b), the most expected person to eat is *Dansa*, unlike (14a) in which *Dansa* is the least expected person.

- 14a) *Dáns- íkka*                      *laafa ʔeessa-a*                      *m- éédd-a*  
 Dansa-NOM-SFS                      small honey-ACC                      eat-3SG.F.M-PFV-DECL  
 'Even Dansa has eaten some honey.'
- b) *Dáns- íkka*                      *laafa ʔeessa-a*                      *m- íb éénn-a*  
 Dansa-NOM-SFS                      small honey-ACC                      eat-3SF.M-PFV-DECL  
 'Even Dansa has not eaten some honey.'

In example (15) the one who has the greatest probability of being helped in Pola's family is *ʔaatto* 'the mother'. This utmost expected candidate to be helped in the family is not being helped. If this utmost person is not helped, then no one is going to be supported in the family. This means that the whole members of the family are not supported by Pola. Haspelmath (1997) calls this most likely alternative 'low endpoints of the relevant pragmatic scale'; when this is accompanied by a sentential negative marker, it gives 'universal negation'.

- 15) *pol-i bare*                      *ʔaatto-kka*                      *maadd- énn-a*  
 pola-NOM himself                      mother-SFS                      help-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
 'Pola doesn't help even his mother'

Likewise, for example (16), the most expected person to drink alcohol is 'he' among his friends, but he has not drunk alcohol. So the scalar focus suffix *-nne/kka* is attached to the 1SG.NOM in order to show the most likely alternative, but the most likely person has not done it, which is expressed by the sentential negative marker. If the most expected one is not doing it, then no one else is doing the event.

- 16) *táán ínne/-kka*                      *matsoy-ia*                      *ʔuŠša-a*  
 1SG.NOM-SFS                      intoxicate-RELZ                      drink-ACC  
*ʔuŠ- áb éíkk-e*  
 drink- 1SG-PFV-NEG-DECL  
 'Even I have not drunk alcohol'

As we can see above, the Dawurotsuwa *-nne/-kka* phrase expresses the most likely alternative in the presence of a

sentential negative marker, but it expresses the least likely alternative in the absence of a sentential negative marker. At (17), the least likely person to drink is *t áán* 'but he has drunk it.

- 17) *t áán ínne/-kka* *matsoy-ia* *ʔušša-a*  
 1SG.NOM-SFS intoxicate-RELZ drink-ACC  
*ʔuš-áá-dd-i*  
 drink- 1SG-PFV-DECL  
 'Even I have drunk alcohol'

When the morpheme *-nne/-kka* is attached, the meaning it conveys is based on the members in the sequence to be compared. The members don't have an equal likelihood of accomplishing an event or a situation. The members are sequenced according to their hierarchy from most likely to the least likely status. The most or the least is determined by the presence or absence of a sentential negative marker. If there is the sentential negative marker, the morpheme gives the most likely alternative and vice versa.

On the other hand, *-nne/-kka* can be used to express an unspecified item, as in (18a). In this example, there is no ranking interpretation. Rather, it expresses the number of elements of the referents. The number can be one, two, three, or more, but *deešša-* 'goat' can be any one of the considered referents. There is no 'the most or the least' expected item among the members. All have equal chances, i.e. *deešša-*, to be taken by Pola in the example (18a). When the morpheme is suffixed to plural nouns, it is unacceptable, as in (18b).

- 18a) *pol-i* *ʔitti deešša-a-nne/-kka* *ʔakk-i-bee-nn-a*  
 Pola-NOM one goat-ACC-INDF take-3SG.M-PFV-NEG-DECL  
 'Pola has not taken even one goat'
- b) *\*pol-i ʔitti deešša-tua-nne/-kka* *ʔakk-i-bee-nn-a*  
 Pola-NOM one goat-PL.ACC-INDF take-3SG.M-PFV-NEG-DECL

In the sentence (19a), morpheme *-nne/-kka*, which expresses negation in (3 & 4) independently above, doesn't play that role here in collaboration with the sentential negative marker. It is the sentential negative marker that plays the role of expressing negation. The phrase that is formed of *-nne/-kka* contributes to the negation. If the morpheme is expected to contribute to the negation as in (19a), it is accompanied by the sentential negative marker. This contribution is made irrespective of its place of occurrence in a clause. The place where they appear doesn't make any difference in its contribution. Whether they occur in the subject position, as in (19b), or object as in (19a), they require a sentential negative marker to contribute to the negation. In this respect, *-nne/-kka*-phrases have a strict pattern in the language. The places where they are located in a clause don't make them omit the licenser, i.e., sentential negative marker. The morpheme can also occur in the absence of the sentential negative marker but doesn't contribute to the negation, as in (20a-d).

- 19a) *pol-i ʔitti ʔišaa-nne/-kka* *maadd-énn-a*  
 Pola-NOM one brother.ACC-INDF help-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
 'Pola doesn't help even one person.'
- b) *ʔitti ʔišaa-nne/-kka* *pol-i* *maadd-énn-a*  
 one brother.ACC-INDF Pola-NOM help-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
 'Pola doesn't help even one person.'
- 20a) *pol-i ʔitti* *balay-nne/-kka* *baynnan*  
 Pola.NOM one mistake-INDF not.exist  
*saaf-ee-dd-a*  
 write-3SG.M-PFV-DECL  
 'Pola has written without making even one mistake'
- b) *t áán í* *ʔáyáá-ppe-nne/-kka* *kaset-áádd é*  
 1SG.NOM what-ABL-INDF before-CVB  
*woos-ai*  
 pray-1SG-IPFV-DECL  
 'I pray before doing anything'
- c) *ʔáyá* *ʔasi-nne/-kka* *yeekk-ia-wee*  
 what person.NOM- INDF mourn-RELZ-NMN  
*dig-át-eedd á-wa*  
 prohibite-PASS-RELZ.PFV-TOP  
 'It is prohibited to any person to mourn'
- d) *ʔáyáá-nne/-kka* *m-ia-wa* *ʔess-a*  
 what- INDF eat-RELZ-NMN stop-2PL-IMP

‘Stop eating anything’

### C. Types of N-words

Based on the definition given in (1), n-words in Dawurotsuwa will be discussed in this section. They are negative indefinite pronouns, *mule*, and minimizers. They serve as a single negative reply for both positive and negative questions.

#### 1. Negative Indefinite Pronouns

In Dawurotsuwa, negative indefinite pronouns are formed by attaching the morpheme *-nne/-kka* to the content question pronouns and *?tí* ‘one’. Look at the table below for their formation. It should be noted that Dawurotsuwa indefinite pronouns are not inherently negative because the same form is used for both affirmative and negatives.

TABLE 2  
N-WORD FORMATION IN DAWUROTSUWA

No.	Item	Pronouns	Negative Indefinite Pronouns
1	One	<i>?ittí</i> ‘one’	<i>?ittú-nne, ?ittú-kka</i>
2	Person	<i>?óón-</i> ‘who/whom’	<i>?óóni-nne, ?óóni-kka</i>
3	Thing	<i>?áyáá</i> ‘what’	<i>?áyáy-nne, ?áyáy-kka</i>
4	Time	<i>?áǎé</i> ‘when’	<i>?áǎé-nne, ?áǎé-kka</i>
5	Place	<i>hák’á</i> ‘where’	<i>hák’á-nne, hák’á-kka</i>
6	Scalar	Proper noun + <i>-kka</i>	Example: <i>D áán á-kka</i>
9	Conjunction	<i>-kka....-kka</i> ‘Neither...nor’	<i>D áán á-kka....</i>

As we can see in the table above, each negative indefinite pronoun is suffixed either with *-nne* or *-kka* and forms n-word class together in Dawurotsuwa. It should be noted that it is not the content question pronoun alone or the suffix *-nne* or *-kka* solely form n-words; it is the combination of both that makes up n-words. Dawurotsuwa n-word forming morpheme consists of the element of the standard negation morpheme. The standard negotiation in Dawurotsuwa is made by using the negative operator *-nn/-kk-* (TABLE-1), consider examples in (21b&22b) below. On the other hand, here we observe that the suffix *-nne/-kka* is used to form indefinite pronouns in Dawurotsuwa. As we can see, both negative morphemes and n-word forming morphemes have *-nn/-kk-* in common.

- 21a) *d áán- í* *laas’ a-a* *m-ee*  
D áána-NOM lunch-ACC eat-3SG.M. IPFV.DECL  
‘Dana eats lunch’
- b) *d áán- í* *laas’ a-a* *m- éénn-a*  
D áána-NOM lunch-ACC eat-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
‘Dana doesn’t eat lunch’
- 22a) *?ánjóór- á* *laas’ a-a* *m- áu*  
Anjore-NOM lunch-ACC eat-3SG.F.IPFV.DECL  
‘Anjore eats lunch’
- b) *?ánjóór- á* *laas’ a-a* *m- úúkk-u*  
Anjore-NOM lunch-ACC eat-3SG-NEG-DECL  
‘Anjore doesn’t eat lunch’

The morpheme *-nne/-kka* is suffixed to the content question words to form a negative indefinite pronoun in Dawurotsuwa. For instance, in (23), the question word *?áyáá* ‘what’ in (23Q) is suffixed with *-nne/-kka* in (23A) to occur as a negative fragment answer: *?áyáá-nne/?áyáá-kka*.

- 23) Q: *?áyáá* *be?- áádd- íí*  
what see-2SG-PFV-Q  
‘What have you seen?’
- A: *?áyáá-nne/-kka*  
what-INDF  
‘Nothing’

Why are the n-word forming morpheme *-nne/-kka* and negative morpheme *-nn/-kk-* do they have a common element in Dawurotsuwa? This needs detailed study, though we won’t try to answer this question now. Is the n-word morpheme developed from the negative morpheme or vice versa? Of course, there is a certain way that they are connected. I think it will not be an arbitrary as Jespersen states:

The history of negative expressions in various languages makes us witness the following curious fluctuation; the original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word, and in its turn may be felt like the negative proper and may then in course of time be subject to the same development as the original word (Jespersen, 1917, p.4).

#### 2. Mule

This is the second type of n-word in Dawurotsuwa. This is represented in Dawurotsuwa by *mulokka*, *mule*, *ʔubbakka* as we can see in (24). According to my informant, they prefer *ʔubbakka* to *mulokka*. And they use *mule* without adding *-kka* too. They are categorized under the n-word because they function as a negative reply for both negative and positive questions; they can be used to express negation in a sentence fragment reply, as in (25&26).

- 24) *mule*, *mulokka*, *ʔubbakka* ‘never, not at all’
- 25) Q: *Šalu-a* *laamoti-ssi* *ʔáidé ʔimm-an íí*  
 money-ACC Lamote-DAT time give-2SG.IPFV.Q  
 ‘When will you give the money to Laamote?’
- A: *mule/mulo-kka/ʔáidé-kka*  
 all/all-INDF /when-INDF  
 ‘Never’
- 26) Q: *laamot-a* *ʔuša-a* *ʔuš-áí*  
 Laamote-NOM drink-ACC smoke-3SG.F.IPFV.Q  
 ‘Does Laamote drink alcohol?’
- A: *mule/mulo-kka/ʔáidé-kka*  
 all/all- INDF /when- INDF  
 ‘Never’

As negative indefinite pronouns need the sentential negative marker to offer negative interpretation, *mule* also needs sentential negative to convey negative interpretation as in (27a&b). In addition, the place where *mule* is located in a clause doesn’t affect its interpretation as in (27b). If there is no sentential negative marker, it doesn’t mean the clause is unacceptable. The clause turns positive, as in (28).

- 27a) *ʔas-i* *ʔogi-a* *ʔer-e-nn-a* *mule*  
 person-NOM road-ACC know-3SG.M-NEG-DECL all  
 ‘No one knows the road’
- b) *mule ʔas-i* *ʔogi-a* *ʔer-e-nn-a*  
 all person-NOM road-ACC know-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
 ‘No one knows the road’
- 28) *ʔas-i* *ʔogi-a* *mule ʔer-ee*  
 person-NOM road-ACC all know-3SG. IPFV.DECL  
 ‘All persons know the road’

In this language, preceding the verb or appearing at the beginning can’t be an excuse to omit the licensing element in the sentence as the absence of the element will make the sentence positive, as in (27-28) above.

In Dawurotsuwa, if *mule* is needed to convey a negative interpretation, there must be a sentential negative marker irrespective of its place where it is located; otherwise, it is changed to positive, as we have discussed above. Giannakidou (2006) categorizes such languages as ‘strict negative concord’ languages which need the sentential negative marker without overpassing in any place they occur. Dawurotsuwa goes into this strict category.

In negative interpretation, *mule* and *-nne/-kka* phrases share meaning. The difference lies in that the former doesn’t carry a meaning of ranking, while the latter also serves in a ranking interpretation, i.e., scalar focus suffix. For example, in (29a) there is a variation in the expected amount of falls in the car, i.e. once, twice, three times, etc. Once is the last one in the ranking. When this ranking is accompanied by a sentential negative marker, it results in a ‘not at all’ interpretation. On the other hand, the *mule* as in (29b) conveys ‘not at all’ as well, but it doesn’t have a ranking from most to the least, rather it generally expresses, without mentioning specific frequency or order.

- 29a) *ta* *kaam-i* *ʔittituu-nne/-kka* *kund-i*  
 SG.POSS car-NOM once- INDF fall-CVB  
*ʔer-e-nn-a*  
 know-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
 ‘My car not fell even once’
- b) *ta* *kaam-i* *mule kund-i* *ʔer-e-nn-a*  
 SG.POSS car-NOM fall-CVB know-3SG.M-NEG-DECL  
 ‘My car fell not at all’

Furthermore, both positive and negative questions are replied to using the same form of *mule*. When the question is positive, it is answered with *mulo-kka* as in (30), which gives a negative interpretation. In the negative question also, the same *mulo-kka* is used as a reply as in (31) gives a negative interpretation as well. In both questions, *mulo-kka* conveys a negative meaning.

- 30) Q: *n één í* *gaammu-a* *beʔ-á ʔer-áí*  
 2SG.NOM lion-ACC see-CVB know-2SG.IPFV.Q  
 ‘Have you ever seen a lion?’
- A: *mulo-kka/ʔáidé-kka*

at all- INDF /when- INDF  
 'Never' (i.e., 'I have never seen a lion')

- 31) Q: *gaammu-a*                      *n éñ í*                      *beʔ- áb éíkk-ii*  
          lion-ACC                      2SG.NOM                      see-1SG-PFV-NEG-Q  
          'Have you not seen a lion?'  
       A: *mulo-kka/ʔáidé-kka*  
          at all- INDF /when- INDF  
          'Never' (i.e., 'I have never seen a lion')

On the other hand, in (32) the morpheme *-kka* is used in the positive sentence and conveys the meaning of 'completely/altogether'. This morpheme has been used to transfer negative interpretation in sentences above (30 & 31) for both positive and negative questions. This shows that the contribution of either negative or positive meaning depends on whether there is a sentential negative marker or not.

- 32) *pol-i*                      *mulo-kka*                      *geeŠša*  
       Pola-NOM                      all- INDF                      neat  
       'Pola is completely clean'

The above discussion shows that *mule* functions as negative replies to both negative and positive questions. It also needs a sentential negative marker irrespective of its location of occurrence in order to convey a negative interpretation. When *mule* is used, there is no ranking unlike *-nne/-kka* expressions.

### 3. Minimizers

Minimizers indicate the smallest amount in the ranked items. This gives them *even*-reading interpretation (Tubau, 2020; Giannakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017). Minimizers consist of implicit *even* expressing elements (Tubau, 2016). Indefinite pronouns in certain languages not only occur in collaboration with sentential negative markers but also occur within positive clauses in the absence of the negative morpheme. They are not limited to the negative context. Questions and if-clauses are one of those contexts in which indefinite pronouns occur in the absence of the sentential negative marker. Indefinite pronouns with such features are termed as 'negative polarity item'. Under this negative polarity item, expressions that are used for representing the smallest amount are also included (Haspelmath, 1997).

Minimizers in Dawurotsuwa are suffixed with *even* marker *-nne/-kka* explicitly, as in (33). These express the tiniest quantity and when they are accompanied by the sentential negative marker, they represent something/someone that does not exist. For example *ʔ tt tk'aala-nne* 'lit. one word' expression of tiniest quantity expression as in (33). The last small thing one can say in a speech is a word; one can't speak less than a word; sometimes one may say a single letter or single sound.

- 33) *ʔitti*                      *k'aala-nne/-kka*                      *haasay-a-bei-kk-e*  
       one                      word- INDF                      speak-1SG-PFV-NEG-DECL  
       'I have not spoken a word'

In example (34), *kušia wotsa* 'lit to put hand' in a scene of beating someone is assumed to be the least incident. If it is less than touching the person beaten, i.e., no contact at all, then one has not been beaten. Touching smoothly with the hand is the first most and least movement in the process of beating. They use this phrase when they want to express they didn't even touch a person. As we can see in the example below, the negative marker *-kk-* is attached to the verb.

- 34) *kušia*                      *wots- áb éíkk-e*  
       hand                      put-1SG-PFV-NEG-DECL  
       'Lit. I have not put my hand'

In example (35), *c'uccai melee* 'Lit. Saliva dries' is used as a reference when to get something done soon. They spit saliva on the floor and order somebody to come back or do something before that saliva dries. If something is done after that saliva dries, then they think it is done late. Hence, saliva is a deadline they give for accomplishing a task.

- 35) *c'uccai*                      *mel- énaa-ni*                      *y-a*  
       saliva                      dry-NEG-CVB                      come-IMP  
       'Lit. Come before saliva dries'

In example (36), *sebberee* is related to having money. One can't have less than this amount of money. It is the last minimum amount of money you can have.

- 36) *sebberee*                      *baawa*  
       single penny                      not.exist  
       'Lit. a penny doesn't exist'

In example (37), *c'ucca haatsi* is used when people want to express a lack of water in a pot. They use this minimum reference: single saliva. For liquid, especially water there can't exist less than single saliva. The last and minimum amount of water that is assumed to be available is saliva.

- 37) *c'ucca*                      *haats-i*                      *soo-ni*                      *baawa*  
       saliva                      water-NOM                      home-LOC not.exist  
       'Lit. saliva water doesn't exist at home'

In example (38), *kafú* serves for the existence of people or other animals in certain places. For instance, when there is



no one in a field, use a bird as the least minimum entity which can serve as a reference. Then, it is expressed whether the bird is flying or not.

- 38) *kafú*            *baawa/paal- énn-a*  
bird            not.exist/fly-3SG-NEG-DECL  
'Lit. a bird doesn't fly; no one is there'

In example (39), *ʔuduts-ia* expresses the minimum to assume somebody is beaten. In a process of beating a person, the minimum thing that can be done is to remove a fly that is sitting on somebody literally. Beyond this, a lot of things can be done such as kicking, pushing, etc.

- 39) *ʔuduts-ia*            *laagg-a-kk-a/dents- ákk-a*  
fly-ACC            drive-2SG-NEG-DECL/remove-2SG-NEG-DECL  
'Lit. you don't take off fly from me'

In the above sentences, minimal unit expressions are *ʔitti k'aala* 'one/single word', *c'ucca* 'saliva', *sebberee* 'a penny', *kafú* 'a bird', *ʔuduts-ia* 'a fly'. When these minimal amounts are used with sentential negative markers, it expresses total absence/lack. These expressions sometimes are suffixed with *-nne/-kka*.

### III. FOCUS AND NEGATION

In the previous sections, we discussed how n-words are formed in Dawurotsuwa. We have noticed that these morphemes are functioning differently in different places. In this section, more points that will help to grasp the general pattern of these morphemes will be discussed.

Focus indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions (Krifka, 2007). There are pragmatic and semantic focuses, where the former deals with communicative purposes of the focus, and the latter offers factual information and affects the truth value. The focus evoking semantic elements such as only, also/too, or even can be a cause for change of truth values when the focus varies on the alternatives. When the focus which is placed on alternatives changes, the assertion also changes (Falaus, 2020).

In a similar way, a sentential negation can operate on alternatives. It is assumed that negation is the total exclusiveness of an alternative in the set just like *only*. Both sentential negation and focus are sometimes represented with a similar marker. On the other hand, the scalar element even shows the alternatives are put in order in comparison with others hierarchically. In this case, both negation and *even* are scale-reversing items in which they both are related to one another in this regard (Jackendoff, 1992).

Furthermore, Falaus says, "Some of these focus-sensitive particles also function as coordinating particles and can even introduce negation by themselves in a certain context," (2020, p.11). This phenomenon is prevalent in Dawurotsuwa. Let us consider the following examples:

NO	Marker	Function
1	<i>-nne</i>	Coordinating (Non-emphatic)
2	<i>-kka</i>	Coordinating (Emphatic)
3	<i>-kka</i>	Coordinating (Emphatic negation)
4	<i>-kka</i>	Focus particle (even)-scalar
5	<i>-kka/nne</i>	Indefinite marker
6	<i>-kka/nne</i>	Minimizer
7	<i>-kk-/nn-</i>	Standard negation
8	<i>-kka</i>	Additive
9	<i>-kko</i>	'some'

This is an interesting occurrence in Dawurotsuwa, where all these functions are represented by the same morpheme with very few differences. Haspelmath (2007) states that the element which is used for marking emphatic negation coordination is at the same time employed to express focus particles. In Dawurotsuwa, emphatic negation coordination - *kka* is used at the same time to mark scalar focus status. Haspelmath (2007) also adds that the markers of indefiniteness are most of the time the same as those of negative focus particles, like not *even* or *neither*, even though they are not the same as the sentential negative marker, unlike Dawurotsuwa, where even they are similar to sentential negation. Watanabe (2004) and Shimoyama (2006) mention that there is a tight relationship in morphology between focus markers and negative polarity items. In Dawurotsuwa (as stated in the table above), the indefiniteness forming morpheme is *-nne/-kka*, which is identical to the focus morpheme *-nne/-kka*.

### IV. ETYMOLOGICAL SOURCE OF THE NEGATIVE MARKER

Poletto presents the following elements as sources of sentential negative markers by conducting various reviews:

- Negative auxiliary
- A negative copula
- Marker of focus
- Verbal or adverbial elements originally related to verbs that contain lexical negation
- An adverb originally related to the non-animate negative quantifiers corresponding to 'nothing'

- Elements derived from sentential tags
- Minimizers
- Possessives
- Modality markers (Poletto, 2020, p.137)

In Dawurotsuwa, the sentinel negative marking element has similarities with other functions as we have seen in the table above. What connection do these elements have with each other? Among these elements, the focus marker is the best candidate to assume as the source of the negation marker of Dawurotsuwa.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper investigated n-words in Dawurotsuwa, one of the Omotic languages in Ethiopia. N-words in this language are formed by suffixing the morpheme *-nn/-kka*. The negative indefinite pronouns are constructed by attaching these morphemes to the content question words. Although the name ‘negative’ is found in the name, it doesn’t mean that the morpheme is inherently negative. These morphemes can appear both in the affirmative and negative. The morphemes are not restricted to the n-words in the language; rather they can serve various functions. *Mule* and minimizers are also found in the category of n-words. In addition, the focus marker, indefinite forming morphemes, and sentential negative markers consist of resembling explicit particles. This situation creates good ground to assume the focus marker as a source of the negative marker in the language.

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**Aklilu Abera Naba:** Lecturer at Wolayta Sodo University since 2007 in the Department of English Language and Literature. He also works on language curriculum designing. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. His research interest is in Afro-Asiatics in general and Omotic specifically. He is also interested in studying language in relation to culture, society, and ideology.