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ASPECTS OF THE STRUCTURE OF SPATIAL EXPRESSIONS IN KONSO

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Abstract

This paper discusses aspects of the structure of spatial expressions in Konso, a Cushitic language spoken in southwest Ethiopia. Spatial expressions in Konso employ the use of locatives, directionals, and postpositions. Derived locatives indicate an extension of location further away from the deictic centre. Postpositions occur with a low, central unrounded vowel which appears short or long. The quality of the vowel at the end of postpositions brings change in interpretation. Much of the spatial orientations are derived from landscape and natural environment. These spatial orientations operate on the linguistic frame of reference based on a vertical opposition between "uphill" and "downhill", with a third element crossing the plane at the horizontal level. Directionals referring to the 'west' and 'east' are derived from the natural phenomena involving the direction of the sun setting and rising. Conversely, Konso does not have directional terms that correspond to 'north' and 'south'.

Keywords: spatial expressions, directionals, locatives, postpositions, Konso

1. The language and the people

The Konso language, referred to as *afaa Xonso* by the speakers, belongs to the Lowland East Cushitic language within the Afro-Asiatic phylum. It has twenty-one consonant phonemes, of which four are voiced implosives /ɓ, ɗ, ʃ, ɠ/. It does not make voice distinction and has no ejectives. Gemination is phonemic in the language. Moreover, it has a typical Lowland East Cushitic five vowel system: *i, e, a, o,* and *u*. All vowels occur short and long, and

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vowel length is phonemic (for details, see Ongaye 2013).[1] Konso has some close linguistic and cultural similarities with neighbouring languages such as Oromo (Hallpike 2008), Gawwada (Tosco 2009) Ts'amakko (Savá 2005), and Dirashe (Ongaye 2013; Wondwosen 2007). Oromo and Dirahse, like Konso, belong to the Lowland East Cushitic family, but Gawwada and Ts'amakko belong to the Dullay languages of the Omo-Tana branch of Lowland-East Cushitic (also see Tosco 2000). Konso is not an endangered language. The language is currently used as a medium of instruction in the primary school. Konso has four dialects: *Faashe*, *Karatte*, *Tuuro* and *χolme* (Black, 1973; Ongaye 2013). Data for this article come from stories and some previous studies on the language. As a native speaker of the *Faashe* dialect of Konso, I have also used my native-speaker knowledge for additional examples.

The Konso people live in the southwest of Ethiopia, at about 600 km from the capital Addis Ababa. They number about 400,000. Their self-name is *Xonsitta*, a masculine nominal derived from the name *Xonso*. Based on the estimates of population growth, Kimura (2004: 277) states that the Konso people have lived in their present area since at least the 16th century. Much of the Konso landscape is mountainous, and has hills rising to a height of 2000 m and the hillsides are scored with dry stonewalled terraces (see also Förch 2003; Watson 2009). There are two types of patterns of settlement in Konso: compact villages and scattered settlements. Most of the compact villages are situated on hilltops and surrounded by high walls of piled stones for protection against attacks and malaria. Shinohara (1993: 58) reports that the Konso villages in the east are generally lower than those in the west at around 1,500 m above sea level, while in the west they are located at around 1,800 m above sea level. As predominantly agriculturalists, the Konso are known for their indigenous system of terracing which allows them to make use of even the most precipitous slopes.

Studies on the structure of spatial language (e.g. Talmy 1983) suggest that linguistic spatial representation in a given language is a window on its speakers' conceptualization of space. In this respect, the nature of the Konso landscape, the settlement patterns and the livelihood strategies have direct connections with the structure and interpretation of position and movement in Konso. So far, much of the aspects of the structure of spatial expressions of Konso remain unstudied. My goal in this article is, therefore, to fill the gap in our understanding of some aspects of spatial expressions in the Konso language. The remaining part of the paper is organised in five sections. In

1 In this article, geminate consonants and long vowels are represented by doubling the first symbol instead of IPA convention of having a colon after the first symbol. Moreover, *y* is used instead of the IPA symbol *j*.

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Section 2, I discuss linguistic frames of reference in Konso. I treat locative and directional expressions in Section 3. In Sections 4 and 5, I discuss postpositions and motion events, respectively. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. **The Konso frame of reference**

In order to account for the different ways in which Konso speakers refer to motion and location in space, I make use of the three different coordinate systems or frames of reference proposed by Levinson (2004) as these provide a framework according to which the speaker and hearer anchor references to space. The linguistic frames of reference that Levinson proposes are the following:

> **Intrinsic frame of reference**: this frame of reference is a coordinate system involving an object-centred coordinate system, where the coordinates are determined by the inherent features, sidedness or facets of the object to be used as the ground or relatum. For example, if a house is seen as having a front side, a person can be located as being in front of the house according to an intrinsic frame of reference. In this case, because the house is being used as a reference point to locate the person, it functions as the ground, and the person is the figure (Levinson 2004: 41).

> **Relative frame of reference** depends on the perspective of the speaker and describes the location of a figure in relation to a ground. More specifically, "It presupposes a viewpoint V (given by the location of a perceiver in any sensory modality), and a figure and a ground distinct from V. It thus offers a triangulation of three points, and utilises coordinates fixed on V to assign directions to figure and ground." For example, using this frame of reference one can describe someone not as being in front of a house but as being to the left of a house. Left implies that the speaker is using the left side of his body as a coordinate (Levinson 2004: 43).

> **Absolute frame of reference**: refers to the fixed direction provided by gravity (or the visual horizon under canonical orientation). Many such systems are clearly abstractions and refinements from environmental gradients (mountain slopes, prevailing wind directions, river drainages, celestial azimuths etc.). These 'cardinal directions' may therefore occur with fixed bearings skewed at various degrees from, and in effect unrelated to, western world's 'north','south','east' and 'west' (Levinson 2004: 47-48).

Based on the types of the linguistic frames of reference proposed by Levinson (2004), Konso operates on the absolute linguistic frame of reference based on a vertical opposition between 'uphill' and 'downhill', with a third element crossing the plane at the horizontal level. The absolute

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frame of reference system in Konso is abstracted out of landscape features as the terms refer to points in the physical world describing the location of things, either with respect to each other or the participants. In this respect, the spatial terms do not have any connection to the western notions of cardinal directions. As a result, there are no terms for the orientation of 'north' and 'south'. The linguistic means available for talking about orientation of the west and east are closely related to natural phenomena involving the direction of the sun setting and rising. In other words, the semantics of cardinal directional terms has much to do with the source domains of the sun (the orientations of east and west). Probably influenced by Amharic (the official working language of the nation) and/or English, most educated people from Konso use the terms *tarra* and *tupatta* for the cardinal directions 'north' and 'south', respectively. The former is derived from the Konso term that refers to the 'top of the head' and the latter from 'bottom'.

The cardinal direction 'west' is derived from the verb root *ɗum-* 'to go/set down, of sun', and the cardinal directional for 'east' is derived from the verb root *piir-* 'to rise, of sun'. The nominals of the verb roots are: *ɗumaata* 'sunset' and *piirtuta* 'sun rise'. In order to use the nominals to indicate the cardinal directionals, we need the orientation word *ɠínɗa* 'side' and the genitive particle *a* as shown in the examples in (1). The use of the orientation word *ɠínɗa* 'side' and the genitive particle renders the meaning 'in the direction of…'.

(1) a. *kahartasiʔ ɠínɗa a ɗumaataʔee ɠapatti ka tayti*

kaharta-siʔ	*ɠínɗa*	*a*	*ɗumaata-ʔ=i*	*ɠap-aɗ-t-i*
ewe-DEF	side	GEN	sunset-DIR=3	hold-MID-3F-PF
ɠap-aɗ-t-i	*ka*	*tay-t-i*		
hold-MID-3F-PF	and	go_away-3F-PF		

'The ewe went in the direction of sunset (towards the west)'

b. *χampirteetasiʔ ɠínɗa a piirtutatin ɗesaa χaʔatti*

χampirteeta-siʔ	*ɠínɗa*	*a*	*piirtutatin*	*ɗesa=i*
bird-DEF	side	GEN	sun.PATH	horizontal.plane=3
χaʔ-aɗ-t-i				
stand_up-MID-3F-PF				

'The bird flew in the direction of sunrise (towards the east)'

The terms corresponding to "left" and "right" are also crucial in the expression of directions. These terms are derived from the body part nouns: *mikta* 'right hand side' and *pittitta* 'left hand side'. Like the cardinal directionals, the use of the right or left side in the spatial expression requires

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the word *ɠinɗa* ‘side’ and the genitive particle *a* and the body part *mikta* or *pittitta* as shown in (2a). In connected speeches, the genitive particle is elided, and therefore, can be easily missed by non-native speakers. I should point out that there is a phonological clue for the presence of a genitive particle in genitive constructions in that genitive constructions in Konso impose a high tone on the possessor. *ɠinɗa* ‘side’ is a generic term used to express direction with nouns indicating destination, (2b). As a noun itself, it is also used with possessive markers as shown in (3).

(2) a. *iʃaɠ ɠinɗa a miktatiʔee kutiʔay*

iʃa-ʔ	*ɠinɗa*	*a*	*mikta-tiʔ=i*	*kutiʔ-ay*
he-NOM	side	GEN	right-LOC=3	sit_down-PF[3SG.M]

‘He sat on the right side’

b. *ɠinɗa a ɗumaataʔ opaa tawti*

ɠinɗa	*a*	*ɗumaata-ʔ*	*opa=i*	*taw-t-i*
side	GEN	sunset-GEN	towards=3	go_away-3F-PF

‘She went to the west’
(lit. She went in the direction/side of the sunset)

(3) a. *ɠinɗa-awu*
side-1SG.POSS.SG
‘my side’

b. *ɠinɗa-adi*
side-3SG.POSS.SG
‘his/her side’

3. Locatives and directionals

In this section, I discuss locative demonstratives such as ‘here’ and ‘there’, and directional notions such as ‘towards’. In this section, I treat locatives and directionals together because the need to indicate the direction of movement requires the use of the directional forms together with locative markers or locative plus the suffix that expresses the trajectory of motion (path). Structurally, locative terms precede the directional ones. In order to analyse the locational and directional aspect of motion in Konso, I follow the deictic system proposed by Ross (2003 as cited in Fast 2015: 8). According to Ross (2003: 231), a deictic system uses the location of the speaker relative to the addressee to orient the direction of motion and location in space. In what follows, I first present the locational terms, and then the directional terms.

Konso has four underived locatives. There is a dialectal difference in the form of the locative for the adverb ‘up there’. In my dialect, the locative which depicts the position of an entity on a higher point is *irre* ‘up there’. In

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the Karatte dialect, it is *ile*. In this article, I prefer to use *ile* because it serves as a base for the derivation of distal deictic terms as will be discussed later in the present section. The underived, basic locative terms are presented in (4).

(4) *aye* 'here'
ile 'there uphill'
dîse 'there (on the horizontal plane)'
χate 'there downhill'

The underived locatives can be schematised as in Figure 1.

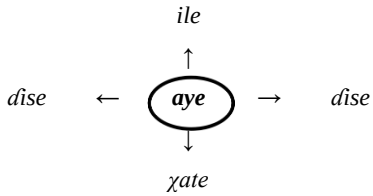

Figure 1. Underived locatives

The onset of the second syllable of the underived locative terms in (4) is geminated to derive deictic locative terms that are farther away from the deictic centre (in this case, the speaker). These are listed in (5) below. That is, gemination of the onset of the second syllable expresses an increased distance from the speaker or deictic centre. Geminating the final consonant for morphological derivation is not unique to locative terms. It is also observed in Konso nouns and verbs. In nouns, it serves as one of the plural formation strategies while in verbs, it serves as a punctual derivation strategy (see Ongaye 2013 and Ongaye & Mous 2017 for details). The phenomenon of geminating the root's final consonant in nouns and verbs has also been reported by Tosco (2009: 526) for Gawwada, another Cushitic language spoken to the west of Konso.

(5) *ille* 'further there uphill'
dîsse 'further there on the horizontal plane'
χatte 'further there downhill'

The forms of both the underived and derived locative terms in Konso can be schematised as in Figure 2.

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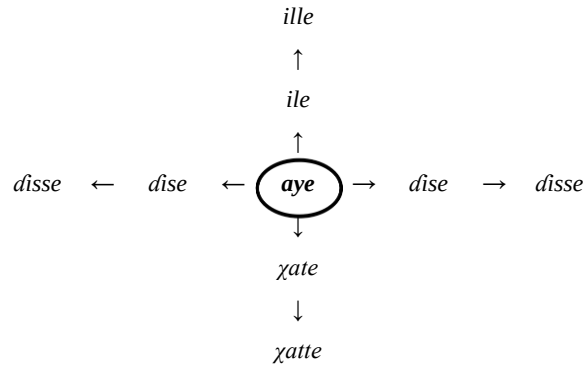

Figure 2. Underived and derived locative terms (adapted from Ongaye 2013: 182)

In example (6), we illustrate the use of underived locative *χate* 'there downhill' in (6a) and its counterpart derived locative *χatte* 'further there downhill' in (6b).

(6) a. *horeetasiχ χate kirruppaa piʃaa ikni*
horeeta-siʔ *χate* *kirra-oppaa*
cattle-DEF downhill_there river-in
piʃaa *ik-ni*
water drink-IPF.PRES
'The cattle are drinking water down there in the river'

b. *horeetasiχ χatte kirruppaa piʃaa ikni*
horeeta-siʔ *χatte* *kirra-oppaa*
cattle-DEF further_downhill_there river-in
piʃaa *ik-ni*
water drink-IPF.PRES
'The cattle are drinking water further down there in the river'

The use of the copula or existential verb is also very crucial in the spatial expressions of locatives. In this respect, languages such as English exclusively use the verb 'to be' with prepositions to express location (Ameka & Levinson, 2007: 851). This is shown in (7). In Konso, it is the existential verb root *kit-* 'to exist' that is used with postpositions to express copula constructions as shown in (8).

(7) a. *The bird is on the tree.*
b. *The dog was under the tree.*

(8) a. *hotaarsiʔ ʔoppaayye karkaɗaa ɣa*
hotaarta-siʔ *ʔoppaa-yye* *karkaɗaa kit-a*
acacia-DEM in-BKGR beehives exist-IPF
'There are beehives in the acacia tree'

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b. *hellaasinit tika karaa ʧan*

hellaa-sini	*tika*	*kara=i*	*kit-a-n*
children-DEF	house	in=3	exist-IPF-PL

'The children are in the house'

Finally, in the topological relations, the locative question is formed with the generic locative interrogative word *ayʃaa* 'where'. Structurally, the preferred position for this question word is between the subject and the existential verb as illustrated in (9a). It can also occur sentence-initially followed by the existential verb and the subject of the sentence as in (9b). The subject noun can occur between the interrogative word and the existential verb as in (9c), although this is not common.

(9) a. *inantasiʔ ʔayʃaa kitta*

inanta-siʔ	*ʔayʃaa*	*kit-t-a*
GIRL-DEF	where	exist-3F-IPF

'Where is the girl?'

b. *ayʃaa kitta inantasi*

ayʃaa	*kit-t-a*	*inanta-si*
WHERE	exist-3F-IPF	girl-DEF

'Where is the girl?'

c. *ayʃaa inantasik kitta*

ayʃaa	*inata-siʔ*	*kit-t-a*
where	girl-DEF	exist-3F-IPF

'Where is the girl?'

In Konso, we find a set of three directionals used along two different axes expressing the direction of entities with reference to each other or speech participants. In (10), I present the directional terms. The directional terms refer to points in the physical world and are further used to describe the movement of entities or speech participants. As mentioned earlier, the directional terms are used together with locative demonstratives and forms that denote the trajectory of motion (i.e. path). This will be discussed in detail later.

(10) *ɗèla*'upwards'
χata 'downwards'
ɗèsa 'moving on a horizontal plane'

Unlike locatives, directionals do not show the reduplication or gemination of the final consonant. The direction of the entities or speech participants may be an outward direction in which case the entity or speech

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participant in question is located away from the speaker. In this respect, the directional terms *ɗela* and *χata* show an outward direction from the speaker. The directional term *ɗela* refers to an upward point along a vertical axis describing a motion uphill or to a higher point of land as illustrated in (11a). On the other hand, the directional term *χata* refers to a downward point along a vertical axis describing a motion downhill or to a lower point of land as shown in (11b).

(11) a. *kahartasiχ χate ɗelaa feyyatti*

kaharta-si?	*χate*	*ɗela=i*	*feyyaɗ-t-i*
ewe-DEF	down_there	upward=3	climb_up-3F-PF

'The Ewe climbed from down there upwards'

b. *ɗakaasi? ʔayin χataa kankalaaɗay*

ɗakaa-si	*aye-n*	*χata=i*	*kankalaaɗ-ay*
stone-DEF	here-PATH	down_there=3	roll_over-PF[3SG.M]

'The stone rolled over from here down there'

In Konso, gesture is another crucial component in the spatial expression of directionals. Finger pointing accompanies most locative expressions when objects are located forward or on the right or left side of the speaker. Another gestural element in the communication of location in Konso is rounding lips and moving the jaw forward. Finger pointing, lip rounding and the forward movement of the jaw can also be done simultaneously when expressing the direction of entities.

Furthermore, it is a common phenomenon in Konso spatial expressions to find combinations of locatives and directionals. The combination and their glossing are provided in Table 1 (see also Ongaye, 2013).

Table 1. Combination of locatives and directional

Locative + Directional	**Gloss**
ayeɗela	'from here uphill'[2]
ayeɗesa	'from here on the horizontal plane'
ayeχata	'from here downhill'
ɗiseɗesa	'from there on the horizontal plane'
ɗiseɗela	'from there uphill'
ɗiseχata	'from there downhill'
χateɗela	'from down there uphill'
χateɗesa	'from down there on the horizontal plane'

2 The interpretation can also mean 'from down there up here'.

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χateχata	'from down there downhill'
ileɗela	'from up there uphill'
ileɗesa	'from up there on the horizontal plane'
ileχata	'from up there downhill'

4. Postpositions

Konso is a postpositional language. All postpositions end in a low central vowel which can appear as a short /a/ or a long /aa/, as shown in Table 2 (see also Ongaye 2013: 179). The difference in vowel length indicates differences in meaning. Earlier research, e.g. Alemayehu (2003), Daudey and Hellenthal (2004) and Ongaye (2004) have not recognized the semantic significance of the variation in vowel length in the word-final position of the postpositions. This will be discussed in some detail in the present section.

Table 2. Konso postpositions

Postpositions with *-a*	**Postpositions with *-aa***	**Gloss**
ɠara	*ɠaraa*	'on (top)'
ɠuɗa[3]	*ɠuɗaa*	'on (side)'
kara	*karaa*	'in, inside'
kela[4]	*kelaa*	'under'
kapa	*kapaa*	'near'
tura	*turaa*	'in front'
mina	*minaa*	'front side'
kamma	*kammaa*	'behind (back side)'
tula	*tulaa*	'behind'
ɠuta	*ɠutaa*	'behind'
oppa	*oppaa*	'at (centre, middle)'
tupa	*tupaa*	'behind (back side)'

Some of the postpositions have putative sources. For example, the putative source for the postposition *kammaa* 'behind (back side)' is *kammatta* 'bottom, stump'. Similarly, the putative source for the postposition *tulaa* 'back' is *tulta* 'back (of human body part)'. The use of body parts as a source of postpositions is not unique to Konso. Studies on the structure of spatial expressions in other languages of the world also show the derivation of postpositions or prepositions from body parts. For instance, Ameka and

3 *ɠuɗa* has a free variant form: *ɠura*.

4 *kela* 'under' is considered taboo around Kenaa (e.g. *Faashe, Toχa, Kasarkiyo* etc.) because it is phonologically homophonous with the term for female genital organ. To avoid this, people use the term *kala*.

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Essegbey (2006: 369) report that Ewe, a Ghanaian language from the Gbe or Tadoid cluster, employs body parts as putative sources of postpositions.

In order to discuss the difference in interpretation brought due to vowel length in the final position of postpositions, I adopt the terms 'figure' and 'ground' proposed by Levinson (2004) and Tamly (1983). According to Levinson (2004: 65), the *figure* is the thing to be located, and the *ground* is the thing with respect to which something is located. Tamly (1983: 230) elaborates the definition of the terms, saying, 'the figure is a moving or conceptually moveable object whose site, path, or orientation is conceived as a variable the particular value of which is the salient issue. The ground is a reference object (itself having a stationary setting within a reference frame) with respect to which the Figure's site, path, or orientation receives characterization'.

The differences in the vowel length in Konso correlate with the interpretation of the relationship between the figure and ground: when postpositions appear with the short vowel, the interpretation of the spatial expression is that the speaker focuses on the ground. However, when they appear with a final long vowel, the speaker focuses on the figure. This crucial difference was not recognized in previous studies on Konso. The following examples illustrate the correlation between the quality of the final vowel (short or long), and the notions of figure and ground.

(12) a. *antit tika karan sahay*

anti-ʔ	*tika*	*kara=in*	*sah-ay*
1PRO.SG-NOM	house	inside=1	sweep-PF[3SG.M]

'I swept the inside of the house'

b. *antit tika karaan sahay*

anti-ʔ	*tika*	*karaa=in*	*sah-ay*
1PRO.SG-NOM	house	inside.LOC=1	sweep-PF[3SG.M]

'I swept something from the inside of the house'

c. **antit tika karan miissaa sahay*

**anti-ʔ*	*tika*	*kara=in*	*miissaa*	*sah-ay*
1PRO.SG-NOM	house	inside=1	rubbish	sweep-PF[3SG.M]

(Intended: I swept the rubbish from the inside of the house)

d. *antit tika karaan miissaa sahay*

anti-ʔ	*tika*	*karaa=in*	*miissaa*	*sah-ay*
1PRO.SG-NOM	house	inside.LOC=1	rubbish	sweep-PF[3SG.M]

'I swept the rubbish from the inside of the house'

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In all the examples in (12), we see that the ground (i.e. *tika* 'house') is overtly stated. However, the examples in (12a) and (12b) do not have an overt figure, and in (12c) and (12d) it is overt. Examples (12a-b) are acceptable even if the Figure *miissaa* 'rubbish' is not stated. The example in (12a) focuses on sweeping the Ground (i.e. *tika* 'house') while example (12b) focuses on sweeping the Figure which is not overtly stated but implied. The implied figure in (12b) is understood from the fact that the postposition contains a long final vowel and a verb (here, *sah-* 'sweep') that can entertain the presence of both the short vowel and long vowel in postpositions. Example (12c) is unacceptable because it has a postposition with a short final vowel and an overt figure. If such a sentence has to be corrected, it has to allow the postposition to have a long final vowel as in (12d).

In addition to the use of a final short or long vowel, the lexical semantics of verbs plays a crucial role in determining the use of the final vowel in postpositions, and, thus, the interpretation of the figure and ground. There are certain verbs in Konso that inherently focus on the figure, and, therefore, strictly allow only the use of the long vowel in the postpositions. Some of such verbs are provided in (13). Such verbs do not take postpositions with short vowels. In example (14), taken from a story about Donkey and Hyena, we find the verbs *taf-* 'take quickly, snatch' and *ɠeed-* 'take', and the postposition *karaa* 'in'. Example (14a) is acceptable because the postposition has a long final vowel, which the verbs *taf-* and *ɠeed-* require. On the other hand, the example in (14b) is semantically unacceptable because the final vowel of the postposition is shortened in the presence of a verb root that requires postpositions to occur with a long final vowel.

(13) *taf-* 'to snatch, take quickly, grab'
ɠeed- 'to take'
pir- 'to finish'
sar- 'to raid, plunder'

(14) a. *...ka karaa marɠinaa ɠeetti ka tafti*

...ka	*karaa*	*marɠinaa*	*ɠeed-t-i*	*ka*
...and	in.FIG	intestine	take-3F-PF	and

taf-t-i
take_quickly-3F-PF
... 'And (the Hyena) removed the (Donkey's) intestine quickly'

b. **...ka karaa marɠinaa ɠeetti ka tafti*

**...ka*	*kara*	*marɠinaa*	*ɠeed-t-i*	*ka*
*...and	in	intestine	take-3F-PF	and

taf-t-i
take_quickly-3F-PF
(Intended: 'And (the Hyena) removed the (Donkey's) intestine quickly')

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The presence of the overt figure in (14a) necessitates the use of the final long vowel in postpositions. Verbs such as those in (13) inherently require the use of the postposition with a final long vowel even when the figure is covert as can be seen from comparing (14a) with (15a). In example (15a), the overt figure in (14a) *marɠ̌ínaa* 'intestine' is absent, and yet we know that the figure is covert from the use of the final long vowel and the lexical property of the verb roots *taf-* and *ɠ̌eeɗ-*. Example (15b) is ungrammatical because the postposition *kara* 'in' with a short final vowel is incompatible with the verbs *taf-* and *ɠ̌eeɗ-* in the sentence.

(15) a. *...ka karaa ɠ̌eetti ka tafti*
...ka karaa ɠ̌eeɗ-t-i ka taf-t-i
...and in.FIG take-3F-PF and take_quickly-3F-PF
...'And (the Hyena) removed it (the Donkey's intestine) quickly'

b. **...ka kara ɠ̌eetti ka tafti*
**...ka kara ɠ̌eeɗ-t-i ka taf-t-i*
*...and in take-3F-PF and snatch-3F-PF
(Intended: 'And (the Hyena) removed it (the Donkey's intestine) quickly')

It is interesting that in the domain of spatial relation verbs in Konso, certain verbs allow the use of postpositions with either a short or long final vowel. In (16), I provide some of such verbs.

(16) *sah-* 'to sweep, clean'
tooyy- 'to have a look at'
ʃaɠ̌- 'to wash'
mur- 'to cut'

In the following sentence, taken from a story about two sisters, the postposition *ɠuɗa* 'on (side)' appears with the final short vowel because the action is focused on the ground (i.e. *ɗakinta* 'body') rather than on the figure (i.e. *ɠ̌ooʃa* 'skin disease'). In the example, the postposition appears with a short final vowel because the focus is on the ground (i.e. the body). Moreover, in the example, the noun *ɠ̌ooʃa* 'skin disease' serves as a figure. So, if we assume that the focus is on the figure, automatically, the postposition will appear with a long final vowel as shown in (17b).

(17) a. *aappaayʃukka ɠ̌oʃooday ikka ɠuɗa ʃaɠ̌ti*
aappaa-ayʃu-ikka ɠ̌oʃa-ood-ay
father-2PL.POSS.SG-and.3 skin_disease-INCH-PF[3SG.M]
ikka ***ɠuɗa*** *ʃaɠ̌-t-i*
and.3 **on (side)** wash-3F-PF
'And their father was infected with skin disease and she washed him'

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b. *aappaay/ukka ɠoo/ooɗay ikka ɠuɗa ʃaƈti*
aappaa-ay/u-ikka *ɠoo/a-ooɗ-ay*
father-2PL.POSS.SG-and.3 skin_disease-INCH-PF[3SG.M]
ikka ***ɠuɗaa*** *ʃaƈ-t-i*
and.3 **on (side).FIG** wash-3F-PF
'And their father was infected with skin disease and she washed it off'

5. Motion events

Motion events are important in the analysis of spatial expressions because they focus on the displacement of the figure in space along a trajectory. The phenomenon of motion events requires the use of position and motion verbs. A positional verb may be used to describe the position or orientation of the figure in relation to the ground while motion verbs express the posture or position assumed while doing some activity (Fast 2015). In (19), I provide examples of positional verb roots in Konso.

(18) *kutiʔ-* 'to sit'
ɠaʔaɗ- 'to stand'
ellaɗ- 'to lean'
muk- 'to lie down'
rak- 'to hang'

In the following example, taken from a story about a Ewe and a She-goat, we find the positional verb *muk-* 'to lie down.' In the story, the Ewe and She-goat deserted their owner's compound, and travelled until it was dark. In the evening, they climbed up a big tree for fear of wild animals and lay down on the branches.

(19) *kahartasiʔ ʔiʃu talteetasiƈ ɠoyruppupaa feyyaɗin ka oppam mukin*
kaharta-siʔ *ka* *talteeta-siʔ* *ɠoyra-oppupa* *feyyaɗ-i-n*
ewe-DEF and goat-DEF tree-into climb_up-PF-PL
'And then the Squirrel jumped over (it)'
ka *oppa-ʔ* *muk-i-n*
and in-LOC lie_down-PF-PL
'The Ewe and She-goat climbed up the tree and lied down'

There are several motion verb roots in Konso which use the landscape to express the orientation of motion. In (20), I provide some of such verbs, which express the source, goal or manner of motion.

(20) *kal-* 'to come back home'
immak- 'to fill up'
sook- 'to come out, exit'
feyyaɗ- 'to climb up'
haaɗ- 'to carry'

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tuull- ‘to cross’
ɗaww- ‘to herd cattle, sheep, etc.’
lekkaɗ- ‘to climb down, descend’
tay- ‘to go away’

In example (21), taken from the story of the Ewe and She-goat mentioned earlier, we find the motion verb *feyyaɗ-* ‘to climb up’ to show the goal of motion. The motion verb encodes motion from the implicit ‘ground’ as source to destination *ɠoyra* ‘tree’.

(21) *oo letta ɗumtee, kahartasik ka talteetasiɠ ɠoyruppupaa feyyaɗîn*

oo	*letta ɗum-t-i-e,*	*kaharta-siʔ*	*ka*
when	sun sunset-3F-PF-BKGR	ewe-DEF	and

talteeta-siʔ	*ɠoyra-oppa-opa=i*	*feyyaɗ-i-n*
she-goat-DEF	tree-in-DEST=1	climb_up-PF-PL

‘When the sun went down, the Ewe and She-goat climbed up a tree’

In Konso, Path is marked by the suffix ***-n(n)***. The suffix appears single when it is followed by another consonant as in (22a), and as geminate when it is followed by a vowel as in (22b). The path suffix adds a further spatial element to the utterance, changing the focus to the direction of the path of motion. The trajectory of the path may be through an opening which enables the figure to move from one end of the opening to the other. In the example, the ground is *χarra* ‘gate’, and the figure *inantasiʔ* ‘the girl’, so that the figure makes a motion through the ground. In example (22b), the agent *inantasi* ‘the girl’ moves through the ground *χarra* ‘gate’ to the goal of motion *tika* ‘house’.

(22) a. *Karraa ka ɠaran ʃoray*

Karraa	*ka*	*orannaa*	*ɠara-n*	*ʃor-ay*
Squirrel	and	spears	on-PATH	jump-PF[3SG.M]

‘And then the Squirrel jumped over (it)’

b. *Inantasiχ χarra karannee tikupa kulliti*

inanta-siʔ	*χarra*	*kara-nn=i*	*tika-opa*	*kull-t-i*
girl-DEF	gate	in-PATH=3	house-DEST	enter-3F-PF

‘The girl entered the house through the gate.’

The path suffix *-n(n)* can be added to postpositions. This is done only when focus **is not** on the figure, as signaled by the short final vowel on the postposition. That is why the example in (23a), with *ɠara*, a postposition with a short final vowel plus the Path marker *-n* is an acceptable sentence (see also example (22b) above). The example in (23b) is unacceptable because of the postposition *ɠaraa* (with a long final vowel) in the presence of a path suffix.

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(23) a. *nama a orannaa ɠaran ʃoro...*
nama *a* *orannaa* *ɠara-n* *ʃor-o...*
person REL spears on-PATH jump-DEP
'The person who jumps over the spears...'

b. **nama a orannaa ɠaraan ʃoro...*
**nama* *a* *orannaa* *ɠaraa-n* *ʃor-o...*
*person REL spears on-FIG-PATH jump-DEP

In Konso, there are verbs that express the motion (i.e. path). Fast (2015) also reports the presence of such verbs in the Tungag language. Some of such verbs focus on the beginning of a motion event (e.g. *paayy*[5]- 'to start'). Others focus on the trajectory of motion (e.g. *tarp*- 'to pass, cross', *tiitaayʃ*- 'to make return'), and still others on the end of the motion event (e.g. *lekkaɗ*- 'to come down', *kay*- 'to reach, arrive', *kal*- 'to come back home'). An illustrative sentential example is provided in (24).

(24) *ikka antaá paayyin ka irroota sakal tarpin ka a kunɗattatil lekkissi*
ikka *aan-taá* *paayy-i-n* *ka* *irroota* *sakal*
and_then.3 go-INF start-PF-PL and mountain nine
tarp-i-n *ka* *a* *kuɗan-atta-tiʔ* *lekkiʃ-t-i*
go-INF and GEN ten-ORD-LOC come_down-3F-PF
'And then, they started to go and crossed nine mountains and she put him down on the tenth'

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have described aspects of the structure of spatial expressions in Konso. I demonstrated that spatial information is encoded through the use of locative and directional demonstratives and various postpositions. Some motion-event verbs in Konso inherently determine focus on the ground or figure. I have shown that postpositions are used in non-static locative relations to code relations of source, goal, and location. Scholars (e.g. Fast 2015; Tosco 2009) state that in languages which use environmental gradients, 'uphill' corresponds to a general Northeast direction, and 'downhill' is centred around the Southwest. However, this correlation does not hold true for Konso because the terms 'uphill' and 'downhill' do not have any natural link to cardinal directions in this language. Although further detailed study needs to be done on the spatial constructions in Konso, I believe that the present analysis will contribute to the understanding of the grammar of space in Konso and related languages of Ethiopia.

5 The verb root *paayy*- 'start' can also be used with non-motion events such as eating, sleeping, etc.

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Abbreviations

1	first person	INF	infinitive
2	second person	INST	instrumental
3	third person	IPF	imperfective
BKGR	background	LOC	locative
CAUS	causative	M	masculine
CLF	cleft	MID	middle
CONT	continuous	NEG	negative
DEF	definite	NOM	nominative
DEP	dependent	ORD	ordinal
DEST	destination	PATH	path
F	third person	PL	plural
FIG	figure	POSS	possessive
GEN	genitive	PRO	pronoun
INCH	inchoative	SG	singular

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