

CLAUSE COMBINING IN GWAMA

Andargachew G. Gebeyehu
University of Gondar, Ethiopia

Abstract

This paper presents a preliminary analysis of clause combining in Gwama, a Koman language spoken in Western Ethiopia. Clauses are combined to form a complex unit. Four types of clause combination structures are identified in the language: complement clauses, relative clauses, adverbial clauses, and converbal clauses. When finite complements function as objects, the verbs of the complements are usually morphologically marked in that they take subject markers and aspect morphemes. In complement constructions, two independent clauses are juxtaposed in Gwama. According to the typology of relative clause formation in African languages, all the relative clause constructions in Gwama use a head-internal non-reduction relativization strategy, where the head noun appears as a full-fledged noun phrase in the relative clause and has no explicit representation in the matrix clause. The relative clauses of Gwama are basically postnominal. Temporal, reason, and concessive clauses have their own markers. The Gwama converb constructions meet two of the three requirements that are attested cross-linguistically: syntactically, converbs are subordinate; on the semantic level, converbs generally modify verbs in a clause; and morphologically, converbs have no markers, so root or stem forms of verbs function as non-finite forms. In such clausal constructions in the language, series of events are conjoined, with the event expressed by the converb appearing anterior to the event expressed by the finite verb.

Keywords: Koman languages, Gwama, clause combining, relativization, converb

1. INTRODUCTION

Gwama refers to both the language and the people. The speakers call themselves Gwama and their language *t'wa Gwama* 'mouth of Gwama'; its speakers sparsely populate the Mao-Komo Special Woreda, an ethnically defined district located to the south of Benihangul-Gumuz Region. It is adjacent to Asossa Zone to the north, Oromia Region to the east and south, and South Sudan to the west. In this woreda, there are reportedly 32 kebele administrations. Except for Tongo¹ town, all are rural kebeles. According to the 2007 census report on the country, the main ethnic groups living in this woreda include Oromo, Mao, Berta, and Komo. In many of the villages of Mao-Komo Special Woreda, the Gwama and other ethnic groups, including Mao, Ganza, and Komo, live amicably together (see also Küspert 2015: 16). According to informants in this study, the kebeles where the Gwama predominantly reside include Zebsher, Kesser, Ya'a Mesera, and Lak'i. A few of

¹ Tongo is a town of the Special Woreda, where the woreda officials work. This town is Kebele 01.

them also live in Yangu (ɲangu), P'enshuba, Kawo Shumete, and Tongo. This ethnic group is aware of the existence of other Gwama speakers in the Yabus area of Sudan. The Ethnologue, on the other hand, notes that the language is spoken in 19 villages found from southern Asosa in Benishangul-Gumuz to Gidami Woreda in Qellem Wollega, Oromia Regional State, including one (Yabus) in Sudan (Lewis et al. 2014). The population size of the ethnic group is estimated to be 15,000 (Lewis et al. 2014). The Gwama livelihood is based on small-scale agriculture, hunting, and poultry. They mainly cultivate maize. Some also cultivate haricot beans, sorghum, millet, etc. The overwhelming majority of households do not seem to produce sufficient agricultural products for their annual consumption. Therefore, to subsidize their living, they hunt different wild animals, collect edible plants, produce honey, etc. Besides this, a few of them breed domestic animals, particularly *waŋa* 'hen' and *ɲa* 'goat'.

Gwama belongs to the Koman sub-family, which includes four living languages: Gwama, Komo, Opuo, and Uduk. To which phylum the Koman group belongs remains debatable. There are three different views concerning the classification of Koman languages. These are the isolative views of Greenberg (1950) and Tucker and Bryan (1956); the Nilo-Saharan thesis of Greenberg (1963), Bender (1983a, 1983b, 1997, 2000, 2005), and Ehret (2001), and the recent exclusion of Koman from Nilo-Saharan by Dimmendaal (2008, 2010, 2023).

This paper focuses on presenting a preliminary description of clause combining and a syntactic analysis of internal constituent order. Though Koman languages exhibit SVO word order as in (1a), other word orders like SOV are also attested (Dimmendaal et al. 2019). Likewise, Gwama allows flexibility in the ordering of constituents, with the OV constituent order of elements being recorded in simple declarative sentences like in (1b).

1. a. *kukuk-to t'op'-a ija*
 duck-DEF drink-3FS water
 'The duck drinks water.'
- b. *ɲa gi bido ma-n-a-duj*
 goat and sheep PFV-1SG-3NS-buy
 'I bought goat and sheep.'

The syntactic OV word order of (1b) can randomly be found in conversation. Nonetheless, the frequently appearing basic constituent ordering is SVO. The person agreement marker appears prefixed to the verb *duj* 'buy' for subject and object arguments. The subject agreement morpheme appears suffixed to the aspect marker *ma-*, and the object agreement marker is placed next to the subject agreement morpheme.

2. METHODOLOGY

The data used for the description was collected through fieldwork conducted between March 2019 and 2021 with three native Gwama speakers. During data collection, different texts were recorded, transcribed and translated, and enriched through elicitation techniques.

The method of transcription needs to be made clear here. Bender (1983a), Leyew (2005), Hellenthal and Kutsch Lojenga (2011), and Kievit and Robertson (2012) have introduced the Gwama vowels in their research findings. Accordingly, Bender (1983a) writes that the Proto-Koman languages have five vowel systems and shows that Gwama has long vowels. Zelalem (2005) has identified five short and five long vowels. Kievit and Robertson (2012), referring to Hellenthal and Kutsch Lojenga (2011), describe a seven-vowel system which includes two [+ATR] vowels, /i/ and /u/, and five [-ATR], /ɪ/, /ɛ/, /ʊ/, /ɔ/ and /a/. Vowel inventories for all daughter languages have seven phonemic vowels, while Uduk has only five (Killian 2015). In addition, the data I collected from Tongo and Zebsher native Gwama-speaking informants indicated that the language has five short and a corresponding number of long vowels (i.e., five short and five long), /i/, /e/, /u/, /o/, /a/ (Gebeyehu 2019, 2021) which is the system used for transcription of data in this paper.²

3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE GWAMA VERBAL SYSTEM

Gwama has a complex verb morphology that shows different inflectional morphemes, including aspect markers, deictic directionality, and subject and object markers (see Goldberg 2018). This section focuses on providing an introductory note on the basic nominal and verbal markings to help explain the complex clause structure.

Two types of person markers can appear on the verb for verb agreement (see Goldberg 2018). These can be categorized into subject markers and object markers. Subject markers appear suffixed to a verb as in (2a) (see column A in Table 1). It can be said that these are the basic verbal person markers for agent nominals. The vowels in the subject markers can be dropped (see column 'B' in Table 1) if these morphemes appear inserted into a reduplicated verb form, as in (2b) and (2c), or after a perfective aspect marker, as in (2d). That is, vowels are mostly dropped when the person marker appears in a series of prefixes.

² The data in this work are transcribed based on my findings and perception of the vowel system in the language. The vowel system may still need further thorough detailed description. Tone and ATR are not considered in this work.

2. a. *kukuk-to t'op'-a ija* c. *i-tongo ze-fap'-n-fap'*
 duck-DEF drink-3FS water LOC-Tongo PROG-rain-3SG-RED
 'The duck (feminine) drinks water.' 'It is raining at Tongo.'
- b. *Ali ze-fa-n-fa da?* d. *Meko ma-n-un-fi*
 Ali PROG-eat-3SG-RED pol Meko PFV-3MS-3PL.OBJ-see
 'Is Ali eating?' 'Meko saw them.'

Table 1: Subject and object person markers

	Subject pronouns	Subject markers		Object markers	
		A	B		
1SG	ga	-nī	n-	1SG	ga-
2SG	ik	-gi	g-	2SG	i-
3MS	uhaj	-ní	n-	3SG	Masculine e-
3FS	hap'	-	ø-		Feminine ap'
1PL	ma	-mì	m-		Neuter a-
1PL	mini	-nì	n-	1PL (EXCL)	ma-
2PL	um	-mí	m-	1PL (INCL)	mi-
3PL	hun	-bi	b-	2PL	um-
				3PL	un-

Some subject markers differ only in tone; see 1SG, 3MS, and 1PL (INCL), as well as 1PL (EXCL) and 2PL. In both nominal and subject verbal morphemes, distinctions for number, person, and gender are indicated, but in object marking the additional affix *a-* refers to third person neuter, as in (3a) and (3b).

3. a. *a-g-a-k'u-k'undu*
 IPFV-2SG-3NS.OBJ-RED-finish
 'You will finish it.'
- b. *ma-n-a-fa-fa*
 PFV-3MS-3NS.OBJ-eat
 'He ate it.'

4. CLAUSE COMBINING

Before looking into the Gwama data in detail, providing a summary of central concepts seems relevant. In subordination, there are subordinating conjunctions that conjoin the main clause with the subordinate one; both are equally important for the whole meaning and structure of the sentence. In this regard, different subordinating conjunctions that relate main and subordinate clauses are shown in Gwama. The data in the present work provide insights on the combinations where one clause is subordinate to the other(s). The complex clause structures described below include complement clauses, relative clauses, adverbial clauses, and converbial clauses.

4.1 Complement clauses

“A prototypical complement clause is a clause that functions as an argument (subject or object) of some other clause” (Payne 2006: 291). That is, the complement clause appears as one of the core arguments of a main (or matrix) clause (Payne 1997: 313). In VO languages, object complements tend to follow the matrix verb (Payne 1997: 314).

When finite complements function as objects, the verbs of the complements are usually morphologically marked in that they take subject markers and tense/aspect morphemes. In other words, finite complements are like independent clauses (Payne 1997: 314). This is also the case in Gwama complement constructions where two independent clauses appear juxtaposed without a complementizer morpheme, as in (4a) and (4b). The clause expressing certainty begins the sentence, and the word *silakon* ‘certain’ goes with it.

4. a. *ga* *wet-ni* *silakon* *ze-ho-b-a-ho:*
 I COP-1SG certain PROG-COME-3FS-3NS-RED
 ‘I am sure that she is coming.’
- b. *ga* *wet-ni* *silakon* *ma-n-a-gi-gi*
 I COP-1SG certain PFV-3MS-3NS-do-RED
 ‘I am sure that he did it.’

4.2 Relative clauses

A relative clause is a type of clause that functions as a nominal modifier (Payne 1997: 325). Leyew (2005: 23) claims that Gwama uses a discontinuous morpheme *a-gi-* as one of the relativizing elements in relative clause constructions. The current data show that the relative clause marker in Gwama is *-a*. Hence, the morpheme *-a* that appears suffixed to the nominal head functions as the relative clause marker, whereas the morpheme *-gi* appears in the clause as a

deictic directional (DD2) morpheme (cf. Hellenthal 2018). The deictic directionals in (5a-d) refer to past events and indicate the time of an event performed in the past.

In short, the Gwama relative clauses function as nominal modifiers formed with the relativizer *-ā* following the referent (see Goldberg 2018: 16), and hence relative clauses are postnominal. Structurally, a relative clause sentence follows the pattern subordinate-matrix, where the matrix clause basically occurs after the relative clause.

5. a. *kikjata-a* *ti-n-gi* *sa:nza-go,* *ma-ø-s'i*
 female-REL give-1SG-DD money-DEF, PFV-3FS-die
 'The woman to whom I gave money has died.'
- b. *u-sit-a* *šap'-g* *u-wal-ge,* *polis* *ma-ne-s'it*
 SGV-man-REL beat-DD SGV-child-DEF, police PFV-3MS-catch
 'Police caught the man who beat the child.'
- c. *u-sit-a* *we-gi* *sulganda* *t'u-t'ot'o-te,* *ga aj-ni-aja*
 SGV-man-REL wear-DD trouser RED-black-DEF, I RED-1SG-know
 'I know the man who wears a black trouser.'
- d. *u-sit-a* *hun-gi-hunu-ge,* *ma-ne-ŋiwe*
 SGV-man-REL RED-DD-sick-DEF, PFV-1SG-heal
 'I healed the man who was sick.'
- e. *uhaj min-a* *kwa-ni-* *ti-ma-ti,* *dab-ma-k'anda*
 he thing-REL PROB-3MS give-1PL.OBJ-RED NEG-1PL-dislike
 'We will not dislike the gift that he is giving.'
- f. *min-a* *kwa* *t'wa-ma* *haj,* *dab-ma-kifigi*
 thing-REL PROB tell-1PL he, NEG-PL.OBJ-oppose
 'We will not oppose what he will tell us.'

Note that according to the typology of relative clause formation in African languages, all the above relative clause constructions in Gwama show that the language employs a head-internal non-reduction relativization strategy, where "the head noun appears as a full-fledged noun phrase in the relative clause and has no explicit representation in the matrix clause" (Comrie 1998, cited in Kuteva and Comrie 2006: 211). In main clause constituent order, predominantly VO languages usually have postnominal relative clauses (Payne 1997: 326). Likewise, similar to Uduk (see Killian 2015: 278), the relative clauses of Gwama are basically postnominal, with the clause occurring after the head.

4.3 Adverbial clauses

Adverbial clauses function as adverbs modifying a verb phrase or a whole clause (Payne 2006: 297). These clauses attach to complete clauses and give additional information about what is expressed in the other clause. The information type expressed in adverbial clauses is similar to that expressed by adverbs, such as time, place, manner, purpose, reason, etc (Payne 2006: 298). Gwama adverbial structures of time, reason, and purpose are subordinate to main clauses, and the basic ordering of the clauses is adverbial-main.

4.3.1 Temporal clauses

Adverbial clauses of time are formed in Gwama by using time adverbs like *gide* ‘when’ (or its short form *gi-* ‘when, while, before’), *bile(a)* ‘while, after’, *kaja* ‘as soon as’, *daga* ‘until’, etc. These time adverbs appear preceding the verb. Consider the following sentences with temporal markers (TEMP).

6. a. *gide* *poʃ* *a-dapʹ*, *uhaj* *ze-tʹopʹ-n-gi* *ʃwi*
 TEMP arrive GEN-3FS.POSS, he PROG-drink-3MS-DD alcohol
 ‘When she arrived, he was drinking alcohol.’
- b. *uhaj* *bila* *ze-ʔif-n-gi-ʔif*, *ma-sitkobof* *ma-ho kobof-bi-ɲa*
 he TEMP exist-sleep-3MS-DD-RED, PL-thief PFV-go steal-3PL-goat
 ‘While he was sleeping, thieves stole his goat.’
- c. *u-Hassen* *bila* *ma-n-ho*, *u-Ali* *ho-ni* *zi* *Asosa*
 SGV-Hassen TEMP PFV-3MS-come, SGV-Ali go-3MS to Asosa
 ‘Ali went to Asosa after Hassen came here.’
- d. *u-Ali* *gide* *jil-n-a* *ʃe* *poʃo*,
 SGV-Ali TEMP NEG-3MS-3NS from arrive,
u-Kamal *ma-ʃa* *kʹund-ni* *minʃiʃa*
 SGV-Kamal PFV-eat finish-3MS food
 ‘Kemal had eaten all the food before Ali arrived.’
- e. *u-Ali* *kaja* *ma-n-poʃo*, *a-ni-fab-gi-fapʹ*
 SGV-Ali temp PFV-3MS-arrive, IPFV-3MS-call-2SG-RED
 ‘Ali will telephone/call you as soon as he arrives.’
- f. *daga* *a-ni-tu-tut*, *gi-ki-ga-ki*
 TEMP IPFV-1SG-RED-return 2SG-wait-1SG-RED
 ‘Wait until I come back.’

- g. *bila ho gwe-bi-gwe, tifa! ze-zug-bi-zugu*
 TEMP go watch-3PL-RED, lion PROG-RED-3PL-stand
 ‘When they go and watch, lions are found there.’

In all of the above sentences, adverbial clauses appear preceding the main clauses. Hence, the same phenomenon of subordinate + main clause pattern applies in adverbial clauses of time.

4.3.2 Reason clauses

Reason clauses are marked in Gwama by using a free morpheme *gaf*, which is also attested functioning as a preposition, as in (7).

7. a. *uhaj ma-ti-n-si gaf u-Seid*
 he PFV-give-3SG-thank to SGV-Seid
 ‘He thanked Seid.’ (Lit. ‘He forwarded gratitude to Seid.’)
- b. *kaj pof-b-a i-t’umu*
 when arrive-3PL-3NS LOC-home
wal-a s’i ko-a-ko gaf kwam-a dap
 child-GEN rat rat say-3FS-RED to mother-ASC 3FS.POSS
 ‘When they arrive home, the young rat says to her mother...’

This morpheme appears preceding an imperfective aspect verbal phrase, and its English meaning is ‘because; since’. At the sentence level, reason clauses seem to appear preceding main clauses, as in (8a-d). However, there is flexibility in the constituent order of the reason clause and the matrix clause, and thus structurally the main clause may begin the sentence, as in (8e).

8. a. *gaf jil-g-a at-gi-ata, ma-n-pi*
 REAS NEG-1SG-3NS RED-DD-study, PFV-1SG-fail
 ‘For I didn’t study, I failed.’
- b. *gaf a-fu-n-a-fun, ma-n-a-p’ada*
 REAS IPFV-love-3MS-3FS-RED, PFV-3MS-3FS-help
 ‘He helped her because he loves her.’
- c. *gaf a-fun-gi ketema-je, ma-ni ga ano:ko*
 REAS IPFV-like-2SG town-this, PFV-1SG I happy
 ‘I am glad because you like this town.’

- d. *gaf a-zinz-ga-zinzi, dab-ga-duj-duj*
 REAS IPFV-RED-1SG-thin, NEG-1SG-buy-RED
 'I did not buy it because it was tight (for me).'
- e. *ma-s'i ma-b-dena kwaga andure*
 PL-rat PFV-3PL-together fear cat
gaf a-aja s'it-a k'a-bun-k'a.
 REAS IPFV-experience catch-3FS eat-3PL-RED
 'Every rat fears to tie the bell on the neck of the cat because it can catch and eat them.'

As shown in (8a), in negative reason clauses, the negative marker *jil* appears following the reason indicator *gaf*. In affirmative reason clauses an imperfective aspect marker *a-* is prefixed to the verb, particularly in events involving unfinished continuous situations, as in (8b-e), where semantically ongoing events in the present or past are indicated. In (8e), we can also notice a habitual experience.

4.3.3 Purpose clauses

Similar to other Nilo-Saharan languages, such as Gumuz, Gwama uses the morpheme *gaf* to mark a clause as being a purpose adverbial. In all of the following illustrative sentences this purpose clause-marking morpheme appears in purpose clauses as a free morpheme and introduces an adverbial clause of purpose (see Goldberg 2018: 31).

9. a. *Dawit ho-n-a gaf duj mus i-t'a*
 Dawit go-3MS-3NS PURP buy banana LOC-outdoor
 'Dawit went out to buy banana.'
- b. *u-jas mine gaf finfi a-no:ko*
 SGV-place this PURP rest 3NS.COP-good
 'This place is good to rest.'
- c. *uhaj ma-ho-n-a gaf ilij i-tat-fufu*
 he PFV-go-3MS-3NS PURP hunt LOC-in-forest
 He went to the forest for hunting.'
- d. *u-?el mine pat'-ni gaf t'at' paka*
 SGV-oven this help-3MS PURP bake injera
 'This oven is used for baking injera.'

- e. *ma-ho-má* *gaf* *ʃa* *ajant'oʃkaja* *i-ta*
 PFV-go-1PL PURP eat lunch LOC-outside
 'We (EXCL) went out to eat (for eating) lunch.'

Note that most languages treat purpose and reason in a similar manner (Payne 2006: 298), and Gwama uses the same morpheme in both of these clause types.

4.4 Concessive clauses

Concessive is a general term for a clause which makes a concession against which the proposition in the main clause is contrasted (Thompson et al. 2007: 262). Gwama marks concessive clauses with the concessive marker *awetif* 'though, although, even though'.

10. a. *awetif* *sit-a* *tulsanza* *deb-a-jan*
 CONC person-3FS poor NEG-3FS-beg
 'Though she is poor, she does not beg.'
- b. *awetif* *sits'it-ni* *sanza* *deb-e-ji-jam*
 CONC rich-3MS property NEG-3MS-RED-happy
 'Though he is rich, he is not happy.'
- c. *awetif* *sont'-it'-ap'* *nan-a-ga-nan* *toti-na s'ins'*
 CONC name-RED-3FS tell-3NS-1SG-RED ?-1SG forget
 'Though she told me her name, I forgot it.'

In the above concessive clauses, the concessive marker appears in the initial position of the subordinate clause. In these sentences, the subordinate + main clause pattern applies, similarly to Gumuz (Ahland 2012) and Komo (Bayou 2014).

4.5 Conditional clauses

To make the discussion clear, let us first have a common understanding of the clause that refers to the condition, with a conditional morpheme, and the main clause, which appears both semantically and structurally related to the conditional clause in the sentence. Thompson et al. (2007) describe semantic and syntactic distinctions between types of conditionals from a typological vantage point. The authors state that the semantic distinction that is signaled in most languages is the distinction between real and unreal conditionals. Real conditionals refer to "real" present (including habitual and generic) or past situations, whereas unreal conditionals refer to "unreal" situations. Unreal conditionals can be imaginative conditions that are *hypothetical*, which might happen, or *counterfactual*, which did not or could not happen. Based on this

classification of conditional types, the Gwama conditional clauses can be categorized into “real” conditionals (i.e. those that could possibly happen) and “unreal” conditionals (i.e. those that are hypothetical or counterfactual).

All living Koman languages mark conditionality using different morphemes: *da* or *?a* in Komo (Bayou 2014), *wakki* in Uduk (Killian 2015), and *ma* in Opuo (Mellese 2017). Amare (2013: 52) claims that Gwama uses “no word for ‘if’ in conditionals”. In my data, it is, however, attested that Gwama marks real and unreal conditionals with the subordinator *ama-* or *á* ‘COND’. Real conditions are those which will probably happen, and unreal conditions are those which cannot. Consider the following structures of real conditions with the conditionality morpheme *ama-*.

11. a. *ama jil-ni-ho das’ini, a-ni-pof i-k’was*
 COND NEG-3PL-go now, IPFV-3PL-arrive LOC-late
 ‘We will be late if we don’t leave now.’
- b. *ama-na-gi a-p’i, a-ni-wet sit s’it-sanza*
 COND-1SG-work GEN-hard, IPFV-1SG-be person rich
 ‘If I work hard, I will be rich.’
- c. *ama-na-aj tut-a de, a-ni-nan-gi-nan*
 COND-1SG-know answer-ASC 3MS.POSS, IPFV-1SG-tell-2SG-RED
 ‘If I know the answer, I will tell you.’
- d. *t’imbir a-kapsko ama-ga-s’it, a-gi-kam a-pu-pofo*
 car GEN-first COND-1SG-hold, IPFV-2SG-find IPFV-RED-arrive
 ‘If you take the first bus, you will arrive on time.’

Note that in negative conditionals, the negative marker *jil* appears following the conditional morpheme, as in (8a), and, in this case, the conditionality marker *ama* appears as a free morpheme. The imperfective aspect marker *a-* appears in the apodosis of the above conditional sentences to express future events. The pattern for the real conditional protasis is COND + AGR + Verb.

There is an alternative conditionality marker *á* ‘COND’ that equally expresses the conditional situation of an event. The difference between *ama-* and *á* seems to be the distinct internal constituent order: while *ama-* is followed by a person marker and the verb of the conditional clause, as in (11a-f), *á* ‘if’ appears followed by a verb or an adverb, as in (12a-d).

12. a. *á tif-ba das'ini,*
 COND start-3PL now,
ā-gi-a bun ā-ni-k'u-kundu
 IPFV-work-ASC 3PL.POSS IPFV-3PL-RED-finish
 'If they start now, they will finish their work.'
- b. *á jil-ni-ho das'ini, ā-ni-pof i-k'was*
 COND NEG-3PL-go now, IPFV-3PL-arrive LOC-back/late
 'We will be late if we don't leave now.'
- c. *á p'i gi-ní-gi, a-ni-wet sit s'it-sanza*
 COND hard work-1SG-RED, IPFV-1SG-be person rich
 'If I work hard, I will be rich.'
- d. *á p'i at-ni-ata, a-mingi-a a-na bi-beje*
 COND hard RED-1SG-study, IPFV-exam-ASC 1SG.POSS RED-pass
 'If I study, I will pass the exam.'

The unreal condition is distinguished by having the conditionality marker *á* 'COND' in the protasis and in addition the morpheme *kal/r*.³ The morpheme *kal-* semantically refers to a condition or event that did not or could not happen, as in (13).

13. a. *á tif kal-b-a-ga anziri,*
 COND start COND-3PL-3NS-DD morning,
a-kal-b-a gi k'und-gi-k'undu
 IPFV-COND-3PL-3NS work RED-DD-finish
 'If they started (it) in the morning, they would finish (it).'
- b. *á p'i at-kal-n-gi-ata, a-kal-ni bef-gi-beje*
 COND hard RED-COND-3MS-DD-study, IPFV-COND-3MS RED-DD-promote
 'If he studied hard, he would promote (to the next level).'

³ The phones [l] and [r] are in free variation, which is a common phenomenon in Gwama, as in [tɪfɪr]– [tɪfɪl] 'lion'.

- c. *á* *wet* *kal-n-gi* *sit* *s'it-sa:nza*,
 COND be COND-1SG-DD person rich,
 a-kal-ni *duj* *swi*
 IPFV-COND-1SG buy house
 'If I were rich, I would buy a house.'
- d. *á* *p'i* *gi* *kal-n-gi-gi*,
 COND hard work COND-1SG-DD-work,
 a-kal-ni *wet* *sit* *s'it-sa:nza*
 IPFV-COND-1SG be person rich
 'If I worked hard, I would be rich.'

This type of conditional sentence seems semantically identical to what Thompson et al. (2007: 256) call counterfactual. As noted above, Amare's (2013: 54-55) description of hypothetical and counterfactual conditions gives no morpheme that signals conditionals, but he claims that the hypothetical conditional differs in having "the perfective suffix *-gi*" in the protasis. The present data show that both real and unreal conditionals are marked in Gwama with *á*, and in the case of unreal conditional clauses with the additional morpheme *kal/r*. As noted above, *-gi* is a deictic directional (DD) morpheme in the sense that something 'finished' is within the semantic range of DD2 (Hellenthal 2018).

In unreal conditions, as can be seen in (13), the conditionality morpheme *á* is the first element in each clause. The attested pattern of the hypothetical (real) and counterfactual (unreal) conditionals is Protasis + Apodosis (Subordinate + Main clause).

5. CONVERB CONSTRUCTIONS

One of the features of Nilo-Saharan languages spoken mainly in the west of the Ethiopian region, which is shared with the Afroasiatic languages in the country, is the use of converbs in clauses (Amha and Dimmendaal 2006: 393). Converbs can be defined as "verb forms that are specialized for the expression of adverbial subordination, but can not form a sentence on their own, i.e. they do not occur as main predicates of independent clauses"; as such they can show restrictions on person and aspect markers (Bisang 1995: 141). Based on Bisang's (1995) definition of converbs, the Gwama converb constructions meet two of the three requirements that are attested cross-linguistically. First, syntactically, converbs are subordinate in the sense of being embedded as adverbial constituents. Second, on the semantic level, converbs are non-finite verb forms that generally

modify verbs in a clause. Morphologically, the converbs have no markers, so root or stem forms of verbs function as non-finite forms. In Gwama, such clausal constructions conjoin a series of events, where the event expressed by the converb appears anterior to the event expressed by the finite verb (see Leyew 2005: 31; Kievit and Robertson 2012: 76).

In such clauses, the converb precedes the finite verb. Both the converb and finite verb are equally important in the clause because semantically they express a sequence of actions. Both verbs share the same arguments and may also share aspect markers. The following examples, taken from texts, show converb constructions in Gwama. Though converbs do not take person agreement morphemes, they can be inflected for aspect, as in (14c).

14. a. *ho fam-b-un-fam*
 go want-3PL.SBJ-3PL.OBJ-RED
 'Having gone, they sought them.'
- b. *ho kam-b-un*
 go find-3PL.SBJ-3PL.OBJ
 'Having gone, they found them'
- c. *ma-ho duj tut-n-a-tut*
 PFV-go buy return-3MS-3NS-RED
 'Having gone and bought (it), he returned.'
- d. *k'iji k'a-ni*
 cut eat-1SG
 'Having cut, I eat, ...' (Literally: 'I eat cutting ...')
- e. *ho kis'b-a*
 go enter-3PL-3NS
 'They, having gone, enter.'

As noted above, in all cases of converb constructions, where two verbs appear in a series, the converb appears first (see Kievit and Robertson 2012: 76). What is more, in converb constructions that have three verbs in a series, two non-finite verbs can appear preceding the finite one, as in (14c). In (14c), in addition, the non-finite verb is inflected for aspect. Obviously, the two verbs share the aspect marker, and they also share person markers.

In some situations, Gwama expresses a single event with two verbs that denote a sequence of two actions. In (15a), the converb construction *k'uf k'a*, which is translated as 'having killed eat', is also used to express the occurrence of two different actions within the identical space-time frames of a converb construction. This sentence is literally translated as 'Tigers eat people', and the

Gwama equivalent contains two verbs *k'uf k'a* to mean 'having killed eat'. A converb can be inflected for aspect and person markers, as in (15b).

15. a. *zelum gi fingo k'uf k'a-ni sit*
 tiger in past kill eat-3SG person
 'In the past, a tiger, having killed, eats person.'
- b. *u-tifal ma-b-e-so k'uf gi fin*
 SGV-lion PFV-PASS-3MS-stab kill with spear
 'A lion, being stabbed, was killed with a spear.'

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper, constructions combining several clauses in Gwama have been discussed with the emphasis on four clausal structures: complement, relative, adverbial, and converbal. The basic constituent order of the identified clause combinations shows that subordinate clauses appear preceding matrix clauses, though the language does not seem rigid in its constituent ordering. The relativizer morpheme *-ā* appears as a subordinator in the relative clause. Gwama shows a head-internal non-reduction relativization strategy; in such a strategy, there is in all cases an unreduced head noun appearing as an NP in the relative clause structure. Of the adverbial clauses described, including temporal, reason, and purpose clauses, the last two (reason and purpose) are treated in a similar fashion, i.e., the subordinator of both clauses is *gaf*. Real and unreal conditions can also be expressed in the language using the conditionality morphemes *ama-* or *á* 'if', which can alternatively be used to change the constituent order in some conditional clauses. The subordinator *ama-* seems to appear preceding the person marker, whereas *á* seems to be followed by a verb or an adjective. Converbs are not morphologically marked with person agreement markers. Therefore, when a verb appears in a non-finite form, this converb functions as a modifier to a following finite verb. The two verbs have equal semantic significance in the clause, for they express a sequence of actions in their order of occurrence, i.e., the converb expresses anteriority.

This study provides preliminary insights into the structure of clause combining in Gwama. I hope it will trigger linguists to conduct further research on the syntactic and semantic analysis of the language.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASC	Associative	OBJ	Object
CONC	Concessive	PASS	Passive
COND	Conditional	PFV	Perfective
COP	Copula	PL	Plural
DD	Deictic-Directional	POSS	Possessive
DEF	Definiteness	PROG	Progressive
FS	Feminine Singular	PURP	Purpose
GEN	Genitive	REAS	Reason
IPFV	Imperfective	RED	Reduplication
LOC	Locative	REL	Relativizer
MS	Masculine Singular	SG	Singular
NEG	Negative	SGV	Singulative
NS	Neuter Singular	TEMP	Temporal

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Author's email address: andargachewgetu1@gmail.com