

## CASE-MARKING IN AMHARIC NONVERBAL PREDICATION, PART II

Weak Referentiality: the Beyond workshop, March 26, 2012

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Amharic nonverbal predication gives rise to (at least) **three somewhat related puzzles**:

The present tense copula **agrees with the subject in a nonstandard way**:

- (1) ine tamari n-ä-ñ  
I student is-3MS<sub>S</sub>-1s<sub>O</sub>  
*I am a student.*

Explanation: the present tense copula is a backward raising verb (see Potsdam and Polinsky in press) that doesn't trigger the movement of the subject to [Spec, TP]

**The case on the non-subject** can be nominative or accusative, with a clear semantic effect:

- (2) a. lijo-cc-u tamari-wočč-u/ Ethiopiaw-yan-u n-φ-aččāw nominative  
child-PL-DEF student-PL-DEF/ Ethiopian-PL-DEF is-3MS<sub>S</sub>-3PL  
*The children are the students/the Ethiopians.*  
b. lijo-cc-u tamari-wočč-u-n/ Ethiopiaw-yan-u-n n-φ-aččāw accusative  
child-PL-DEF student-PL-DEF-ACC/ Ethiopian-PL-DEF-ACC is-3MS<sub>S</sub>-3PL  
*The children are just like the students/the Ethiopians.*

The "near-identity" reading suggests the presence of an additional piece of structure, which is responsible for the accusative case assignment, except...

**SL** predicates require accusative case marking and a nonstandard pattern of φ-agreement:

- (3) a. lij-očč-u rak'ut-aččāw-n māt't'-u  
children-DEF naked-3PL<sub>GEN</sub>-ACC come.PERF-3PL<sub>S</sub>  
*The children came naked.*  
b. \*lij-očč-u rak'ut-aččāw māt't'-u  
children-DEF naked-3PL<sub>GEN</sub> come.PERF-3PL<sub>S</sub>  
c. \*lij-očč-u rak'ut māt't'-u  
children-DEF naked come.PERF-3PL<sub>S</sub>

Generalization: cross-linguistically, stage-level predication & comparison are often encoded by the same means -- but how is this done?

### 2. JACALTEC NEAR-IDENTITY

Pustet 2005:66-67: Jacaltec is supposed to be the only language where adjectival predicates can appear with a copula, while nominal predicates cannot:

- (4) a. c'ul ix Craig 1977:23  
good CLF.she  
*She is good/a good person.*  
b. c'ul ye ix Craig 1977:23  
good is CLF.she  
*She is fine/in good health.*

Craig 1977:24: unlike most adjectives, which can never combine with a copula, the adjectives expressing emotional and effective states, such as *tzalalal* 'happy', "require the copula *-eyi*":

- (5) a. *tzalalal/busc'ulal/akan c'ulal* *\*(ye)* *naj* Craig 1977:24-25  
happy/sad/peace is CLF.he  
*He is happy/sad/at peace.*
- b. *how/sac'an/isa* *(\*ye)* *naj*  
violent/diligent/lazy is CLF.he  
*He is violent/diligent/lazy.*

When occurring with nominals, *-eyi* "denotes the appearance or resemblance of one thing to something else" (Craig 1977:25):

- (6) *añ ye te' cape* Craig 1977:25  
medicine is CLF.the coffee  
*The coffee tastes like medicine.*

Pustet 2005:67: "the semantic essence of *-eyi* could be captured in terms of the notion of non-innateness", or in other words, it is not really a copula.

Craig 1977 translates this copula as "to be in a certain way or condition". Interestingly, unlike the existential copula *ay*, which is sentence-initial and takes an absolutive subject marker, the manner copula *-eyi* is a second-position verb and takes an ergative subject marker. Neither of them is inflected for aspect.

### 3. RUSSIAN "INSTRUMENTAL OF COMPARISON"

Peškovskij 1956, see also Madariaga 2008: the instrumental case on Russian predicates arose historically from a secondary predicate denoting comparison or way of action (see Madariaga 2008 for the references and discussion of the same development in Old Church Slavonic):

- (7) a. *Otčego moj dux vampirom satanu poët i slavit?* Peškovskij 1956  
why my spirit vampire-INST Satan-ACC sings and celebrates  
*Why does my soul sing in honour of Satan like a vampire?*
- b. *Крѣвь течааše rekami.* OCS, Madariaga 2008  
blood-NOM.SG poured river-INST.PL  
*Blood was pouring like a river.*

This use was first extended towards designative contexts (indication of professional quality):  
note: "extended" is intended to entail that the comparative use didn't disappear; it very much still exists

- (8) *Vy že kogo xošcete igumenom[ъ] imeti sobe...*  
you PRT whom-ACC want abbot-INST have-INF self-DAT  
*[he] whom you want to have as an abbot...*

... eventually, with the copula (then becoming the regular predicative case):

- (9) *Ta dva byla posłьmь u rize.*  
DEM-NOM-DUAL two-NOM.DUAL be-PAST-DUAL ambassador-INST.SG in Riga-LOC  
*Both were in Riga as ambassadors/in an embassy.*

Madariaga 2008 argues that this instrumental case is assigned by a null preposition:

- (10) *Juan y Luis estuvieron trabajando de médico-%(s) en Alemania.* Madariaga 2008  
Juan and Luis were-3PL working of doctor-PL in Germany  
*Juan and Luis worked as doctors in Germany.*

Doesn't this remind you of bare NP predicates in Germanic and Romance? (Kupferman 1979, Pollock 1983, Boone 1987, Stowell 1989, 1991, Longobardi 1994, Chierchia 1998, Roy

2006, Beyssade and Dobrovie-Sorin 2005, de Swart, Winter and Zwarts 2005, Matushansky and Spector 2005)

In this context, how incidental is it that comparative NPs in these languages are also bare?

- (11) a. Le téléphone portable est apparu comme objet de luxe. French  
the phone mobile is appeared as object of luxury  
*Cell phones appeared as objects of luxury.*
- b. Juan está trabajando como médico en un hospital. Spanish  
Juan be-PRES-3SG working as doctor in a hospital  
*Juan is working as a doctor in a hospital.*
- c. Deze kamer is in gebruik als opslagplaats. Dutch, de Swart, Winter and Zwarts 2007  
this room is in use as storage.room  
*This room is in use as a storage room.*

Frequent claim (Emonds 1985, Aarts 1992, Bowers 1993, Eide and Åfarli 1999, den Dikken 2006): in small clause complements like (12) *as* is the lexicalization of Pred°:

- (12) a. She regards this hypothesis as silly. English  
b. They take him for a fool.

Marelj and Matushansky 2010: no, it most probably isn't (see also Starke 1995)

#### 4. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The fact that languages often use the same morphosyntactic means for adverbs and (a subset of secondary) predicates is unlikely to be incidental (see Himmelmann and Schultze-Berndt 2005, and in particular van der Auwera and Malchukov 2005):

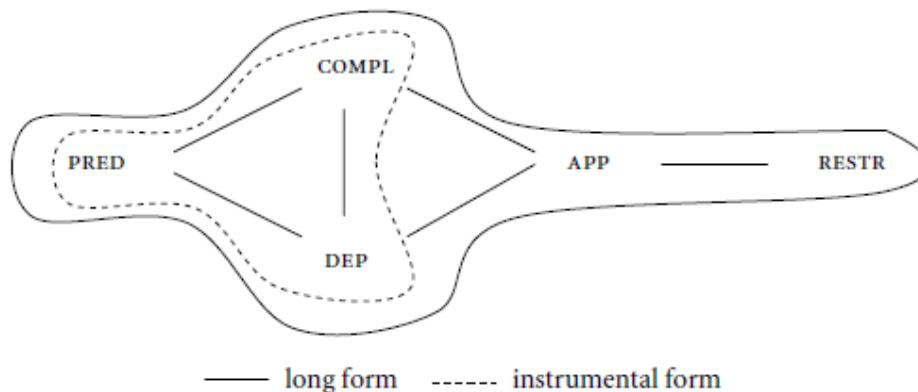


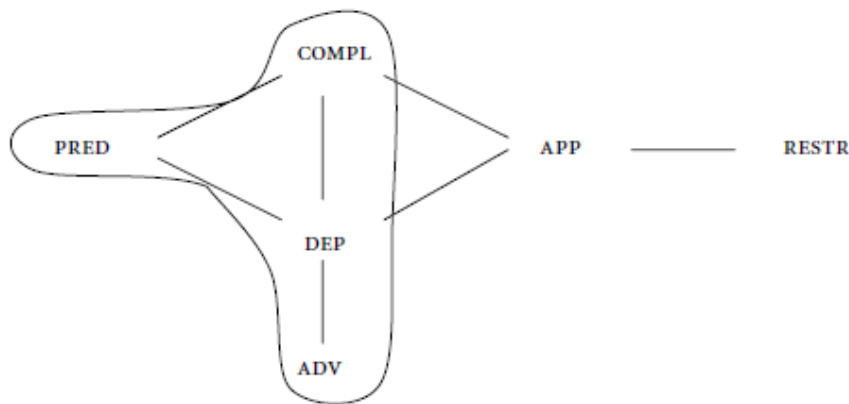
FIGURE 13.18 The long and instrumental forms of the Russian adjective

(13) **Russian:** AP/NP predicates usually bear instrumental, which also derives some adverbs

- a. Yana sčitaet Marka svoim vragom. ECM  
Yana-NOM considers Mark-ACC self's enemy-INSTR  
*Yana considers Mark her enemy.*
- b. Alik streloj pomčalsja domoj. half-transparent adverbial  
Alik-NOM arrow-INST PRF-rush-PAST-MSG homewards  
*Alik rushed home like an arrow (very fast).*

- c. Tolik kubar'om skatilsja po lestnice. idiomatic adverbial  
Tolik-NOM peg top-INST PRF-roll-PAST-MSG over stairs  
*Tolik fell down the stairs head over heels.*
- d. Edik peškom došel do stancii. adverbial  
Edik-NOM on foot-INST PRF-walk-PAST-MSG till station  
*Edik reached the station on foot.*

So for Russian instrumental we really need a slightly more detailed map:



Welsh is like Russian (with some caveats regarding predicate fronting):

- (14) **Welsh**: the same marker introduces predicates and converts adjectives to adverbs
- a. Rydw i'n ystyried [Siôn yn niwsans]. ECM, Zaring 1996  
am I+PROG consider John PRED nuisance  
*I consider John a nuisance.*
- b. Dw i'n licio cwrw yn oer. depictive  
be-1SG I+PROG like beer PRED cold  
*I like beer cold.*
- c. Oedden nhw 'n ffyrnig yn achlysurol. adverb, Jones 2009  
be-IMP.3PL they PRED fierce in occasional  
*They were occasionally fierce.*

And Hungarian isn't:

- (15) **Hungarian**, de Groot 2008: the same case is used for adverbs and depictives
- a. Tamás szép-en énekel. manner  
Tom beautiful-SPE sings  
*Tom sings beautifully.*
- b. Mari nyers-en ette meg a hal-at. depictive  
Mary raw-SPE ate ASP the fish-ACC  
*Mary ate the fish raw.*
- c. Péter mérges-en ment el. ambiguous or vague (like German or Dutch)  
Peter angry-SPE went away  
*Peter left angrily.*

While the semantic connection is more or less clear, the syntactic one isn't.

Jacalteco and Amharic provide evidence for a finer-grained differentiation, linking stage-level predication with comparison. And Jacalteco uses a **verbal copula** for this.

A formal link between depictives and adverbs requires a way of representing the semantics of an adverb as a predication on the subject (for manner adverbials, at least).

A potential syntactic link comes from the derivation of a verb in DM (Hale and Keyser 2002, Arad 2003, Doron 2003, Ramchand 2008; cf. Borer 2005), where the verbalizing head *v* may modify the final state provided by the complement of a change-of-state verb (16a) or impose a manner on an activity event (16b):



In a sense, (16a) the root acts as a depictive and in (16b), as an adverb.

A potential semantic connection may come from the agentive *be* (Lakoff 1970, Partee 1977, Dowty 1979, Rothstein 2000):

- (17) a. Roger is being rude.  
 b. Roger rudely refused to answer.

Does the agentive *be* function as a secondary predicate?

Finally, since some depictives might be derived from extraposed reduced relative clauses (see Pereltsvaig 2007, Rozhnova in progress) and others from absolute constructions, agreement in case vs. case-marking might follow.

To be continued...

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