TOWARD AN AMHARIC CASE-GRAMMAR

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0. <u>Introduction</u>

a. The present paper is a preliminary study for a monograph on the Am-
haric case-system. Since my purpose is to present only the theoretical
basis for the longer study, I am using here as few examples as possible,
even though each statement is supported by a sufficient number of exam-
ples, both orally collected and compiled from written documents.[1]

Amharic is eminently appropriate for a study of case-systems. Its
entire complement-system can be defined in interpretive semantic terms.
This language has no significant instances of arbitrary, lexically spe-
cified verbal government.[2] If the semantic features of a verb are
clearly established, it can be predicted what case the complements
attached to it will take. In many languages, arbitrary verbal govern-
ment is established through semantic changes in the lexical verb which,
in spite of the changes, maintains its original case government. Amhar-
ic has no such instances.

Amharic is of particular interest here since, as a Semitic language,
its ancestor must have had a different case-system, reconstructible by
comparing various Semitic languages. It is obvious that the modifica-
tion of the original case-system was triggered by the impact of the
Cushitic substratum, but the most interesting feature of the Amharic
case-system, the asymmetrical correspondences (see below), are not found
in Cushitic (as far as we know). Amharic tried to make use of its

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[1]The present study is primarily based on literary Amharic. In some
cases, however, I had recourse to the assistance of two native inform-
ants, Mr. Wond Wossen Mesfin and Mr. Aynalem Bekele, who represent the
Addis Ababa colloquial of the young generation. This dialect noticeably
differs from the literary language, especially in the domain of case
uses. Some of the discrepancies will be pointed out in footnotes.

[2]This is a counter-example to Jespersen's [1924:129] claim (about
Indo-European) that "however far back we go, we nowhere find a case with
only one well-defined function: in every language every case served
different purposes, and the boundaries between these two are far from
being clear-cut."

Semitic morphological devices to express Cushitic case-categories, and
the result is an absolutely original system, with much coherence and con-
sistency, independent of both its sources, Semitic and Cushitic.

If the Amharic case-system is ultimately a spontaneous development,
one may wonder what factor inspired the selection of its categories.
In the following I assume that these developments were not fortuitous,
but reflect very deep categories of language. It is premature to spec-
ulate about how many universal and language-specific elements the Amhar-
ic case-system contains, but it is quite likely that a great deal of it
is universal.

b. In my "Pronominalization in Amharic" [Hetzron 1966], I gave a taxo-
nomical description of the Amharic case-system on the basis of corres-
pondences between adnominal and adpronominal case exponents. In this
language, there are six basic prepositions which can be attached to
complement nouns, and three sets of complement suffix pronouns only.
Without taking semantics into consideration, it is impossible to predict
from the adnominal case marker what case the pronominal complement is
going to be in, and vice-versa. Let me illustrate this point.

Here are three uses of the preposition kǎ- which might be fairly
well rendered by the English preposition 'from':

(1a) sǎwiyyǎw kǎ-bet (wǝst) wǎṭṭa
      man-the from=house (inside) went-out
      'The man came/went out of the/a house'
(1b) fǝrew kǎ-bǝrtukan wǝst wǎṭṭa
      pip-the from=orange inside came-out
      'The pip came out of the orange'
(1c) lebaw kǎ-sǎwiyyǎw gǎnzǎb sǎrrǎqǎ
      thief-the from=man-the money stole
      'The thief stole money from the man'

Let us now use pronouns instead of nouns for the complements preceded
here by kǎ- . These pronouns will be suffixed to the verbal stem.
The construction used below is the relative where the pronominal suffix
of the verb refers to the subsequent head-noun, and its 'case' reflects
function within the relative clause, represented in (1) by kǎ- .

(2a') săwiyyăw yă-wăṭṭa-bbăt beṭ

    man-the that=came-out=in-it house

    'the house from which the man came/went out'

(2b') fərəw yă-wăṭṭa-llăt bərtukan

    pip-the that=came-out=to-it orange

    'the orange from which the pip came out'

(2c') lebaw gănzăb yă-sărrăqă-w săw

    thief-the money that=stole=him man

    'the man from whom the thief stole money'

In other words, instead of 'from it' (for 'from which'), we respectively
have 'in-it', 'to-it' and the plain object suffix 'it', three different
suffixes corresponding to the same preposition kă- . The choice of
the pronominal case can be predicted on the basis of the meaning. If
one speaks of origin, departure point, the pronoun has 'in' (a). If
one describes extraction, drawing out a component from a whole, the pro-
nominal complement is 'to' (b). If one mentions the source of acquisi-
tion, it will appear as an object pronoun (c). With nouns, as we have
seen in (1), all the three relations are represented by the preposition
kă- 'from'. Thus, the pronominal case cannot be predicted on the basis
of the shape of the nominal case; one has to have recourse to semantics.

    Let us now try it the other way around and see whether nominal cases
can be predicted on the basis of the pronominal one. The answer is even
more emphatically negative. In the form:

(3)   yă-măṭṭa-bbăt N

    that=he-went=in-it N

-bb- 'in' may be the pronominal counterpart of any of the following ad-
nominal cases (i.e. N can be any of the nouns which in (4) are preceded
by prepositions:

(4a) bă-măkina măṭṭa   (bă- instrumental)

    with=car he-came

    'He came by car'

(4b) bă-meda wəsṭ măṭṭa   (bă- locative)

    in=field inside he-came

    'He was coming in the field'

(4c) kǝ-betu mǝ̈ṭṭa   (kǝ- ablative)

      from=house-the he-came

      'He came from the house'

(4d) wǝ̈dǝ̈ betu mǝ̈ṭṭa   (wǝ̈dǝ̈ directional)

      to(wards) house-the he-came

      'He was coming to the house'

(4e) (sǝ)lǝ̈-gudday mǝ̈ṭṭa   (lǝ̈- or sǝlǝ̈ purposive)

      for=business he-came

      'He came for business'

Furthermore, mǝ̈ṭṭa-bbǝ̈t may also be used in the sense of 'he came to his
(own or someone else's) detriment', a pronominal use which has no nominal
counterpart.

     This leads to the conclusion that surface complement relations must
be defined in terms of two exponents, the adnominal and the adpronominal
case markers.

1. Symmetrical and asymmetrical correspondences

     The adnominal complement markers are (with approximate definitions,
to be developed later): -n (object, accusative), lǝ̈- (dative), bǝ̈-
(locative/instrumental), kǝ- (ablative), wǝ̈dǝ̈ (directional), sǝlǝ̈
(purposive 'for', topical 'about, on the subject of'). The three spatial
prepositions bǝ̈- (static), kǝ- (away), and wǝ̈dǝ̈ (toward) are often
supplemented by postpositions like wǝsṭ 'inside', lay 'top', tač
'underneath', aṭǝ̈gǝ̈b 'near', etc. for more specific expression. [3]
There are some other compounds, kǝ-...gar(a) 'with' (comitative),
bǝ̈-...mǝknǝyat 'because of', etc., but they do not concern us here. The
only 'Preposition-...Postposition' combination relevant to our topic is
bǝ̈-...lay which, in addition to its local meaning 'on (the top of)',
can also be used as a topical (~ sǝlǝ̈$_2$) and as a benedictive (see

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[3]In Addis Ababa colloquial, the static and directional locative pre-
fixes (bǝ̈- and wǝ̈dǝ̈) are most often replaced by the preposition
ǝ-~ ∅. As in all its uses ǝ- alternates with one of the prepositions
above, and in no case is it the only preposition to use, I omit ǝ- from
this discussion. The Addis Ababa colloquial further uses the postposition
ga in the same sense as aṭǝ̈gǝ̈b.

below). We are also excluding prepositions with very clear and concrete
meaning like ǝndä 'like, as' which have no suffix-pronominal counter-
part.

The suffix pronouns belong to three sets: O (object), B (etymologi-
cally related to bǝ̆-), and L (etymologically related to lǝ̆-). The
following graph (Table 1) sums up the possible combinations of adnominal
and adpronominal case markers on the basis of Hetzron [1966] (which cites
many more examples), with some further data. Ø in either column indicates
that the complement in question can appear only under the other category,
i.e. Ø in the first column marks a complement which can only be pronominal,
and in the second a complement which appears only as a noun, never as a
suffix pronoun.[4]

Various combinations of 7 adnominal cases + zero and 3 adpronominal
cases + zero (8 vs. 4) make up 20 surface complement types actually used
in Amharic. The -n/O, lǝ̆/L and bǝ̆-/B correspondences have been called,
with some historical bias, symmetrical, and the rest asymmetrical. Des-
criptively speaking, the combinations -n/B, lǝ̆-/B and bǝ̆-...lay/L
have a special status. Whereas in the other cases there might be (1) a
nominal complement only (except when Ø), (2) a pronominal complement
only (except when Ø), or (3) a nominal complement with a resumptive pro-
nominal complement (e.g. to=the-man I-answered=to-him [see Getatachew
[1970] for the function of this construction]), these three can only
appear in the last two configurations, either as a pronominal complement
(in which case -n/B cannot be distinguished from bǝ̆-/B), e.g.:

(5)   yǝh sǝra bǝzu gize wässädä-bbät
       this work much time took=in-him
       'This work took him a long time'

or both a nominal complement and a resumptive pronoun:

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[4]Independent pronouns behave like nouns. They can have adnominal
case-markers. In the following, I shall use the term pronoun with ref-
erence to pronoun suffixes only. This is well justified, because the re-
sumptive [Getatchew 1970] and relative [Hetzron 1966:83-4] functions of
pronouns can be fulfilled by suffixes only, e.g. lǝ̆-zzih säw mǝ̆lläshu-
llǝ̆t to=this man I-answered=to-him, 'I replied to this man', resumptive;
yǝ̆mǝ̆lläshu-llǝ̆t säw that-I-answered=to-him, 'the man to whom I ans-
wered', relative. In these cases, lǝ̆-(ǝ)ssu to=he with the indepen-
dent pronoun can never be used.

NOMINAL   PRONOMINAL

ø   ø

-n

lă-   O

bă-

bă-...lay

kă-   L

wădă

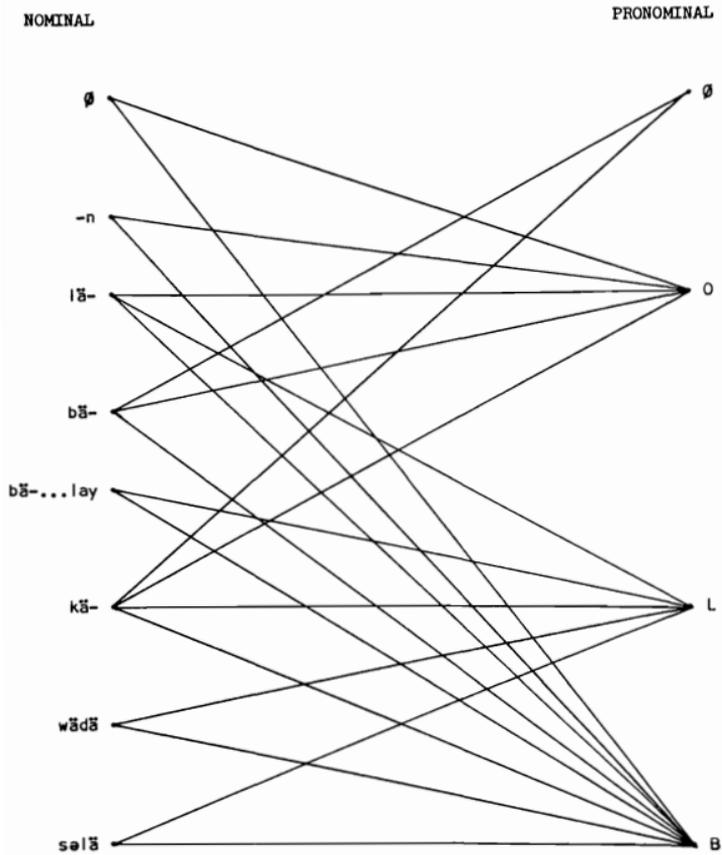sălă   B

Table 1

(6)   yəh səra lä-zzih säw bəzu gize wässädä-bbät

        this work to=this man much time took=in-him

        'This work took this man a long time'

but never with a nominal complement only:

(7)   *yəh səra lä-zzih säw bəzu gize wässädä

        'This work took this man a long time'

Here is a breakdown of the meanings of the various combinations in Table 1, arranged according to the first (nominal) column. This is only a provisional presentation of the surface-situation with approximative semantic interpretation, meant to serve as raw material for the subsequent analysis.

a. Ø/O. In Amharic possession is expressed by means of the verb allä 'there is', with a peculiar type of construction:

(8a)   (yəh säw) mäṣhaf allä-w

        (this man) book there-is=him

        '(This man)/He has a book'

(8b)   (yəh säw) mäṣhafočč allu-t

        (this man) books there-are=him

        '(This man)/He has books'

(8c)   (ənnäzzih säwočč) mäṣhaf all-aččäw

        (these men) book there-is=them

        '(These people)/They have a book'

(8d)   (ənnäzzih säwočč) mäṣhafočč allu-aččäw

        (these men) books there-are=them

        '(These people)/They have books'

The agreement with the verb shows that the surface subject of the sentence is the element possessed. The possessors are absolutely unmarked, they are in fact in extraposition,[5] i.e. not integrated syntactically into the

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[5]Also called 'introductory nominative'. The term already used for this phenomenon in generative grammar is 'dislocation'.

sentence [Dawkins 1960:54]. At the end of the verb, there is an O type
pronoun suffix in agreement with the extraposed noun. The sentence is
correct without an explicit extraposed noun, but not without the pronoun.

b. **Ø/B.** The Amharic expression for necessitative 'must' is similar.
The person or object under obligation may only appear in extraposition,
outside the S proper, and the same verb allä is followed by a B pro-
noun suffix in agreement with the extraposed noun, with a verbal noun
as the subject:

(9a)　(yəh säw) mähed allä-bbät

　　　(this man) going there-is=in=him

　　　'(This man)/He has to go'

(9b)　(ənnäzzih säwoččə) mähed allä-bbaččäw

　　　(these men) going there-is=in=them

　　　'(These men)/They have to go'

　　Ø/B can also be used to indicate that the action or event mentioned
is detrimental to someone, e.g.:

(10)　and läg bəʔər säbbärä-bbəňň

　　　one boy pen broke=in-me

　　　'A boy broke a pen to my detriment'

If the person to whose detriment the action takes place is not clear from
the context, the only way to mention him is by using extraposition:

(11)　yəh säw, and läg bəʔər säbbärä-bbät

　　　'This man, a boy broke a pen to his detriment'

In practice, however, the person the damage is done to is often the owner
of the object broken, as in:

(12)　and läg yäzzih-ən säw bəʔər säbbärä-bbät

　　　'A boy broke this man's pen to his [the man's] detriment'

c. **-n/O.** This is the usual case-marking for an object. The object
suffix is -n after definite or generic nouns [Afevork 1905:291], and
zero after indefinite nouns. I am using -n as a symbol for the object
case in general. -n/O is one of the three symmetrical correspondences.

d. -n/B. This asymmetrical correspondence freely alternates with the
symmetrical bǎ-(...ǀay)/B in many verbs with a clearly stylistic-
euphonic function. -n/B is preferred to bǎ-/B whenever the alterna-
tion is possible. There are two conditions for the alternation: the
presence of a resumptive pronoun B (the abundance of [b]'s in bǎ-
and later in -bb- is thus avoided by replacing the first one with -n),
and that the complement must be an organic, not only incidental, part
of the content of the verb. Thus, in:

(13)   sǎwoččhu bǎ-əgziabher yamnallu
            the-men in=God believe
            'The people believe in God'

bǎ- may not be replaced by -n. The sentence

(14)   sǎwoččhu bǎ-əgziabher yamnu-bbǎt-all
            ...they-believe=in-him=Aux
            'The people believe in God'

however, freely alternates with:

(15)   sǎwoččhu əgziabher-ən yamnu-bbǎt-all
            'The people believe in God'

as there is a resumptive pronoun. As far as the 'organicity' of the
complement is concerned, in:

(16)   bǎ-mǎkinaw mǒ†ǎʧʧə-bbǎt
            in=the-car she-came=in-it
            'She came with the car'

the instrumental bǎ- cannot be replaced by -n because the presence
of an instrument does not necessarily follow from the content of the
verb 'come'. On the other hand, beside:

(17)   bǎ-mǎkinaw †ǎ†ǎqqǎmku-bbǎt
            in=the-car I-used=in-it
            'I used the car'

it is possible to say:

(18) məkinaw-n təṭəqqəmku-bbət

  the-car=Acc, I-used=in-it

  'I used the car'

since the verb 'use' implies an instrumental (in the instrumental/loca-
tive case).[6]

e. lə-/O. Dative, i.e. transfer of an entity to someone, is usually
expressed by lə-/O, for instance with verbs like 'give', 'lend', etc.
The only notable exception I know of is the verb šəṭə 'sell' which re-
quires, for the buyer, lə-/L. The explanation for this apparent discre-
pancy might be that selling implies primarily transfer of rights and
not necessarily handing an object over to another person.

  In intransitive verbs such as 'to be enough' (bəqqa), 'to be
necessary' (asfəlləgə), 'to seem' (məssələ), etc. the entity for
which 'it is enough', etc. will have also lə-/O [Armbruster 1908:§61c].
The term 'experiencer' is proper for this subcategory. A special case
of experiencer is the 'agent' of the passive forms of verbs of cognition,
perception, 'to be known to' (and not 'by' even in English), 'to be
seen/visible to', etc. The corresponding causatives also have lə-/O
for the one who is subjected to the experience such as 'to show to', 'to
let someone know' [Polotsky 1960:120].

f. lə-/L. This combination is used in the sense of 'to the benefit of'
(benefactive), or 'to the intention of' (destinative). When something
to be handed over is sent, lə-/L mark the addressee. The beneficiary of
a permission (fəqqədə 'allow') or the person replied to (məlləsə
'answer') are also in the lə-/L case. This combination is further used
when an action is performed on a component of the entity represented by
the complement, as in:

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  [6]For other examples of euphonic -n , see Polotsky [1966:243, fn. 3].
There, yohannəs-ən ...yəmmiṣəfə-bbaččäw means 'who writes ... about King
John', the -n indicates that B is not used in the detrimental sense
'against'. For the concept of organic vs. inorganic complment, see
Zsilka [1967:108sq.] and here [fns. 26 and 29].

(19)   yohannəs lä-käbbädä ṭəfəru-n qorräṭä-llät

        John to=Kebbede his-fingernail=Acc. cut-to-him

        'John cut Kebbede's fingernails'

Furthermore, lä-/0 may be used in the purposive sense 'for' in free alter-
nation with səlä-/L.

g.   lä-/B. This combination is used for an addressee who gets a message
(and not an object sent) or something that he does not have to handle
[Hetzron 1966:93]. Another case involves the 'effectual', i.e., an
entity that suffers the effects and consequences of the action or event.
Finally, lä-/B is used for the purposive 'for' in free alternation with
səlä/B. For the distinction between səlä/L and səlä/B see t. below.

h.   bä-/0. This is reserved to the agent of the passive, e.g.:

(20)   yəh bəʔər bä-säwiyyäw täsäbbärä

        this pen in=the-man was-broken

        'This pen was broken by the man'

It is remarkable that the agent of the passive cannot be pronominal.
The is no 'by him', nor, in relative constructions, 'by whom'. As the
corresponding active forms can express practically the same thing, such
a block on the agent creates no problem.

i.   bä-/0. This is the case of what I called [Hetzron 1963] the
'mediator' in a factitive[7] construction. The pattern is 'X causes Y
to perform an action'. If Y is actively involved in the action, it
will appear in the accusative. If, on the other hand, Y is a mere
instrument in the hands of X, it will take the preposition bä-. The
latter cannot, however, be assimilated to the instrumental (bä-/B) be-
cause its pronominal reflection, like that of the other type of mediator
is 0.

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[7]Fillmore [1968:25] misuses the term 'factitive' for 'factive'. In
the accepted terminology, 'factive' is the case of 'being/becoming such',
whereas 'factitive' is a type of causative.

j. **bǝ̄-/B.** The symmetrical correspondence bǝ̄-/B is used in the very general sense of locative (also when bǝ̄- is supplemented by locative postpositions), and in the instrumental (where bǝ̄- may be supplemented by the postpositions ...əğ 'hand', ...ammakkayənnǝ̄t 'intermediary'). Temporal complements are also in bǝ̄-/B. Verbs like 'believe in', 'envy', etc. have bǝ̄-/B for the entity trusted or envied. Cf. d. above.

k. **bǝ̄-...lay/L.** This is the benedictive sense, for the entity on which something is imposed by a higher authority in a beneficial manner [Hetzron 1966:92 (d) for examples]. In this case, the nominal complement cannot stand alone. It must be followed by a resumptive pronoun L.

l. **bǝ̄-...lay/B.** This use is equivalent to the topical səlǝ̄/B, it refers to the topic of conversation, discussion, subject of agreement etc. It can be replaced by -n/B, see d. above.

m. **kǝ̄-/∅.** Used as agent of passive when it can be interpreted as the origin of the entity designated by the subject, either because it 'emanated' from him being his creation (as in kǝ̄-N tǝdǝrräsǝ̄ 'by=N was-written', speaking of a book), or sent out by him (kǝ̄-N tǝlakǝ̄ 'by=N was-sent'). As in h. above, this agent cannot appear as a pronoun.

n. **kǝ̄-/0.** Source of acquisition is designated by this combination. Another use is in comparative constructions, the entity against which something is measured has kǝ̄-/0 'more/less than'. Both uses of kǝ̄-/0 alternate with -n/0 when there is a resumptive pronoun. It is thus possible to say:

(21)   kǝ̄-sətəyyǝ̄wa and mǝ̄ṣhaf gǝ̄zzah^w
            from=the-woman one book I-bought
            'I bought a book from the woman'

or with resumptive pronoun:

(22)   ...gǝ̄zzah^w-at
            bought=her

but only

(23) setəyyăwa-n and măṣhaf găzzahᵂ-at

     the-woman=Acc. one book I-bought=her

     'I bought a book from the woman'

and never

(24) ...găzzahᵂ

when the source of acquisition (here 'the woman') has the object ending -n.

o. <u>kă-/L</u>. This marks the entity from which a component has been or is extracted, e.g.:

(25) qəbatu yătăgăffăfă-llăt wătăt

     the-butter that-was-removed=to-it milk

     'the milk from which the cream was extracted' (=skim-milk)

and (1b)-(2b') above.

p. <u>kă-/B</u>. This is the ablative case, the place from which someone or something is moving away, origin, etc. It may sometimes indicate the place approached, but also implying that the approach is completed. Sometimes it is used as a plain locative. These uses of kă- will be dealt with in 3.j. below.

q. <u>wădă/L</u>. This marks the person approached.

r. <u>wădă/B</u>. This indicates the place approached. The use of wădă does not necessarily imply completion of the approach, it may also be 'towards'. The translative 'to transform into' is also rendered by this combination. wădă, with no clear pronominal counterpart, is also used in the sense of 'approximately'. This is nevertheless no instance of wădă/Ø. In fact, in Amharic there is no clearcut way to distinguish between 'the time at which' and 'the time about which'.

s. <u>səlă/L</u>. This is the purposive 'for', also in the sense of 'instead of'. It can be analyzed only in comparison with səlă/B, see t., below.

t. <u>səlă/B (purposive)</u>. When a preexisting situation occasions an action or event, the causal bă-...məknəyat is used. When the action is performed for a not yet existing, future cause, one uses the purposive lă-

or səlä [Dawkins 1960:114, fn. 5]. The pronominal counterpart is L
when the action is profitable to the person or cause ('for the sake of',
'for'):

(26)   (sə)lä-wändəmmu motä-llät

        'he died for his brother'

or:

(27)   səlä agäru motä-llat

        'he died for his country'

(28)   (sə)lä-abbatu mäṭṭa-llät

        'he came for his father' (to help him or to replace him)

These are three instances of resumptive pronoun. When there is no idea
of profit involved, B is the adpronominal purposive:

(29)   (sə)lä-guddayu mäṭṭa-bbät

        for=the-business he-came=in-it

        'He came for the business'

u. **səlä/B (topical)**. In free variation with bä-...lay (1. above),
səlä can be used as a topical.

v. **Discussion**. There exists a certain amount of optionality in the
Amharic verbal government system when the complement relation may be
interpreted in different manners. For instance, with the verb šäššä
'to flee', either the accusative case or kä- are possible (with 0 as
pronominal reflection). This means that the idea of 'away from' inherent
to the verb may be used by the case-marking rule alternatively to the
object case (which has an application analogical to the object case of
'to leave'). Sending a letter may have wädä or lä- (but always L)
because either the idea of approach or that of destination may be
picked up by the case rule. With därräsä 'arrive', the place of arri-
val may be marked by kä- for completed approach, or by wädä for
approach in general, since completion is implied by the verb anyhow.[8]

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[8]In the Addis Ababa colloquial, only ə- (fn. 3) is used with
därräsä.

Let us consider the following quasi-paraphrase relation. The verb
gälläṣä 'to reveal, explain' governs lä-/L for the interlocutor,
whereas näggärä 'to say' has lä-/L. Now, in:

(30) lä-zzih säwəyye əndəzzih bəlo gälläṣä-llät/näggärä-w

      to=this man thus saying he-explained=to-him/he-told=him

      'He explained to/told this man as follows'

either verb can be used with little difference in meaning. However,
gälläṣä clearly implies 'revealing something for the other person's
benefit' or 'put knowledge at someone else's disposal', whereas näggärä
is a neutral verb of communication, implying mere transmission of message.
Hence the difference in agreement.

Similarly, we can compare:

(31) and ləba gänzäb särräqä-w

      one thief money stole=him

      'A thief stole money from him'

and its apparent paraphrase:

(32) and ləba gänzäb wässädä-bbät

      one thief money took-away=in-him

      'A thief took money from him'

The second sentence most probably refers to a theft, but not necessarily
so. The thief might have taken the money quite 'unprofessionally', as
a legitimate act by a man who also happens to be a thief.

Amharic has instances of lexical verbs which have different inter-
pretations according to the complement they govern. Such a case is
täsmamma which is an intransitive-reciprocal derivative of the verb
sämma 'to hear, understand' which is also used, with the 'experiencer'
in lä-/O, meaning 'to feel'. With bä-...lay/B or sələä/B it means
'to agree upon'; with lä-/O it is 'to fit, be convenient for'. When
it means 'agree', the persons agreeing are either plural subjects or
subject and comitative, and they 'understand' each other concerning a
topic. In the case of 'fit', the 'understanding' is unilateral; the
(usually nonhuman) subject is compatible with the (usually human)

experiencer, but the experiencer has no effect on the subject, hence
I$\tilde{S}$-/O.

2. The origin of the asymmetrical correspondences.

One may wonder how such a complex system has come about. If a unit
is composed of two classes of variables, the first class containing 8
members and the second 4 (including $\emptyset$), we can end up with 32 compound
units. The economy is obvious. The system described in Table 1 makes
use of 20 of these 32 possibilities. Nevertheless, it would be absolute-
ly wrong to think that the system was created through a random grouping
of the elements together in every possible combination, so as to obtain
maximum use out of the atomic components. Let us first take a look at
the diachrony, that is, how this state of affairs may have been created
in the history of Ethiopic.

The first step must have been the blocking of free pronominalization,
by encliticizing the three sets of pronouns O, B and L in a strict
morphological arrangement. This created a discrepancy between adnominal
(quantitatively free) and adpronominal (threefold only) case-marking.
However, such a blocking is conceivable in a situation where the idea of
asymmetrical correspondences can rely on some precedent.

There are two natural sources for the creation of asymmetrical
correspondences, one involving a language universal, the other a general
fact in Semitic.

In several unrelated languages one finds that part of the dative
complements may, in certain conditions, assume the same shape of a
'direct' object. For instance, in English:

(33)   I gave a book to the boy

can be paraphrased by:

(34)   I gave the boy a book

where the dative complement, brought directly next to the verb, has no
explicit case marker on the surface. It is quite impressive that Indo-
nesian has the same phenomenon: the above two sentences can be trans-
lated into it as:

(35) saya memberikan buku kepada anak itu

    'I gave a book to the boy'

and

(36) saya memberikan anak itu buku

    'I gave the boy a book'

respectively. In the latter, the dative preposition kepada is no more
necessary as anak itu 'boy that' has been brought next to the verb. I
have the impression that the admissibility of 0 suffixes in Amharic for
pronominal counterparts of lə̌-complements (dative-experiencer) also
obeys the same general tendency.[9] It can be proved that this 0 suffix
is formally different from the 0 suffix denoting regular accusative
objects. In Amharic, a verb can admit one pronominal suffix only. If
there should be two, one of them is omitted [Hetzron 1966:95-6]. There
is no clearcut hierarchy of pronouns determining which suffix can be
deleted in favor of another. Two things can be established with certainty:
first and second person suffixes have priority over third person ones,
and an 0 suffix corresponding to -n occupies the lowest position and
yields to all the other suffixes [Polotsky 1960:120]. An 0 corresponding
to lə̌- may drive out an accusative 0 (but never vice-versa), since it
has the same footing as B and L in the omission rules.

    The other source of asymmetrical correspondences is the adoption of
the preposition kə̌- 'from' into South-Ethiopic. Most probably it is
a borrowing from Cushitic. Somali has ka 'from' and Bedauye a compar-
ative ka 'more than' (which is elsewhere expressed by the same marker

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    [9]Geez has, beside the accusative in -š̌, an 'analytic' way to ex-
press object relation: rəʔəyš̌ bəʔəse 'he saw the man' with the accusa-
tive ending (-i + -š̌ = -e), vs. rəʔəyo lš̌-bəʔəsi literally 'he-saw-him
to=man', with obligatory presence of an object pronoun and a dative pre-
fix before the noun [see Schneider 1959]. In Geez, both constructions
render the same case relation. In Amharic, lš̌-/0 is used in a sense
different from both -n/0 and lš̌-/L, and there is no obligatory resump-
tion as in Geez.

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2. The origin of the asymmetrical correspondences.

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nesian has the same phenomenon: the above two sentences can be trans-
lated into it as:

with the same category of complement actually represents two independent
features the addition of which makes up the complement relation.

Let us review the morphemes involved and see whether they each can
be attributed a meaning independently of what their counterpart may be
in a [-α pronoun] context.

a. Subject: participator.

In Amharic, the category of subject may also be defined in semantic
terms.[12] We can call it a _participator_ in that it takes part in the
action or activity, either by triggering it, or by performing it, or else
by actively reacting to it. The last sense is necessary for verbs like
'fall' (wäddäqä) where the falling may have been caused, triggered by a
factor distant from the subject, but the person who falls assumes a fall-
ing position, his muscles performing instinctive movements attempting to
regain balance. Likewise, a falling object is changing posture (e.g.
is turning) during its descent. We shall see that the object does not
'participate' in the activity in the same sense as the subject; it is
rather subjected to it, transformed by it, etc. Thus, the subject must
assume a somewhat superior position, preserve some degree of independence
of its own with relation to the action of the verb.

Amharic has no instances of 'nominative of patient' where the subject
does not participate in the action at all. The verb täqäbbälä which
is sometimes translated by 'receive' is in fact 'accept', i.e. reacting
positively to the act of giving. 'He received a prize, but did not
accept it' can be idiomatically rendered in Amharic by

(37) yätäsäṭṭä-w-n šällämät altäqäbbälä-w-m

      'he did not accept the prize that was given to him'

or by

---

[12]Against Fillmore [1968:17], but also against the concept of
'subject-of' [Chomsky 1965:68sq.] as a mere grammatical function.
These approaches may have some justification for English and other
languages, but should not be part of general grammar.

as the ablative).[10] Even though an ablative preposition mn is well
attested in many Semitic languages, the use of the locative-instrumental
also as an ablative is a well-known phenomenon in Semitic (Akkadian ina,
Ugaritic b-, and, in the Ethiopian domain, Harari -be). It is possible
that the original ablative preposition was in Proto-Amharic bä-, whose
pronominal counterpart was naturally B, and when kä- was borrowed from
Cushitic, it replaced the adnominal ablative use of bä-, but not the
adpronominal one.[11]

The O pronominalization of lä-complements was probably not strong
enough to trigger the development of an asymmetrical system like the
one in Amharic, since the O suffixes representing lä- have maintained
some independence from the O standing for the accusative. However, the
adoption of kä- for nouns, together with the maintenance of the older
B pronoun suffixes, was a very good precedent for asymmetry, and the
language started taking advantage of this possibility.

3. The meaning of Amharic cases.

As pointed out above, it is improbable that Amharic merely took ad-
vantage of the liberty of coupling adnominal and adpronominal case-
markers at random in order to obtain a maximum number of composite units.
It is easy to perceive that most uses of kä-, whatever their pronominal
counterpart, have something in common, they all indicate origin (esp.
the sentences of (1) and (2)). Similarly, in the combination bä-...!ay/L
(benedictive), it is obvious that L has a meaning of its own, indica-
ting that the action or event coming from above is beneficial to the
patient, a meaning 'to the benefit of' which it shares with its use as
a counterpar of lä- in symmetrical correspondences. The L and B
counterparts of (sə)lä (purposive) and wädä (directional) also have
their common denominators. This suggests that the dual case-marking
system of Amharic is after all an atomic system; each morph, preposition
or conjugated suffix, has its own meaning. The combination of two cases

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[10]Ultimately, this ka may be related to the Semitic k- 'like, as',
but I find it unlikely that Amharic kä- be directly descended from it.

[11]Let us note that kä- alternates with tä- in Amharic, the latter
form being the only one used in the Gurage languages. The alternation
k ~ t is well-known in Cushitic.

used.

When there is no conceivable or recognizable participator associa-
table with the content of the verb, it will appear subjectless. Such is
the case for 'having pain' in general. 'I have a headache' is rendered
by

(44)   rase-n yammä-ññ-all

        my-head=Acc. it-hurts=me=Aux

        'I have a headache'

where the person in pain is only indicated by a possessive on the part
of the body and by an O suffix on the verb. The person in pain cannot,
in this case, appear as a noun within the sentence, - it can only be
mentioned in an extraposition:

(45)   käbbädä, rasu-n yammä-w-all

        Kebbede, his-head=Acc. it-hurts=him=Aux

        'Kebbede has a headache'

This shows that, curiously enough, the suffering person can become an
object only if a participator-subject is mentioned.

There are verbs which can hardly be associated with any subject.
The verbs rabä 'to be hungry', ṭämma 'to be thirsty' are such. They
appear in subjectless constructions, the hungry or thirsty person being
expressed by an O pronoun or, if a noun is necessary, in extraposition:
käbbädä, rabä-w/ṭämma-w 'Kebbede, it-hungered=him/it-made-thirsty=him'.[13]

In addition to participatorship, a subject must be specified for
[± willfulness]. In many cases, the distinction between the two values
is not expressed on the surface, but it is necessary to take care of
sentences like:

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[13]Eventually, one may use the form wäha ṭämma-w 'water made-thirsty=
him', but wäha is an entirely empty element, it cannot be replaced by
the name of any other drink or even with another general term like
mäṭäṭṭ 'drink'. At the first glance, this wäha looks like a cognate
subject, but most probably it is a cognate instrumental. For generic
instruments with no case-marker preceding the verb, see Hetzron [1963:
432-3] and Polotsky [1966:246-7].

(38)   šälləmat agäňto altäqäbbälä-w-m

   'having found [~ come across] a prize, he did not accept it'

On the other hand,

(39)   yätäqäbbälä-w-n šälləmat alfälläga-w-m

does not mean 'he did not want the prize he received', but 'he did not
want [anymore] the prize he had accepted', i.e. first active acceptance,
then change of mind.

   The one to whom something happens cannot be a subject, unless re-
action to the happening is implied. The one who falls is the subject of
wäddäqä 'fall' for the reasons suggested above. It is possible to say:

(40)   säwiyyäw tänšärattätä

   'the man slid'

for the same reasons. However, for 'the man slipped', i.e. lost footing,
expressing only the loss of control and not the person's reaction to it,
'the man' will be an object, and the eventual subject (not necessarily
selected) the thing which causes the slip:

(41)   (čäqaw) käbbädä-n ammalläčä-w/addalläčä-w

   '(the mud) made Kebbede slip'

or likewise

(42)   käbbädä-n dəngay addänaqqäfä-w

   'a stone made Kebbede stumble'

The mere expression 'Kebbede slipped' will thus be an 'Object-Verb' con-
struction with no subject. For 'having pain', when the cause of the
pain can be shown, the cause will be the subject, both the person pained
and his organ in pain will be objects, and there is an obligatory re-
sumptive pronoun referring to the person [Getatchew 1970:example (17a)]:

(43)   †äǧǧu almaz-ən rasʷa-n ammäm-at

   the-mead Almaz=Acc. her-head=Acc. pained=her

   'The mead gave Almaz a headache'

When the cause of the pain is not mentioned, another construction is

form (in tə-), passive constructions, always without an agent, are re-
placed by the so-called <u>impersonal</u> form[16] in which the original object
remains an object, but the use corresponds to that of the passive in
Amharic.[17] The impersonal is used not only when the subject is unknown
or unspecifiable, but also when the participator which could be a sub-
ject is known but not mentioned for stylistic reasons. Leslau [1967:1151]
adduces the Chaha (Western Gurage) example:

(47)   wähe warim baräm tigäßa
        well one-spent-the-night-(?) he-said-and when-he-entered
        'when he entered saying "did one spent the night well?" '

Here a person is addressed, and the 'literal' translation '<u>one</u> spent the
night' is very awkward, as it unquestionably stands for 'you spent the
night'. However, if we render it by an English passive 'how was the
night spent?', we have the stylistic equivalent of the Chaha phrase.
The impersonal by no means expresses generality of the subject, like
English 'one', but is a way of forming passives without making the orig-
inal object into a subject, which would violate the semantic definition
of the subject. Thus, the data from related Northern and Western Gurage
languages (whose case-system can be formalized along the same lines as
Amharic) suggest that Amharic does exhibit an instance of arbitrary,
nonsemantic use of a case.

    Another case in point is the verb tazzäzä, composed of the passive
formative tä- (t- before vowel) and azzäzä 'give order'. In addi-
tion to its being a transformationally obtained passive of azzäzä, 'to
be given order(s)', it can also render English 'obey'. The difference
between the two senses is that the first has a semantically unmotivated
subject (a former object), while in the second, the introduction of the
normal subject feature [participator] makes it 'obey'. Obeying is be-
coming an active participator as a result of having been given an order.

_____

    [16]It comes from the old third person plural forms, 'they...'. There
is also Cushitic inspiration behind this development. Somali has a pas-
sive derivative which is used independently of the impersonal, a morpho-
logically active form having as its subject the impersonal pronoun La.

    [17]Italian has similar forms, see Jespersen [1924:161].

(46) säwəyyäw bə?ər säbbärä

    'the man broke a pen'

as referring to either inadvertent or intentional breaking.[14] Such a
distinction is expressed by the verb on the surface in the case of
waññä 'swim' [+willful] vs. tänsaffäfä 'float' [-willful]. This fea-
ture can also take care of the distinction between factitive and per-
missive ('to cause to do' vs. 'to let to do', cf. Hetzron [1963:436-8]):
Inanimate subjects are necessarily [-willful].

    A weak point in the definition of the subject is the passive con-
struction. The subject of the passive is the same as the object of the
corresponding active verb. It seems that there is no reason to claim
that the semantic information contained in an active verb is in any way
different from that of its passive counterpart. The only difference lies
in the orientation, in the fact that in an active verb the object can
often be omitted as being irrelevant for the communication, whereas a
subject can be omitted more easily in a passivized form where the gram-
matical subject is the object, and the former subject, the agent comple-
ment, is omissible. Otherwise, the semantic components of both the
active and the passive forms of the same verb, e.g. bälla 'to eat' and
täbälla 'to be eaten' seem to be exactly the same.[15] The only solution
to this problem is to assume that the passive constructions are trans-
forms of the active ones, thus the semantic definition is not necessary
for such secondary configurations. Here Amharic has adopted an instance
of arbitrary case-marking.

    This assumption is supported by comparative data. In other South-
Ethiopic languages, namely in Northern and Western Gurage, even though
these languages do possess a passive derivative related to the Amharic

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[14]To make this distinction explicit, after the subject sayawq
'without knowing' ('unintentionally') or awqo 'knowing' ('on purpose')
can be respectively inserted.

[15]This confirms Martinet's reasoning [1965:216-7] according to which
a system where a predicate needs no subject (Basque in his study, but
this is also true in a way for Amharic), but has complements only, should
have no 'voice' (active vs. passive). Amharic inherited voice from its
Semitic ancestry, but it looks somewhat out of place in its present com-
plement system.

It primarily indicates the success of the action whether actually happening or potentially conceived. It really means 'the key is fit to open the door', that the given key is the proper instrument for performing the action independently of who would turn it. It is thus a participator in the potential opening, as it makes it possible, but an instrument of the real opening.

Let us consider the following four sentences:

(54a) The door opened

(54b) The janitor opened the door

(54c) The janitor opened the door with this key

(54d) This key opened the door

Fillmore [1968:27] attempts to give a unified representation of the uses of open in all the four cases through the 'frame feature' +[____ Objective, (Agentive), (Instrumental)]. This representation may describe the surface verbal word [open], but nothing else.[18] A theory which claims to be universal should recognize that in (54a) and (54b) there is derivational syncretism, such as drop/drop synonymous with fall/fell. In Amharic, the verb of (54a) is täkäffätä, a passive stem, and (54b) käffätä. Someone with an Anglocentric viewpoint may claim that in the cases where there exist different verbal stems, the selection of the lexical item depends on the presence/absence of an agent, thus open is the typical case, not fall/fell. This, however, would not work in reality. Sentence (54b) above entails (54a), but (54a) presupposes no human agency (only tolerates it), consequently they refer to different events. Their relation can be compared to the case of 'receiving' which presupposes 'giving', but 'giving' does not entail 'receiving' because non-acceptance is also a possibility. Furthermore, Fillmore seems to imply that (54a) is constructed because no

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[18]In fact, combining the surface verb with deep case categories in the same formula constitutes a dangerous mixing of levels. A verb like English deliver could, by the same technique, be represented as +[____ Agentive, Objective ((Ablative†Terminal))] containing both the meaning 'set free, save' and 'carry goods to destination'.

As I also intend to deal with more universal implications of the
Amharic case-system, I would like to make one more point. Amharic,
like English, has constructions like:

(48) säwäyyäw bärru-n bä-qulfu käffätä

    'the man opened the door with the key'

vs.

(49) qulfu bärru-n käffätä

    'the key opened the door'

Fillmore [1968:33] pointed out that if, in his system, no Agentive is
present, Instrumentals (here 'key') will assume the function of gramma-
tical subject. If Instrumentals can become subjects also in Amharic,
the suggestion that the subject has its own semantic definition seems
to be wrong. But it is not. However attractive Fillmore's proposal
may be, it has to be rejected. Let us first note that whereas we have
the pair

(50) The man cut the painting with a knife

(51) The knife cut the painting

(also in Amharic), with an instrumental apparently becoming a subject,
there is no such pair for

(52) The man painted the picture with a brush

(53) *The brush painted the picture

We have to make a clear distinction between instruments of creation
and instruments of destruction. Instruments of creation such as a
brush require constant handling by the agent, hence they cannot become
subjects. Instruments of destruction only require triggering, then
they may follow their own course in destroying the condemned object,
guided by inertia, gravitation, etc. Therefore, such instruments may
be participators in one sense, and it is by virtue of this feature that
they may become subjects when the agent is not mentioned, not just be-
cause they are instrumentals. The case of He opened the door with a
key/The key opened the door is more complicated. The first sentence
refers to an actual act of opening, but the second not necessarily so.

dictable course), such as 'key' and 'open', or 'glue' and 'make stick'.
It is possible to say

(59) The man opened the door with the key

and

(60) The key opened the door

but

(61) The man opened the door with a chisel

has a non-cognate instrument, hence the impossibility of

(62) *The chisel opened the door

   (2) Instruments of destruction, where no organized action is
assumed.

(63) The man cut the picture with a knife

is acceptable (it may denote either a voluntary or involuntary act),
as well as

(64) A knife cut the picture

(noncommittal as to the presence of human agency in English and poten-
tial in Amharic), but beside

(65) The man painted the picture with a/the brush

a constructive action, there is no

(66) *A/The brush painted the picture

as the brush requires constant manipulation by the artist.

   (3) Inalienable instruments, where an entity performs an action
through one of its components. It is possible to say (also in Amharic)

(67) The man broke the window with his fist

as well as

(68) The man's fist broke the window

The two sentences are not equivalent because, here again, the latter

agent happens to be present in the sentence. However, English (but not Amharic) distinguishes between The door opened and The door was opened. The first presupposes no agent, whereas the second does, even though it is not mentioned.

I feel that in (54b) and (54c) above the same verb open is used (even though only (54c) implies unlocking, but this is really a consequence of the presence of an instrument). But the most important — and for Amharic the only — reading of (54d) contains another open. The example:

(55) He had a key which opened the front-gate, but he never used it

clearly means that the key was capable of opening the front-gate, but it never became an instrument of opening. In Amharic,

(56) qulfu bärru-n käffätä
      'the key opened the door'

unequivocally means 'this key is good for this particular door' and cannot be used like English

(57) A key was opening the door

when only the turning key is observed by the story-teller, and not the agent. In Amharic, even an instrument of destruction may be used as a subject only in the potential sense. The sentence:

(58) səntiw wäräqätu-n qäddädä
      'the knife cut the paper'

has only one interpretation: 'the knife was good enough to cut the paper'.

It appears that there are three types of cases (in English as well as, with a potential sense, in Amharic) where instruments which occur as instrumentals with a given verb may also appear as the subjects of the same surface verb. These are the following:

(1) Cognate instruments, where the instruments are typically used for the performance of what particular act, with a predictable course of action (such as key turning in the keyhole, to exclude brushes which might be typical instruments of painting, but follow an unpre-

In order to determine the character of the accusative complement in Amharic, then, one cannot have recourse to the same criteria as for the other complements. One may even wonder whether it is definable at all, or else it is just a matter of arbitrary, idiosyncratic behaviour of lexical verbs. It seems to me that there is a possible notational definition for the object case in Amharic.

Let us try to classify the main uses of the object case in this language. The following subcategorization is impressionistic; further investigation is necessary to find out whether it is justifiable or not. First of all, there is a category which might be called trans-figurative. This involves object-entities created, transformed, or destroyed through the action of a verb. The other important class is transferential, the entity displaced, relocated through the activity of the verb. The third major class is attestative, entities attested, known, perceived, etc. through the action of the verb. There is sentimentive, where the object of feelings expressed by the verb is its grammatical object. Another case is that of 'leave', 'abandon', where the subject is moving away and the object stays. This multiple subcategorization, for whatever it is worth, is rather a reflection of the semantic verb classes which take objects, and does not characterize the object relation itself. But now it is easy to see the trait that unites them. They all refer to the knowledge or image the speaker has about the entity in question, its shape, substance and status (trans-figurative), its location (transferential), sources of this knowledge (attestative), feelings about it (sentimentive), etc. Thus, an object is defined through its relation to the speaker's knowledge of the world.

I have interpreted above 'writing a letter on a paper' as 'trans-forming a paper into a letter'. On the other hand, this could also be reinterpreted as 'making a letter out of a paper'. In fact, English 'to present' has on the surface such a dual possibility: its object may either be the beneficiary ('to present someone with something') or the gift ('to present something to someone'). In the face of such con-flicting analyses, the object is selected according to what the speaker

does not necessarily imply that the man was the human agent behind it. The man's fist may have been pushed into the window by someone else.[19]

b. Object: redefinition.

Unlike all the other cases, the object case does not indicate the nature of the logical relation between verb and complement. In fact, several such relations may exist between verb and object. For instance, in verbs of utterance and knowledge, the object has exactly the same type of relation with the verb as a topical complement. Thus, 'to know something' expresses having knowledge about something. It is re-markable that in order to be an object there needs to be a direct re-lation between verb and complement.[20] 'To know about something' ex-presses knowledge about knowledge about something, an indirect relation. Similarly, 'touching something' is laying the hand or other part of the body upon something, 'seeing something' quite clearly has a loca-tive connotation. In 'writing a letter' we may find a logical rela-tion which is expressed in many languages by the translative case, namely 'writing a letter on paper' as 'making a paper into a letter'. The locative, instrumental, etc. correspondences of the accusative in Hungarian have been the object of an interesting monograph by J. Zsilka, now available in English [1967].

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[19]As far as the last type is concerned, it clearly shows that Fill-more was wrong in claiming [1966:23] that the incorrectness of *The car broke the window with a fender vs. the correct The car broke the window with its fender and The car's fender broke the window can be explained by assuming that these sentences are 'agentless' and that the car's fender constitutes the instrument. Above, the man is clearly the agent, yet it is impossible to say in English *The man broke the window with a fist. This follows from a rule concerning in-alienable possessions, which has nothing to do with case status in the sentence. Hungarian, on the other hand, has no such rule, and Az ember ökölei/öklével betörte az ablakot 'The man with-fist/with-his-fist broke-it the window-Acc.' is grammatical with or without a possessive.

[20]Martinet [1965] defined the unmarked case of Basque (object, or subject of intransitive verbs) as indicating the most direct relation with the verb. This relation is 'unspecified determination', independent of logical relations. This is also true for what I call 'redef-inition', see below.

the verb will be its grammatical object. In 'have' one may learn about
possession that started earlier. In the latter verbs, one is not dis-
covering pre-existing facts, but learning about a change of status.
Redefinition is substantial, not merely an improvement or extension of
knowledge.

An apparent contradiction to this principle is the case of our <u>senti-
mentive</u>, with verbs such as 'like', 'hate', which are stative but still
have an object. However, feelings are potential, they are not exper-
ienced constantly; they need be remembered in order to be felt. A state-
ment with the <u>sentimentive</u> is bringing forth these feelings, not dis-
covering them. This is comparable to our <u>attestative</u> type.

Amharic has also instances where the object case alternates for the
same complement with another, relational case. 'To flee' is šǎššǎ
and the person who is <u>fled from</u> may either be redefined as fear-inspir-
ing (sentimentive), using -n, or merely be designated as a locative de-
parture point, when kǝ- is used. In the case of sources of acquisi-
tion, beside:

(73)kǝ-zziččɨ set lay and mǎṣhaf gǎzzahʷ(-at)

    from=this woman on one book I-bought(=her)

   'I bought a book from this woman'

it is possible to say:

(74)yǝhǝččɨ-ǝn set and mǎṣhaf gǎzzahʷ-at

    this-Acc. woman...

   'I bought a book from this woman'

with object suffix and an obligatory O resumptive pronoun. The first
construction (73) describes the woman as the origin of the book, while
the second points out that the woman managed to give the book away, she
does not own it anymore. kǝ- and -n further alternate (under the same
conditions) in comparative constructions, attached to entity A against
which B is measured. -n expresses the idea that our image of A has also
changed, as we know how it relates to B (more or less than B in some re-
spect); and kǝ- is the neutral expression of the fact that some attri-

considers worth redefining. This is a subjective process comparable
to what was meant by the term 'topicalization' in recent works. The
fact that a letter has been created is often more important than the
fact that a piece of paper has been altered. But the latter may be
given enough emphasis for redefinition in the Hungarian verb teleír
'fill with writing', with the paper as the object. In the case of the
verb 'to present', the two constructions represent a difference in the
focus of the communication. In

(69) I presented him with an award

'he' will be redefined as an award-winner. In

(70) I presented an award to him

the award is redefined as belonging to 'him', an award has been assigned.
Fillmore [1968:48, fn. 49] illustrated this point very convincingly:

(71) He sprayed the wall with paint

redefines the wall as being entirely covered with paint as a conse-
quence of the action, but

(72) He sprayed paint on the wall

implies nothing about how much of the wall has been covered, but re-
defines paint as being applied on the wall. Thus, the selection of
the object, within the conditions specified above (direct relation,
modification of the speaker's knowledge about it: redefinition),
depends on the context, on the speaker's intentions, to a great extent.

   Redefinition always means change, either of shape (transfigurative)
or location (transferential) or references (attestative) or making
feelings explicit (sentimentive), but it is not identical with dis-
covering new, pre-existing data. This can be clearly shown by con-
fronting two verbs with similar content, one stative and the other
not. For the expression of 'to have' Amharic has allä). The item
possessed is the subject of this verb, as it is primarily a verb of
existence. On the contrary, in gäzza 'buy' or agäññä 'find, obtain',
the object the possession of which is secured through the action of

redefined, but are not participators. Subjects of intransitive verbs
are both redefined and participators. In the ergative languages, the
feature [redefined] is first spelled out in the shape of a usually un-
marked case, and the remaining participators (the subjects of transi-
tive verbs only) get ergative. In nominative languages like Amharic,
first the feature [participator] is spelled out in the shape of the
unmarked case (nominative), and the remaining instances of [redefined]
(objects only) get the accusative.

d. 0 suffix: straight effect.

An examination of all the case exponents indicates that the adnominal
and adpronominal cases constitute two separate semantic classes. Suffix
pronouns always express the effect of the verb on the complement.

The main meaning of the 0 suffix is immediate involvement in the
action or event expressed by the verb. In the cases of the -n/0 cor-
respondences, where -n represents the object case, the use of 0 is
automatically entailed, in agreement with the semantic definitions of
-n and 0. -n depends on the condition that the relation between verb
and complement be direct (b. above), and this is precisely what 0 is
meant to express.

The preposition lə̈- has 0 as its adnominal counterpart in the da-
tive for the beneficiary and the experiencer. Transfer of property di-
rectly involves the recipient, since transfers presuppose a source and
a target. Similarly, the experiencer is directly involved in what the
verb expresses, since it refers to his judgement, needs, feelings, to
an effect on him. This justifies 0. The source of acquisition is as
direclty involved in a transfer as the beneficiary, hence 0 (in kə̈-/0).
The mediator of a factitive has -n when he is an active part in the
action, since he is redefined as being under the influence of the subject
of the causative. If the mediator is a mere instrument in the hands of
the subject, it will have bə̈-. However, in both cases it is absolutely
clear that the mediator is directly involved in the act of causation of
which he is a complement. Therefore, 0 suffixes are used in both cases.

e. L suffix: ascending effect.

The main meanings of this suffix are 'to the benefit of' (benefactive

bute attested both in A and B is measured taking the amount found in A
as the norm, i.e. departing _from_ A.

A further proof that semantic relations determine the subject-object
distribution can be found in the verb aggaṭṭämä 'to meet'. In European
languages, the protagonist is the subject of the verb 'meet' and the new-
comer its complement, direct object or comitative. In Amharic, quite
on the contrary, the protagonist is the object and the newcomer is the
subject. This can be justified on the grounds that the newcomer is the
one who performs the act, i.e. he appears, to create an encounter. He
is the participator, whereas the protagonist is found by the newcomer,
he comes into his field of vision (attestative). Thus, Amharic renders
'I met a man' as:

(75) säw aggaṭṭämä-ññ
      man stumbled-on=me

c. _Intransitive verbs_.

One might say that in the case of the verb wäddäqä the subject is
transferential in the sense 'fall', and in the other senses, 'crumble',
'collapse', it is _transfigurative_. It thus should be an object, as it
is directly affected by the action. Likewise, there is transfiguration
of the subject in motä 'die', transference in hedä 'go', attestation
in bäqq alä 'appear', both transference and attestation in mäṭṭa
'come', etc. In other words, the subjects of intransitive verbs undergo
the same epistemological modification as the objects of the transitive
verbs. All the same, it is also true that the subjects are _also_ partici-
pators, the transfigurative and transferential, etc. changes are often,
so to speak, self-inflicted or are accompanied by active reaction. In
the case-rules, it is the feature [participator] that prevails. We can
state in general that the subjects of intransitive verbs are also re-
defined like objects, but they are also specified to be active partici-
pators, while objects are not.

Such a concept can be used for the description of the difference be-
tween the so-called ergative languages and the nominative ones. Subjects
of transitive verbs are participators, but not redefined. Objects are

L expresses the fact that he can reject or accept the approach at will. The place approached, on the other hand, can have no reaction to it, hence the use of B. The preposition is wə̆də̆ in both cases. With the verb lakä̆ 'send' [Hetzron 1966:33],

(76) aškä̆ru-n lakə-llə̆ñ̃ (with L)

means 'send me the servant!' (for my own use), whereas

(77) aškä̆ru-n lakə-bbə̆ñ̃ (with B)

merely requests that the servant be sent to my place. Particularly instructive is the contrast between

(78) wä̆rä̆qə̆t lakä̆-llə̆ñ̃
      'he sent me a letter' (L)

and

(79) mä̆lʔəkt lakä̆-bbə̆ñ̃
      'he sent me a message' (B)

A letter is supposed to be accepted, opened and read by the addressee (which he may refuse to do); this justifies L, the ascending effect. The oral message, on the other hand, is given directly to the recipient who remains passive, subjected to a flow of sounds emitted by the messenger. This justifies B.

The purposive (sə)lə̆ (see l.s.-t., above) can also occur either with L or B. As shown above, if a person or cause profits from the action, i.e. it has a delayed and eventually prolonged effect on him/it, L is indicated. If the action is performed in view of settling some business, it is <u>imposed</u> on the business which is, consequently, marked by B.

g. lə̆-: aim.

The following (adnominal) cases mark the manner in which the verb relates to the complement. The preposition lə̆- indicates for whom the action is performed, or in relation to whom the event can be judged. It may show in relation to whom a piece of knowledge exists ('is known to'). The object of lə̆- is the intended or fortuitous target of the action

and benedictive), 'intended for', 'for' (destinative, purposive of one
type)[21] and 'affecting the whole through a component' (either by doing
something to a component such as cutting someone's fingernail, see l.f.
above, or by extracting a component from the whole, as in l.o. above).
In the first two interpretations, the entity marked by L has something
put at its disposal, it obtains something. It is not directly involved
in the performance of the action; there is always some delay, some dis-
tance between the action or event and the L element. The third sense
may also be assimilated to the first two through considerations of dis-
tance. After all, if a component is affected, the whole suffers its con-
sequences. This effect is also delayed, as it is directly exerted on
the component, but is experienced by the larger entity. The L is al-
ways on a higher plane.

f. B suffix: descending effect.

All the uses of the B suffix can be summed up under the heading
'patient'. B may refer to the person to whom the action or event is
detrimental, to the one on whom obligation is imposed, to the place,
time or instrument of the activity (which are passively involved), to the
topic of the utterance. In all these cases the patient-object is pas-
sively involved in the action or event, no initiative is expected from
it, it only receives or suffers (willingly or not) what is going on. In
order to use a uniform terminology, I call this descending effect,
since the action or event descends upon the patient from a higher plane.
The effect is not straight (i.e. on the same plane) as in O, nor is the
patient in any way free to choose whether to take advantage of the
effects of the activity (as in L of the first type). It/he is entirely
involved, not only one of its components (as in L of the second type).
The element marked by B is 'at the mercy of the subject of the verb'.

Let us compare some cases where both L and B may be used with the
same verb and the same adnominal case. If a person is approached,

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[21]The importance of the beneficial meaning of L has been exagger-
ated in the literature. Cohen [1936:145] more carefully states that it
indicates simply attribution.

L expresses the fact that he can reject or accept the approach at will. The place approached, on the other hand, can have no reaction to it, hence the use of B. The preposition is wǎdǎ in both cases. With the verb lakǎ 'send' [Hetzron 1966:33],

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g. lǎ-: aim.
    The following (adnominal) cases mark the manner in which the verb relates to the complement. The preposition lǎ- indicates for whom the action is performed, or in relation to whom the event can be judged. It may show in relation to whom a piece of knowledge exists ('is known to'). The object of lǎ- is the intended or fortuitous target of the action

or event. Thus, giving away is directed at the beneficiary. The exper-
iencer is the one with respect to whom the judgement contained in the
verb is valid. Since these two are also directly involved, suffix 0
is used. In the case of the benefactive and destinative ('sell',
'allow', 'answer', etc.), the action is also directed toward the lə̌-
element, but its effect is felt on it/him somewhat later (L). The same
delayed effect is also true for the addressive/effectual lə̌-/B, but the
target of the action becomes a patient. The purposive (sə)lə̌- also
imparts the idea of directedness.

h. bə̌-: medium.

I use the term medium in its physical sense, the substance or object
through which the activity is carried on. If bə̌- is attached to a
noun marked as [place], it is interpreted as a locative. Following a
suggestion by Ruwet [1969], I consider the postpositions lay 'top',
tač 'underneath', etc. as [place] nouns, so that in a construction
such as: bə̌-ṭərə̌ppeza lay 'on the table', the word for 'table' is a
genitival adjunct on lay. If it is replaced by a pronoun, another
genitival form, a possessive, is used: bə̌-lay-u 'in=top=its' ('on it'),
or with a curious reduplication: bə̌layu lay. If the preposition is
attached to a noun marked as [time], it is interpreted as a temporal.
Attached to a noun of another type, it is interpreted as an instrumental.[22]
The fact that 'instrumental' and 'locative' are closely related to each
other can also be demonstrated in English. The neutral

(80)   He came by car

can be paraphrased, with some difference of incidental meaning, by

(81)   He came with a car (instrumental)

or

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[22]The Addis Ababa colloquial is breaking up the direct surface rep-
resentation of this global category. The often used preposition ə-
(fn. 3.) tends to replace bə̌- in the locative sense only.

(82) He came in a car (locative)[23]

Using the same preposition for the locative and the instrumental is a
general feature of Semitic. It is also reflected in Amharic derivational
morphology. Nominalizations of the pattern mä- + _Jussive stem_ + -ya
represent both meanings. The form mäsbärya either refers to the 'place'
or 'instrument of breaking', both derived from säbbärä 'break'. Using
the same case-markers for locative and temporal expressions is widespread.

    The agent of the passive, as well as the passive mediator of a fac-
titive [Hetzron 1963], is a medium for the performance of the action.
Passivization probably changes a [participator] into a [medium], a trans-
formation whose conditions remain to be investigated. Uses like 'to be-
lieve in' may be considered as a symbolic locative. 'Trusting, believing
in' refers to the potentialities of the person trusted, not to what he
actually said (as in 'believing his word'), but to what lies inside him,
what may become manifest in the future.

i. bä-...lay: imposive.

    Quite in line with its literal meaning, 'on top of', this compound
case-marker can be used when the complement is considered to be on a
lower plane than the subject. The subject imposes the action on the
complement. In the case of the benedictive, a higher authority imposes
(bä-...lay) something on a lower entity; this turns out to be beneficial

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    [23]See further Chomsky [forthcoming:examples 23-6] where he shows that
beside the possibility of paraphrasing instrumentals as direct objects
with the verb use, e.g. He used a knife to cut the salami (with) ~ He
cut the salami with a knife, it is also possible to say He used the
table to write (on) (~ He wrote on the table). This is further feasible
for temporals: He used the afternoon to finish his dissertation (~ He
finished his dissertation in the afternoon). Note, however, that there
is some question of magnitude involved. While instrumentals can always
be paraphrased by use + NP, when the time or place belongs to another
class of magnitude than the action, such a paraphrase is impossible, as
in the case of He finished his dissertation in Paris/in his youth (and
no *He used..., unless the dissertation involved research through entire
Paris). Consequently, media roughly coextensive with the content of the
verb are paraphrasable by use + NP + infinitive, but not otherwise.
Instrumentals are coextensive by definition.

in the sense that it puts something at the lower entity's disposal (L).
In the conversation-topic sense, talking about something is also assuming
a higher, outside position. Sometimes, bɜ̄-...lay can be replaced by
simple bɜ̄-.

j. kɜ̄-: boundary.

This preposition indicates origin, departure ('from'), the element
which is surpassed by, or surpasses, another ('**more**/less than'). It is
used with verbs of 'disrupting continuity' such as 'cut', 'fold' etc.,
prefixed to the place-object where discontinuity is created by the action
of the verb. It can also be a static locative in the sense of 'within
the confines of', when being in a given place hides, delimits, distinguish-
es the subject. It is also used for 'leaning against something'. Finally,
in apparent contradiction with the ablative meaning, it may designate a
place reached. If an approach is not necessarily completed, wɜ̄dɜ̄ is used.
kɜ̄- always implies completion, arrival. However, this use is most often
redundant. There is no clearcut case where substituting kɜ̄- for wɜ̄dɜ̄
suffices to express completion. kɜ̄- is used with verbs like dɜ̄rrɜ̄sɜ̄
'arrive', gɜ̄bba 'enter' where completion is inherent to the verb.[24] It
is also used in the inherent negative senses of 'be missing from', 'stay
away from', 'stop doing something'.

The common denominator of all these uses is that the complement
marked by kɜ̄- constitutes a boundary of some kind. Crossing a boundary
in either direction, leaving the confines of a place or entering them,
or even staying within them, all require kɜ̄-. In the comparative, the
element compared to is supposed to contain a definite amount or degree
of the attribute compared, and passing that amount or degree in either
direction is the essence of the comparative (but not of 'as...as...'!).
Disrupting continuity means creating a boundary. 'Absence from' indicates
the confines of the area within which something is not found. 'Stop
doing' is setting a boundary, a limit to an action.

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[24]In Addis Ababa colloquial, the static and directional-completive
uses of kɜ̄- have been replaced by ə-.

k. **wǎdǎ: target.**

This preposition marks the person, place or (in estimating), the amount approached. Turning, looking 'toward' is also rendered by wǎdǎ. It is further used in the translative sense 'transform into' or 'cut into (two)'. In order to define the global meaning of wǎdǎ, we have to compare it to |ǎ- (g. above). First, |ǎ- never has a spatial meaning. It expresses the destination the subject has in mind for its action or for the object of the action. It expresses the concrete or symbolic direction in which the action starts without explicitly referring to movement. On the other hand, wǎdǎ centers on the target's position, it marks attraction toward a point. While in the case of destination (|ǎ-) the aim may be unreal, a complement with wǎdǎ has to represent something concrete. |ǎ- is an 'arrow' marking direction, wǎdǎ is a 'path' approaching a destination.

l. **sǎlǎ: purposive/topical.**

The purposive sense has already been mentioned in |ǎ- above. Purposive is a 'future causal' [Dawkins 1960:114, fn. 5], a special case of 'aim' (hence the alternation with |ǎ-) for unspecified later benefit. The concept of 'topical' has also been discussed (i. above). The only question to ask is why the same preposition is used for both functions. The connecting feature may be that in both instances there is considerable distance between the verb and the sǎlǎ-complement; they do not coexist at the same time. 'Topical' evokes something past and purposive prepares something to come.

m. **Recapitulation.**

The analysis given above suggests that each case-marking morph of Amharic carries its own meaning and must be assigned a distinct semantic feature. If we visualize verb-complement relation as 'something emanating from the verb and reaching the complement', we must realize that there are two sides to it: the relation of the verb to the complement and the relation of the complement to the verb. Our investigation shows that the former is translated by adnominal case-markers, the latter by adpronominal ones. Let us reserve the term <u>case</u> for adnominal case-markers

and call the adpronominal markers _effects_.

Assuming that the semantic features characterizing these relations have already been defined in the deep semantic structure, the following spelling rules are needed (Table 2).

For _subject_, see Section 6 below. The immediate implication of this arrangement is that if no pronoun is available, the features of the second part of Table 2 have no segmental realization on the surface, and vice-versa. Amharic further has a resumptive construction [Getatchew 1970] where the sentence contains both a nominal and a pronominal expression of the same complement, so that features of both parts may be simultaneously spelled out. Before establishing the general theoretical setting in which this system operates, let us deal with two specific problems.

4. _Limitations of case-marking._
a. _No counterpart._

In some cases, a complement can be expressed in one manner only, either pronominally (l.a.-b.) or nominally (l.h. and l.m.), but not both. If the only expression is pronominal, the coreferential noun, when missing from the normal context, may be mentioned in extraposition. Let us examine whether the above semantic analysis can account for these instances.

The _agent of passive_ takes either bä- or, in special cases, kä- (l.m.). It cannot appear pronominally. On semantic grounds it may seem that even though the agent of the passive is the _medium_ of the action (viewed from that angle), thus justifying bä-, or the _originator_ of the object (for kä-), the action has no effect on it at all in the sense of 3.d.-e.-f., above. Consequently, while passivization changes the feature [participator] into [medium] (or [boundary]), it does not introduce any _effect_ feature (which the subject never had). We have seen that the prerequisite for having a suffix-pronominal expression is having one of the effect features. In the absence of such a feature, there is no pronoun. In the case of the _mediator of the factitive_, the basic action exerts no effect on the former subject, but the causation element which reduces the subject to a mediator (by changing the feature [participator]

1. RELATION OF VERB TO COMPLEMENT

[redefined] $\longrightarrow$ $\left\{ \begin{matrix} \langle\text{-n}\rangle \\ \emptyset \end{matrix} \right\}$

[aim] $\longrightarrow$ Iə̄-

[medium] $\longrightarrow$ bə̄-

[imposive] $\longrightarrow$ bə̄-...Iay

[boundary] $\longrightarrow$ kə̄-

[target] $\longrightarrow$ wə̄də̄

[topical] $\longrightarrow$ $\left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{bə̄-...Iay} \\ \text{səIə̄} \end{matrix} \right\}$

[purposive] $\longrightarrow$ (sə)Iə̄

$\left/ \quad \left[\begin{array}{l} \overline{\text{Noun}} \\ \text{-pronoun} \\ \left\langle \begin{matrix} \text{+definite} \\ \text{+generic} \end{matrix} \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \right.$

2. RELATION OF COMPLEMENT TO VERB

[straight effect] $\longrightarrow$ O

[ascending effect] $\longrightarrow$ L

[descending effect] $\longrightarrow$ B

$\left/ \quad \left[\begin{array}{l} \overline{\text{Noun}} \\ \text{+pronoun} \end{array} \right] \right.$

Table 2

to either [redefined] or [medium]) does exert a direct, straight effect
on it.

These criteria also turn out to be operative in <u>possessive</u> construc-
tions. The possessor is directly involved in the possession, but is not
participating in it through action or reaction. As possession is static,
the possessor is not an aim, nor a medium. None of the definitions in
part 1 of Table 2 applies to it. Consequently, there is no way to
integrate the possessor into the sentence in a non-pronominal form.

Similar reasoning is true for the <u>necessitative</u> (1.b.). A person
under an obligation is subjected to it, hence B. However, he he is not
redefined, nor aimed at by it. The feature [imposive] could eventually
apply, but it presupposes a subject imposing the obligation, and in
these necessitative constructions there is no such subject. The gram-
matical subject is a sentence, the performance of which constitutes
the obligation.

The case of the <u>detrimental</u> is more complicated. In the sentence:

(83)   təlantənna ləgu mästawätu-n säbbärä-bbät
      yesterday the-boy the-glass=Acc. broke=in-him
     'Yesterday the boy broke the windowglass to his detriment'

the only way of mentioning the person to whose detriment this takes place,
unless it is mentioned for some other reason anyhow,[25] is by extraposition.
Nevertheless, there are some verbs which admit a bä-...lay/B (imposive/
descending) combination for the complement which apparently has the same
detrimental meaning and can, therefore, also appear as a noun. Such
verbs čämmärä 'inflict upon' (also 'add', 'pour'), färrädä 'judge',
mäsäkkärä 'give testimony'.

(84)   käbbädä bä-zzih säw lay səqay čämmärä-bbät
      Kebbede in=this man on suffering inflicted=in-him
     'Kebbede inflicted suffering on this man'

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[25] E.g. mästawätu-n can also be interpreted 'his window (Acc.)',
and in this case the owner of the window should also be the person
suffering the damage.

(85) daññaw bš-zzih sšw lay fšrršdš-bbšt

the-judge in=this man on judged=in-him

'The judge ruled against this man'

It seems that when the verb inherently expresses a negative effect, the complement will take the imposive bš-...lay. When the damage is a consequence of the action but not inherent in it,[26] the complement takes ∅/B. The action is not necessarily oriented toward the person suffering the damage, so lš- cannot be used, he is not a medium of the action and does not qualify for bš-. None of the definitions for adnominal cases applies.

In the case of subjectless verbs such as 'have pain', 'be hungry' (3.a.), the person having the sensation suffers its direct effect, hence O, but is not a participant, nor is he redefined (a temporary state does not redefine); he is not a medium for another action; as there is no subject to impose, the imposive cannot be used. There remains the use of extraposition. When the pain is the result of a concrete event, such as drinking, the person in pain is redefined as being under the effect or aftereffect of alcohol.

We can thus see that when there is no [-αpronoun] counterpart to a nominal or pronominal complement, no arbitrary ad hoc rule is necessary to block it. The lack of counterpart is due to the finiteness of the case and effect system, so that none of the semantic definitions applies.

b. Obligatory pronominal resumption.

We have mentioned that in some cases a nominal complement requires the co-presence of a pronominal one (but not vice-versa, see Section 1). Such cases are -n/B (1.d.), -n/O which alternates with kš-/O for source of acquisition (1.n.) or for 'causing pain' (3.a.), lš-/B (1.g., effectual) and bš-...lay/L (1.k., benedictive).

The first two can be easily eliminated. -n/B is a transformation-ally obtained euphonic variant of bš-/B, found only when a resumptive

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²⁶This is another instance of the distinction between organic (im-posive) and inorganic (detrimental) complements, cf. fns. 6 and 29.

pronoun appears. The uses of -n/∅ with obligatory resumption follows
the same pattern. It is a general rule of Amharic that when a verb has
two objects, one being the (alienable or unalienable) owner of the
other, the owner is obligatorily recalled by a resumptive pronoun.[27]
Such configurations may occur in _factitive_ constructions, with verbs of
bodily affliction (person vs. part of his body), and with sources of
acquisition. Such sources are marked [boundary] and [redefined]. The
adnominal case-rule may select either one of these features. If the
second is selected, the rule requiring obligatory pronominal resumption
(when the same verb has an additional object originally owned by the
source) is applied.

It is clear that there are semantic affinities between bə-...lay
(imposive) and B (patient, descending effect), and between lə- (aim)
and L (having at one's disposal, ascending effect). Historically,
their function used to be identical. Although a process of divergence
has abolished this full identity, they still retain a degree of simi-
larity. Imposition _usually_ implies descending effect. If it
happens that the imposition ends up by putting something at the complement's
disposal (instead of making it a patient), such a fact is explicitly
marked. Likewise, if mere orientation and aiming end up as descending
upon the complement, this does not go unmarked. In other words, bə-...
lay is prejudicial to benefitting, but is still compatible with it.
Similarly, lə- makes it less probable that the complement be a patient,
but does not really exclude it.[28] To dispel these prejudices, the pro-
noun expressing the unexpected effect _has_ to be spelled out.

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[27]See Hetzron [1963] for examples with two objects. When there is
an ownership relation between the two, the resumptive pronouns are oblig-
atory. In the case of two unrelated objects, there is no such obligation.
See also Getatchew [1970:exx. 16-9].

[28]These 'prejudices' reflect older uses. These meanings of the pre-
positions have survived in proverbial style, e.g. [Cohen 1936:298]
yänəgus qal yäməhrät bihon lə-mängəstu; yämäat bihon bə-mängəstu
'The king's word, if it is clement, [it is] _for_ the kingdom; if it is of
anger, [it is] _detrimental_ to the kingdom'. Note that these sentences
have no verb either, another property of proverbs. In normal speech,
bə- cannot be used in this sense.

The prejudicial behavior of 'a case toward an effect' can be formal-
ized within the framework of a 'theory of markedness' comparable to the
one presented by Chomsky and Halle [1968]. Thus, if for a given case-
marker a certain effect-marker is expected, it will be classified 'un-
marked' (u) vs. the possible, but unexpected 'marked' one (m). If two
effects combinable with a case-marker have the same degree of expecta-
bility, only + and - prefixes can be used. Thus, u vs. m indicates,
in Troubetzkoyan terms, a privative relation as expectation, while
+ and - are equi-pollent. We can further state that if a case-marker
is combined with a <u>marked</u> effect, the latter will have to be spelled
out by means of a pronoun at all times. This can be described if we
analyze the effect-markers into the following, more atomic features:

(86)   direct effect   descending effect

    O   +   -

    B   -   +

    L   -   -

where '-' indicates either absence of the feature or noncommittalness
in that respect (as B may be direct as well as indirect). The marked-
ness-rule would then be:

(87) [u descending effect] → [- descending effect] $\Big/ \begin{bmatrix} X \\ aim \\ \underline{} \end{bmatrix}$

which states that with Iǯ- both O and L are unmarked, whereas B
is marked (and should be spelled out obligatorily when combined with Iǯ-).
The difference between O and L will depend on the prefix [± straight
effect], where the markedness principle is not involved. Next:

(88) [u descending effect] → [+ descending effect] $\Big/ \begin{bmatrix} X \\ imposive \\ \underline{} \end{bmatrix}$

i.e. with imposition we expect B, and in the benedictive, L is a marked
form which needs to be spelled out by means of a redundant pronoun. Note
that O is impossible with [imposive].

    In all other cases, ± values are to be used, not u/m. The unmarked
combinations are demonstrably the oldest in Amharic.

5. <u>Theoretical implications</u>.

It is quite obvious that the above sketch of the Amharic case-
system differs fundamentally from the model suggested by Fillmore [1968].
Some differences are of detail. Against his Objective, I am suggesting
that the object is selected by a process comparable to his 'primary top-
icalization' [1968:57 sq.], not on the basis of the logical relation
between Noun and Verb (which might be homologous with the relations
between other complements and the verb). The inventory of cases is
also quite dissimilar. His Instrumental and Locative, as well as the
Temporal, correspond here to only one category: 'medium'.

But the most important difference is that in my system there are
two coexisting sets of categories involved, cases proper and the three
effects.

For Fillmore, a verb is represented as having a number of case-
marked arguments. E.g. (and ignoring optionality for the moment):

(89)   Arrive_{objectal, ablative, locative, instrumental}

Each noun is attached to one of these cases. In the present system,
on the other hand, there is a dual system of adnominal and adpronominal
<u>case</u> and <u>effect</u> markers, both attachable to the same complement. Accord-
ing to the above description, each of the complement-markers, the case
and the effect, reflects another facet of the same relation. Thus, in
därräsä 'arrive', kä- expresses 'boundary crossing for reaching a
destination', and B the 'patient' character of the place reached. Con-
sequently, that part of the verb which has the complement attached to
it is a composite element itself. The free variation between kä- and
wädä for place of arrival suggests that there are at least three com-
ponents present in this complement: [boundary], [target], [descending
effect], and either one of the first two can be spelled out with a non-
pronominal complement. Thus, därräsä 'arrive' should be represented
by something like the following cluster of feature-bundles:

(90)   dǟrräšǟ

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{participator} \\ \pm \text{willful} \\ \text{redefined} \end{bmatrix}$$ (subject)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{boundary} \\ \text{descending effect} \end{bmatrix}$$ (departure point)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{target} \\ \text{boundary} \\ \text{descending effect} \end{bmatrix}$$ (destination reached)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{medium} \\ \text{descending effect} \end{bmatrix}$$ (vehicle)

The last one, the instrumental, is distinguished from the locative and the temporal through lacking a co-occurring feature [place] or [time]. dǟrräšǟ may further have a _temporal_ aspect, but this can be predicted from the bundles above.

The complements are each attached to one of the inner bundles, to be called _subverbs_, and according to whether they appear as pronouns or not, (eventually both), _case_ and/or _effect_ features will be segmentalized. However, whether given a surface-expression or not, the features remain part of the lexical verb. Each subverb, except the subject (and, with some reservations, the object), have to contain features of both classes, of one or more case-features and one effect-feature. In some cases, however, they will contain features of one class only (4.a.). Thus, a surface verb is considered to be composed of elements, subverbs, which are composite themselves.

There _is_ an attested model in language which brings a situation similar to what is reconstructed here all the way to the surface. This is the phenomenon of 'serialization' found in West African languages [Stahlke 1970]. This means that, as a matter of principle, a verb can have only one argument, and conversely, each complement will have its own verb. Thus, the English sentence 'I brought a book home' is represented in Yoruba by a structure [Stahlke 1970:61] 'I took book came house'. In his article Stahlke wonders how serializing constructions

are to be interpreted. He rejects the idea that conjoining is a
possible source for them [77-83], or that "at least some verbs in series
(...) are in fact overt case markers" [83-7], or that serial verbs are
complex lexical items [87-90]. I believe that serialization need not
be integrated into syntactic configurations hitherto known to us from
other languages, but rather the complement system of other languages
should be interpreted through it. It is a fairly faithful and little-
altered representation of the very deep structure of sentences. It
underlies sentences with several complements also in those languages
which allow several complements on one verb on the surface.

   Amharic is somewhat closer to the serializing type than English. For
one thing, it seems to prefer having only one complement per verb. During
investigation, when I made up sentences where the verb has several possible
complements on it, they were accepted with some reluctance. They were
grammatical, but stylistically objectionable. For instance:

(91)   säwiyyäw k-addis abäba wädä gondär hedä
       the-man from=Addis Ababa to(ward) Gondar went
       'The man went from Gondar to Addis Ababa'

can be paraphrased by:

(92)   säwiyyäw k-addis abäba wätto wädä gondär hedä

with wätto 'he-went-out-and'. But Amharic is not a serializing lang-
uage. It only has a 'stylistic' preference for one-verb-one-noun con-
structions, and it uses case-markers even in sentences like (92) above
where the semantic nature of wätto would make the function of the
attached noun clear.

   In the underlying representation, on the other hand, each subverb
(except the subjectal one) represents an element which can be rendered
by a full verb in a serializing language.

6. _Formal representation_.

   The following formal representation is incomplete and needs further
elaboration. Nevertheless, it should illustrate the way the system
suggested above operates.

   There is a pre-lexical semantic deep structure where a sentence-to-be

is represented by a series of <u>sub-verbs</u>, some or all of them combined
with nouns. The lexical verbs are selected by matching their sub-verbal
composition with the content of the semantic deep structure. This might
require some adjustment, such as picking <u>two</u> verbs to render all the
semantic features, perhaps also dropping or adding a relatively insig-
nificant feature, if the required combination of sub-verbs happens to
have no exact counterpart in the lexicon.

In the following, I will illustrate the formalism of my brand of
case-grammar using the verb ḋärräsä. I am doing so because this verb
can entirely be defined in terms of 'case' and 'effect' features,
whereas most verbs contain added semantic features of a different
nature. The sub-verbal configuration which underlies the lexical verb
ḋärräsä is as follows:

(93)

$$
\left[\begin{bmatrix} \text{participator} \\ \pm\text{willful} \\ \text{redefined} \end{bmatrix} N, \begin{bmatrix} \text{boundary} \\ \text{target} \\ \text{desc.eff.} \end{bmatrix} N, \begin{bmatrix} \text{boundary} \\ \text{desc.eff.} \end{bmatrix} (N), \left(\begin{bmatrix} \text{medium} \\ \text{desc.eff.} \end{bmatrix} N \right) \right]_S
$$

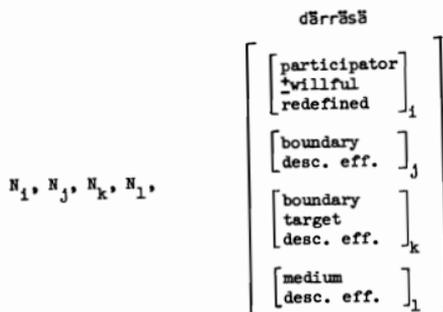   (subject)   (pl. of arrival)   (pl. of dep.)   (instrument)

Parentheses indicate optionality. It is quite clear that a subject is
indispensable for this verb. Knowledge of the place of arrival is also
essential, but it may be represented by zero on the surface if the con-
text makes it clear (e.g. where arrival refers to the scene of the events
related). Thus, the place of arrival is always known, and if deleted,
it is still recoverable. As to the place of departure, on the other
hand, N is in parentheses, indicating that one may effectively use the
verb <u>arrive</u> without specifying or even knowing the place of departure.
Only N is in parentheses because it is implied that there exists a place
of departure (if not, bəqq alä 'to appear', 'pop up' would be used).
As to the instrumental, the entire group is in parentheses because <u>arrive</u>
allows the presence of an instrument (a vehicle[29]), but does not require

---

[29]In other words, the instrumental is here an inorganic complement,
cf. fns. 6 and 26. 'By foot' is not a real instrumental, but an explicit
mark of lack of instrumental in verbs of motion.

it.

　　If the semantic deep structure happens to have one of the config-
urations falling into the pattern of (93), the verb dᵃrrᵃsᵃ is selec-
ted as a representative of all the subverbs. There are reasons to
believe (I intend to expose them elsewhere) that <u>case</u> is not assigned
to nouns at this stage. Rather, each sub-verbal construction is given
an index number which shows the relation between sub-verb and noun even
in discontinuity:

(94)   dᵃrrᵃsᵃ

$$N_i, N_j, N_k, N_l,$$
$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{participator} \\ \text{+willful} \\ \text{redefined} \end{bmatrix}_i$$
$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{boundary} \\ \text{desc. eff.} \end{bmatrix}_j$$
$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{boundary} \\ \text{target} \\ \text{desc. eff.} \end{bmatrix}_k$$
$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{medium} \\ \text{desc. eff.} \end{bmatrix}_l$$

　　The sub-verbal features are first copied to the coreferential nouns.
Thus, in addition to its lexical features, a lexically inserted noun
will have the shape:

(95) $$\begin{bmatrix} \text{Noun} \\ \text{boundary} \\ \text{desc.eff.} \end{bmatrix}$$
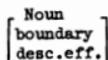
　　After nouns have been assigned case features, as a first step, nouns
marked [participator] will be spelled out as subjects, i.e. nominatives
which impose agreement on verbs. Next, for those nouns which have more
than one case-features (like N_k in (94)), one of the features has to
be deleted. This is necessary at this stage so that a source of acqui-
sition, which is not marked by kᵃ-, could undergo (96), the rule which
specifies that if there are two objects where one is owned by the other,
the owner is marked by an O suffix (4.b.):

(96)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{-pronoun} \\ \text{redefined} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \\ X \end{bmatrix}_{N_1} \Longrightarrow N_1, \begin{bmatrix} \text{+pronoun} \\ \text{redefined} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix} \Big/ \ Y \underline{\quad} Z \begin{bmatrix} \text{redefined} \\ W \end{bmatrix}_{N_2}, \begin{bmatrix} \text{+pronoun} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix}_{N_1}$$

In Amharic a pronoun directly following a noun can only be a possessive.

The following redundancy rule will then stipulate that <u>redefinition</u> automatically entails <u>straight effect</u>:

(97)

$$[\text{redefined}] \Longrightarrow [\text{straight effect}] \ / \ \begin{bmatrix} \text{+pronoun} \\ \underline{\quad} \end{bmatrix}$$

The following rules generate obligatory resumptive pronouns under the conventions of markedness discussed in 4.b. They apply only when the element is [-pronoun]:

(98)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{-pronoun} \\ \text{imposive} \\ \text{ascending effect} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix}_N \Longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{-pronoun} \\ \text{imposive} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix}_N, \begin{bmatrix} \text{+pronoun} \\ \text{ascending effect} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix}_P$$

(99)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{-pronoun} \\ \text{target} \\ \text{descending effect} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix}_N \Longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{-pronoun} \\ \text{target} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix}_N, \begin{bmatrix} \text{+pronoun} \\ \text{descending effect} \\ \alpha\text{gender} \\ \beta\text{number} \end{bmatrix}_P$$

Next, the spelling rules given in Table 2 apply. Note that they contain very specific conditions. No effect feature can be spelled out if no [+pronoun] element is present. No case feature can be spelled out if no [-pronoun] is present. Both can be spelled out if both types of elements are present, in the case of resumptive pronouns (including those generated by (96), (98) and (99)). The manner by which the other resumptive pronouns are generated (cf. [Getatchew 1970]) will be the subject of a separate study.

There is a further pronoun-placement rule which puts all the

[+pronoun] elements right after the main verb:

(100)

X	$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{pronoun} \\ Y \end{bmatrix}$	Z	verb	W
1	2	3	4	5
1	$\emptyset$	3	4+2	5

where W is an auxiliary or zero.

   The above rules appear in the order below:

(101)

      (1) lexical verb selection ((93) and (94) above)

      (2) subject spelled out

      (3) rule of two objects ((96) above)

      (4) redefinition to straight effect (97)

      (5) pronoun-placement (100)

      (6) markedness rules (98), (99)

      (7) case and effect spelling rules (Table 2)

      (8) pronoun-placement (100)

   Note that the pronoun-placement rule (100) appears twice in (101),
as (5) and as (8). This is necessary for the phenomenon already mentioned
in Section 2. Amharic allows only one pronoun-suffix per verb on the
surface. Should there be two such pronouns, one of them is deleted.
It is not always clear which one of them is doomed to be dropped. One
finds, however, that whenever there is conflict between an 0 suffix rep-
resenting an object (i.e. generated by (97)) and any other suffix (in-
cluding 0 generated by the rule in Table 2), the former yields to the
latter. This can be explained by assuming that the first pronouns to
be placed are the object ones (101(5)). When later any other pronoun
is transported to the postverbal position (101(8)), (it can only stand
after the verb and before an auxiliary or zero (according to (100)),
if it finds there an already placed object pronoun, the automatic dele-
tion of the latter then takes place. (101(8)) applies only once. If
there are still other instances of [+pronoun] to be placed in the sen-
tence, they will be converted into independent pronouns, if possible
(cf. fn. 4). If not, they will be simply deleted.

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