1. Introduction


This study, to some extent following the above tradition, discusses a syntactic structure until now largely neglected, i.e., prenominal relative clauses. It aims to present a synthetizing study of the structure in Ethiopian languages. The Ethiopian Language Area seems to be the only area in Africa where there is strong concentration of languages with prenominal relative clauses (Dryer 2005). Even if Wu 2011’s typological study on prenominal relatives includes many prenominal-relative-clause languages, Ethiopian prenominal-relative-clause languages are poorly represented and only briefly discussed. This study can, therefore, be considered a

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1 For simplicity’s sake, I use “Ethiopian languages” to refer to languages spoken in the Ethiopian Language Area, i.e. in Ethiopia and Eritrea.
The main objective of this data-oriented study is to give a synchronic typological overview of Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses, both from the inside and from the outside By “inside”, I mean to compare prenominal relative clauses in the Ethiopian area in order to show how they are different from and/or similar to each other. By “outside”, I extend the comparison to beyond Ethiopian languages and include other African languages with or without prenominal relative clauses and languages from elsewhere with prenominal relative clauses. These comparisons will show to what extent Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses are typologically marked or ordinary. However, the inside comparison will be given more attention. Furthermore, synchronic comparison naturally leads us to questions concerning language evolution and language contact. These questions have always been in the center of studies of the Ethiopian Language Area and will be discussed here.

This study is organized as follows. The first section gives a general review of Ethiopian languages and Ethiopian prenominal-relative-clause languages. The second section presents in detail three features of Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses, i.e., relativizers, internal realization of the constituent relativized on, and relative verb forms. The last section discusses these three properties from synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

2. Ethiopian prenominal-relative-clause languages

According to Ethnologue 2009, Ethiopia has 89 languages (5 dead and 85 living, of which 65 are Afro-Asiatic, with 17 that are Nilo-Saharan, English and Ethiopian Sign Language). Eritrea, on the other hand, has only 13 languages (i.e. one dead and 12 living, of which 8 are Afro-Asiatic, 2 are Nilo-Saharan, and the others are English and Italian). Afar (Cushitic), Saho (Cushitic) and Tigrigna (Semitic) are spoken in both countries (Lewis 2009).

Among the particularities of Ethiopian languages, one that distinguishes them from other African languages, is the existence of prenominal relative clauses. A relative clause can be defined as a subordinate clause which shares a semantic pivot (or domain noun, following Keenan & Comrie (1977: 63-64)) with its matrix sentence (See Vries (2002: 14), Grosu (2002: 145) and Creissels (2005, §1) for more detailed discussion on defining relative clauses), as in the example below:

(1) the apple [(which/that) George lay on the table] relative clause

In this example, the relative clause (which/that) George lay on the table modifies the nominal semantic pivot (the) apple in the same way an adjective does. Since it is placed after (the)
apple, *(which/that)* George lay on the table is a postnominal relative clause. A prenominal relative clause is before the semantic pivot that it modifies. Here are examples of prenominal relative clauses from Ethiopian languages:

(2) Amharic (Semitic) (Hayat Omar, personal communication):

```
yeh/ya [yä-säbbärä-w]_relative_clause säw
DEM REL-break.PERF.S3SG-O3SG/ART man
```

‘the man that broke (it)’

(3) Dime (Omotic) (Seyoum 2008: 154):

```
[täáy ?ád-déé-b-is-im]_relative_clause gošt-is-im nü yéf-déé-n
now come-IMPERF-REL-ART-ACC man-ART-ACC 3SG.M.SUBJ see-IMPERF-3
```

‘He sees the man who is coming now.’

(4) Kambaata (Cushitic) (Treis 2008: 166):

```
[daguij-ő]_relative_clause adab-āa
run-3M.PERF boy-M.ACC
```

‘the boy who ran’

(5) Male (Omotic) (Amha 2001: 160):

```
?iini [ziginó mukk-é]_relative_clause ?atsi
person.SG.M.NOM yesterday come-PERF person.M.ABS
zag-é-ne
see-PERF-AFFIRM.DECL
```

‘He saw the man who came yesterday.’

There are other types of relative clauses, such as correlative relative clauses, adjoined relative clauses and internally-headed relative clauses.² Our study only concerns the prenominal relative clause, with merely very sporadic mention of other types of relative clauses. Thus, only the Ethiopian languages with prenominal relative clauses are to be discussed in detail. More precisely, only three families are concerned: Omotic, Cushitic and Semitic. Most Lowland East Cushitic languages have postnominal relative clauses (Tosco 2003: 90), for example Arbore (D. Hayward 1984, §5.7) and Tsamai (Savà 2005, §4.2). Similarly Ethiopian Nilo-Saharan languages in general do not have prenominal relatives, for

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According to Dryer 2005, the prenominal relative clause is found in 7 Ethiopian languages (9 in all of Africa, including 2 non-Ethiopian languages, i.e. Ijo (Niger-Congo) (Williamson 1965) in Nigeria and Khoekhoe (Khoisan) in Namibia):

(6) Omotic (2): Gamo, Zaysete
   Cushitic (2): Afar, Qimant
   Semitic (3): Amharic, Chaha (dialect of Sebat Bet Gurage), Tigré

Other Ethiopian languages of the three families have recently been described as having prenominal relatives, though not all have been fully treated.

Map 1. Eritrea and Ethiopia (and Djibouti), with prenominal-relative-clause languages highlighted (from Ethnologue)
Map 2. Southwestern Ethiopia, with prenominal-relative-clause languages highlighted (from Ethnologue)
3. Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses

Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses show a great degree of diversity, more than can be characterized here. I focus on three structural properties: (a) relativizers, (b) realization of the head noun in the relative clause, and (c) relative verb forms. Each property is considered from within the group of Ethiopian languages, and from outside or more typologically, i.e. compared to other African languages with or without prenominal relative clauses and to other languages from elsewhere with prenominal relatives.

3.1 Relativizers


Except for relative pronouns, many other types of relativizers are used in Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses.

3.1.1 Linkers. The first type of relativizer is found, for example, in Baiso (Cushitic), Dime (Omotic) and Haro (Omotic). Following Creissels (2006: vol. 2, §33.3.4) and Creissels et al. (2008: 142), I adopt the label ‘linker’ (joncteur in French (Creissels 2006: vol. 2, §33.3.4)). Linkers do not indicate the position relativized on, but agree with the head noun in number, gender or noun class. More importantly, typologically, in relative clauses with relative pronouns, there can be no resumptive pronouns (i.e. pronominal elements which correspond to the head noun in the relative clause (see below)), but linkers can be used together with resumptive pronouns, for example, in Arabic (Creissels et al. 2008: 143).

(8) ar-arzulu ilaði: qatalu:-hu
    DEF-man LINK.SG.M kill.PERF.S3PLM-O3SGM
‘the man they killed’
Lit. ‘the man that one they killed him’
(9) \textit{al-bintu} llati: \textit{ðahabtu} maʕa-ha: ?ila: s-su:qi
\text{DEF-girl} \text{LINK.SG.F} \text{go.PERF.S1SG with-3SGF to DEF-market.GEN}
‘the girl with whom I went to the market’
Lit. ‘the girl that one I went with her to the market’

Prenominal relatives with linkers from Dime are shown in (10)-(12) (Seyoum 2008: 154, 155, 156):

(10) tǎáy \textit{ʔad-déé-b-is-im} gošt-is-im nú yéf-déé-n
\text{now come-IMPERF-LINK.SG.M-ART-ACC man-ART-ACC 3SG.M.SUBJ see-IMPERF-3}
‘He sees the man who is coming now.’

(11) dər-im wúdúr-in šin-i-nd \textit{ʔámz-is} láχt’-i-n
\text{goat-ACC girl-DAT buy-PERF-LINK.SG.F woman-ART die-PERF-3}
‘The woman who bought a goat for a girl died.’

(12) dər-is-im wúdúr-is-in šin-i-d \textit{ʔámz-af-is} láχt’-i-n
\text{goat-ART-ACC girl-ART-DAT buy-PERF-LINK.PL woman-PL-ART die-PERF-3}
‘The women who bought the goat for the girl died.’

The linkers in question are \textit{-(u)b} [+Masculine, +Singular] as in (10), \textit{-(i)nd} [+Feminine, +Singular] as in (11) and \textit{-(i)d} [+Plural] as in (12).

Here are Baiso examples with linkers, \textit{ka} [+Masculine, +Singular], \textit{ta} [+Feminine, +Singular] and \textit{o} [+Plural] (R. Hayward 1979: 116):

(13) íso ka ayeeseran hiʔi
3PL LINK.SG.M speak.PRES.3SG language
‘the language which they speak’

(14) ker ta abate féro
dog LINK.SG.F bite.PAST.3SG finger
‘the finger which the dog bit’

(15) o iminamen keferroo
LINK.PL buy.PASS.PAST.3PL sandals
‘the sandals which were bought’

Different from the tripartite system in Dime and in Baiso, Haro has only two linkers, \textit{-sa} for masculine head nouns and \textit{-na} for feminine ones (Woldemariam 2004, §3.3.2.6).
According to Creissels (1991: 459-460) and Creissels et al. (2008: 142), linkers are common relativizers in African relative clauses. Mutaka (2000: 212) explained this phenomenon by arguing that “in languages where nouns are grouped into morphological classes, the nouns often influence the form of any noun-related element thereby ensuring a type of agreement between it (the head noun) and the noun-related element”. Creissels (1991: 460) also related linkers to noun classes.

Among Ethiopian non-prenominal-relative-clause languages, Harar Oromo (Cushitic) (Owens 1985, Baye 1987) optionally marks postnominal relative clauses with linkers, xan(i) for masculine head nouns and tan(i) for feminine ones (Owens 1985: 131).

(16) namicc-íi  (xan)  d’ufe
man-NOM LINK.M came
‘the man who came’

(17) intal-tíi   (tan)  inníi  arke
girl-NOM LINK.F 3SG.M saw
‘the girl he saw’

(18) namicc-íi (xan)  intal-tíi  isá  baréed-dúu
man-NOM LINK.M girl-NOM his pretty-F
‘the man whose daughter is pretty’
Lit. ‘the man that his daughter is pretty’

(19) hárrée-n  lamén  taní-n   bite
donkey-NOM two LINK.F-1SG bought
‘the two donkeys I bought’

Note that there is a resumptive pronoun in (18), i.e. isá “his”.


(20) monna  yo   Lebruru  le  mo  rekiseditse-ng
man.NC1 LINK.NC1 Afrikaner.NC5 S3:NC5 O3:NC1 sell.PERF-REL.V DIKGOMO
cow.NC8/10
‘the man to whom the Afrikaner sold cows’
Lit. ‘the man that the Afrikaner sold cows to him’
The linkers *yo* in (20) and *tsé* in (21) are marked for the noun class of the head nouns, *monna* ‘man’ in the first class and *dìpôdî* ‘goat’ in the 8/10 class. Similar to Arabic examples (8)-(9) and Harar Oromo (18), *yo* in (20) co-occurs with a resumptive pronoun, i.e. *mo*.

With regard to African relative clauses in general, Ethiopian prenominal relatives with linkers seem to be in the mainstream. However, from a typological point of view, they are very exceptional, because nowhere else similar prenominal relatives seem to have been documented. Creissels (2006: vol. 2, 240) even reported that linkers were never found in prenominal relative clauses. Wu 2011’s typological study only mentioned Dime linkers. The existence of linkers in Ethiopian prenominal relatives demonstrates the conflict between regional particularity and typological tendency.

### 3.1.2 Complementizer

The second type of relativizer in Ethiopian prenominal relatives is complementizer. Prototypical complementizers do not vary for case – but may for other semantic features. They do not pied-pipe adpositions either. It is possible that the same complementizer can also be used in other types of subordinate clauses, such as *that*, used as complementizer both for relativization and for general complementation. Thus, it may be better to use “complementizer” only if the complementizer and relativizer functions overlap.

Such a complementizer is used in at least five Semitic languages, Harari, Tigré, Tigrigna, Amharic, and Argobba, which can be divided into two groups according to how T/A/M affects the complementizers.

The first group consists of Harari, Tigré and Tigrigna, where T/A/M, expressed by using an auxiliary, affects not the form of the complementizer, but its position. Tigré has the simplest pattern: the complementizer is either preverbal if there is no auxiliary, or between the main verb and the auxiliary (Palmer 1961: 24, 25):

(22) ści̓b łà wàddäya htdocsarı̓m
father COMP do.PAST.S3SG.O3SG sin
`the sin a father did’

(23) łà šàffàttit wàddawo łà ‘àilàw ämàs
ART Shifta do.PTCPL.S3PL.O3SG COMP AUX.S3PL crime
`the crimes the Shifta were committing’
In Tigrigna, \( zə- \) (and its allomorphs \( zi-/zä-/ə \) (Palmer 1962: 36)) is prefixed to the main verb without auxiliary as in (24), or to the non-gerundive main verb and the auxiliary as in (25), or only to the auxiliary if the main verb is gerundive as in (26) (Overfelt 2009: 47, Palmer 1962: 37, Overfelt 2009: 53).

(24) \( ʔɨti \ zi-rəʔak'əwo səbʔaj \)
DEM.SG.M COMP-see.PERF.S1SG.O3SGM man.SG.M
‘the man that I saw’

(25) \( ətom 'ab'u zi-əhəsəu zə-nəbəru səb'at \)
DEM.PL there COMP-farm.S3PL COMP-AUX.S3PL man.PL
‘the men who were farming there’

(26) \( ʔɨta ʔɨti səbʔaj səmuj tsihiwuə zi-nəbəɾə \)
DEM.SG.F DEM.SG.M man.SG.M Monday write.GER.S3SGM.O3SGF COMP-AUX.S3SGM dəbdabe
letter.SG.F
‘the letter that the man wrote on Monday’

In Harari (Wagner 1997: 503), \( z(i)- \) is placed before the verb in the past and in the negative past and non-past, for example \( zaysəbar \ ‘who does not break’, but it is between the main verb and the auxiliary verb, like \( yisəbrə-z-ə:l \ ‘who breaks’.

The second group is composed of Amharic and Argobba, where T/A/M affects not the position of the complementizer, but its form: in other words, there is more than one complementizer. In Amharic \( yä- \) as in (27) is used for perfect and \( yä-mm-/ə-mm- \) as in (28) for imperfect (Hudson 1997: 482):

(27) \( kä-gurage yä-tä-gənə nəwlt \)
in-Gurage COMP-PASS-find.PERF statue
‘a statue which was found in Gurage’

(28) \( sələ-tərik yamm-i-nəgər məsəhəf \)
about-history COMP-S3SG-tell book
‘a book which tells about history’

Argobba (Leslau 1959, Hudson 1997 and Wetter 2010) has similar complementizers.
According to Creissels et al. (2008: 142), the use of a complementizer in relatives is common in African languages, for example, in Yoruba\(^3\) (Niger-Congo) (Lawal 1987: 69):

(29) \(\text{ọkùnrin tì ó ra asọ} \)  
\(\text{man COMP 3SG bought cloth} \)  
\('\text{the man who bought the cloth}'\)

(30) \(\text{asọ tì ọkùnrin nàà rà} \)  
\(\text{cloth COMP man ART bought} \)  
\('\text{the cloth that the man bought}'\)

(31) \(\text{ọmọ tì ọkùnrin nàà ra asọ fùn} \)  
\(\text{child COMP man ART bought cloth for} \)  
\('\text{the child that the man bought the cloth for}'\)

and in Hausa (Chadic) (Jaggar 1998: 203, 202).

(32) \(\text{bàkì-n dà sukà isō jiỳà} \)  
\(\text{guests-DEF.PL COMP 3PL.FOC.PERF arrive yesterday} \)  
\('\text{the guests that arrived yesterday}'\)

(33) \(\text{gà mòtà-rì dà mukà sàyà jiỳà} \)  
\(\text{PRES car-DEF.SG.F COMP 1PL.FOC.PERF buy yesterday} \)  
\('\text{Here's the car that we bought yesterday.'}\)

The complementizer is found in prenominal relative clauses in languages from all over the world, for example, -(e)n in Basque (Isolate) (Oyharçabal 2003: 764):

(34) \(\text{Pellok ekarri duen dirua galdu dut} \)  
\(\text{Peter.ERG bring AUX.COMP money.ART lose.PAST AUX} \)  
\('\text{I lost the money Peter brought.'}\)

and \text{de} in Mandarin (Sino-Tibetan):

(35) \(\text{lisi da le de na ge ren} \)  
\(\text{Lisi hit T/A/M COMP DEM CL person} \)  
\('\text{the person that Lisi hit}'\)

\(^3\) According to Creissels (1991: 460), the complementizer \(tì\) in Yoruba can be omitted.
What is exceptional in Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses is the position of the complementizer. Typologically, the complementizer is often between the prenominal relative clause and the head noun, similar to the position of the complementizer in postnominal relative clauses. However, Harari, Tigré and Tigrigna complementizers are either preverbal or VP-internal and Amharic and Argobba complementizers are invariably preverbal. This is typologically marked, though not unique.⁴ Laze, a Kartvelian language, also has a clause-internal complementizer (Lacroix 2009).

Another particularity of the complementizers in Amharic and in Argobba is that the aspect of the relative verb plays a role in the choice of complementizer: in Amharic ṣā- for perfect and ṣā-mm-/ə-mm- for imperfect; and in Argobba ɨ- for perfect and imm- for imperfect. A similar pattern is found in Tibeto-Birman languages, for example, Burmese (Herring 1991), Dolakha Newar (Genetti 2007, Chapter 17) and Kyirong Tibetan (Huber 2003).

3.1.3 Zero relativizer. Besides linkers and complementizers, a relative clause can have no relativizers at all. This ‘zero marking’ strategy is used, for example, in Male (Amha 2001: 160):

(36) ?ĩiní  ziginó  mukk-é  ?atsí  zãg-é-ne
   person.SG.M.NOM yesterday come-PERF person.M.ABS see-PERF-AFFIRM.DECL
   ‘He saw the man who came yesterday.’

The corresponding independent clause is (Amha 2001: 160):

(37) ?atsí  zignó  mukk-é-ne
   person.M.ABS yesterday come-PERF-AFFIRM.DECL
   ‘The man came yesterday.’

Note that the only difference between the relative clause in (36) and the corresponding independent clause (37) is -ne, the positive declarative particle. Both clauses are aspect-marked, thus, finite. Besides -é-, other aspect-polarity markers are -á-, -andá-, -uwá- and -ibá, which are also used in relative clauses (Amha 2001: 161):

(38) gärçi  ṣas-ã  keezz-ã  miná  haiss-ó
    old people-NOM tell-IMPERF ancient speech-ABS
    ‘stories which old people tell’

---

⁴ Some forty years ago, Hetzron (1972:41) noted that “[n]o other language has exactly the same system”. 
(39) na-att-ó-m miná haiss-ó keezz-ándá naʔʔ-éll-ó
child-PL-ABS-DAT ancient speech-ABS tell-FUT.IMPERF child-F-ABS
‘the girl (i.e. female child) who will tell stories to the children’

(40) miná haiss-ó na-att-ó-m keezz-uwá gabáró-ntsí
ancient speech-ABS child-PL-ABS-DAT tell-IMPERF.NEG farmer-DEF.PL.NOM
‘the farmers who do not tell stories to children’

(41) miná haiss-ó na-att-ó-m keezz-ibá gabáró-ntsí
ancient speech-ABS child-PL-ABS-DAT tell-PERF.NEG farmer-DEF.PL.NOM
‘the farmers who did not tell stories to children’


Zero marking is found in other African languages, for example in Kanuri (Nilo-Saharan) (Creissels et al. 2008: 142):

(42) kâm kasíwu-lan rúmma-dó
person market-LOC see.T/A/M.S2SG-DEF
‘the person you saw at the market’

(43) kâm shí-ro goro yíkona-dó
person 3SG-DAT cola give.T/A/M.S1SG-DEF
‘the person to whom I gave cola’

In prenominal relative clauses of languages outside Africa, many do not use relativizers at all. Such languages can be found in Asia, as in Altaic languages, e.g. Turkish (Kornfilt 1997, §1.1.2.3) and Evenki (Nedjalkov 1997: 34), in Dravidian languages, e.g. Kannada (Sridhar 1990, §1.1.2.3), and in Indo-Aryan languages, e.g. Marathi (Pandharipande 2003, §1.1.2.3); in Europe, as in Uralic prenominal-relative-clause languages, e.g. Mari (Matsumura 1981); and in America, as in Cuzco Quechua (Lefebvre & Muysken 1988).

3.1.4. Other cases. Some Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses can use both the complementizer and zero marking. In the Chaha dialect of Sebat Bet Gurage (Semitic) the complementizer jo- is used for perfective verb stems while there is no relativizer for imperfective relative clauses (Rose 2007: 420):
Prenominal Relative Clauses in Ethiopian Languages

(44) จอ-เทน-เทг  แกะด์
COMP-come.PERF-3SGF  girl
‘the girl who came’

(45) ติ-เทน  แกะด์
3SGF-come.IMPERF  girl
‘the girl who comes’

For a more theoretical analysis, see Alemayehu 1990. Silt’e (Semitic) (Rawda 2003, Chapter 4) has the same pattern.

In Amharic prenominal relative clauses preceded by a preposition, ยา- and ยา-ม่ are not used, so there is no overt complementizer in perfective relative clauses and there is əนมə- in imperfective relative clauses (Demeke 2001: 203):

(46) อ้นบ้ายตา  ลา-(*ยา-)ก็ัดดัล-ə-ว  ลəจจ
lion  to-COMP-kill.PERF-S3SGM-O3SGM/ART  boy
‘to the boy who killed a lion’

(47) อ้นบ้ายตา  ลา-(*ยาม่-/)əนมə-ิก็ัดล-əว  ลəจจ
lion  to-COMP-S3SGM-kill.IMPERF-O3SGM/ART  boy
‘to the boy who kills/will kill a lion’

See Leslau (1959: 256) for similar phenomena in Argobba.

In the above Male examples (36), (38)-(41), repeated below, there is no relativizer:

(48) ʔินี  ฉิจินอ  มุกค-ี  ʔาสิ  ซัด-ี-น
person.SG.M.NOM yesterday  come-PERF  person.M.ABS  see-PERF-AFFIRM.DECL
‘He saw the man who came yesterday.’

(49) กาศิ ʔาส-อะ  ขอฉิจ  มิน-ำ  หัวสส-อะ
old  people-NOM  tell-IMPERF  ancient  speech-ABS
‘stories which old people tell’

(50) นา-ตัท-อะ-ม  มิน-ำ  หัวสส-อะ  ขอฉิจ-ันดา  นาʔ-งีล-อะ
child-PL-ABS-DAT  ancient  speech-ABS  tell-FUT.IMPERF  child-F-ABS
‘the girl (i.e. female child) who will tell stories to the children’
If the verb has no aspect markers, -ó or -oná ends the relative clause (Amha 2001: 167, 168).

What is exceptional in Male relative clauses is that finite relative clauses have no relativizers while non-finite ones use the complementizers -ó or -oná. Typologically, it is often finite relative clauses that use relativizers but non-finite ones have no relativizer at all, as in English.

Wolaytta (Omotic) has a more complicated system of relativizers. The two factors that determine the use of a given relativizer are positions relativized on and aspect (Wakasa 2008: 840).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>+subject</th>
<th>-subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>imperfective</td>
<td>-iya</td>
<td>-iyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfective</td>
<td>-(id)a</td>
<td>-(id)o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For examples (Wakasa 2008: 844, 845, 848, 849)
To summarize, Ethiopian relative clauses show both regional traits and typological tendencies. Linkers are exceptional world-wide, because they are unique to Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses, though they are common in Africa. As for complementizers and zero marking, Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses respect general tendencies in African languages as well as typological discoveries about prenominal relative clauses. However, what is really exceptional in Ethiopian prenominal relatives is the complexity and the diversity of relativizer systems, which Wu 2011’s typological study on prenominal relatives seems to have ignored.

### 3.2 Internal realization of the head noun

In prenominal and postnominal relative clauses, which are head-external relative clauses, by definition, the head noun cannot have a full (i.e. non-reduced) nominal realization, contrary to head-internal relative clauses. In head-external relative clauses, the most frequent internal realization of the head noun is gapping, that is, the constituent relativized on is left empty in the relative clause. In most of the above examples from Ethiopian languages, there is gapping in prenominal relative clauses. Indeed, gapping is used in all the Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses, though to different extents. It is always used for subject relative
clauses. This is also true for African languages (Kuteva & Comrie 2006) and languages in the world in general (Keenan & Comrie 1977, 1979).

Some Ethiopian languages consistently use gapping for objects and lower positions. See above Wolaytta examples (61) and (62) for the direct object relativization and dative relativization. Here are Male examples from objects to adjuncts (Amha 2001: 161, 165, 163):

(63) gárciʔas-á keezz-á miná haiss-ó
old people-NOM tell-IMPERF ancient speech-ABS
‘stories which old people tell’

(64) tááni miiʃʃe talʔ-é naʔʔ-éll-á
1SG.NOM money.ABS borrow-PERF child-F-NOM
‘the girl to whom I lent money’ or ‘the girl from whom I borrowed money’

(65) nééni waas’-ó kis’s’-é ?ött-éll-á
2SG.NOM water-ABS draw-PERF pot-F-NOM
‘the pot with which you drew the water’

(66) ʔízíʔafíll-ó mask-é wór-á
3SG.M.NOM cloth-ABS wash-PERF river-NOM
‘the river in which he washed the cloth’

Other Ethiopian languages use a pronominal element – a real pronoun or cross-referencing affixes attached to the verb – in relative clauses. This pronominal element is often labeled “resumptive pronoun”. According to Comrie 1981, if the pronominal element is used both in independent clauses and in relative clauses, it is not a resumptive pronoun. For example, in Hausa yā is not a resumptive pronoun, because, though used in relatives, it is also obligatory in the independent clause (Comrie 1981: 220):

(67) dōkin dà yā mutù
horse REL 3SG died
‘the horse which died’

(68) dōkī *(yā) mutù
horse 3SG died
‘The horse died.’
Lit. ‘Horse it died.’
In other words, the use of $yā$ is not due to relativization. As Comrie (1981:221) suggests, “this pronoun [i.e. $yā$] functions very much like verb-agreement in European languages”.

Among Ethiopian prenominal-relative languages Amharic uses resumptive pronouns – or rather, resumptive cross-referencing affixes – from direct objects to obliques (Leslau 1995: 102, 99, Hudson 1997: 482):

(69) $yā$-mätta-hu-t säwwyye wändomme näw

COMP-hit.PERF-S1SG-O3SGM man my-brother is

‘The man whom I hit is my brother.’

Lit. ‘The man that I hit him is my brother.’

(70) wändommočçu əzzih $yā$-näbbär-u-t lōg tamarì näw

his brothers here COMP-be.PERF-S3PL-ART boy student is

‘The boy whose brothers were here is a student.’

Lit. ‘The boy that his brothers were here is a student.’

(71) Ya $yā$-tä-wälläd-ku-bbä-t bet näw

DEM COMP-MID-bear.PERF-S1SG-LOC-ART house is

‘That’s the house that I was born in.’

See also Silt’e (Rawda 2003, Chapter 3) for similar resumptive cross-referencing affixes. Kambaata uses resumptive cross-referencing affixes for indirect objects and lower positions (Treis 2008: 177, 179, 181).

(72) loodāam xa’mm-ée meent-íchch-ut

Loodaamo.M.NOM ask-3 M.PERF.REL woman-SG-F.NOM

‘the woman whom Loodaamo had asked’

(73) Harruuchch-ú’ argishsh-oon-sí mänch-u

donkey.SG-M.ACC-1SG.POSS lend-1 SG.PERF-3M.OBJ.REL person.SG-M.NOM

‘the person to whom I had lent my donkey’

Lit. ‘the person that I lent my donkey to him’

(74) gízz-u mogga’-amm-o-sé mesel-éeta

money-M.NOM steal-PASS-3M.PERF-3F.OBJ.REL girl-F.ACC

‘the girl from whom money had been stolen’

Lit. ‘the girl that money had been stolen from her’
Tigrigna (Palmer 1962) and Afar (Simeone-Senelle 2008) use resumptive pronouns from datives as well.

In Sidamo animacy plays an active role in the distribution of resumptive pronouns (see Kazuhiro (2007, §5.4) for more details). This language optionally uses resumptive cross-referencing affixes for animate objects and animate possessors (Kazuhiro 2007: 671, 645):

(76) bule la’-’ino(-si) mančo
    Bule.NOM.F see-3SG.F-PRES.PERF-3SG.M person
    ‘the man who Bule saw’
    Lit. ‘the man Bule saw (him)’

(77) rodö(-se) dangurá gan-t-into mančo
    sibling.NOM.F-3SG.F.POSS Dangura.ACC hit-3SG.F-PRES.PERF.3 person
    ‘the person whose sister hit Dangura’
    Lit. ‘the person his/the sister hit Dangura’

while cross-referencing affixes or real pronouns are obligatory for animate obliques (Kazuhiro 2007: 672, 676):

(78) lat’o dikko ha-d-ino-si mančo
    Lat’o.NOM.F market go-3SG.F-PRES.PERF.3-3SG.M person
    ‘the person for whom Lat’o went to the market’
    Lit. ‘the person that Lat’o went to the marked for him’

(79) bule isí-ra mat’aafá hir-t-ino mančo
    Bule.NOM.F 3SG.M.GEN-DAT book.ACC buy-3SG.F-PRES.PERF.3 person
    ‘the person for/from whom Bule bought the book’
    Lit. ‘the person that Bule bought the book for/from him’

As for inanimate head nouns, only gapping is used from subjects to obliques (Kazuhiro 2007: 631, 660, 640, 641):
Prenominal Relative Clauses in Ethiopian Languages

(80)  
\text{ise} \quad \text{hiikk}'-i-t-ino \quad \text{t'arap'eessá}

3SG.F.NOM \quad \text{break-EPEN-3SG.F-PRES.PERF.3} \quad \text{table.ACC}

‘the table she broke’

(81)  
\text{bule} \quad \text{lekká} \quad \text{hiikk}'-i-t-ino \quad \text{t'arap'eessá}

Bule.NOM.F \quad \text{leg.OBL} \quad \text{break-EPEN-3SG.F-PRES.PERF.3} \quad \text{table.ACC}

‘the table whose leg Bule broke’

Lit. ‘the table Bule broke the leg’

(82)  
\text{ise} \quad \text{e'-i-ino} \quad \text{min}

3SG.F.NOM \quad \text{enter-3SG.F-PRES.PERF.3} \quad \text{house}

‘the house into which she entered’

Lit. ‘the house she entered’

(83)  
\text{isi} \quad \text{kubb-ø-ino} \quad \text{hakk'iččó}

3SG.M.NOM \quad \text{jump-3SG.M-PRES.PERF.3} \quad \text{tree.GEN.F}

‘the tree from which he jumped’

Lit. ‘the tree he jumped’

In Alaba-K’abeena, there is a resumptive pronoun only if the head noun is genitive in the relative clause (Schneider-Blum 2007:367):

(84)  
\text{ʔam-ás(i)} \quad \text{giddan-u wokt-i}

mother-SG.F.NOM.PC.3SG.M \quad \text{near-A/N time-TN.M.ABS}

\text{reh-too-si} \quad \text{c'úul-(u)}

die-3SG.F/3PL.PERF-PC.3SG.M.REL \quad \text{child-SG.M.NOM}

‘the boy, whose mother had died recently’

Lit. ‘the boy, that his mother had died recently’

The resumptive pronoun, i.e. -ás(i) in (84), is obligatory. On the contrary, in an NP, if the possessor is nominal, there can be dependent-marking, as in (85), or double-marking as in (86) (Schneider-Blum 2007:172):

(85)  
\text{fe?leecci} \quad \text{mat-i} \quad \text{lokk-á(i)}

goal.S1.M.GEN \quad \text{one-F.A/N} \quad \text{leg-TN.F.NOM}

‘one of the billy goat’s legs’

3.3 Relative verb forms

In relative clauses, some languages use particular verbal forms different from those used as predicates in independent clauses, for example, participles in English:

(87) the man sitting on the floor

(88) the man wounded by a tiger

Some Ethiopian languages do not use special verb forms in prenominal relative clauses, like Alaba-K’abeena (Schneider-Blume 2007, §4.6.1), Amharic (Leslau 1995: 81-118), Harari (Wagner 1997), Sidamo (Kazuhiro 2007), Silt’e (Rawda 2003, Chapter 4) and Tigrigna (Palmer 1962, Kogan 1997, Overfelt 2009).

Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses with special verb forms can be classified into three prototypes:

(89) T/A/M reduction
    polarity-based: positive vs. negative
    position-based: subject vs. non-subject

Generally speaking, special relative verb forms are particularly common in African languages (Creissels 1991: 461, Watters 2000: 227, Creissels et al. 2008: 141). The three patterns found in Ethiopian prenominal relatives are also found in other African languages.
3.3.1 T/A/M reduction. In the first type, there is reduction, even total absence, of T/A/M markers, for example, in Dizi (Beachy 2005: 125, 129):

(90)  
\[ \text{dadu tamir-s-da-z/-jn} \]
\[ \text{child learn-CAUS-REL-M/F} \]
\[ \text{‘the one who causes a child to learn’, i.e. teacher} \]

(91)  
\[ \text{a:j gab-i-z} \]
\[ \text{water create-EPEN-M} \]
\[ \text{‘the one who creates water’} \]

and in Male (Amha 2001: 167, 168):

(92)  
\[ \text{ʔiíní waatśi gets-ó ʔoti táá-m ʔing-é-ne} \]
\[ \text{3SG.M.NOM water.ABS keep-REL pot.ABS 1SG-DAT give-PERF-AFFIRM.DECL} \]
\[ \text{‘He gave me a pot in which water can be kept.’} \]

(93)  
\[ \text{mú?-óna múʔ?-á k'ára-ke} \]
\[ \text{eat-REL food-NOM good-COP.AFFIRM.DECL} \]
\[ \text{‘The food which we ate is good.’/ ‘The food which is eaten (by us) is good.’} \]

Note that these two languages have prenominal relative clauses with fully-conjugated verb forms, for example in Dizi (Beachy 2005: 127, 129, 131):

(94)  
\[ \text{bolim-ki-d-a} \]
\[ \text{be demolished-PERF-REL-DEF} \]
\[ \text{‘the one that has been demolished’} \]

(95)  
\[ \text{at jet-i-k nogim-da-d-a} \]
\[ \text{now 2SG-EPEN-INSTR converse-IMPERF-REL-DEF} \]
\[ \text{‘the one who is conversing with you’} \]

(96)  
\[ \text{eds-k’áŋk meʃ-i-n-j-ki jaːb} \]
\[ \text{AIDS-INSTR grab-EPEN-PASS-PERF person} \]
\[ \text{‘the person who has been grabbed by AIDS’} \]

(97)  
\[ \text{i-kot-n-de-ki jaːb-e-n} \]
\[ \text{3SG.F-wait-PASS-IMPERF-PERF person-DEF-M} \]
\[ \text{‘the lady who was being waited for’} \]
The same T/A/M markers are used in Dizi independent clauses, too (Beachy 2005, §3.8.3.2). See above (36)-(41) for Male prenominal relative clauses with fully-conjugated verb forms.

Haro also has reduced prenominal relative clauses where there is neither agreement nor tense-aspect markers, but the positive particle -é- is kept (Woldemariam 2004: 104):

(98)  
\[\text{zine} \quad \text{yood-e-na-t-o}\]  
yesterday come-AFFIRM-LINK.F-DEF.F-ABS  
‘the female one that came yesterday’

If the head noun is a man, \textit{yood-e-sa-t-o} is used: -sa-, LINK.M replaces -na-. If the relative clause is negative, -é- is replaced by the negative particle -á-, used also in independent negative sentences (Woldemariam 2004: 150).


However, relative clauses in Haro are quite exceptional in that they lose agreement and tense-aspect markers but keeps the sentence particles, -é-/-á-. In other prenominal relative clauses, it is rather the sentence particles that are lost. In Korean, independent clauses have sentence particles of one of the following types: declarative, interrogative, propositive and imperative (Sohn 1999, §9.2.1), but relative clauses have only the relativizer -(u)n (Sohn 1999, §9.4.3).

3.3.2 Polarity-based. The second type of special verb forms, i.e. the polarity-based type, has three sub-types:

(99)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item Special positive verb forms
  \item Special negative verb forms
  \item Special positive and negative verb forms
\end{itemize}

Qimant (Cushitic) illustrates the first sub-type. Qimant positive relative clauses have special verb forms depending on whether the position relativized on is subject or non-subject (see below) while negative relative verb forms are the same as main verb forms (Appleyard 1975: 337-339).

Afar belongs to the second sub-type. In independent clauses, the negation is marked by the stressed prefix \textit{ma}- (Bliese 1981: 84):
Negation in relative clauses (and in other subordinate clauses) is expressed by the auxiliary *waa* (inaccusative)/*wee* (accusative) (Simeone-Senelle 2008: 5):

(101) *uirru-l tū baahē wayta leen*

children-on unit bring AUX.NEG.INACC.3SG.F water

‘the water that brings nothing to children’

(102) *biyaaakitaksugé-wee idaltī*

be ill.PTCP-AUX.NEG.ACC.3SG.M aged person

‘the old person that was not ill’

Baiso also has special negative relative verb forms for the past tense and the imperfect aspect: invariable verb stem + *u/annu*, for example (R. Hayward 1979: 116).

(103) *ka aman-u ibaaddootī*

LINK.M.SG believe-NEG.PAST man

‘the man who did not believe’

(104) *ta keen-annu helēeltī*

LINK.F.SG bring-NEG.IMPERF woman

‘the woman who does not bring’

(105) *o keen-u/-annu ibaaddo*

LINK.PL bring-NEG.PAST/-NEG.IMPERF people

‘people who did/does not bring’

There is another pattern of negative imperfective relative clauses in Baiso, i.e. verb stem + *(n)u + LINK + giran.* Giran inflects for the full concord set, for example, *anfe-u o giran bekke* ‘water which has not boiled’ (R. Hayward 1979: 116). Note that negation in declarative clauses is expressed by two preverbal particles, *lakko* and *la* (R. Hayward 1978: 555).

Kambaata uses the third sub-type. In independent clauses, the accent is always on a non-final position in the verb (Treis 2008: 166):
In positive relative clauses, the accent is always on the final position, thus different from independent clauses (Treis 2008: 166):

(107) dagújj-ó adab-áa
    run-3M.PERF boy-M.ACC
    ‘the boy who ran’

In negative relative clauses, -umb expresses negation (Treis 2008: 172):

(108) moggá’-úmb-ut óos-ut
    steal-REL.NEG-F.NOM children-F.NOM
    ‘children who do not steal/have not stolen/are not stealing’

This relative negation morpheme -umb is different from all other negative morphemes: -ba’a for negative indicative imperfective main verbs, -im for negative indicative perfective and progressive main verbs, -ú’nná for negative converbs, -ka for negative jussive verbs and -oot for negative imperative verbs. Note also that negative relative verbs have the same accent pattern as adjectives, for example, muccúr-u ‘clean-NOM’, muccur-ú ‘clean-ACC’ vs. it-úmb-u ‘eat-REL.NEG-NOM’, it-umb-ú ‘eat-REL.NEG-ACC’ (Treis 2008: 170). It can be seen that in negative relatives the accent is not necessarily on the final syllable of relative verbs.

Some African languages also use polarity-based special verb forms. In Efik (Niger-Congo), relative clauses are normally introduced by one of the complementizers emì/èke. Positive relative verbs have the suffix -de, for example, èke di-de ‘who came’ (Welmers 1973: 432). Negative relative verbs do not have the suffix -de, but use special person markers for the negative auxiliary, for example, mmi- for 3rd persons, instead of the expected *ima- or *imi-, as in emì mmi-ike di-ge ‘who didn’t come’ (Welmers 1973: 434). On the contrary, polarity rarely, if ever, plays a role in non-Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses: Wu 2011 did not mention any such languages.

3.3.3 Position-based. The third major type of Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses uses special verb forms according to the position relativized on, often subject vs. non-subject.

Qimant and Xamtanga use two series of relative verbs: subject forms and oblique (i.e. non-subject) forms. Polarity plays a role, too. According to Appleyard (1975: 337-339), in Qimant positive subject relative clauses, the 1st and 2nd persons have only the masculine marker in singular and no gender marker in plural; the 3rd persons have gender and number
markers, but no personal marker. In positive oblique relative clauses, the 1st and 2nd persons have gender and number markers with an optional additional -or marker, but no personal marker; the 3rd persons have gender, number and personal markers. Negative relative verb forms are the same as main verb forms. In Xamtanga (Appleyard 1987: 483-486), positive relative verb forms have no tense/aspect marker. Subject forms have person and number markers for the 1st and 2nd persons and only gender markers for the 3rd persons. Oblique forms have person markers followed by gender markers agreeing with the head noun. Negative relative verb forms show aspect differences and are almost same as main verb forms except for negative subject forms, which lack the enclitic -im. See also Appleyard (2007a: 474) and Wedekink et al. (2008, §455-484) for Bedawi (Cushitic), and Appleyard (2007b, §3.6.2) for Bil (Cushitic).

Other African languages also use special verb forms according to the position relativized on. This is true for Bantu languages in particular. In the literature a distinction is often made between subject (or direct) relative clauses and non-subject (or indirect) relative clauses (Doke 1954, Zeller 2004, Henderson 2007, Letsholo 2009, L. Downing et al. 2010).

Among prenominal-relative languages, Turkic languages and Quechuan languages use different verb forms according to the diachonomy subject vs. non-subject. For example, in Cuzco Quechua, the -q-marked form is used in subject relatives and the -sqa-/na-marked forms (with possessive markers) in non-subject ones (Lefebvre & Muysken 1988:166-167):

(109) *hamu-sha-q runa*
     come-PROG-GEN man
     ‘the man who is coming’

(110) *riku-sqa-y warma*
     see-PTCP-1SG.POSS girl
     ‘the girl that I saw’

(111) *paqarin rima-na-yki runa*
     tomorrow speak-PTCP-2SG.POSS man
     ‘the man that you will be speaking to tomorrow’

See Kornfilt (1997, §1.1.2.3) for similar structures in Turkish.

### 3.4 Summary

The above presentation shows that Ethiopian prenominal-relative languages exhibit great diversity and complexity, seen from inside, among the languages themselves, and from outside, typologically.
Seen from inside, there are three types of relativizers, i.e. linkers, complementizers and zero marking; two kinds of internal realization of the head noun in the relative clause, i.e. gapping and resumption; and three types of relative verb forms, i.e. T/A/M reduction, polarity-based and position-based. There can be even finer distinctions within one category: the polarity-based relative verb forms can be divided into three sub-groups: special positive verb forms, special negative verb forms and special positive and negative verb forms.

Seen from outside, the diversity and complexity of Ethiopian prenominal relatives can also be found in other African languages: linkers seem to exist only in African languages, and polarity-based relative verb forms are another characteristic of African relatives. However, relatives with these particularities in other languages are almost all postnominal. It is only in the Ethiopian Language Area that so many languages with prenominal relatives are found. Ethiopian prenominal relatives differ from prenominal relatives in non-African languages to a great extent: as seen in the comparison of prenominal in Wu 2011, Ethiopian prenominal relatives are the only prenominal relatives which use linkers and polarity-based relative verb forms. The massive use of resumptive pronouns in Ethiopian prenominal relatives also challenges the traditional generalization that resumption is rare in prenominal relatives.

The best words to characterize Ethiopian prenominal relatives, then, are diversity and complexity.

4. Language contact and language evolution

Given the diversity and complexity of Ethiopian prenominal relatives, one question, among many others, is worth asking: are Ethiopian prenominal relative clauses more similar to African relative clauses or to other prenominal relatives? In other words, which factors play a more important role in Ethiopian prenominal relativization: regional factors or typological ones?

On the one hand, certain properties, such as linkers and polarity-based relative verb forms, bring Ethiopian prenominal relatives closer to African relative clauses. However, other properties differentiate Ethiopian prenominal relatives from African relatives, especially in that Ethiopian relatives are prenominal, contrary to the location of relative clauses in almost all other documented African languages. Thus it seems that Ethiopian prenominal relatives share properties both with African relative clauses and other prenominal relative clauses, and meanwhile differ from African relative clauses and non-Ethiopian prenominal relatives. All these may be better considered from a diachronic point of view.

It is well-known that languages never change in a haphazard manner in the long term. Otherwise, theories of grammaticalization would not have been possible and there would not be common patterns of cross-linguistic grammaticalization. Languages in a language area are isolated to the extent that the pressure from language contact is so strong that even linguistic universals may have to yield. Nonetheless, given that languages are part of human cognition, language universals reflect the cognitive system common to all humans. Thus pressure from
language contact – regional factors – and human cognition – typological factors – surfaces as conflict between regional traits and typology. In my opinion, it is impossible to foresee which structural properties can surface under language contact and through language evolution. Analysis on given structural features can be undertaken only on a case-by-case basis.

The first concern is the prenominal position of Ethiopian relatives. It has been almost universally accepted that Ethiopic Semitic languages have undergone extensive influence from Cushitic (Leslau 1945, 1952, Bach 1970, Little 1974, Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 133-135, Tosco 2000). Word order change is one of the contact-induced changes and one of the easiest structural properties to borrow (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 88, Thomason 2001: 69-71, Winford 2003). Leslau 1945 included the word order [relative-noun] in Amharic as a contact-induced change from Cushitic. Givón 1971 also argued in favor of the historical change in syntax \[\text{noun-modifier} \rightarrow \text{modifier-noun}\]. The question still remains whether the appearance of prenominal relative clauses in Ethiopic Semitic languages can be due to direct borrowing or later evolution.

The hypothesis of later evolution after the appearance of OV order is attractive, but problematic, because what is typologically valid is prenominal relative clause \(\rightarrow\) OV, but not *OV \(\rightarrow\) prenominal relatives (“unidirectional correlation” in Dryer (2007: 96)); according to the statistics of WALS, out of 691 languages, 109 (i.e. 15.77%) have OV and prenominal relatives and 96 (i.e. 13.89%) have OV and postnominal relatives; and out of 638 languages, 92 (i.e. 14.42%) have OV and prenominal relatives and 72 (i.e. 11.29%) have OV and postnominal relatives. The difference (i.e. 15.77% vs. 13.89%, and 14.42% vs. 11.29%) is not statistically significant. Languages with OV order have almost the same probability of having prenominal relatives or postnominal relatives. In other words, a language could quite preserve its \[\text{noun-relative}\] order (i.e. postnominal relatives) even after having adopted OV from other languages. Furthermore, not all Cushitic languages have the \[\text{relative-noun}\] order (i.e. prenominal relatives), because most of the East Cushitic languages use postnominal modifiers in general (Tosco 2003: 90). For example, Arbore (D. Hayward 1984, §5.7) and Tsamai (Savà 2005, §4.2) have only postnominal relative clauses in spite of their OV order. It is possible that the Highland East Cushitic group may have played a more important role in this word order change (Tosco 1994: 416), because prenominal relative clauses are found in Highland East Cushitic group in general while the Lowland East Cushitic group has almost exclusively postnominal relatives, except Afar (Simeone-Senell 2008) and Baiso (Tosco 1994: 429) in Ethiopia, and Saho in Eritrea (Tosco 2003: 90). Tosco (1994: 426) suggests that the prenominalization of relative clauses in East Cushitic languages resulted from the grammaticalization of a cleft construction where the copula was reinterpreted as an agreement marker.

The same evolution might have happened in Ethiopic Semitic languages. Possibly, Omotic languages have also influenced Ethiopian Semitic languages, because Omotic languages have a
more thorough-going verb-final pattern than Semitic languages (R. Hayward 2003: 244)\(^5\). It may not be impossible that prenominalization of relatives may have been only an indirect contact-induced change, that is, OV order was adopted first and triggered other word-order changes, which later triggered relative-noun order change. Once more, it seems difficult to find factual arguments in favor of or against this hypothesis.

Besides the question of prenominalization of relative clauses, the origin of relativizers (i.e. linkers, complementizers and zero marking) and the origin of relative verb forms are also interesting questions, though much less studied. One may assume that Baiso, Dime and Haro linkers result from language contact, but the opposite hypothesis, i.e. the one of genetic heritage, is also reasonable. Only linguistic data, which are quite sparse on Ethiopian languages, will serve to decide the issue. Geography, history and demography must also be taken into consideration. These approaches go beyond the scope of this study, and thus cannot be developed further here. It is difficult to retrace diachronic evolution of structural properties. More importantly, structural features can be transferred from one language to another through language contact. Little’s (1974: 267) remark seems still to hold: “[t]he precise source of the Cushitic influence is still very much in question and will probably remain so since very little information is available concerning the linguistic geography of ancient Ethiopia”.

5. Conclusion

This study concentrated on three features of prenominal relative clauses in Ethiopian languages: types of relativizers, internal realization of the head noun and relative verb forms. The presentation on each point led us recurrently to the conclusion of the tension between regionalism and typology. Diachronically speaking, this situation is largely due to language contact and grammaticalization. However, it was also shown how difficult it is to track down structural properties to their origins. Future studies on historical documents and description on other less known languages may shed light on these unanswered questions.

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\(^5\) The substratum may be Omotic, if one attempts “to speculate about the cause of the [Highland East Cushitic] word order shift, … [i.e.,] contact from the neighboring rigid SOV Omotic languages” (Tosco 1994: 437).
Abbreviations

1, 2, 3, …: noun class (after NC)  LINK: linker
1: first person  LOC: locative
2: second person  M: masculine
3: third person  MID: middle voice
A/N: absolutive/nominative  NC: noun class
ABS: absolutive  NEG: negative
ACC: accusative  NOM: nominative
AFFIRM: affirmative  NONSUBJ: non-subject
ANT: anterior  O1(SG)(F): object first person (singular)
ART: article  (feminine)
AUX: auxiliary  OBJ: object
CAUS: causative  OBL: oblique
CL: classifier  PASS: passive
COMP: complementizer  PAST: past tense
COP: copula  PC: personal clitic
DAT: dative  PERF: perfect(ive)
DECL: declarative  PL: plural
DEF: definite  POSS: possessive
DEM: demonstrative  PRES: present tense
EPEN: epenthetic vowel  PROG: progressive
ERG: ergative  PTCPL: participle
F: feminine  REL.V: relative verb form
FOC: focus  REL: relativizer
FUT: future tense  S1(SG)(F): subject first person (singular)
GEN: genitive  (feminine)
GER: gerund  SG: singular
IMPERF: imperfect(ive)  SUBJ: subject
INACC: inaccusative  T/A/M: tense-aspect-mood
INF: infinitive  TN: transnumeral
INSTR: instrumental

References


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Appendix: Languages discussed

Afar (Cushitic)                      Kɔɔzime (Niger-Congo)
Alaba-K’abeena (Cushitic)           Khoekhoe (Khoisan)
Amharic (Semitic)                   Korean (Isolate)
Anuak (Nilo-Saharan)                Kunama (Nilo-Saharan)
Arabic (Semitic)                    Kwegu (Nilo-Saharan)
Arbore (Cushitic)                   Kyirong Tibetan (Sino-Tibetan)
Argobba (Semitic)                   Laze (Kartvelian)
Babungo (Niger-Congo)               Majang (Nilo-Saharan)
Baiso (Cushitic)                    Male (Omotic)
Basque (Isolate)                    Mandarin (Sino-Tibetan)
Bedawiyet (Cushitic)                Marathi (Indo-European)
Berta (Nilo-Saharan)                Mari (Uralic)
Bilen (Nilo-Saharan)                Me’en (Nilo-Saharan)
Burmese (Sino-Tibetan)              Mina (Chadic)
Chaha Sebat Bet Gurage (Semitic)    Murle (Nilo-Saharan)
Cuzco Quechua (Quechan)             Nara (Nilo-Saharan)
Dime (Omotic)                       Ngemba (Niger-Congo)
Dirasha (Cushitic)                  Nuer (Nilo-Saharan)
Dizzi (Omotic)                      Qimant (Cushitic)
Dolakha Newar (Sino-Tibetan)        Saho (Cushitic)
Efik (Niger-Congo)                  Sidamo (Cushitic)
Evenki (Altaic)                     Silt’e (Semitic)
Gamo (Omotic)                       Suri (Nilo-Saharan)
Gumuz (Nilo-Saharan)                Tigré (Semitic)
Harar Oromo (Cushitic)              Tigrigna (Semitic)
Harari (Semitic)                    Tsamai (Cushitic)
Haro (Omotic)                       Tswana (Niger-Congo)
Hausa (Chadic)                      Turkana (Nilo-Saharan)
Ijo (Niger-Congo)                   Turkish (Altaic)
Inor (Semitic)                      Wolaytta (Omotic)
Kambaata (Cushitic)                 Xamtanga (Cushitic)
Kannada (Dravidian)                 Yoruba (Niger-Congo)
Kanuri (Nilo-Saharan)               Zaysete (Omotic)