

Predicative Possession in Amharic (Ethiosemitic)

Abstract

The existential verb *all-* ‘there is/exists’ is the regular possessive predicator attaching subject and object agreement suffixes in Amharic, and the action verbs *jaz* ‘to hold’ and *akabt* ‘to abound’ also convey possession in their grammaticalized senses. This paper aims to describe typology of possessive predications in the language under Heine’s (1997) and Stassen’s (2009) typological frameworks having informant consultation, online corpus and limited introspection as the major data sources. The verb *all-* ‘there is/exist with subject agreement only shows locational proximity in figure-ground relations whereas its subject and object indexes refer to the possessive use. However, the POSR subject co-referenced by the object agreement on the verb displays a notorious mismatch and the POSR tends to be originally the fronted object argument that is probably developing subject properties over time. The action verbs *jaz-* ‘to catch’ and *akabt* ‘to abound’ in their extended possessive uses mainly refer to temporary and permanent senses of possession respectively. The body part relations are often realized in external possession constructions where the POSR with accusative/dative case occurs with the POSM as the locational adjunct or the unaccusative POSR occurs with the POSM object. In incorporating structure also, the POSM as part of the verb or the predicate adjective takes the POSR as an object argument in the same predicate type.

Key words: possession, typology, predicative, description, interpretation