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in Amharic and Geez

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This dissertation is about non-verbal predication - i.e., propositions where the main predicate is an NP, an AP or a PP - in two Ethiopian Semitic languages, Amharic and Geez. Concentrating on copular clauses, I examine several phenomena such as agreement, predicate selection, case-marking system, presence and absence of a copula as well as verbal and non-verbal copulas.

I provide a syntactic analysis for Amharic and Geez copular clauses that explains these variations. The difference between the copular elements in terms of their agreement system and type of predicate they show up with is argued to be due to the fact that they are of different types of verbs - personal and impersonal on the one hand and subject-raising and possessor-raising on the other hand - suggesting the presence of more than one BE in these languages. Regarding, the verbal/non-verbal distinction between Geez copular elements, it is argued that the latter are used for inherent predication as opposed to the former, which indicate tense and aspect. Regarding copulaless clauses in Geez, it is claimed that they are also full clauses. To analyze case-marking of NP and APs, I argue nominative should be treated as the absence of case, whereas accusative is assigned by a functional head in the small clause, whose semantic contribution is to indicate eventivity.

The dissertation will be of interest to anyone working on Semitic languages, non-verbal predication, copular clauses, raising, agreement and case-marking.

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Netherlands
Graduate
School of
Linguistics

Utrecht Institute of Linguistics OTS

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Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap

Netherlands
Graduate
School of
Linguistics