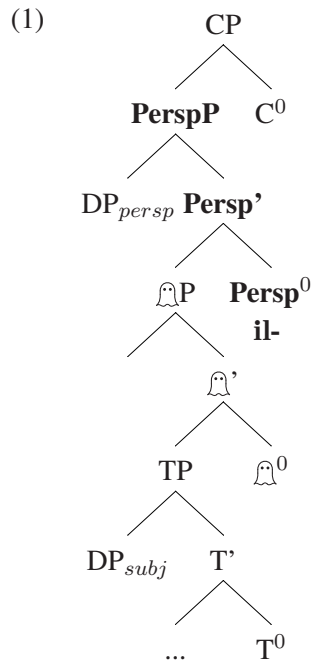


Tigrinya attitude reports: arguments for syntactic perspective

Carolyn Spadine, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

Overview This talk presents novel data from Tigrinya (Semitic) for a perspectival projection (“PerspP”, as pictured in (1)) in the left periphery of the clause. Previous works (Speas 2004, Sundaresan 2016, and others) have argued that such a projection is necessary to account for morphosyntactic phenomena that is sensitive to discourse and pragmatic factors, such as evidentiality marking, indexical shift, and perspectival anaphora. However, the existing proposals that make use of this projection extrapolate its existence from indirect factors, like auxiliary choice, agreement, and binding. Tigrinya can realize this projection overtly; the head Persp⁰ is spelled out as **il-**, and introduces a perspective holder argument in the specifier of PerspP.



The construction under discussion also has the novel property of allowing indexical shift in root clauses. If indexical shift relies on a semantic property of the matrix verb in shifty construction (as proposed in (Ludwig et al. 2009) for Matses), this would be unexpected. Instead, this data suggests that indexical shift is a property of certain types of *clauses*, and the compatibility or incompatibility of certain verb classes with shifty embedded clauses is the result of selectional restrictions on clause size, rather than the particular semantics of those verbs.

il- clauses Example (2) illustrates an attitude report construction in Tigrinya. On first glance, it appears to have a matrix verb, **il-**, introducing a speaker, *birhane*, and embedding a clause with indexical shift. Under that view, (2) is unsurprising. However, **il- is not a verb**, as it fails to pattern like true verbs in Tigrinya. First, **il-** is morphologically invariant for TAM. Further, it cannot be negated, take any kind of temporal modification, or be modified by adverbs. Finally the main verb in (2), *fetij-ej-o* uses a vocalic template otherwise constrained to root clauses.

Given that **il-** is not a verb, properties of (2) are surprising: how does this construction get the semantics of an attitude report? What introduces the “speaker” argument, *birhane*? How is indexical shift available without an overt verb? One might posit that constructions like (2) feature a null matrix verb, but this is incompatible with both the inability of the saying event to be modified and evidence from embedded uses of **il-** clauses, discussed in more detail below. Likewise, this cannot be a quotative construction, as extraction out of the clause and question readings of in-situ wh- words are possible.

(2) *birhane_i ane_i neti muvi fetij-ej-o il-u* **Analysis** Instead, I propose that the translation given for these sentences in (2) is deceptive (despite being the most intuitive translation for native speakers); there is no saying event, but instead an argument that indicates who the reported information originates from (e.g. *According to Birhane, he liked the movie.*)

In (2), **il-** heads a perspectival projection in the left periphery of the sentence that introduces an overt perspectival nominal. To account for indexical shift in these clauses, there must be a monster operator ($\hat{\mathbb{P}}$), following (Schlenker 1999), (Shklovsky&Sudo 2014) below **il-** that shifts the interpretation of indexicals to the perspective of the argument introduced by **il-**. In (2), the embedded subject stays under the scope of the monster operator and is realized as first-person pronoun *ane*.

(3) $[_{CP} [_{PerspP} \text{Birhane}_i [_{\hat{\mathbb{P}}} [_{TP} \text{ane}_i \text{neti muvi fetijejo } T^0] \hat{\mathbb{P}}^0] \text{il-a}] C^0]$

The perspectival projection is high enough in the structure that normal agreement and case assignment are unchanged; the main verb, *fetijejo*, shows agreement with its subject, *ane*, rather than the highest argument in the clause. That this clause bears root morphology is unsurprising, if it is a monoclausal construction, but

unexpected if there is a null verb of saying embedding the overt clause.

Predictions for embedded *il-* clauses Clauses like (2) can be embedded under attitude report verbs in Tigrinya, as in (4). The properties of (4) are similar to those in (2): indexical shift and root morphology on the verb embedded verb. This is not typical of embedded clauses in Tigrinya, as illustrated by (5), which is a more generally available embedding strategy.

(4) birhane_i ane_i neti muvi fetij-ej-o il-u nəgir-u-ni embedded *il-* clause
 birhane 1S DET movie like-1S.S-3MS.O *il*-3MS tell-3MS.S-11.O [✓shifting, ✓root morph.]

Birhane_i told me that he_i liked the movie

(5) birhane_i əssu_i neti muvi kəməzə-fetəj-uw-o nəgir-u-ni embedded *kəməzə-* clause
 birhane 3MS DET movie COMP-like-3MS.S-3MS.O tell-3MS.S-1S.O [X shifting, X root morph.]

Birhane_i told me that he_i liked the movie

Unlike the root *il-* sentence in (2), (4) does not have an extra overt nominal argument, as *birhane* is an argument of the verb (or a v^0). However, Tigrinya is *pro*-drop language more generally, so it is unsurprising that *il-* can introduce a covert *pro* argument in (4), giving it the structure in (6):

(6) [Birhane [_{CP} [_{PerspP} *pro*_i [_{NP} [ane_i neti muvi fetijejo] \bar{A}^0] *il-u*] C⁰] nəgiruni]

This proposal predicts that the *pro* argument could be realized overtly, even when *il-* is embedded under another verb.

(7) kidane əssu ane nəfoŋ ij-e il-u jə-amin (8) *kidane əssu ane nəfoŋ ij-e il-u
 kidane 3MS 1S smart COP-1S *il*-3MS 3-believe kidane him I smart COP-1S *il*-3MS
Kidane believes that he is smart *Int: Kidane says that he is smart*

This prediction is borne out in (7); *kidane* is the subject argument of “believe”, the matrix verb; the pronoun *əssu* “he” is the argument of *il-*; and the indexical-shifted *ane* “I” is the argument of the embedded predicate “smart”. If the matrix verb is removed, this configuration is no longer licit (8), as there are three nominals and only two licensors. Furthermore, since there is no necessary connection between the matrix subject of an attitude verb and the perspectival argument in its complement, *il-* should be able to introduce an argument unrelated to the matrix subject, which is born out in (9), where the matrix subject is *hiwet* and the perspective holder is *naomi*, further supporting the proposal that *il-* is a overt head of a perspectival projection that introduces a perspectival argument.

(9) hiwet naomi beylul məmber gəziʔ-a il-a nəgir-at-ina
 hiwet naomi beylul chair buy-3FS.S *il*-3FS say-3FS-1P

Hiwet told us that Naomi said that Beylul bought a chair

Binding predictions As in many languages with indexical shift ((Shklovsky&Sudo 2009), (Podobryaev 2014)), subjects in otherwise shifty clauses can be unshifted if they move out of the scope of the monster operator, and in this high position, unshifted subjects must be realized as anaphors if they are bound by the matrix subject. Tigrinya does not generally allow cross-clausal binding (hence the coreference in (5)), but the anaphor *baʔal-u* is required in (10) for the embedded subject to corefer with the matrix subject.

(10) birhane_i (əssu_i/*pro*_i) baʔal-u_i neti muvi fetij-uw-o il-u jə-amin
 birhane 3MS self-3MS the movie like-3MS.S-3MS.O *il*-3M 3-believe

Birhane believes that he liked the movie

This is true whether or not the perspectival argument of *il-* is overt. Cross-clausal binding between *birhane* and *baʔal-u* would be unexpected, but local binding between *əssu/pro* and *baʔal-u* is predicted. That an anaphor is licensed when the perspectival argument is covert suggests that it is still syntactically active despite being unpronounced. One of the major factors that lead (Speas 2004), (Sundaesan 2016) to posit covert perspectival elements is strikingly similar binding facts in other languages; that the perspectival argument in Tigrinya can also be overtly realized shows that such proposals are on the right track.