Competition for case assignment and agreement -- a study on the causee and indirect objects of Amharic

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1 Introduction

Even if there are very few systematic investigations of the matter so far (to the best of my knowledge), the status of causee arguments in causative constructions is quite fascinating for many reasons. First, unlike the prototypical arguments, the causee arguments are always optional. In many languages which mark their their causatives with morphologically, such as Hindi, Japanese, Oromo and Amharic, the overt presence of the causee is consistently optional. The causee arguments do their job of causing the event under their covert status (just like the subjects of pro-drop languages). Secondly, causee arguments in many languages display the properties of both arguments and adjuncts. While the instrumental cases they usually receive, and their optionality put them in par with prototypical adjuncts, their agentive semantics tells something different about them –argumenthood. Causee arguments also have marked similarities with indirect objects, syntactic objects themselves are suspect of both argumenthood and adjuncthood. In languages such as Japanese and Tigrinya, for example, the causee arguments act as prototypical indirect objects by receiving dative case.

Amharic causee arguments also have interesting properties. While instrumental and dative case marking are quite common for causee arguments across languages of the world, causee arguments in Amharic can also come with accusative case[1].

What is specially interesting about the accusative case marking is not the fact that the arguments come up with uncommon case marking for the causee arguments per se, rather the effect of the case marking invokes on the verbal agreements. In this paper, I will attempt to investigate the syntactic properties of causee arguments in Amharic causative constructions. Juxtaposing them with middle and theme arguments, I will argue that all these periphrastic arguments can receive a unified analysis. Putting the causee argument in to the picture, I will argue, Baker's (2012) recent analysis of the internal arguments in Amharic is on the right track, specially for the case markings, but insufficient to capture all the agreement facts. I will argue that the syntactic (relative) position of the arguments, countering his point, is crucial for the agreement of the internal and causee arguments.

But, before getting into the details on how causee arguments behave in the language, I will flesh out the general properties of causatives constructions in the language. For that end, I will first describe the basic patterns of morphological causativization. Relying on the currently availably literature, I will then develop a simple sketch of how the causative constructions fit into the clausal fseq. And, finally, I will concentrate on the

[1] In some other languages, such as Malayalam, for example, the case marking of the causee makes a clear-cut distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. In the causativization of intransitive verbs, the causee seems to function as object. In transitive verbs, on the other hand, the causee functions as an adjunct by receiving instrumental case.

main purpose of the paper and argue for a specific syntactic position for causee arguments using evidences from agreement and locality.

2 The empirical facts

Causativity can be encoded in two ways in Amharic–either with overt material or without it.

2.1 Lexical causatives:

Like most of English words, many Amharic verbs carry causative interpretation with no overt causative marking. Verbs like *gädälä* ('kill') and *chäräsä* ('finish') and many others do not require any over marking to encode causation.

2.2 Morphological Causatives:

Amharic has two causative prefixes each standing for external and internal causation.

The internal causative marker A: The internal causative marker *a* (also called direct causative) is a transitivizer element; its main task is to convert the intransitive verbs into transitive. The internal causative marker *a* is one of the most productive morphemes in the language. Its distribution is mostly straightforward. It occurs on non-agentive (intransitive) verbs and turn them to agentive/causative/transitive.

(1) wät't'a → awät't'a
go down → down

(2) mät't'a → amät't'a
come(int) → bring(tr)

(3) KälaTä → aKälät't'ä
melt(int) → melt(tr)

Almost all unaccusative and majority of intransitive verbs can be turned into transitive by prefixing *a*[2] .

[2]Anticausatives and passives are also overly marked by a prefix *ta*- eg. tä-fälla. The anticausative (passive) and causative markers can not co-occur on the same stem

The external causative marker AS:The external causative is mainly related to the arguments of the predicates, rather than the verbs per se. It gives a sense of indirect causing– the external argument (the agent) causes or forces somebody else to do some event (action) on the patient. The distribution of the external causative marker is more varied than the the internal causative marker. It occurs on agentive (transitive) as well as non-agentive (intransitive) stems[3].

(4) as-wät't'a
AS-go out
'cause sb to go out'

(5) as-mät't'a
AS-came
'cause sb to come/bring'

(6) as-gäddälä
AS-kill
'cause sb to kill/be killed'

To make the semantic difference between the two causative markers, let's now compare the derivatives of the two morphomes on a a single unaccusative verb: *mät't'a*.

(7) Kasa mät't'a
Kasa came
'Kasa came'

(8) Kasa däbdabe-u-n a-mät't'a
Kasa letter-Def-Acc A-came
'Kasa bring the letter'

(9) Kasa däbdabe-u-n as-mät't'a
Kasa letter-Def-Acc AS-came
'Kasa have someone bring the letter'

The first sentence in (7) is headed by a plain unaccusative verb. When the internal causative marker *a* attaches on the verb in (8) the verb functions as transitive. It forces one more argument into the derivation. The verb in (9) is different from the one in (8) because of the fact that the latter is marked by the external causative AS. From the suface, the external causative marker doesn't seem to introduce additional argument further from the internal causativizer. We still have the external argument *Kasa* and the

[3]Abbreviations: Acc=accusative; Appl=applicative; Def=definite; 1=first person; 2= second person; 3=third person; Fem= Feminine; pl=plural; s=singular;IO=indirect object; M=masculine; O=object; S=subject; Ben=Benifactive; Foc=focus

internal argument *däbdabe-u*. But, from the meaning of the sentences, it is clear that the latter one has one more implicit argument. The implicit argument functions as intermediator between the direct object (the book) and the external argument (Kasa). This argument is what is known as causee argument in the literature[4]. Even if a prototypical causee argument remains implicit, as in the above example, it can also occur overtly, as in the following example.

(10) Kasa bä-tämari-oçç-u däbdabe-u-n as-mät't'a
Kasa by-student-pl-Def letter-Def-Acc AS-came
'Kasa have the letter by the students'

3 Setting the ground: the syntax of causatives

In this section, I will flesh out some of the crucial theoretical grounds that need to be set for proper analysis of the causative construction, and ultimately the causee argument. Thinking about the syntax of causative constructions, the first question that comes to one's mind is whether they introduce their own clause or not. In the following sections, I will briefly summarize some of the reasons to think of Amharic causatives as mono-clausal or bi-clausal. The number of clauses that causatives introduce is important because it directly affects the analysis we will propose finally. I will then move on the position of the causative construction in the VP fseq.

3.1 Bi-clausal or monoclausal?

It is well-known that causative constructions have exceptionally double-facet nature when it comes to event structure. Unlike regular transitive predicates that introduce one event connecting the single external argument to the single internal argument, causatives force two or more (external) arguments on a single internal argument. In some languages, the bi-clausality of causative constructions seems very obvious as the causatives themselves are introduced by full-fledged predicates which support their own VP domains in non-causative environments. The case of the English causative verbs such as "make" and "cause" can be sited as example for this. Even if the causative *made* comes in conjunction with another lexical verb *kiss* (like all other causatives) in a sentence like *John made Mary kiss the elephant*, the causative verb still can have its own full sentence structure: as, *John made a box*. Unless one is in a position deny the relation of two instances of *made*, which seems an untenable position, then, the assumption that *made* has clause of its own in both instances is a reasonable line of thinking. For languages which mark causation

[4]There is a confusion on terminology in the literature. Some people use the term causee to mean the intermediator argument, while others use it to mean the patient (the internal argument of the verb). I will preserve the term *causee* for the intermediate argument, and use *patient* or *caused* for the internal argument.

by inflectional items, however, things are more complex than the case in English. There are a number of both evidences and counter-evidences to take causative constructions in agglutinative languages as bi-causal Harley (2006), Baker (1988). Here, I will briefly present some of those evidences for Amharic causatives.

3.1.1 Reasons to think of causative constructions as bi-clausal

Generally speaking, causatives encode double events; events that the causer caused and the causee did (is caused to do). There are of course a few evidences in Amharic that the events are actually two. I will present two of them:

Negative polarity items: scope over either or both of the events.

(11) Almaz-n manim al-as-gäräff-ä-at-im
Almaz-Acc nobody Neg-AS-whip-3msS-3mfO-Foc

Thinking of the passive[5] causative, there are two reading for this sentence:

- nobody whipped Almaz or,
- she has been whipped, but, nobody caused it (it just happened by the initiation of the agent him/herself)

This shows that the scope of the negative polarity item is ambiguous. It can scope either only to the caused event or to the causation event.

Manner adverbs: : the manner adverbs can raise ambiguities just like the negative polarity items.

(12) Kasa Aster-n bäfitnät't' as-mät't'at
Kasa Aster-Acc fast AS-come-3msS-3fsO
'Kasa make Aster come fast'
'Kasa fastly make Aster come'

In the above example, it is possible to get the meaning of *fast* causation, ie, Kasa was fast to cause the implicit causee to bring Aster; or fast caused event, ie, Kasa caused the event in a way that the causee will bring Aster fast (she will come fast).

[5]When the external causative occurs on transitive verbs, the reading is usually ambigious betweeen passive and active. For the sake of simplicity, I am abstracting away from the meaning that arises from the active causative reading.

3.1.2 Reasons to think of them as mono-clausal

Morpho-phonology:the causative marker AS is part of the morpho-phonoligical component of the verb. In verbal movements (dislocation) as shown in (13), nominalizations, clefting and other syntactic and phonological process, it is quite evident that the prefix is part of the word. The prefix can never go or left behind for movement or any similar syntactic operations. Just to take one example, non-wh questions can be asked by putting the question marker *inde* at the end of the sentence. When the event is under focus, the question mark in combination with the verb can raise to pre-subject position. In this case, the prefix has to raise too.

(13) [as-wät't'-ä-at inde]$_i$ Kasa Aster-n t$_i$?
AS-go-3mS-3fsO R Kasa Aster-Acc
'Did Kasa allow (force) Aster go out?'

(14) *wät't'-ä-at inde Kasa Aster-n as-?

a) **Single tense**: Tense in Amharic is marked only by the auxiliary verb, *naw* for non-past and *näbär* for past. It is not possible to have two independent tense markings for the causative and the lexical verb. Furthermore, if there are time adverbs in the causative constructions, it is not possible to get the reading of different times for the causation and caused events.

(15) Kasa lij-u-n sägno bä-Almaz as-mäkär-ä-w
Kasa son-3msPoss-Acc monday by-Almaz AS-advise-3msS-3msO
'Kasa have his son advised by Almaz on monday'

In whatever syntactic position it appears, the time adverb *segno* ('monday') can modify only the event of the main verb; not the causing. That means, the reading of the time adverbs always goes with the time of the actual event in stead of the time of the causation.

b) **Single case marking** in relation to the tense marking, the causative constructions always have a single nominative case marking in the whole verbal domain. As nominative cause is usually attributed to the finite clauses, having a single of it offers a supporting evidence for the mono-clausal view.

Generally speaking, as all the above points suggest, there is no clear cut evidence that the causatives are mono-clausal or bi-clausal constructions. Most of the syntactic evidences seem to suggest to the mono clausal side while the scope and adverbial interpretations show the bi-clausal causatives[6]. Even if I don't have the space and the expertise to deeply breakdown both possibilities, the decision of the mono-clausal and bi-clausal is

[6] Harley (2006), Folli & Harley (2007) for a similar conclusion for Japanese causatives.

quite crucial. If we consider causatives as bi-clausal constructions, we need a completely different framework– may be a kind of embedding and small clauses kind of analysis. That way, I can for example think of the causee as the subject of small clause, and the the external argument as the subject of the matrix clause. If we think of them as mono clausal, on the other hand, the kind of analysis advocated in Kratzer (1996) and many others follow her will be good enough. In this case, we don't need to think of embedding and matrix clauses; the causatives simply merge in one of the functional projections in the VP (vP or VoiceP). I am not in a position to solve this theoretical problem in here, acknowledging the gravity of the issue and postponing the task for future work, I assume that causative constructions are mono-clausal, following (Ramchand & Svenonius 2006), mainly for three main reasons[7]. First, the causative markers in Amharic and Hindi are quite similar that, I presume, the analysis effectively implemented for one can be extended to the other. Then, look at Ramchand's analysis of the Hindi causatives as mono-clausal makes it highly plausible to implement the same analysis for the Amharic. Secondly, all the previous literature on Amharic causatives unanimously assume the causatives as mono-clausal. Finally, given that the indirect objects are quite similar with the causee argument, as I will show in the following sections, and that the most prominent analyses for the triadic verbs right now is the mono-clausal one, Larson (1988), it seems reasonable to assume causatives too as mono-clausal[8].

3.2 causatives into the clausal fseq

Even though causative constructions are one of the most extensively investigated areas of syntax, there is no consensus on how they fit into the VP fseq. Since Hale and Keyser (1993), it has been customary to introduce different feature assigning heads in the L-syntax (the lexicon, contra to S-syntax, which is supposed to be the narrow syntax) such as CAUSE, DO, BECOME to derive intransitives into transitives, or suppress the transitive/causative to derive the intransitive counterparts. They have shown that the English de-adjective verb *thin* is headed by BE and BECOME when inchoative, and CAUSE when transitive.

(16) the gravy thinnned
the cook thinned the gravy

Amberber has taken Hale and Keyser's idea and applied it to the Amharic causatives. First, he groups Amharic verbs into two classes–Pattern I and Pattern II. Pattern I verbs are basically the unaccusative class. They do not internally imply the transfer of causation from agent to patient. If the event is transitive, the transitivity is to the

[7]The distribution of the causatives in Amharic is strikingly similar to that of Hindi. A unified analysis of the kind suggested in Svenonius (2005) would be quite effectives, I presume.

[8]It is equally interesting actually to notice that triadic verbs have also have been argued to have bi-clausal domain (Kayne 1981, Hoekstra & Sybesma 2004).

subject/agent itself. There may be a causation, but, the causation is not a causation initiated by entity X to inflict it on entity Y. The event rather applies from X to X or not transitive at all. If one says *abebaw fäka* (the flower blossom) it means, it is blossoming by itself or by its own inherent behavior. Blossoming is the property or nature of the flower, and has nobody control over it. Amberber assumes these verb classes to lack causative sub-event from their roots. It is then agentizer head, morphologically realized as *a*, which transforms them to agentive/causative. His Pattern II verbs are basically transitive verbs. The causation of these verbs is transitive from agent entity X to entity Y. As they are inherently agentive verbs, they do not require agentizer marker for transitivity. Some strictly agentive verbs, such *gädälä* (kill) and *gänäba* (build)

From this, he then proposes that the internal causative merges in the L-syntax while the external causative AS merges in the S-syntax. He then argues that the distinction between Pattern I and II verbs is in the fact that the latter group have Causative sub-event as part of their root while the latter get it in the L-syntax.

Recent works, such as Kratzer (1996), Harley (2006), Ramchand (2008), Chomsky (2001) and many others, on the other hand, argued for all causative and inchoative alternations to proceed in the narrow syntax.

The standard analysis of the causatives that goes in line with Kratzers and Chomsky suggests that causativization is achieved by a single causative head, little v (Voice for Kratzer). According to Chomsky (2001), little v is not only the main source of causativization, it is also the source of accusative case assignment. He suggested that the accusative case marking is done by phi-complete v (he marks it as v*). In cases where v is not phi-complete, it will not be assign accusative case to the object, leading to defective case assignment, as in passives, unaccusatives and anticaustives. He suggested that in passives and uncausatives, v is defective that the direct object (patient) receives nominative case from T.

(17) John sank the boat (v, Nom–Acc)
The boat sank (v, Nom)
The boat was sank (by John) (v, Nom)

Following the standard analysis of the VP-fseq and combining the ideas already developed in Demeke (2003), the big functional projection of Amharic VP, for a sentence as (18), looks like the following (fig. 1) tree structure:

(18) Aster Kasa-n iyy-a-mät't'-achi-w näw
Aster Kasa-Acc Perf-CAUS-come-3sfS-3msO is
'Aster is bringing Kasa' (causing/forcing him to come)

As shown in the tree structure, and standardly assumed in the literature, aspect (AspP) is independent of theta role and case assignment. Whether the verb is transitive or

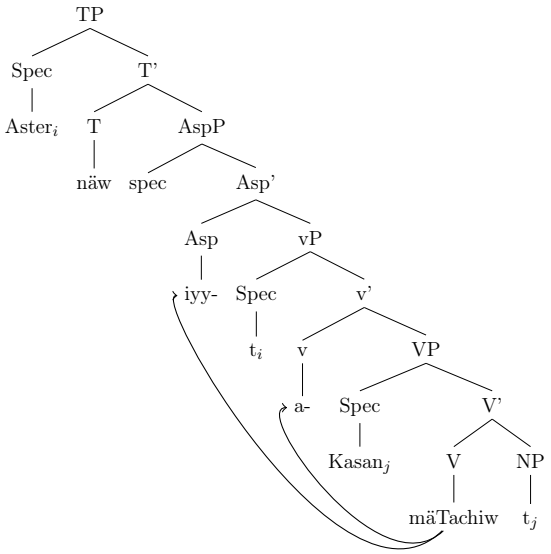

Figure 1: VP fseq according to the standard theory

intransitive, whether it is causative or inchoative, aspect markers can prefix on the verb. The aspect markers are outside of the agentive marker. Tense is represented by the copula, which normally occurs at the end of the whole VP[9]. The most external subject (the causer) has nominative case (morphologically unmarked). By now, it is standard to assume that the nominative case of the subjects is assigned by the Tense head (T) (Chomsky 2001). In this framework, the external argument merges in vP and moves to SpecTP for case assignment.

While the structure we have developed so far gives us a general framework for merging different functional items into the VP fseq, there are still a few problems left. First, the idea of little v has been used in varies senses in different works that it is not clear which of the arguments exactly fit into it. Whether little v and Voice are the same projections with different designations, or different projections, it is not clear from the literature. From the sprite of Kratzer's and Chomsky's works, it seems that the two projections actually are the same— a projection where the prototypical agent subject merges in. In other works these projections have been connected to other notions; and other syntactic positions as applicative phrase (ApplP) have been used to in place of little v (Kim 2011). That is, all the three projections such as VoiceP, ApplP and vP have been confusingly used to represent causatives/agentives.

[9]Hence, if we have to follow the Kenian Antisymetric style of derivation, a further raising of the whole AspP will be necessary to get the position of the copular right.

Fortunately enough, to alleviate the confusion emerging from the litrature, (Pylkkänen 2008), recently, come up with a better and more elaborated system for introducing arguments into the VP fseq. She, also Kim (2011) for follow up, has proposed about seven layers of functional projections that introduce arguments.

Voice [Phrase-selecting Cause[Verb selecting Cause [Root selecting Cause [Low Source appl [Low recipient appl [High Applicative]]]]]]

According to this framework, Voice is the projection where the external argument merges; while Cause projections are specifically preserved for causers and causee arguments. SourceAppl and Recipient Appl are dedicated to source and recipient middle arguments respectively.

If we have a sentence as *Mary sent John a letter*, *Mary* merges in Voice projection while the recipient middle argument *John* merges in Low source Appl. For Amharic causative sentence like:

(19) Mary John-n yäkärämä-u-n siga as-bäl-ach-iw
Mary John-Acc old-Def-Acc meat AS-eat-3fsS-3msO
'Mary made John eat the old meat'

the external argument (the causer) *Mary* merges in Voice, while the causee *John* falls into one of the causative (she designates them as vCauseP) projections. That is, she has different flavors of applicatives merging below the causative domain; while the external argument is above both the applicatives and causatives.

This is a more refined and better system for it eschews confusion between the little v and Voice heads. Pylkkänen's approach to the voice and causative projection that the two head their own projection is also friendly to decompositional approaches advocated in (Ramchand 2008) and (Borer 2005).

> I would like to propose that while Cause and Voice are separate pieces in the universal inventory of functional heads, they can be grouped together into a morpheme in the lexicon of a particular language. In such a language, Voice and Cause form a feature bundle similar to the one formed by Tense and Agreement in languages that do not have a split Infl.
>
> (Pylkkänen 2008, pp. 99)

Hence, I will follow her framework, and assume that the external argument (causer) always merges in Voice while the Causee merges in the Causative domains. For languages such as English, the causative and the external argument (theta-role) can be assumed span together and lexicalize as a single item, while in languages such as Amharic and Japanese, they head independent projections. Applying her approach, then, the more refined Amharic TP looks like the following:

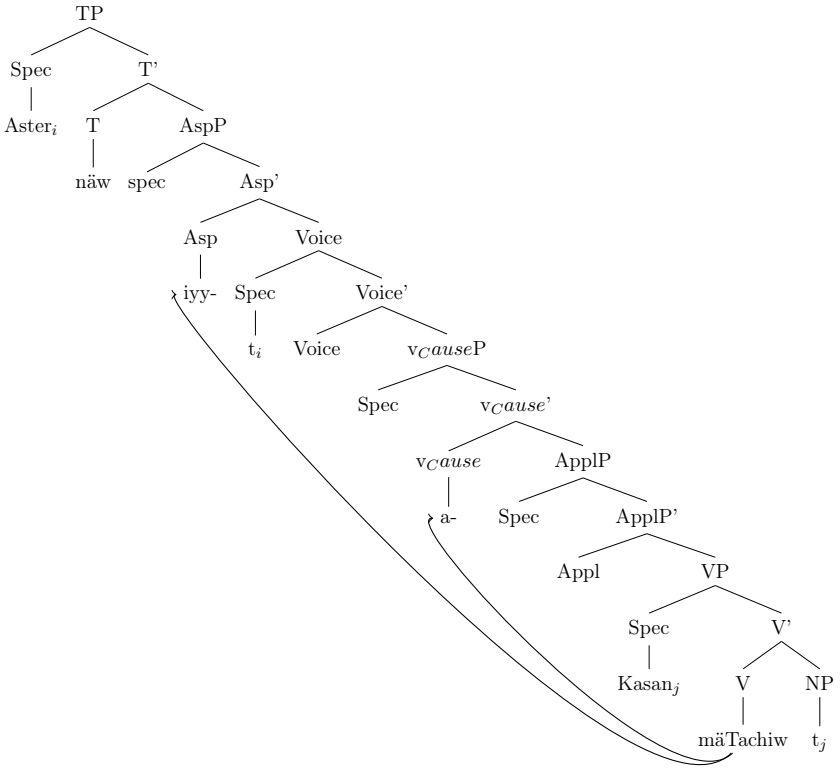

Figure 2: VP fseq according to Pylkkänen (2008)

Introducing two independent heads for the external argument (causer) and the argument of the causative (cause) makes the system cleaner than the standard analysis. I will then base my analysis on this structure.

4 The position of the causee

In the above sections, I have attempted to fit causatives into the basic architecture of the VP fseq. In this section, I will focus on the main agenda of the paper– the syntactic position of cuasee arguments.

What is the standard generative syntax say about the position of causee arguments?

I will start from what (Ramchand 2011) calls the standard ("traditional") analysis of intermediate agents (causee arguments). Verbs merge with their thematic values, either as transitive or intransitive. The causative morpheme then introduces one further argument as well as an event position.

Causative morpheme: E < Agent, Caused-Event >

When an intransitive verb like *laugh* for example, combines with the causative morpheme, the internal argument of the causative event identifies the event of the embedded verb, and the single argument of the unaccusative verb is marked as direct object.

(20) Lij-u sak'-ä (Amharic)
child-Def laughed-3msS
'the boy laughed'

(21) Kasa lij-u-n as-sak-ä-w (Amharic)
Kasa child-Def-Acc AS-laugh-3msS-3msO
'Kasa make the boy laugh'

(22) bacca hãs-aa (Hindi, Ramchand (2008), pp 55)
child laugh-perf.m
'The child laughed.'

(23) Anjum-ne bacce-ko hãs-vaa-yaa (Hindi, Ramchand (2008), pp 55)
Anjum-erg child-acc laugh-vaa-perf.m
'Anjum made the child laugh'

In the (20) and (22) examples, the external causer is the only agent, and the sole argument of the unaccusative verb as the causee, the causativization marks the arguments of the unaccusative verb as direct object. This process is morphologically evident both in Hindi and Amharic causatives. In these sentences, the experiencer is the syntactic subject.

But, in the other examples, (20) and (23), the experiencer is marked as object due to the introduction of the causative markers.

As the above example shows, the causee is marked by the accusative case. It also triggers object agreement with the verb.
As for the verbs that are already transitive in their lexicon, the literature on Hindi causatives, as reported in Ramchand, further predicts that "The Agent/Causer argument introduced by the causative morpheme is linked to the subject, and any left over argument must be demoted (here, the agent of the embedded verb) and realized as a *-se* marked adjunct". The point here is, as the two important argument positions, the subject and the object are satisfied, any left-over argument should be demoted to adjunct position. This story of demoting extra arguments to adjunct position also gives sense for Amharic causatives because, as in Hind, one of the arguments of the transitive verb can be marked by the instrumental marker and arguably function as an adjunct [10].

(24) Kasa lij-u-n bä-mämhir-it-u as-gäräf-ä-w
Kasa child-Def-Acc (by-teacher-Fem-Def) AS-whip-3msS-3msO
'Kasa have the boy whipped by the female teacher'

The problem with Amharic is on the fact that the causee doesn't have to be instrumental marked, and doesn't have to be optional. Unlike the causee arguments in Hindi and Japanese,(Harley 2006), the causee in Amharic can properly appear like all other arguments, receiving the accusative case and triggering the object agreement on the verb.

(25) Kasa mämhir-it-u-n lij-u-n as-gäräf-ä-at
Kasa teacher-Fem-Def child-Def-Acc AS-whip-3msS-3mfO
'Kasa make the (female) teacher whip the boy'

Now, the questions is, if our argument structure allows only external and internal arguments (which is presumably the reason why demotion happens in Hindi causatives), what is the position of the causee argument in Amharic causatives?

4.1 Causee as oblique argument?

Amharic has a class of arguments which display quirky properties in agreement and case assignment. They are the affectees/experiencer arguments of unaccusative verbs as *t'äfa* ('lost')and psych verbs as *tämämä* ('get sick'). They are quirky because they display the properties of objects even if they are supposed to act like regular subjects (as they are the sole arguments of the predicates).

[10] Ramchand & Svenonius (2006) argues against the adjunction analysis

(26) Astern-n amäm-at
Aster-Acc sick-3fsO
'Aster is sick'

Looking at from the surface, if we take experiencer argument *Aster* in the above sentence, it seems the subject of the sentence as it is the sole argument in the sentence, as well as it appears in a position where prototypical subjects appear in. The agreement and case assignment however shows that the NP is rather more object-like. It is accusative case marked, and triggers object agreement on the verb. Observing this fact (Amberber 1996) argued that the argument is actually the object of the sentence where the external argument is hidden from the overt syntax (Amberber calls it *Ambient causer*, following (Pesetsky 1995)).

? further observed that the goal arguments of triadic verbs as *lakä* ('send'), *sät't'ä* ('give'), *nägärä* ('tell') etc also behave in a similar fashion. He then challenged Amberber's analysis and argue that these arguments can not be like regular objects as they obligatorily trigger agreement, and optionally receive the accusative case (the exact reverse of the regular objects in the language).

"The affectee argument is not like the agent argument of a normal transitive verb in that it triggers object agreement, not subject agreement, and in that it (optionally) bears accusative case. At the same time, it is not like the theme argument of a normal transitive verb in that object agreement with it is obligatory (not optional), and accusative case is optional (not obligatory)".

From this, he then conclude that these arguments are oblique arguments just like Icelandic dative subjects. Stressing their obliqueness, Baker then proposed the existence of a null P projection on these arguments as the main culprit for the mixed property these arguments display. To exactly block these arguments from subject agreement and nominative case, and enable object agreement and accusative case, he caims:

- null headed PPs can not satisfy EPP feature of T
- EPP satisfaction of T is dependent on agreement (ie, an NP that can not satisfy EPP of T can not agree with T)
- The NP arguments inside the PP can not move out of it
- FP has no EPP feature

If these goal/affectee arguments are headed by null PP which cannot satisfy EPP of T, these arguments cannot raise to T and build agreement with it. This assumption effectively blocks the possibility of subject agreement on the verb and nominative case with T. As the FP (the projection that the arguments merge in, also the source of object agreement) is assume to have no EPP feature, raising of the argument doesn't happen. As the PP can not satisfy the EPP feature of the T, a pro argument merges in SpecTP; leaving the argument NP in the lower position to agree only with F.

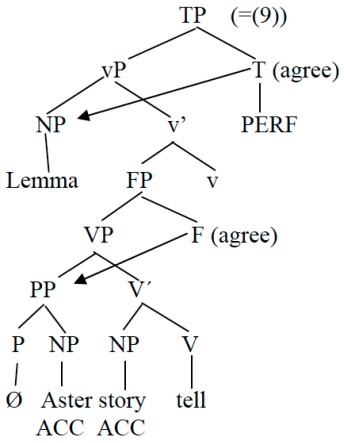

Figure 3: Object agreement according to **?**, pp 26

As shown in the tree structure, the goal argument *Almaz/Aster* is headed by null PP. Hence, it can neither agree nor move to T. It is however close enough to agree with F, the projection which is responsible for the object agreement (Baker assumes F to be distinct from v from the observation that non-agentive verbs can have object agreement in Amharic).

Then, the question is; can Baker's analysis of the goal and affectee arguments directly capture the causee argument? or, in other words, can causee arguments be considered as oblique arguments.

The principal source of Baker's proposal is the observation that affectee and goal arguments tend to display mixed properties of internal and external arguments. Next, I will show that causee arguments are strikingly similar to the goal arguments that Baker analyzed, that a unified analysis is required.

4.2 The causee and other internal arguments

There is a striking similarity between causee arguments and indirect objects of triadic verbs in Amharic.

1. Both the indirect object and the causee can be case marked by a preposition (imparting instrumental for the causative, (27) and genitive[11] for the IO, (28)). Of course, indirect objects and causee are the only arguments that receive case by prepositional marking.

[11]Even if the genitive and instrumental cased markers have different effect on the agreement of the arguments, as genitive case marked indirect object can trigger agreement on the verb while instrumental case marked causee can not, both of them can be considered as prepositions.

(27) Kasa däbdabe-u-n bä-mämhir-it-u as-näbäb-ä-w
Kasa letter-Def-Acc By-teacher-Fem-Def AS-read-3msS-3msO
'Kasa get the letter read by the (female) teacher'

(28) Kasa däbdabe-u-n lä-mämhir-it-u lak-ä-w
Kasa letter-Def-Acc for-teacher-Fem-Def lak-3msS-3msO
'Kasa send the letter to the (female) teacher'

2. When both arguments are marked by the prepositional case markers, the preferred order is after the theme argument ((27) and (28))(compare with 5^{th}).
3. When they are marked by the preposition, they don't block the theme argument from agreeing with the verb (compare with 7^{th})
4. Both the cause and the indirect object can be marked by the regular accusative case marker, in addition to the prepositional one ((29) and (30)).

(29) Kasa mämhir-it-u-n däbdabe-u-n as-näbäb-ä-at (* äw)
Kasa teacher-Fem-Def-Acc letter-Def-Acc AS-read-3msS-3fsO
'Kasa make the (female) teacher read the letter'

(30) Kasa mämhir-it-u-n däbdabe-u-n lak-ä-lat (* äw)
Kasa teacher-Fem-Def-Acc letter-Def-Acc lak-3msS-3fsO
'Kasa send the the (female) teacher a letter'

5. When they are marked by the accusative case, the preferred position for both classes of arguments is before the theme ((29) and (30)).
6. When they are marked by the accusative case,given that no other argument is blocking, they necessarily trigger object agreement on the verb ((29) and (30)).
7. When they are marked by the accusative case, both classes of arguments block the agreement of the theme argument ((29) and (30)).
8. The theme argument can precede both of them (object raising is possible in both cases) without much affecting the agreement paradigm ((31) and (32)).

(31) Kasa däbdabe-u-n mämhir-it-u-n as-näbäb-ä-at (* äw)
Kasa letter-Def-Acc teacher-Fem-Def-Acc AS-read-3msS-3fsO
'Kasa make the (female) teacher read the letter'

(32) Kasa däbdabw-u-n mämhir-it-u-n lak-ä-lat (*äw)
Kasa letter-Def-Acc teacher-Fem-Def-Acc lak-3msS-3fsO
'Kasa send the the (female) teacher a letter'

All these similarities cannot be a matter of coincidence. This opens the possibility for unified analysis for both groups of arguments.

Following Baker's line of reasoning then, the causee can be taken as the NP merging under the null PP. Note at this point that even if Baker is presenting the indirect object merge inside the VP projection, in line with (Larson 1988), he also suggests an alternative position in SpecApplP for other independent reasons[12]. As I have already mentioned, Pylkkänen's (Pylkkänen 2008) research support this higher position for middle arguments [13]. Her theory is specially interesting; unlike all the previous approaches, it predicts distinct syntactic positions for middle and causee arguments. Assuming distinct projections for causee arguments and middle arguments is specially necessary for Amharic, as they still can co-occur in the same VP, even if the two arguments are similar in their syntactic properties.

(33) Aster lij-it-u-n däbdabe-u-n lä-Kasa as-lak-äçç-at
Aster child-Fem-Def-Acc letter-Def-Acc for-Kasa AS-send-3fsS-3fsO
' made the girl send the letter to Kasa'

In this example, *Aster* is the external argument of both the indirect object and the causative construction. *däbdabewun* ('the letter') is the patient; *lij-it-u* ('the girl') is the causee while *Kasa* is the indirect object. The interesting part is the verbal agreement. In all the literature available so far in Amharic literature, the indirect object is assumed as it obligatorily agrees with the verb. As the above example shows,however, the assumption is inaccurate. Whenever the causee merges into the derivation, neither the theme not the middle argument (the indirect object) is able to trigger agreement on the verb.

(34) Aster lij-it-u-n däbdabe-u-n lä-Kasa as-lak-äçç-at (*iw)(*lat)
Aster child-Fem-Def-Acc letter-Def-Acc for-Kasa AS-send-3fsS-3fsO (3msO)(3fsO)
'Aster made the girl send the letter to Kasa'

But, if we remove the causee from the construction (make it silent), both the direct object and the indirect object are able to agree with the verb.

(35) Aster däbdabe-u-n lä-Kasa as-lak-äçç-iw
Aster letter-Def-Acc for-Kasa AS-send-3fsS-3msO
'Aster have the letter sent to Kasa'

[12]He suggested SpecApplP as an alternative posistion for the indirect objects in response to the quetion why only indirect objects (middle arguments) are tend to be oblique arguments. He speculated that only ApplP might support null-headed PPs.

[13]It would also have been interesting to bring Ramchand's (Ramchand & Svenonius 2006, Ramchand 2008, 2011) analysis of Hindi causatives and the general framework of her system into the picture. But, unfortunately, I didn't understand her general system yet. Hence, I decide to keep myself away from it for now.

(36) Aster däbdabe-u-n lä-Kasa as-lak-äçç-lät
Aster letter-Def-Acc for-Kasa AS-send-3fsS-3ms.Ben
'Aster have the letter sent to Kasa'

This competition-based agreement style seems to undermine Baker's project which mainly relies on the arguments' own internal syntax (null PP). As the above examples show, it is not really the syntactic structure of the arguments themselves that determines their agreement; rather the competition they are involved in. If there is a causee argument in the derivation, it tend to trigger agreement on the verb while blocking all other arguments.

How about the instrumental marked causee?

(37) Aster bä-lij-it-u däbdabe-u-n lä-kasa as-lak-äçç-(iw)(lät)(-*at)
Aster by-child-Fem-Def letter-Def-Acc for-Kasa AS-send-3msS-(3msO)(3ms.Ben)
(*3mfO)
'Aster make the girl sent the letter to Kasa'

As expected, whenever the causee is marked by the instrumental, the causee is unable to trigger agreement on the verb. In this case, the two arguments can happily agree with the verb. Note that the instrumental case marker in Amharic is a preposition. This seems to support Baker's hypothesis that prepositions can undermine the agreement of the arguments. But, the problem is that Baker's null PP is designed to allow object agreement while blocking subject agreement, by failing to satisfy the needs of the EPP. If the reason why the middle arguments (affectees and goals) do not trigger subject agreement is because of the failure of the null-headed PP to satisfy the EPP of the T, then, we expect the instrumental causee to trigger object agreement[14]. This is, however impossible as the above example,(37), shows. We then need another explanation why the instrumental causee is failing to agree with the verb while the accusative case marked one is able to agree.

4.3 The proposal

My proposal for the instrumental marked cauee is in line with Rezac (2008) where prepositions are taken to introduce phases, blocking any form of agreement out of the prepositional phrase.

[14]Thinking of Bresnan & Mchombo (1987) claim that anaphoric agreement markers are the arguments themselves; hence, the DP is merely an adjunct in such environments, the object agreement and adjunction facts here, that failure of the adjunct to trigger object agreement, corroborates Baker's another hypothesis– that the object agreement in Amharic is grammatical rather than anaphoric.The validity of that hypothesis is also necessary for the current proposal in this paper, because if the agreement markers are taken as anaphoric, the whole story needs a completely different analysis

As for the competition of the periphrastic arguments to trigger agreement on the object, I propose that locality effect applying at LF is the major culprit.

The relative position of the theme argument and the periphrastic argument doesn't have effect on the verbal agreement. But, as we have seen above, the presence of the causee in the higher position blocks the agreement of the theme and the indirect object. This seemingly contradicting can be solved by devising a locality constraint apply at LF. In addition, I propose two major factors affecting the locality hierarchy at LF:

- the underlying (default) syntactic configuration
- topicalization

The root of locality effect on the syntactic configuration is well-known. Higher elements dominate lower elements in the syntactic hierarchy. But, the syntactic hierarchy by itself is not satisfactory as the above alternations clearly show that being higher in the surface hierarchy doesn't change the game. Therefore, I want to include the notion that the topicalized argument always dominates the non-topicalized arguments at LF, even if their surface structure could be in the reverse order in a similar spirit advanced in Polinsky & Potsdam (2001) . For that end, first, I will establish the fact that it is indeed the topicalized argument that triggers the agreement with the verb. I will then combine the topicalized argument dominating the other argument at LF with the syntactic locality to derive all the required outcomes in the agreement of the causee and other periphrastic arguments.

4.3.1 Topicalization

Topicalization is usually attributed to the subject NP. Topic and subject are even taken as the same and one notion. As (Shibatani 1991) noted, both in the philosophical and linguistic tradition, subjects are taken as a mere synonymy or equated with the topic; "the subject is what we are talking about" (Chafe 1976, pp. 43). And, as direct reflection of the long-standing tradition to associate subject with topics, generativists have argued for close proximity of subjecthood in the fseq with the topic-hood, (Rizzi 1997). Objects are rarely taken to be topical items. Here, I want to argue that the periphrastic objects are indeed topicalized, without raising to the pre-subject position.

The first question in addressing topicalization is then the notion of what topicalization itself is. I assume Shibatani description of topic is correct:

> The grammatical topic functions as a powerful cohesive device that relates an event to the preceding event in such a way that the new event is presented as a further development of the preceding event by way of sharing the topic with it.
>
> (Shibatani 1991, pp. 101)

The idea here is that topic is the notion that connects one event to the next event when there are series of events. The notion that transfers from the first sentence to the next, keeping the flow of the topic constant (without topic-shift) can then be considered as the topic.

Pronominal coreference facts in Amharic do show that the DP that agrees is the DP in topic position. We can test this phenomena by using the ambiguous pronoun, *esu* translated as 'he' as well as 'it'.

(38) Kasa lä-Aster däbdabe lak-ä. esu-m guwadägnoççwan asdänäk'-ä
Kasa for-Aster letter sent-3msS. He/it-Foc her.friends surprise-3msS
'Kasa sent a letter to Aster. It/he surprised her friends.'

(39) Kasa lä-Aster däbdabe-u-n lak-ä-w. esum guwadägnoççwan asdänäk-ä
Kasa for-Aster letter-Def-Acc send-3msS-3msO. He/it her.friends surprise-3msS
'Kasa sent the letter to Aster. It/he surprised her friends.'

There are events in each of these sentences. The first sentence of each of the example has the event of *sending a letter*, and the second sentences of the examples contain the event of *surprising her friends*.

Now, the point is what does the pronoun *esu-m* (it/he-Focus) refers to. In each of the example, there are three candidates for the antecedence of the pronoun:

- the external argument, *Kasa*
- the internal argument, the *letter*
- the event of sending itself

It turns out that in both of the examples, the event (of sending) is the most salient antecedent, while the external argument is the least (almost unavailable) one. When it comes to the appropriateness of the internal argument as antecedent of the topicalized pronoun, the two examples have clear distinction. While the direct object is almost unable to corefer with the pronoun in (38), it is easily available in (39).

The same can be said about the indirect object. Look at the following sentences.

(40) aster lä-mämhir-u$_j$ däbdabe$_i$ lak$_h$-äçç-lät. esu-m$_h$/j/??i tämariwäççun asasäbä
Aster for-teacher-Def letter send-3fs-3ms.Ben. He/it-Foc students bothered
'Aster send a letter to the teacher. It/he bothered the students.'

(41) aster lä-mämhir-u$_j$ däbdabe$_i$ lak$_h$-äçç. esum$_h$/??j/i tämariwäççun asasäbä
Aster for-teacher-Def letter send-3fs. He/it-Foc students warned
'Aster send a letter to the teacher. It/he bothered the students.'

Even if the event is still the most salient topic, most appropriate to co-index with the pronoun, agreeing arguments can also be marginally available for corefering with the pronoun. As the marks indicate, the indirect object is available to function as the topic of the next sentence more saliently in (40) than in (41). It is more appropriate for the indirect object to transfer as the subject of the next sentence (event) whenever it is in agreement with the verb of the first sentence.

Given the topic is the notion that connects the events of the two consecutive sentences, hence,taking the topic argument be the one saliently available to antecede a pronoun in the next sentence,Caramazza & Gupta (1979), and that "pronouns require that their referents be topical." Kehler (2004), the coindexation facts from the above examples shows that the object agreeing with the verb is the one in topic position[15].

Digressing from the main point, an equally interesting fact is the case of an embedded object argument. When the object is embedded inside a matrix clause, it can no longer antecede the pronoun in the next sentence. The event, however, is still able to antecede it. This seems to suggest that the topicalized object is still below the event. If it is below the event boundary, how can it antecede the pronoun in the first place is a mystery to me.

(42) aster lä-mämhir-u$_j$ däbdabe$_i$ indä-lak$_h$-äçç-(lät) tänägärä. esum$_{/h/}$ $*$ j tämariwäççun asasäbä
Aster for-teacher-Def letter RM-send-3fs-(3ms.Ben) told. it/*he students bothered bothered
'It is reported that Aster sent a letter to the teacher. It/he bothered the students.'

If my argument for the topicalization of the agreeing arguments is successful, then, the next step is to establish the relationship between the syntactic positions of internal arguments and causee arguments, and develop how and why the agreement and case marking is possible in some positions, but not in others.

I have already claimed that middle arguments (indirect object) and causee arguments have similar syntactic properties. I also claimed that, even if they are similar, they do not hold the same position in the VP fseq. I have presented their co-occurrence as the main evidence for this. Following (Pylkkänen 2008), I also claimed that causee arguments merge in SpecvCausP while middle arguments merge in SpecApplP.

Now, the main issue that I am concerned here is getting the agreement and the case assignment of the causee, and other internal arguments right.

[15]At this point, one might argue that the agreement markers are pronominal; and, hence, induce prominence to the objects. The idea is plausible one. But, as Baker has rejected the pronominal (anaphora) possibility of object agreement markers in Amharic, I will not be worried about it in here. Look at footnote 14.

4.3.2 Agreement

My observation is that it highest of the internal arguments triggers obligatory agreement with the verb. Whenever the causee is not part of the derivation, the theme or the middle argument triggers agreement. Whenever the causee is part of the derivation,however, none of the other two internal arguments can trigger agreement. We can capture this fact by simple locality constraint as Relativized Minimality, Rizzi (1990). As the causee is the highest argument, it agrees with F and blocks the other arguments.

Baker's analysis of the order of the arguments in Amharic in combination with the universal hierarchy proposed in (Pylkkänen 2008) the following structure for the example given above, (27) repeated here.

(43) Aster lij-it-u-n lä-Kasa däbdabe-u-n as-lak-äçç-at (*iw)(*lat)
Aster child-Fem-Def-Acc for-Kasa letter-Def-Acc AS-send-3fsS-3fsO (3msO)(3fsO)
'Aster made the girl send the letter to Kasa'

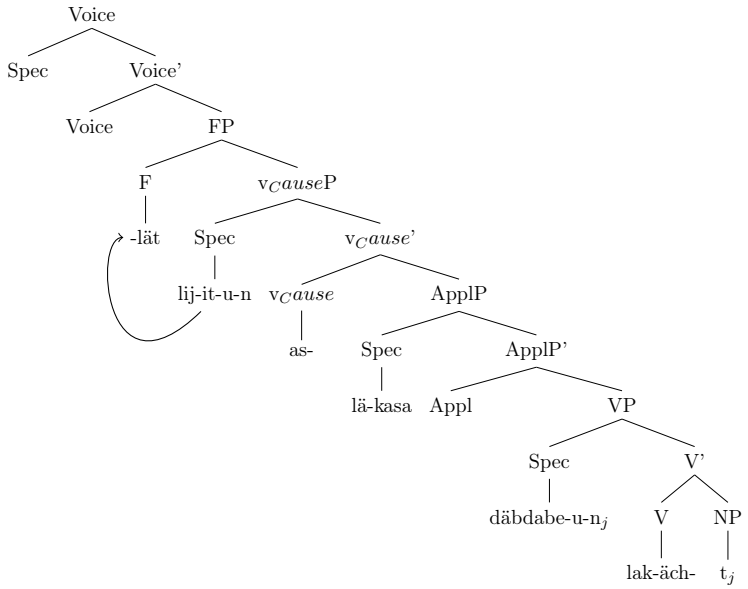

Figure 4: agreement of the causee argument

Now, take a situation where the causee doesn't merge. The empirical observation is any of the arguments can trigger object agreement, but never both of them at the same time. In the examples in (31) and (32), I have also shown that the surface order of the two arguments doesn't have effect on the agreement. It is also possible for any of the internal arguments to precede the causee argument, still without affecting the agreement. I have taken it as an evidence for the LF nature of agreement in Amharic. As is evident from

those examples, even if the theme precedes the middle and the causee arguments, it can not trigger agreement on the verb.

Since the middle argument normally (in the underling order) c-commands the theme argument,(**?**), according to the relativized minimality analysis, we expect the middle argument to trigger agreement. This is born out. Under normal conditions, it is always the middle argument that triggers the object agreement.

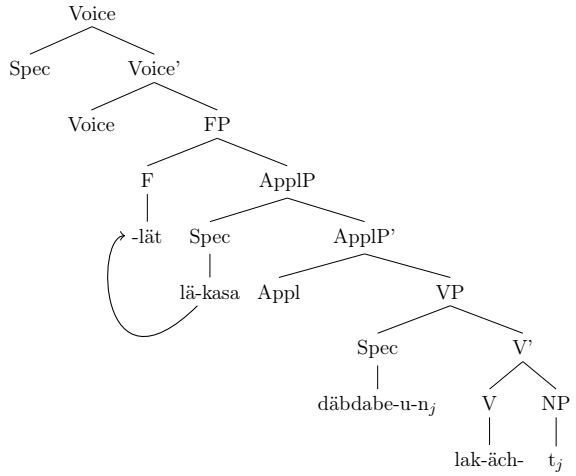

Figure 5: Indirect object agreement

That means, the relativized minimality story proposed for the causee argument then can easily capture the normal agreement facts of the middle argument and the theme argument.

The relativized minimality proposal however falls into problem when we consider the situations where the theme argument agrees with the verb, blocking the middle and causee arguments, partially presented in (27) and (28), repeated here.

(44) Kasa bä-mämhir-it-u däbdabe-u-n as-näbäb-ä-w (*at)
Kasa letter-Def-Acc By-teacher-Fem-Def AS-read-3msS-3msO (*3fsO)
'Kasa get the letter read by the (female) teacher'

(45) Kasa lä-mämhir-it-u däbdabe-u-n lak-ä-w (*at)
Kasa letter-Def-Acc for-teacher-Fem-Def lak-3msS-3msO (*3fsO)
'Kasa send the letter to the (female) teacher'

I claim that this apparently reversed situation is the result of the topicalization process that the theme argument is undergoing at LF[16]. I have already shown that the object

[16]An alternative analysis would be to assume the preposition marked arguments to merge in lower

that triggers the agreement is the one in topic position; also claimed that the topicalized argument moves at LF to a higher position. The topicalization moves the theme argument to higher position at LF, regardless of the surface position, enabling the theme to block the middle agreement and trigger object agreement.

One serious issue that immediately arises out of this kind of analysis is why theme happen to raise to higher position (topicalzation), only when the other arguments are case marked by preposition. In other words, why is topicalization of the theme, and its follow up object agreement, impossible when the causee and the middle argument are in accusative case, as presented in (46) and (47).

(46) Kasa mämhir-it-u-n däbdabe-u-n as-näbäb-ä-at (* äw)
Kasa teacher-Fem-Def-Acc letter-Def-Acc AS-read-3msS-3fsO
'Kasa make the (female) teacher read the letter'

(47) Kasa mämhir-it-u-n däbdabe-u-n lak-ä-lat (* äw)
Kasa teacher-Fem-Def-Acc letter-Def-Acc lak-3msS-3fsO
'Kasa send the the (female) teacher a letter'

I claim that topicalization at LF (any kind of movement for that matter) obeys the basic principles of syntax. In the topicalization raising above, we were raising accusative marked argument across generive or instrumental marked arguments. If we take the more radical kind of relativized minimality, advocate in Stark's (2001), raising of accusative case marked across non-accusative arguments is expected. Because the argument has carried at least one additional feature that the higher arguments do no have. [DP$_C$*ausee* +instrumental]...[DP$_I$*O*+dative]...[DP$_D$*O*+Accusative] In this kind of feature, composition, we don't expect any form of blocking. Hence, raising would be licit.

But, whenever all the arguments are marked by accusative case, the case composition of the arguments puts them into competition. The higher arguments block the lower arguments; making the LF raising of the theme argument illicit, as in (46) and (47).

4.3.3 Case

There are two major views on case assignment in the generative litrature. I call them the fixed view and the relativized view. The fixed view is the mainstream view of case assignment where a specific fixed functional head is taken as a responsible organ for assigning certain kinds of case. In the earlier stages of P&P, instance, nominative Case was assumed to be assigned by the IP via spec-head relationship between the case-assigning

position than the theme argument. That is, to assume that the merging position of the arguments vary in accordance with their case marking. But, I am not entertaining such analysis for two main reasons. First, I believe the topicalization of the object is real, an independent fact. Secondly, I find Baker's argument on the higher position of the middle arguments is convincing. Hence, there is no need stipulate that the middle argument merges lower than the theme whenever it comes with dative case.

head (the I) and the argument (the subject). Case assignment in Amharic internal arguments is not similar to agreement. As I have illustrated above, the agreement of one of the arguments is highly dependent on the positions and structures of the other arguments in the derivation. Higher arguments block the agreements of lower arguments. But, this kind of syntactic competition is not available in case assignment. Case assignment is rather dependent on the intra-DP properties. One such factor is the specificity of the DP. Accusative case marking is possible only on specific (morphologically marked by the definite article) DPs.

(48) #Kasa yähon-ä-n tämari gäräf-ä(w)
Kasa one-3ms-Acc student whip-3msS-(3msO)
'Kasa whipped a student' (unspecific)

'Considering the in-ward looking nature of case, I assume that case is not specifically related to any functional projection. I assume that any of the functional projections related with agentive, Voice, vCause and Appl can assign case to the arguments in their specifier position. The theme can then receive case from V; the middle argument from Appl and the causee from Voice.

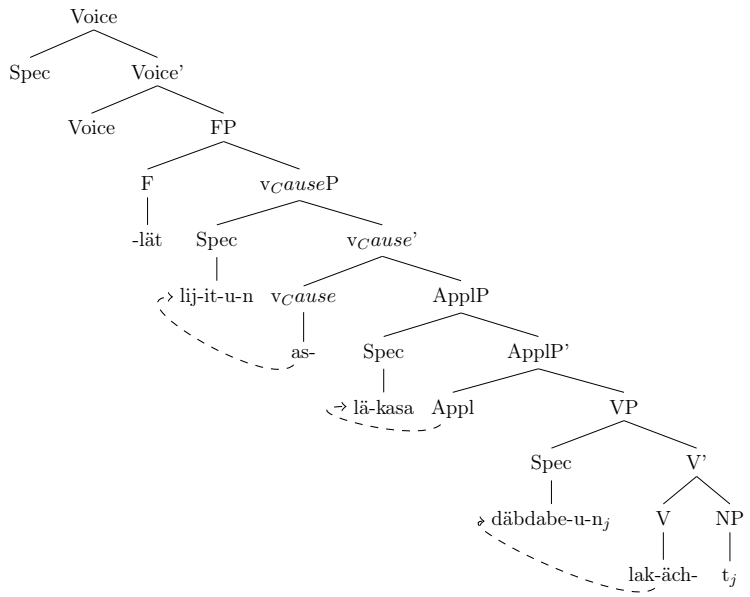

Figure 6: Case Assignment

5 Conclusion

In the above section, I have attempted to derive the case and object agreement phenomena in periphrastic arguments of Amharic VP. I argued that introducing the causee argument into the derivation challenges Baker's (Baker 2012) recent analysis of the middle and theme arguments as headed by null PP projection. I have also attempted to capture the agreement and case facts using the usual locality constraints such as Relativized Minimality.

Relying on two basic assumptions that:

1. Relativized Minimality applies only at LF
2. Case assignment and object agreement are independent operations

I use the first to capture the agreement fact that the internal arguments and the causee arguments interplay. I have shown that the three periphrastic arguments compete for agreement. Whenever the causee argument is part of the derivation, it blocks the other two arguments, in accordance with the principles of relativized minimality, and takes control of the agreement. Whenever the causee argument is not part of the derivation,the theme and the goal/source arguments compete for agreement. If the goal has accusative, it dominates the accusative case marked theme. That is, if the middle argument is accusative case, the theme has no chance of controlling agreement in any way. If the goal is marked by the prepostion (dative), the goal can still dominate the theme and control the agreement, or accusative marked theme can control the agreement by undergoing topicalization movement at LF

Separating case assignments from the object agreement, I claimed that cases are assigned by separate projections, unlike agreement which is the reflex of the a single functional projection. I take the idiosyncratic nature of cases in accordance with the internal structure of the DPs as an evidence for this claim.

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