Homework 4
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1 Possession

There are two different strategies for possession in Amharic.

1.1 Suffixes

Possession is marked with noun suffixes. Second and third person singular suffixes distinguish between male and femaile, but the plural forms are not gendered.

(1) *doro-é* 'my chicken'
     doro-i 'your (m) chicken'
     doro-ish 'your (f) chicken'
     doro-u 'his chicken'
     doro-wa 'her chicken'

All plural suffixes begin with *ach-*. These suffixes may by further analyzable as *-ach-in, -ach-un, and -ach-ew*.

(2) *doro-achin* 'our chicken'
     doro-achun 'your (pl) chicken'
     doro-achew 'their chicken'

1.2 Contrast forms

Additionally, Amharic has several contrast forms for possession. These forms place the stress on the possessor and convey a meaning like 'MY hand.'

Table 1: Contrast forms

yené ij	'my hand'	*ij-é*	'my hand'
yante ij	'your (m) hand'	*ij-ih*	'your (m) hand'
yanchí ij	'your (f) hand'	*ij-ish*	'your (f) hand'
yesu ij	'his hand'	*ij-u*	'his hand'
yeswa ij	'her hand'	*ij-wa*	'her hand'
yenya ij-och	'our hands'	*ij-och-achin*	'our hands'
-[1]	-	*ij-och-achun*	'your (pl) hands'
yenesu ij-och	'their hands'	*ij-och-achew*	'their hands'

Possessive forms like 'Rachel's hand' are constructed similarly. As in (4), these constructions do not work with the suffix forms in the previous section.

(3) *je Rachel ij* 'Rachel's hand'

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[1]There was no example of a contrast form for the second person plural (you all).

(4) *Rachel ijwa 'Rachel's hand'

(5) *je Abe ij* 'Abe's hand'

2   Pronouns

Subject pronouns have the following forms in Amharic:

Table 2: Subject pronouns

iné	I
ante	you (m)
anchí	you (f)
isu	he
iswa	she
inya	we
inante	you (pl)
inesu	they

The pronouns only occur as the subjects of sentences. They occur before objects and verbs, and we have some evidence that suggests that Amharic is an SOV language.

(6)   *iné rejim neny*
      I   tall   be\1s
      'I am tall.'

(7)   *ante   rejim neh*
      you-M tall   be\2MS
      'You (m) are tall'

(8)   *anchí rejim nesh*
      you-F tall   be\2FS
      'You (f) are tall'

(9)   *isu rejim new*
      he tall   be\3MS
      'He is tall'

(10) *iswa rejim nat*
      she   tall   be\3FS
      'She is tall'

(11) *inya rejim nen*
      we   tall   be\1P
      'We are tall'

(12) *inant rejim nachu*
      you\P tall   be\2P
      'You (pl) are tall'

(13) *inesu rejim nachew*
      they   tall   be\3P

      'They are tall'

Additionally, the language has demonstrative pronouns (like 'this' and 'that'). These pronouns appear to be grammatically masculine; in (14), we see that the verb *new* 'to be' is in the masculine form, event though *wef* 'bird' is grammatically feminine.

(14) *ihé k'ey wef new*
      this red   bird be\3MS

      'This is a red bird'[2]

(15) *inezí k'ey wef-och nachew*
      these red   bird-P   be\3P
      'These birds are red'

(16) *yachí wef tinishíyé nat*
      that   bird small   be\3FS
      'That bird is small'

There is evidence of possessive pronouns, but we only se a single example in the data.

(17) *yené* 'mine'

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[2]In these glosses, 3FS means third person feminine singular, 3PL means third person plural, etc.