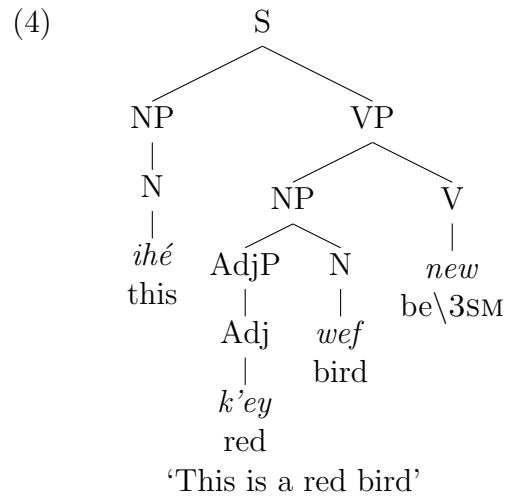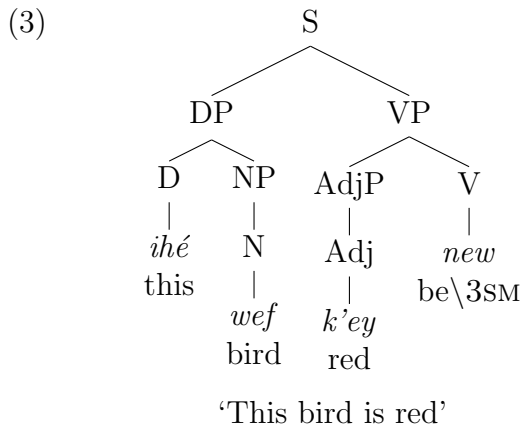# 1 Copular sentences

1.1 Structure

The 'be' element is the verb *new* (here in the masculine form; all forms can be seen in table 1). Copular sentences have the form SOV. The complements in each of these sentences can be phrases headed either by nouns, the class of words that includes things, or by adjectives, the class of words that are used to modify nouns. These two possibilities are shown in (1) and (2).

(1)   *wef-och tinishíyé nachew*
      bird-P   small   be\3P

      'The birds are small'[1]

(2)   *Arsema temarí nech*
      Arsema student be\3SF

      Arsema is a student

The difference between these phrases is sometimes dependent on word order. In (3), *k'ey* 'red' is a complement of the verb. In (4), it modifies the noun phrase, which is a complement of the *new*.

(3)

```
                   S
          _____/_____
         DP                 VP
       _/  \_            __/  \__
      D     NP        AdjP      V
      |     |          |        |
     ihé    N         Adj      new
     this   |          |      be\3SM
            |          |
           wef        k'ey
           bird        red

          'This bird is red'
```

(4)

```
                   S
          _____/_____
         NP                 VP
         |               __/  \__
         N              NP       V
         |           __/  \__    |
        ihé        AdjP     N    new
        this        |       |   be\3SM
                   Adj     wef
                    |      bird
                   k'ey
                    red

          'This is a red bird'
```

The forms of the subjects and complements are the same. Amharic appears to track arguments using word order, and there are no indications of case in copular sentences.

1.2 Copula forms

Table 1 lists the forms of the copula in the postive and negative.

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[1]In these glosses, 3SF means third person singular feminine, P means plural, etc.

Table 1: Copula forms

form	affirmative		negative	
1s	neny	'I am'	aydelehum	'I am not'
2sm	neh	'You (m) are'	aydelehim	'You (m) are not'
2sf	nesh	'You (f) are'	aydeleshim	'You (f) are not'
3sm	new	'He is'	aydelem	'He is not'
3sf	nech/nat	'She is'	aydelechim	'She is not'
1p	nen	'We are'	aydelenim	'We are not'
2p	nachu	'You (pl) are'	aydelachum	'You (pl) are not'
3p	nachew	'They are'	aydelum	'They are not'

The word order is SOV in both the positive and negative. The only difference between affirmative and negative is the form of the copula.

(5) *iné temarí neny* 'I am a student'

(6) *ante temarí neh* 'You (m) are a student'

(7) *anchí temarí nesh* 'You (f) are a student'

(8) *isu temarí new* 'He is a student'

(9) *iswa temarí nech* 'She is a student'

(10) *inya temaríyoch nen* 'We are students'

(11) *inante temaríyoch nachu* 'You (pl) are students'

(12) *inesu temaríyoch nachew* 'They are students'

(13) *iné temarí aydelehum* 'I am not a student'

(14) *ante temarí aydelehim* 'You (m) are not a student'

(15) *anchí temarí aydeleshim* 'You (f) are not a student'

(16) *isu temarí aydelem* 'He is not a student'

(17) *iswa temarí aydelechim* 'She is not a student'

(18) *inya temaríyoch aydelenim* 'We are not students'

(19) *inante temaríyoch aydelachum* 'You (p) are not students'

(20) *inesu temaríyoch aydelum* 'They are not students'

2 Negation

Table 2 shows the past affirmative and negative forms of *merot'* 'to run'.

Table 2: Postive and negative forms of 'to run'

iné rot'-kuwin	'I ran'	*iné al-rot'-ku-m*	'I didn't run'
ante rot'-k	'You (m) ran'	*ante al-rot'-k-im*	'You (m) didn't run'
anchí rot'-sh	'You (f) ran'	*anchíma al-rot'-sh-im*	'You (f) didn't run'
isu rot'-e	'He ran'	*isu al-rot'-e-m*	'He didn't run'
iswa rot'-ech	'She ran'	*iswa al-rot'-ech-im*	'She didn't run'
inya rot'-en	'We ran'	*inya al-rot'-in-im*	'We didn't run'
inante rot'-achu	'You (pl) ran'	*inante al-rot'-achu-m*	'You (pl) didn't run'
inesu rot'-u	'They ran'	*inesu al-rot'-u-m*	'They didn't run'

Here, we see that the negative forms are formed by the prefix *al-* and an *-im* suffix which occurs after the person marking suffix.