

Homework 6

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1 Subject person marking

In Amharic, subject person marking differs in each tense.

1.1 Past positive, negative

In the past tense, there are different affixes depending on whether the verb root ends in a consonant or a vowel. Example (1) lists the different forms for a verb ending in a consonant.

- (1) *mezemir* ‘to sing’
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>zemer-ku</i> ¹ ‘I sang’ | <i>al-zemer-ku-m</i> ‘I didn’t sing’ |
| <i>zemer-k</i> ‘You (m) sang’ | <i>al-zemer-k-im</i> ‘You (m) didn’t sing’ |
| <i>zemer-sh</i> ‘You (f) sang’ | <i>al-zemer-sh-im</i> ‘You (f) didn’t sing’ |
| <i>zemer-e</i> ‘He sang’ | <i>al-zemer-e-m</i> ‘He didn’t sing’ |
| <i>zemer-ech</i> ‘She sang’ | <i>al-zemer-ech-im</i> ‘She didn’t sing’ |
| <i>zemer-en</i> ‘We sang’ | <i>al-zemer-en-im</i> ‘We didn’t sing’ |
| <i>zemer-achu</i> ‘You (pl) sang’ | <i>al-zemer-achu-m</i> ‘You (pl) didn’t sing’ |
| <i>zemer-u</i> ‘They sang’ | <i>al-zemer-u-m</i> ‘They didn’t sing’ |

By contrast, (2) shows the forms for a verb root ending in a vowel.

- (2) *mesrat* ‘to work’
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>sera-w</i> ‘I worked’ | <i>al-sera-w-m</i> ‘I didn’t work’ |
| <i>sera-h</i> ‘You (m) worked’ | <i>al-sera-h-im</i> ‘You (m) didn’t work’ |
| <i>sera-sh</i> ‘You (f) worked’ | <i>al-sera-sh-im</i> ‘You (f) didn’t work’ |
| <i>sera</i> ‘He worked’ | <i>al-sera-m</i> ‘He didn’t work’ |
| <i>sera-ch</i> ‘She worked’ | <i>al-sera-ch-im</i> ‘She didn’t work’ |
| <i>sera-n</i> ‘We worked’ | <i>al-sera-n-im</i> ‘We didn’t work’ |
| <i>sera-chu</i> ‘You (pl) worked’ | <i>al-sera-chu-m</i> ‘You (pl) didn’t work’ |
| <i>ser-u</i> ‘They worked’ | <i>al-ser-u-m</i> ‘They didn’t work’ |

All V-final forms preserve the final root vowel with the exception of the third-person plural form *seru*. In this form, the final vowel is dropped and replaced with the *-u* suffix; otherwise, it would be indistinguishable from the 3SM form. These two paradigms are summarized in table 1.

¹Arsima was unsure if this form was correct, and also provided *zemerkuwin*

Table 1: Past subject affixes

form	C-final	V-final
1S	- <i>ku</i>	- <i>w</i>
2SM	- <i>k</i>	- <i>h</i>
2SF	- <i>sh</i>	- <i>sh</i>
3SM	- <i>e</i>	- \emptyset
3SF	- <i>ech</i>	- <i>ch</i>
1P	- <i>en</i>	- <i>n</i>
2P	- <i>achu</i>	- <i>chu</i>
3P	- <i>u</i>	- <i>u</i>

1.2 Present/future positive, negative

In the present tense, there are several different forms for the positive and negative. Each form requires a prefix and a suffix, which is summarized in table 2.

- (3) *merot* ‘to run’
- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>iné i-rot’-al-ew</i> ‘I run’ | <i>iné al-rot’-im</i> ‘I don’t run’ |
| <i>ante ti-rot’-al-eh</i> ‘You (m) run’ | <i>ante at-rot’-im</i> ‘You (m) don’t run’ |
| <i>anchí ti-roch’-al-esh</i> ‘You (f) run’ | <i>anchí at-roch’-im</i> ‘You (f) don’t run’ |
| <i>isu yí-rot’-al-e</i> ‘He run’ | <i>isu ay-rot’-im</i> ‘He doesn’t run’ |
| <i>iswa ti-rot’-al-ech</i> ‘She run’ | <i>iswa at-rot’-im</i> ‘She doesn’t run’ |
| <i>inya in-rot’-al-en</i> ‘We run’ | <i>inya an-rot’-im</i> ‘We don’t run’ |
| <i>inante ti-rot’-al-achu</i> ‘You (pl) run’ | <i>inante at-rot’-um</i> ‘You (pl) don’t run’ |
| <i>inesu yí-rot’-al-u</i> ‘They run’ | <i>inesu ay-rot’-um</i> ‘They don’t run’ |

Table 2: Present/future affixes

form	positive	negative	group
1S	<i>i- -al-ew</i>	<i>al- -im</i>	1 (<i>i-/al-</i>)
2SM	<i>ti- -al-eh</i>	<i>at- -im</i>	2 (<i>ti-/at-</i>)
2SF	<i>ti- -al-esh</i>	<i>at- -im</i> + palatalization	2 (<i>ti-/at-</i>)
3SM	<i>yí- -al-e</i>	<i>ay- -im</i>	3 (<i>yí-/ay-</i>)
3SF	<i>ti- -al-ech</i>	<i>at- -im</i>	2 (<i>ti-/at-</i>)
1P	<i>in- -al-en</i>	<i>an- -im</i>	4 (<i>in-/an-</i>)
2P	<i>ti- -al-achu</i>	<i>at- -um</i>	2 (<i>ti-/at-</i>)
3P	<i>yí- -al-u</i>	<i>ay- -um</i>	3 (<i>yí-/ay-</i>)

2 Object person marking in transitive verbs

In transitive verbs, the direct object is marked by a verbal suffix which occurs after the subject suffix (listed in table 2).

- (4) *ak'if-ke-ny*
 hug-2SM.SUBJ-1S.OBJ
 'You (m) hugged me'

Table 3: Subject and object suffixes

form	subject	object
1S	<i>-ku</i>	<i>-eny</i>
2SM	<i>-k</i>	<i>-eh</i>
2SF	<i>-sh</i>	<i>-ish</i>
3SM	<i>-e</i>	<i>-t, -ew</i>
3SF	<i>-ech</i>	<i>-(w)at</i>
1P	<i>-en</i>	<i>-en²</i>
2P	<i>-achu-</i>	<i>-(w)achu</i>
3P	<i>-u</i>	<i>-(w)achew</i>

- (5) *mak'if* 'to hug'
- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| <i>ak'if-e-ny</i> | 'He hugged me' |
| <i>ak'if-e-h</i> | 'He hugged you (m)' |
| <i>ak'if-e-sh</i> | 'He hugged you (f)' |
| <i>ak'if-e-w</i> | 'He hugged him' |
| <i>ak'if-at</i> | 'He hugged her' |
| <i>ak'if-e-n</i> | 'He hugged us' |
| <i>ak'if-achu</i> | 'He hugged you (pl)' |
| <i>ak'if-achew</i> | 'He hugged them' |

²This possibly becomes *-n* after a palatalized consonant.