

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

DESCRIPTION OF THE MORPHOSYNTAX AND THE FUNCTIONS OF
RELATIVE CLAUSES IN ARGOBBA

By

Mitike Asrat

Addis Ababa, September 2010

DESCRIPTION OF THE MORPHOSYNTAX AND THE FUNCTIONS OF
RELATIVE CLAUSES IN ARGOBBA

by

Mitike Asrat

A thesis submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Philology
(Graduate Program)

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in Linguistics

September 2010

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Institute of Language Studies
Department of Linguistics and Philology

**DESCRIPTION OF THE MORPHOSYNTAX AND THE FUNCTIONS OF RELATIVE
CLAUSES IN ARGOBBA**

By

Mitike Asrat

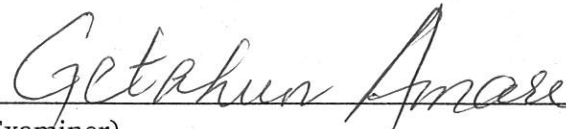
Approved by the Board of Examiners:

Dr. Ronny Meyer


(Advisor)



Signature



(Examiner)



Signature

Acknowledgements

My first and foremost gratitude goes to my advisor Dr. Ronny Meyer for his constructive idea, invaluable comments, guidance and corrections on the thesis. He provides me technical and material support. I would like to express my appreciation for his patience and genuine effort.

My deepest thank for my informants Ahmed Nuru, Nuru Muhammed and Muhammed Seid who helped me in the data collection time and for their support. I would like to thank Bikale Seyoum and my family for their help. I am grateful to the Department of Linguistics and Philology and the Addis Ababa University for supporting me financially.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	IV
Table of Contents	V
List of Figures.....	VII
List of Abbreviations	VIII
Abstract.....	X
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Objective of the Study.....	5
1.3 Significance of the Study	5
1.4 The Scope of the Study	6
1.5 Methodology	6
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	8
2.1 Review of Literature on Argobba	8
2.1.1 Review of Previous Works on Argobba	8
2.1.2 Grammatical Sketch of Argobba.....	9
2.2 Review of Literature on Relative Clauses.....	10
2.2.1 Definition and General Features of Relative Clauses.....	10
2.2.2 Word Order and Relative Clause Typology	13
2.2.3 Strategies for Relativizing Constituents.....	14
2.2.3.1 Non-Reduction Type	14
2.2.3.2 Relative Pronoun Type	15
2.2.3.3 Pronoun-Retention Type.....	17
2.2.3.4 Gapping Strategy	18
2.2.4 Accessibility Hierarchy.....	19
2.2.4.1 General Remarks.....	19
2.2.4.2 Subject Relativization	20
2.2.4.3 Relativization of Direct and Indirect Objects.....	21
2.2.4.4 Adjunct Relativization	22
2.2.5 General Observations on Relative Clause Types.....	24
2.2.6 Types of Relative Clauses	24
2.2.6.1 Restrictive vs. Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses	25

2.2.6.2	Lexically vs. Free-Headed Relative Clauses.....	27
2.2.6.2.1	Lexically Headed Relative Clauses	28
2.2.6.2.2	Free Headed Relative Clauses	28
2.2.7	Cleft Constructions	29
Chapter 3: Morphology of Relative Clause Verbs in Argobba		32
Chapter 4: Structure of the Relative Clause in Argobba.....		34
4.1	General Features of Relative Clauses	34
4.2	Word Order and Typology of Relative Clauses	35
4.3	Accessibility of Constituents	36
4.3.1	Subject Relativization.....	36
4.3.2	Relativization of Direct and Indirect Objects	38
4.3.3	Adjunct Relativization.....	41
4.4	Typology of Relative Clauses in Argobba.....	43
Chapter 5: Cleft Constructions in Argobba.....		48
Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion		49
References		51

List of Figures

Figure 1: Classification of Ethiopian Semitic languages.....	1
Figure 2: Argobba speaking people.....	4

List of Abbreviations¹

1S	First Person Singular Subject Agreement
2SM	Second Person Singular Masculine Subject Agreement
3P	Third Person Subject Agreement
3PL	Third Person Plural Subject Agreement
3S	Third Person Singular Subject Agreement
3SF	Third Person Singular Feminine Subject Agreement
3SM	Third Person Singular Masculine Subject Agreement
ACC	Accusative
AUX	Auxiliary
BEN	Benefactive
CLI	Noun Class One
COP	Copula
DAT	Dative
DEF	Definite
DO	Direct Object
ERG	Ergative
ES	Ethio-Semitic
F	Feminine
IPV	Imperfective
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
NOM	Nominative
NP	Non-past Tense
O1S	First Person Singular Object Agreement
O2SM	Second Person Singular Masculine Object Agreement
O3PL	Third Person Plural Object Agreement
O3SF	Third Person Singular Feminine Object Agreement
O3SM	Third Person Singular Masculine Object Agreement

¹ The Leipzig glossing rules conventions for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glossing are applied throughout the paper (cf. The Leipzig Glossing Rules 2004).

OBJ	Object
PL	Plural
pro	Empty Element
PV	Perfective
RC	Relative Clause
RM	Relative Marker
SF	Singular Feminine
SM	Singular Masculine
SG	Singular
SNG	Singulative
SUBJ	Subject
VN	Verbal Noun
.	division between several grammatical category labels ascribed to a single object language element
-	segmentable morpheme break

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to describe the morphosyntax and the functions of relative clauses in Argobba. To do so, I use data elicited from interview which were collected during a stay in the village of Shonke in 2010.

There are two kinds of verbs in relative clauses in Argobba: perfective and imperfective. The perfective relative verb contains a prefixing element *i-* while the prefix is *im-* with imperfective relative verbs. Argobba is a pronominal language for relativization. Two relativization strategies are used: The subject is relativized by gapping but non-subject constituents are relativized by a kind of pronoun retention, i.e., the relativized noun is always free since it is recoverable from the agreement markers of the relative verb. Argobba relativizes subjects, objects (direct and indirect) and adjunct constituents. If the head noun of a relative clause is definite both the perfective and the imperfective relative verbs also contain a definite marker.

Argobba relative clauses are classified into restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. Furthermore, relative clauses are distinguished between lexically headed relatives vs. free headed relatives. The characteristics and the elements of cleft constructions have also been pointed out.

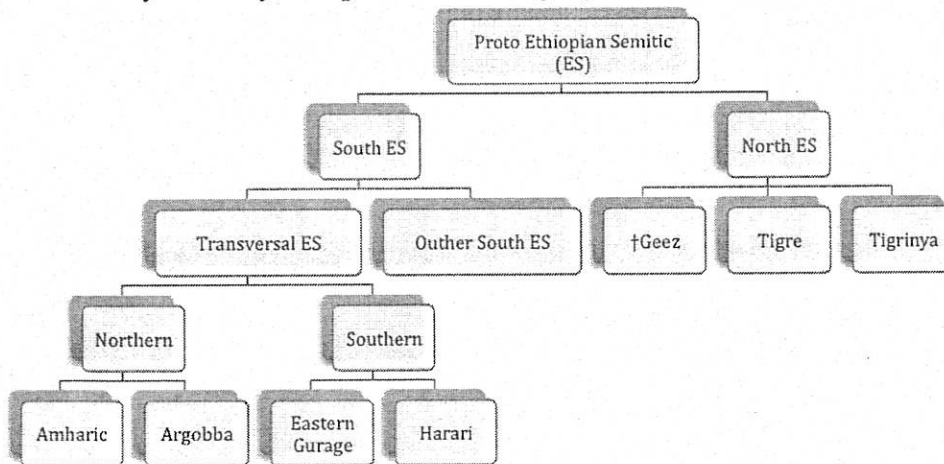
Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides general information about the Argobba language and its speakers as well as about the objectives of the study and the methodology applied.

1.1 Background of the Study

There are two big language phyla in Ethiopia: Afroasiatic and Nilo-Saharan. The majority of the languages of Ethiopia belong to the Afroasiatic phylum, in which they are classified as Semitic, Cushitic or Omotic. Most of the languages spoken in Ethiopia belong to the large Afroasiatic phylum (Fleming 1976: 34).

Figure 1: Classification of Ethiopian Semitic languages



According to Hetzron (1972: 7ff.), Ethiopian Semitic forms together with South Arabic the South Semitic sub-division within Semitic. Based on Hetzron's (1972: 119) classification, Ethiopian Semitic consists of a North Ethiopian Semitic branch comprising †Geez, Tigre and Tigrinya and a South Ethiopian

Semitic branch with a Transversal and an Outer division,² whereby the Transversal division includes two sub-groups: East Gurage-Harari vs. Amharic and Argobba, the language of main concern in the present study.³

As shown in Figure 1, Amharic and Argobba are closely related languages which belong to a single genetic sub-group called Northern Transversal Ethiopian Semitic. Nevertheless, the relation between these two languages is still not well-studied. According to Leslau (1997), Argobba is closely related with Amharic. There are some substantial differences between Amharic and Argobba in lexicon and grammar. Therefore, Wetter (2006: 1), Getahun (2009: 7) and Abebe (2006: 29) consider Argobba to be an independent language. Furthermore, there seems to be linguistic variations within Argobba which is, therefore, classified into two groups: Northern and Southern (Hussien et al. 2006: 1, Leslau 1997: xiv, Wetter 2006: 9). According to Hussein et al. (2006: 1) the precise locations of these northern and southern Argobba varieties are unclear. In general, the southern varieties are spoken along the road that goes from Addis Ababa to Harar while the northern varieties are to be found near to Kemise. According to Wetter (2006: 9) the northern dialects consist of the varieties spoken at T'ollaha, Shonke and Shewa Robit while the Southern

² See Voigt 2007 for a critical assessment of Hetrzon's classification.

³ See for alternative classifications of Ethiopian Semitic languages Girma (2001:35) or Hayward (2000: 80).

dialect cluster encompasses the varieties of Aliyu Amba and Harar.⁴ In Shewa Robit, every person has certain knowledge of Amharic, Oromo, and Afar. The contact between Argobba and Amharic on the one side and Oromo on the other side resulted in changes in Argobba ranging from borrowing to language shift. Migrations of the Argobba people have also played a major role in linguistic attrition. Argobba, as a language structurally close to Amharic, easily coalesces with and eventually blends into Amharic where the latter is the dominant language. The southern Argobba, who live around Harar, shifted to Oromo (cf. Leslau 1997: xiv). Generally there is influence from Amharic in the southwest, Oromo in the southeast and Afar in the northeast, while along the northwestern road there is both Amharic and Oromo influence on Argobba (Abebe 2006: 18ff.).

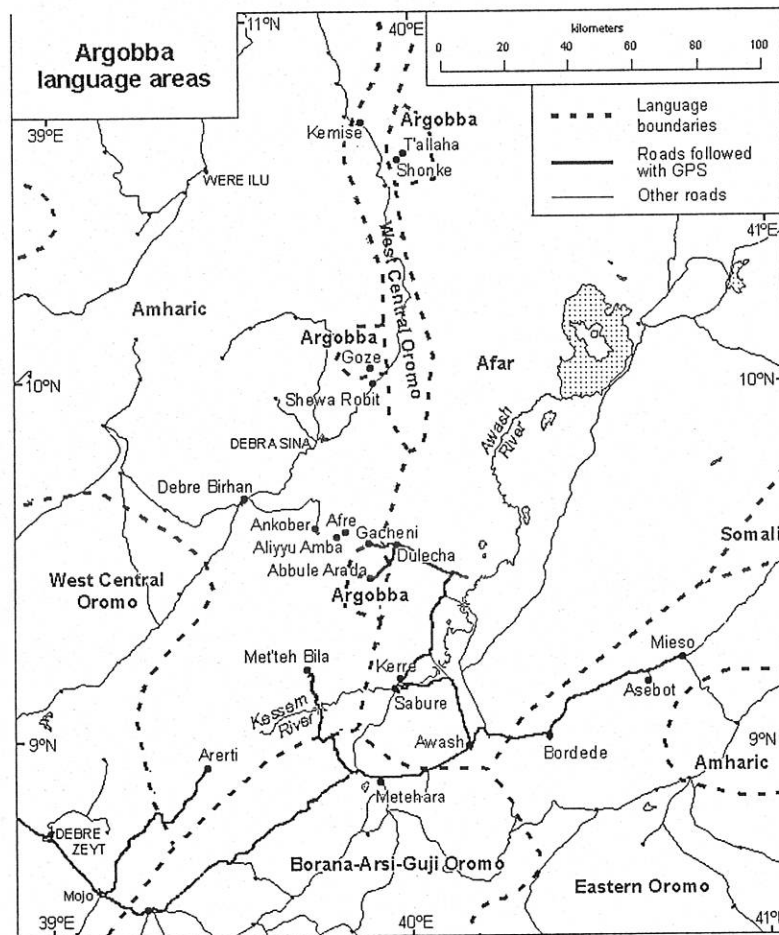
Argobba is considered an endangered and under-documented language, which is spoken by less than 11,000 mother tongue speakers in the Amhara, Afar and Oromia Regional States (cf. Girma 2005: 25). They settle in places known as Argobba Leyu Woreda, Gachin, Shonke, etc. According to the CSA (2007), the total population size of ethnic Argobba, i.e. of individuals who consider themselves to be Argobba but not necessarily speak the language, is 140,134 of which 27,560 come from urban areas but 112,574 from rural areas. That means most ethnic Argobba do not speak the Argobba language. The few

⁴ See also Hussein et al. (2006: 1) for the distribution of Argobba linguistic and ethnic groups.

remaining speakers of Argobba, in particular in the Shonke area and in the vicinity of Gachin, try to maintain and revitalize their language by different means, e.g., it was introduced in schools as a medium of instruction and as a school subject.

Argobba are farmers in rural areas and traders in towns.

Figure 2: Argobba speaking people (adopted from Hussein et al. 2006: 2)



In the 7th century, Muslim Arab people came to Ethiopia because of religious wars in the Mecca area (Ahmed 2007: 9). Argobba elders are of the opinion that the Argobba are historically and culturally related to these Arab migrants.

They believe that the first people to introduce Islam into Ethiopia were the Argobba. Today all Argobba people are Muslims.

According to Nuru Muhammed who recalls oral tradition of Argabbo elders, there are two versions for the etymology of the word *Argobba*. One of them reports that Argobba means *arāb gābba* 'Arab came'. The other version is *haregoba* which should mean 'non-slaved peoples entered to Ethiopia' or 'Arab peoples settled in mountains', i.e., most of the time the Argobba peoples settled in mountainous areas in order to protect themselves in war.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to describe the morphosyntax of relative clauses in Argobba and their functions. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To point out common morphological and syntactical properties of relative clauses in Argobba;
- To identify several types of relative clauses and their functions; and
- To identify morphosyntactic strategies used to form different types of relative clauses in Argobba.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The main significance of the study is to record and to analyze the morphosyntax and function of the relative clause in Argobba because the language is an endangered language lacking adequate grammatical description.

In addition, the study might have the following contributions:

- It will help to develop our knowledge of the morphosyntax and the functions of relative clauses in Argobba;
- It may help for educational material preparation in Argobba; and
- It may serve as input for further research.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The study tries to assess the morphosyntax and the functions of relative clauses in Argobba. This study is restricted to the Shonke dialect of Argobba which is considered to represent the dialect which is less influenced by Amharic.

1.5 Methodology

The present study is based on primary linguistic data, which were elicited through interviews with native speakers of Argobba in Shonke by using Amharic as metalanguage (i.e., the present study employed the informant method of data collection). The data have been collected during February 5-29. My language consultants were Ahmed Nuru (30 years old) and Muhammed Seid (26 years old). Both were born in Shonke and are native speakers of Argobba. In addition they speak Amharic and Oromo.

Prior to the gathering of the data, questionnaires containing paradigms, phrases and clauses were prepared to facilitate the description of the morphosyntax and the function of relative clauses in Argobba. All data were recorded and transcribed. These processed data form the corpus for the analysis. For the preparation of questionnaires, previous works on Argobba and

typological works on the structure of relative clauses especially Comrie (1981) were considered.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

2.1 Review of Literature on Argobba

2.1.1 Review of Previous Works on Argobba

Until today, only a few works have been conducted on the different elements of Argobba, like Leslau (1957, 1959, 1978 and 1997), Hetzron (1972), Zelealem (1994), Hudson (1997) and Girma (2006b) whose published materials on Argobba are mainly based on the dialect of Aliyu Amba. Zelealem (1994) and Getahun (2009) did research on Gachin dialects. Except Leslau (1997) which provides a general overview of Argobba phonology, morphology and lexicon, the remaining works focus on very specific aspects of the Argobba language.⁵ Despite these works, Argobba cannot be considered a well-documented language because sufficient information on various grammatical and syntactic aspects as well as on the interface between grammar and pragmatics is still lacking. The motive for the present study is, therefore, to enhance the documentation of Argobba by describing the morphosyntax and the functions of relative clauses in Argobba based on primary linguistic data and, thus, to present an analysis of a specific but very frequent clause type.

⁵ Recently, Andreas Wetter accomplished his PhD dissertation on Argobba. Unfortunately, his work is not accessible for the present study.

2.1.2 Grammatical Sketch of Argobba

The Argobba consonant phonemes are similar to Amharic consonant phonemes except for the velar *x*, the pharyngeals *ħ* and *ʕ* which are common in Argobba; but do not occur in Amharic (Getahun (2009) and Zelealem (1994)). The phonemes of Argobba and Amharic are summarized in Leslau (1997: 128ff.) and for T'ollaha or Shonke Argobba in particular in Wetter (2006). T'ollaha or Shonke Argobba fully preserved the fricatives *h*, *x*, *ʕ*, *ħ* (and the glottal stop) as phonemes while in the remaining Argobba varieties they are reduced to *h* or deleted. Argobba has the seven vowel phonemes: *i*, *e*, *ɨ*, *ə*, *a*, *u* and *o*. The basic word order of Argobba is SOV, whereby adjectives and other modifiers precede their head noun.

With regard to verbal inflection, the lack of the 3M subject agreement marker or empty with verbs is a specific feature of Shonke Argobba (Getahun 2009: 8ff.). Furthermore, Shonke Argobba reduced the subject prefix *t-* of verbs in the imperfective aspect to *i-* if it occurs word initially, e.g., *i-mət'aləx* 'you (2sm) come' which occurs in Amharic as *tī-mət'alləh*. In the Ankober dialect of Argobba, in contrast, these agreement markers are pronounced.

Argobba makes use of several morphemes for determination (cf. Getahun 2009: 8ff., Leslau 1997: 12ff.). The definite article is *-u* for masculine, gender-neutral and plural nouns but *-a* for feminine nouns in singular. In addition the singulative markers *-tʃi* and *-iti* are used as determiners with masculine and feminine nouns, respectively. There is no special morpheme for the indefinite article. Gender is normally not marked by a special marker attached to the

noun; rather it is indicated by the definite articles, the demonstrative pronouns, the agreement markers on the verb referring to the noun, or by a special gender modifier (Leslau 1997: 14).

According to Getahun (2009: 261), Argobba relative clauses are externally headed, prenominal and can be both headed or headless. There are also both restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses without any morphosyntactic difference. Argobba employs only the gap strategy in the relativization process. In Argobba, constituents associated with subject, object, adverbial complements, adjuncts and genitive phrases are accessible for relativization. The relative verb is marked by the prefixes *i-* and *mi-* which are attached to perfective and imperfective verb forms, respectively. Getahun's (2009) analysis is based on Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar framework.

2.2 Review of Literature on Relative Clauses

2.2.1 Definition and General Features of Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are defined by a combination of semantic and syntactic properties. Culicover (1970: 179), Downing (1978: 383) and Payne (1997: 326) define a relative clause as a dependent clause that modifies a noun by making it more specific or by adding additional information about it. According to Comrie (1981: 138ff.), a relative clause provides for the hearer an additional piece of information about an already identified entity. Relative clauses, therefore, most frequently have the semantic function to modify a nominal.

According to Andrews (2007: 206), “A relative clause ... is a subordinate clause which delimits the reference of an NP [from the matrix clause] by specifying the role of the referent of that NP in the situation described by the [relative clause].”

(1) *somebody lives nearby [who has a CD burner]_{RC}*

(Andrews 2007: 206)

In (1) the relative clause is *who has a CD burner*, which is marked by the relative pronoun *who*. The relative clause restricts the reference of the head noun, *somebody*, to the owners of a CD burner (Andrews 2007: 206).

According to Payne (1997: 325ff), relative clauses consist of the following parts:

- (a) the head noun (as part of the matrix clause) which is modified,
- (b) the relativized noun phrase (which is part of the modifying clause and co-referential with the head noun),
- (c) the modifying clause (i.e. the relative clause), and
- (d) the relativizer as marker of relative clauses.

The noun which is modified by the relative clause is called the head noun. The head noun may take the role of a subject, an object (direct and indirect) or possessors within the relative clause (Van Valin 2004: 47).

According to Payne (1997: 326ff.), the relativizer is the morpheme or particle that sets off the restricting clause as a relative clause. In English, the relativizer, which is a relative pronoun, reflects some properties of the

relativized noun within the relative clause, like humanness or grammatical relations. Payne (1997: 332ff.) states that a relativizer is often similar to complementizers. According to Keenan (1985: 153ff.) relative clauses may be introduced by a complementizer which is not a nominal or pronominal element. Relative pronouns are typically similar to other pronouns, either the question words or the pronouns used to refer to non-specific, indefinite items. In English and in most European languages the relativizers are relative pronouns and demonstratives. However, relative clauses in many other languages might not contain a relative pronoun as relativizer (Van Valin 2004: 47) but use a special relativizer to identify a clause as a relative clause. In some languages, for instance, a prefix for relativized verbs occurs, as in Amharic, Argobba, Tigrinya or Turkish. According to Palmer (1962: 36) relative clauses in Tigrinya are definable in terms of the occurrence of the particle *zə-* prefixed to the verb in the relative clause.

- (2) *kab ləkkəf zə-ḥaläfe dästa* (Tigrinya)
 from exact which-it.passed joy
 'boundless joy' (Palmer 1962: 36)

The relative particle *zə-* in (2) is prefixed to the verb of the relative clause (Palmer 1962: 36). The term *relative particle* is not congruent with *relative pronoun* because the choice of terminology results from the fact that *zə-* indicates that a clause is a relative clause but it does not in any way mark the kind of distinctions that are shown by relative pronouns, such as in English.

2.2.2 Word Order and Relative Clause Typology

According to Comrie (1981: 140), there is a distinction between the order of constituents in independent sentences and relative clauses. In English simple sentences, the direct object follows the main verb. In relative clauses, however, it may occur in form of a relative pronoun clause initially.

- (3) a. *I saw [the man]_{DO} yesterday.*
b. *the man [[whom]_{DO} I saw yesterday]_{RC}*

In example (3a), the direct object *the man* follows the main verb *saw* but in (3b) the relative pronoun *whom* occurs clause initially (Comrie 1981: 140).

Furthermore, relative clauses can be typologically classified on the basis of the position of the relative clause with respect to the head noun either as prenominal or postnominal relative clause. In prenominal relative clauses, the relative clause occurs before the head noun while in postnominal relative clauses, it follows the head (cf. Downing 1978: 382, Keenan 1985: 143).⁶ Whether a relative clause is pre- or postnominal strongly correlates with the order of constituents in simple sentences (cf. Downing 1978: 383ff., Comrie 1981: 145, Keenan 1985: 126, Payne 1997: 326, and Andrews 2007: 212). Prenominal relative clauses occur only in languages in which the object precedes the main clause verb, i.e. in verb-final languages, like Turkish. These type of languages, which according to Dryer (2005: 337) are mainly spoken in New Guinea, Northeast Africa and Northwest America, is usually highly

⁶ See Borsely (1997:640) on extraposed relatives clauses.

inflectional with a extensive verbal morphology. Postnominal relative clauses, subsequently, occur in languages in which the object follows the main clause verb, i.e., in SVO languages like English but also in VSO languages.

In addition to pre- and postnominal relative clauses with an external head, there are a few languages with an internally headed relative clause in which the head noun occurs inside the relative clause itself without any overt representation of the head in the matrix clause (Comrie 1983: 145). The head occurs within the relative clause either in the position that would be expected on the basis of the function of the relativized noun or the relative clause is headless (Payne 1997: 326, Andrews 2004: 212).

2.2.3 Strategies for Relativizing Constituents

Languages use different strategies with respect to the formation of relative clauses. There are four strategies in which the head noun can be relativized: (1) non-reduction type, (2) relative pronoun type, (3) pronoun retention type, and (4) gapping (Comrie 1981: 147, Keenan 1985: 146).

2.2.3.1 Non-Reduction Type

This strategy simply means that the head noun appears in full or unreduced form in the relative clause in the normal position of this constituent and with the normal case marking for a noun phrase expressing that particular function (Comrie 1981: 147), as shown in (4). This strategy is typical for internally headed relative clauses in contrast to externally headed relative clauses (Nikolaeva 2006: 503).

- (4) Tyè be [n ye so mìn ye] dyɔ. (Bambara)
 man_the PRESENT I PAST house see build
 'The man is building the house that I saw.' (Comrie 1981: 145)

In the construction in (4), the whole clause *n ye so mìn ye* is a relative clause with an internal head, *so* 'house', which functions as direct object in the main clause.

2.2.3.2 Relative Pronoun Type

Relative pronouns are usually identical with either interrogative pronouns or demonstratives. For instance, *where* and *that* in English are relative pronouns but also function as interrogative or demonstrative pronouns, respectively. Furthermore, the relative pronoun in English must agree with the head noun on the dimension of humanness: *who* is used with nouns that refer to human beings but *which* is used with all other nouns (Culicover 1976: 198).

- (5) a. *Mary is the only person who John likes.* (English)
 b. **Mary is the only person which John likes.*
 c. **This book is the only thing who was on the table.*
 d. *This is the book the only thing which was on the table.*

(Culicover 1976: 198)

Relative pronouns are pronominal elements occurring in the relative clause and are distinct from ordinary pronouns which occur in simple declarative sentences. Relative pronouns are usually the clause-initial pronominal element in a relative clause which are marked for nominal properties of their head such as gender, number or case to indicate the role of the head noun within the

relative clause (cf. Comrie/Kuteva n.d.: 4, Keenan 1985: 149). Let see two examples from three different languages.

- (6) *devuška, [kotor-oj ja dal knig-u]* (Russian)
 girl who-DAT I give.PV.M book-ACC
 ‘(the) girl to whom I gave the book’ (Comrie 1981: 149)

- (7) *Das Mädchen, [dem ich den Ball gab], ist meine Schwester.* (German)
 DEF.NOM girl who-DAT.SF I.NOM DEF.ACC
 ball give.PAST.1S COP.PRESENT.3S my.F.NOM sister
 ‘The girl to whom I give the ball is my sister.’

In (6), *kotor-* ‘who’ functions basically as interrogative modifier but it is commonly used in Russian as relative pronoun (cf. also Keenan 1985: 150 for an Indonesian example). As can be observed in (7), the relative pronoun *dem* ‘who’ agrees in gender and number with its head noun *das Mädchen* ‘the girl’ but is marked for dative case which indicates the beneficiary/addressee role of the head noun in the relative clause.

Relative pronouns are limited to postnominal relative clauses, like German; there are no clearly identifiable relative pronouns in languages with prenominal relative clauses (Comrie 1981: 149, Keenan 1985: 151ff.). This strategy is typical for most European languages but quite infrequent in other languages.

2.2.3.3 Pronoun-Retention Type

Many languages use pronoun retention as a means of forming relative clauses. Here the function of the head noun is indicated by resumptive pronouns⁷ (Comrie 1981: 147, Comrie/Kuteva n.d.: 7). These resumptive pronouns, like relative pronouns, refer to the head noun of the relative clause and specify its grammatical relation within it but, in contrast to relative pronouns, resumptive pronouns remain in situ and do not move to the clause-initial position (Comrie 1981: 147ff. Payne 1997: 332), as shown in the following examples from English.

- (8) a. *This is the road that I know where [it]_{Resumptive Pronoun} leads.* (English)
(Comrie 1981: 147)
- b. *That is the guy who I can never remember [his]_{Resumptive Pronoun} name.*
(Payne 1997: 332)

As can be seen in the above examples, the pronoun *it* in (8a) refers to the relativized noun *the road*, i.e., it provides information about the subject of the indirect question clause (Comrie 1981: 147). In example (8b), the head noun *the guy* is referred to by the possessive pronoun *his* in the relative clause (Payne 1997: 332).

⁷ The term *resumptive pronoun* refers to an element or structure that repeats or in some way recapitulates the meaning of a previously mentioned element (Crystal 1997: 332).

2.2.3.4 Gapping Strategy

Gapping is a strategy which simply does not provide any overt indication of the role of the head noun within the relative clause (Comrie 1981: 151). A gap is an abstract symbol that does not actually have any phonetic realization though sometimes there may be intonational cues as to where such gaps appear (Payne 1997: 330). Therefore, the gapping strategy involves cases without overt reference to the head noun within the relative clause (Comrie/Kuteva n.d.: 8). The gapping strategy is especially effective in recovering the grammatical relation of the relativized head noun in verb-medial languages like English, as shown in (9).

- (9) a. *the man who/that gave the book to the girl* (English)
b. *the book which/that the man gave to the girl* (Comrie 1981: 151)

In (9), there is no overt indication of the role of the head nouns *the man* or *the book* within the relative clauses.

The gapping type is often used to relativize subjects. According to Keenan (1985: 153ff.), it is the dominant mode for forming relative clauses in pronominal languages, like Hebrew, as shown in (10).

- (10) *ha-nashim she-ani makir* (Hebrew)
the-women that-I know
'the women that I know' (Keenan 1985: 153)

The complementizer *she-* in Hebrew serves to introduce a great variety of subordinate clauses. In relative clauses with *she-*, the head noun is simply

gapped and not further referred to in the relative clause itself (Keenan 1985: 153).

2.2.4 Accessibility Hierarchy

2.2.4.1 General Remarks

The accessibility hierarchy, as proposed by Keenan/Comrie (1977) or its modifications⁸ can play an important role for the relativization of constituents. The initial accessibility hierarchy, as proposed by Keenan/Comrie (1977), is given in (11) and expresses the relative accessibility of sentence constituents to relativization in simple main clause constructions.

(11) Accessibility Hierarchy (Keenan/Comrie 1977: 66)

Subject > Direct Object > Indirect Object > Oblique > Genitive

The symbol '>' indicates that the constituent to the left is more accessible for relativization than the constituents to the right, i.e., it is easier to relativize subjects than objects than indirect objects than obliques than genitives. Subsequent work has demonstrated that the accessibility hierarchy of Keenan/Comrie (1977) may be refined in various ways (cf. Lehman 1986).

Based on the accessibility hierarchy, languages vary with respect to which sentence constituents can be relativized. The relativization ability of certain constituents, in turn, depends on other constituents (Keenan and Comrie

⁸ For a modified hierarchy of grammatical relations see Van Valin (2004: 46).

1977: 66). There is a hierarchy constraint which states that a language must be able to relativize subject constituents. Any relative clause-forming strategy must apply to a continuous segment of the accessibility hierarchy; strategies that apply at one point of the hierarchy can in principle cease to apply to any lower point of it (Keenan/Comrie 1977: 67). A language is free to treat adjacent positions on the accessibility hierarchy as the same but it cannot skip positions. Thus, if a given strategy can apply to both subjects and locative expressions, it must also apply to direct and indirect objects. Each point of the accessibility hierarchy is a possible cut-off point for any strategy that applies to a higher point.

2.2.4.2 Subject Relativization

Any language must be able to relativize subjects, i.e., the grammar of a language must be designed to allow relativization on subjects, the upper most end of the accessibility hierarchy (cf. (11)). It is possible, however, for a language to allow relativization only on subjects in a language like Malagasy which has the basic word order VOS (Keenan/Comrie 1977: 69, Andrews 2007: 236). In example (12) below, the (a)-clause is a simple main clause construction while the (b)-clause is a relativized subject construction.

- (12) a. *manasa ny lamba ny vehivahy.* (Malagasy)
 wash the clothes the woman
 'The woman is washing the clothes.'
- b. *ny vehivahy (izay) manasa ny lamba*
 the woman that wash the clothes
 'the woman who is washing the clothes'

- c. **ny lamba (izay) manasa ny vehivahy*
 the clothes that wash the woman
 ‘the clothes which are the women washed’ (Andrews 2007: 226)

Example (12c) shows that the relativization of the direct object in Malagasy yields an ungrammatical clause.

2.2.4.3 Relativization of Direct and Indirect Objects

After subject relativization, the next frequent kind of relativization occurs with direct and indirect objects. Luganda, a Bantu language, for instance, has two different relative markers according to whether the relativized constituent is subject or object in the relative clause, as shown in (13) (Andrews 2007: 21).

- (13) a. *omukazi e-ye-basse* (Luganda)
 woman SUBJ.RM-CLI.SG.SUBJ-sleep
 ‘the woman who sleeps’
 b. *omussaja omukazi gew-ya-kuba*
 man woman OBJ.RM-CLI.SG.SUBJ-hit
 ‘the man who the woman hit’ (Andrews 2007: 229)

In Basque, subjects (cf. (14b)), direct objects (cf. (14c)) and indirect objects (cf. (14d)) can be relativized. In contrast to Luganda, Basque makes no distinction between relativized subjects and objects, as shown in (14).

- (14) a. *gizon-a-k emakume-a-ri liburu-a eman dio.* (Basque)
 man-DEF-ERG woman-DEF-DAT book-DEF give has
 ‘The man has given the book to the woman.’
 b. *emakume-a-ri liburu-a eman dio-n gizon-a*
 woman-DEF-DAT book-DEF give has-RM man-DEF
 ‘the man who gave the book to the woman’

c. *gizon-a-k emakume-a-ri eman dio-n liburu-a*
 man-DEF-ERG woman-DEF-DAT give has-RM book-DEF

‘the book the man gave to the woman.’

d. *gizon-a-k liburu-a eman dio-n emakume-a*
 man-DEF-ERG book-DEF give has-RM woman-DEF

‘the woman the man gave the book to’ (Andrews 2007: 230)

In (14), the order of constituents is *Subject – Indirect Object – Direct Object – Verb* in a simple main clause. If any of the nominal constituents is relativized, the auxiliary verb *dio* is marked by the invariable relative marker *-n* as relative clause verb and the respective relativized constituent will move to the right of the auxiliary element by creating a gap in the relative clause (Keenan/Comrie 1977: 22).

In Oromo, a Lowland East-Cushitic language, direct objects as head of a relative clause are moved out of the relative clause but leave an empty *pro*.

(15) *muttf⁷-ittfa kan tf’aaltuu-n ∅ rukkut-t-e* (Oromo)
 child-DEF.M RM Chaltu-NOM pro hit-3SF-PV

‘the boy whom Chaltu hit’ (Baye 1986: 2)

The relativized position is covered by *pro*, an empty pronominal which is co-referential with *muttf⁷ittfa* ‘the boy’. Therefore, the phi-features and the thematic role of the empty *pro* are recoverable (Baye 1986: 2ff).

2.2.4.4 Adjunct Relativization

Adjuncts are optional pre- or postpositional phrases which can express thematic roles such as location, instrument, goal, source and also malefactive

and benefactive. These adjuncts need not be overtly realized but can be referred to by agreement marker on the verb if they are known in discourse. According to Kornfilt (2008: 1) such covert adjuncts, which are locally licensed and identified by overt agreement marking, can be treated like regular pronominals. According to Girma (2006a: 2) the forms of non-subject agreement elements (i.e., object agreement elements) and their function are essentially the same across the various Ethio-Semitic languages. Adjuncts in Amharic, i.e. non-argument constituents, can be referred to by overt prepositional phrases (and optional non-subject agreement markers on the verb), as in (16a), or they may be an empty *pro* or covert constituent, as in (16b), which is recovered from the non-subjects markers. If such constituents are relativized, the non-subject markers on the verb are co-referential with the head noun, as in (16c).

(16) a. *kəbbədə lə-lijj-itwa dəbdabe s'af-ə-ll-at.* (Amharic)

Kebbede BEN-child-DEF.F letter write.PV-3SM-BEN-O3SF

'Kebbede wrote a letter for the girl.'

b. *kəbbədə ø dəbdabe s'af-ə-ll-at.*

Kebbede O3SF letter write.PV-3SM-BEN-O3SF

'Kebbede wrote a letter for her.'

c. *kəbbədə dəbdabe jə-s'af-ə-ll-at_i [lijj-itwa]_i*

Kebbede letter RM-write.PV-3SM-BEN-O3SF child-DEF.F

'the girl for whom Kebbede wrote a letter'

2.2.5 General Observations on Relative Clause Types

It has been observed that if a language can relativize any position on the accessibility hierarchy (cf. 2.2.4) with a primary strategy, then it can also relativize all higher positions with that strategy (Keenan/Comrie 1977: 68). Amharic, for instance, is said to use 'a kind of pronominalization' to relativize constituents (Hailu 1972: 497). Furthermore, different strategies can be used with regard to which sentence constituent is relativized. Languages may employ different morphosyntactic as well as suprasegmental relativizing strategies for different syntactic semantic roles of the head nouns (Comrie 1981: 163, and Comrie/Kuteva n.d.: 2). The strategies differ with regard to the sentence constituents that they relativize. Some constituents could be relativized by a particular strategy while others use a different strategy. The distribution of relativization is not arbitrary. Languages use different strategies to relativize a certain element in the accessibility hierarchy. For example, Persian uses the gapping strategy with subject and direct object constituents but the pronoun-retention strategy (i.e. personal pronouns) to relativize other all other constituents (Comrie 1981: 141). It was also observed that languages may have restrictions for relativizing constituents. For instance, Malagasy relativizes only the subject constituent while Kinyarwanda (a Bantu language) relativizes subject and direct object constituents (Comrie 1981: 250).

2.2.6 Types of Relative Clauses

Relative clauses can be classified as restrictive vs. non-restrictive relative clauses. They can occur with a lexical head or may be free headed or headless.

The lexical head of a relative clause can occur within the relative clause (internal) or be external (prenominal or postnominal relative clause) (Downing 1978: 383).

2.2.6.1 Restrictive vs. Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses

Restrictive relative clauses provide specific information about their head nouns. They provide information about participants of a given sentence but do not identify them within a set of possible referents. Non-restrictive relative clauses, in contrast, add a supplementary piece of information about an already identified entity. Non-restrictive relative clauses, thus, provide additional information which is not essential to understand the meaning of the sentence but do not support the identification of the referent of its head noun. Restrictive relative clauses use presupposed information to identify the referent of the head noun while non-restrictive relative clauses present new information on the basis of the assumption that the referent can be identified (Comrie 1981: 138ff.). Restrictive relative clauses provide some kind of specification about the head noun and it help to identify or restrict the reference of a head noun. Non-restrictive relative clauses supply additional information about the head noun, whose identity or reference was already established (Fabb 1990: 57, Cristofaro 2003: 195, Dryer 2005: 367).

Restrictive relative clauses do not convey new information but restrict the reference of a noun to those possible referents of which that assertion is believed to be true (Downing 1978: 379). According to Bache and Jackobson

(1980: 264), restrictive relative clauses are clauses that function at group level, whereas non-restrictive relative clause function at the sentence level.

- (17) a. *The man [who is sitting in that office] is a psychologist.*
b. *The dog [that/which you saw] belongs to John.*

In (17a), the restrictive relative clause *who is sitting in that office* gives some kind of specification about the man (Cristofaro 2003: 195). In (17b), the restrictive relative clause *that/ which you saw* restricts the referents of the head noun *the dog*. The restrictive relative clauses in (17) do not provide new information about their heads but narrow the concept associated with them (Downing 1978: 379).

In English, restrictive relative clauses and non-restrictive relative clauses occur in a specific sequence. Restrictive relative clauses precede non-restrictive relative in the construction of a sentence. In addition, a head noun may be specified by two or more concatenated restrictive relative clauses but it takes multiple non-restrictive relative clauses only if they are conjoined (Jackendoff 1977: 171).

- (18) a. *The man that came to dinner, who was drunk fainted.* (English)

b. **The man, who was drunk, that come to dinner fainted.*

- (19) a. *The man who came to dinner and who hated lox.*

b. **A man, who came to dinner, who hated lox.* (Jackendoff 1977: 171)

In the above sentence (18a), the head noun *the man* is modified by the restrictive relative clause, *that came to dinner*, which in turn precedes the non-restrictive relative clause, *who was drunk*. In (18b), in contrast, the non-restrictive relative clause, *who was drunk*, precedes the restrictive relative

clause, *that come to dinner*, which yields an ungrammatical expression in English. In (19a), the head noun *the man* is specified by the restrictive relative clauses *who came to dinner* and *who hated lox* which are connected by the conjunction *and*. If this conjunction is lacking, the constructions become ungrammatical (Jackendoff 1977: 171ff.).

Moreover, non-restrictive relative clauses unlike restrictive relative clauses cannot be introduced by the complementizer *that* (Jackendoff 1977: 171).

(20) **The man, that Bill saw, sneezed.* (English)

The man, who Bill saw, sneezed. (Jackendoff 1977: 171)

Based on Fabb (1990: 57), the main difference between restrictive relative clauses and non-restrictive relative clauses is that restrictive relative clauses function as modifier while non-restrictive relative clauses do not. According to Jackendoff (1977: 172) and Bache/Jakobsen (1980: 244), however, there are formal difference between restrictive relative clauses and non-restrictive relative clauses in English in intonation, complementizers, punctuation and distribution.

2.2.6.2 Lexically vs. Free-Headed Relative Clauses

Lexically headed relatives are those relative clauses in which the head nouns are phonetically overt. The head nouns in free-headed relative clauses, consequently, are phonetically not realized (Payne 1997: 328 and Radford 2006: 148).

2.2.6.2.1 Lexically Headed Relative Clauses

Lexically headed relative clauses occur with external and internal heads. They can be postnominal or prenominal (Keenan 1985: 143). Internally headed relative clauses are those for which the head is within or inside the relative clauses. Many OV languages including Bambara, a Niger-Congo language of West Africa, have internally headed relative clauses (Comrie 1981: 145, Keenan 1985: 143, Payne 1997: 328). This type is rare throughout the world except in North America and West Africa where it is quite common (Dryer 2005: 367).

2.2.6.2.2 Free Headed Relative Clauses

Free headed relative clauses are those clauses which refer themselves to the noun that they modify. With other words, free headed relative clauses lack head nouns (Culicover 1976: 203, Payne 1997: 328). According to Radford (2006: 148) free headed relative clauses contain interrogative pronouns which are “antecedentless”, as in (21).

(21) *Whenever I am afraid, I call her.*

(English)

(Payne 1997: 328)

Free headed relative clauses resemble indirect questions but do not permit the use of the adverb *else* in English while questions do (Culicover 1976: 203).

- (22) a. *I sold what (*else) you had in the basket.* (English)
b. *Mary never informed me of who (else) she was waiting.*
(Culicover 1976: 203)

2.2.7 Cleft Constructions

Cleft construction is a term used in grammatical descriptions to refer to where a single clause has been divided into two separate sections, each with its own verb (Crystal 1997: 63). A cleft construction consists of a noun phrase as complement to a copula and a relative clause. The copula clause is commonly referred to as the cleft constituent and is normally found to the left of the rest of the clause (Payne 1997: 279, Appleyard 1989: 290).

According to Hailu (1984: 128) makes a morphological distinction between relative clauses and cleft constructions. He writes: "In Amharic, cleft and relative clauses have a very similar structure. In both, the absence of a major constituent (except for the main verb) is a characteristic of their surface structure. Both clauses are marked by a particle which we designate as RM [relative marker, M.A.] prefixed to the main verb of the clause if there is no overt auxiliary" (Hailu 1984: 128). Hailu (1984) provides the following examples:

(23) a. Cleft construction: (Amharic)

almaz jə-səddəb-əttf-w təmari-wottf-u-n nə-w.
Almaz RM-insult.PV-3SF-O3SM student-PL-DEF-ACC COP.NP-3SM

'It is the students that Almaz insulted.'

b. Relative clause construction:

almaz jə-səddəb-əttf-əttfəw təmari-wottf
Almaz RM-insult.PV-3SF-O3PL student-PL

'the students who Almaz insulted' (Hailu 1984: 128)

The structural similarities between the two clauses types are clearly evident in the above examples.

According to Kapeliuk (1988: 101), there are two constructions in cleft sentences, both containing a relative verb and a copula. First, pseudo-clefts are cleft construction in which the relative verb acts as the subject of the copula clause and, second, true cleft constructions in which the relative clause serves as predicative complement.

A cleft sentence is a construction in which some constituent in a sentence is moved from its position into a separate clause to give it greater emphasis (Yri 2005: 42). According to Appleyard (1989: 291), the function of cleft constructions is foregrounding or focusing of one element of the underlying sentence, which is then connected by means of the copula to the rest of the sentence, which in turn, is constructed in the form of a relative clause. The focused item is usually a noun, noun phrase, or the equivalent of a noun phrase and may either precede or follow the relative clause. The semantics of this

focusing are essentially clear, the focused element being the new information and the relative clause the “given” or “presupposed” background information.

According to Kapeliuk (1988: 103), the function of cleft constructions may be briefly categorized as foregrounding whereby Leslau (1995: 105) says that the purpose of cleft constructions is focusing.

Based on Yri (2005: 45), the cleft construction is an instance of the more general schema with can be formulated as $X = Y$, the schema can be described as (SUBJECT) (PIVOT) (COPULA) or alternatively (PIVOT COPULA) (SUBJECT). Semantically, the subject is the topic, the pivot is a comment of some kind, either to the whole subject, or to some salient part of it.

According to Leslau (1995: 105) Amharic makes extensive use of a structure called cleft sentence. It consists of the verb of a plain sentence transformed into a relative verb combined with the copula.

Clefts typically put a particular constituent into focus. This focusing is often accompanied by a special intonation. Focus is a term used by linguists in a two part analysis of sentences which distinguishes between the information assumed by speakers and that which is the center (focus) of their interest. The contrast between given and new information makes an analogous distinction. According to Miller (2006: 511) “focus is used to highlight the information they carry, to contrast one piece of information, to reintroduce information that has already been mentioned but dropped, to shift the listener’s attention to another entity or topic of conversation, or to emphasize a piece of information.”

Chapter 3: Morphology of Relative Clause Verbs in Argobba

In Argobba, a relative clause consists of a verb which inflects for person, number, gender and aspect and the markers *i-* or *im-* which are prefixed to the verb in the perfective or imperfective aspect, respectively. There are two kinds of relative verbs in the language that differ in terms of their aspect: perfective and imperfective. Perfective relative verbs mark their subjects by a set of subject agreement suffixes and optional additional suffixes for objects or adjuncts.

- (24) *sini i-səbbər-e-ju xənabo*
 cup RM-break.PV-3SM.O3SM-DEF child
 ‘the child who broke the cup’

In (24), the relative clause verb *i-səbbər-e-ju* is in the perfective aspect marked for a 3SM subject and a 3SM object. The 3MS *ə* can be (*i, e*) in the next examples. The prefix *i-* indicates morphologically that it is a verb in a relative clause. Relative clause verbs in the imperfective aspect have the prefix *im-* as relative marker.

- (25) *k’əhəwa im-i-dəd xənabo bə-addis abəba-ma xed.*
 coffee RM-3SM-love.IPV child to-Addis Ababa-? go.PV.3SM
 ‘A child who likes coffee went to Addis Ababa.’

The relativized head noun can have a definite or indefinite reading. In example (24), for instance, the relativized head noun *xənabo* ‘child’ has a definite reading because the definite marker *-u* is attached to the relative clause verb. In (25), in contrast, *xənabo* ‘child’ has an indefinite reading because no definite

marker occurs at all. These examples show that the relativized head noun can be definite or indefinite; thus there is no constraint that the head noun must always be definite as postulated in Getahun (2009: 291).

Chapter 4: Structure of the Relative Clause in Argobba

4.1 General Features of Relative Clauses

The main function of relative clause is to specify the referent of its head noun.

The following Argobba examples illustrates this function with several head nouns.

- (26) *lə-aster kitab i-ferrax-ə-l-ja xənabo dima nə-j.*
 for-Aster book RM-buy.PV-3SM-BEN-3SF child good COP.NP-3SM
 ‘The child who bought a book for Aster is good.’

- (27) *gizia i-sərrək'-e-ju xənabo nare*
 money RM-steal.PV-3SM.O3SM-DEF child today
mətt'-əl
 come.PV.3SM-AUX.NP

‘The child who stole (the) money from him came today.’

In (26), there are two sentences, namely the relative clause *ləaster kitab iferaxəlat xənabo* ‘the child who bought a book for Aster’ and the copula clause *xənabo dima nəj* ‘the child is good’. The head noun *xənabo* ‘the child’ is part of both, the relative clause and the copula clause. In both clauses it functions as subject. Its function as subject in the relative clause is only recoverable by the use of 3SM subject agreement on the relative clause verb, no other trace is available. As subject agreement on verbs is obligatory in Argobba, the strategy to relativize subjects must be considered to be gapping (cf. 2.2.3.4). The benefactive constituent marked on the verb *iferaxəlja* by the suffix *-lja* does not

refer to the head noun but to the beneficiary *laster* 'for Aster' which occurs as overt adjunct constituent in the relative clause.

In (27), the restrictive relative clause *gizia isərrək'eju* '(the one) who stole the money' modifies the head noun *xənabo* 'the child'. Consequently, the restrictive relative clause delimits the potential referents of *xənabo* 'the child' to a very specific one, namely '(the one) who stole the money'. The restrictive relative clause is marked by the relativizer *i-* a bound morpheme which is prefixed to the perfective verb of the restrictive relative clause. In addition, the relative clause verb is marked by a 3SM object marker followed by the definite article. The 3SM object marker refers to the individual whose money was stolen while the definite article seems to enforce the restriction expressed by the relative clause.

In Argobba, there is no relative pronoun to indicate the semantic role of the head noun in the relative clause. The markers *i-* or *im-* prefixed to the verb in the relative clause (cf. examples (25) and (26) above) simply show that the verb is not a main-clause verb.

4.2 Word Order and Typology of Relative Clauses

Based on the word order, there is a difference on structure of simple sentences and relative clauses in Argobba. In simple sentences, the common word order is SOV. In relative clauses, however, the relativized constituent always follows the verb. The following Argobba example (28) in contrast to (26) above illustrates the difference between the structure of simple sentences and relative clause structure.

- (28) *xənabi-tʃʃi lə-aster intə-suk' kitab ʃerrəx-ə-l-ja.*
 child-SNG.M for-Aster from-shop book buy.PV-3SM-BEN-O3SF

'The male child bought a book for Aster from a shop.'

As Argobba is a SOV language, the subject or agent *xənabiʃʃi* 'the male child' precedes to adjunct *laster* 'for Aster' which, in turn, precedes the source expression *intəsuk'* 'from the shop' and the direct object *kitab* 'book' in (28). In the relative clause in (26), however, the subject *xənaʃʃi* 'child' occurs after the relative clause verb. Argobba is a language with prenominal relative clauses, i.e. the relative clause precedes its head noun, as shown in (26).

4.3 Accessibility of Constituents

In this section, the strategies to relativize sentence constituents will be discussed.

4.3.1 Subject Relativization

Argobba uses the gapping strategy for the relativization of subjects.

- (29) *aster-n i-ddəd-ə-ja kəbir dəmam nə-j*
 Aster-ACC RM-love.PV-3SM-O3SF teacher rich COP.NP-3SM

'The teacher who loved Aster is rich.'

- (30) *timaje baxara i-ferraħ-ə-ja-ju kassa*
 yesterday ox RM-buy.PV-3SM-O3SM-DEF Kassa
xamud nə-j.
 fat COP.NP-3SM

‘Yesterday, the (one) Kassa who bought the ox is fat.’

The head nouns *kəbir* ‘teacher’ in (29) and the proper noun *kassa* in (30) functions as subject in both, the relative clause and the matrix clause. They are referred to by the 3SM subject agreement marker *-ə* on the verb of (29) and (30). However, as subject agreement on verbs is obligatory in Argobba, it cannot be considered a special reference marker for the relativized subject. Thus, the relativized subject head noun is overt only in the matrix clause but covert in the relative clause where it leaves a gap. The additional object agreement marker and the definite article are optional elements which are not obligatory for subject relativization, as shown in the following two examples:

- (31) *i-xed məkina*
 RM-go.PV car
 ‘a car which went’

- (32) *bə-hidig-u məkina i-ferrəħ nəgade xəssər*
 by-credit-DEF car RM-buy.PV.3SM merchant suffer_a_loss.PV.3SM
 ‘The merchant who bought a car by credit suffered a loss.’

In the Argobba variety of Shonke/T’ollaha the suffix *-ə* (*i* and *eare* allomorphs) as 3SM subject agreement marker is not uttered. Thus, in (31) and (32), there is no overt element which establishes a reference to the relativized head noun, as the prefix *i-* only indicates that the verb is not a main clause verb but does not convey information about the semantic role of the relativized constituent.

Note that in contrast to Getahun (2009: 261) who argues that the head noun must always be definite the examples (31) and (32) occur in an undetermined form.

4.3.2 Relativization of Direct and Indirect Objects

In Argobba, direct and indirect objects can be relativized. The following examples illustrate the relativization of direct object constituents:

- (33) *gəbəri-tfifi i-ləʔ-e-ju azunirja həbən wəʔinə*
 farmer-SNG.M RM-eat.PV-3SM.O3SM-DEF lunch red sauce
nə-j
 COP.NP-3SM

‘The lunch which the farmer ate is red sauce.’

- (34) *xənabi-tfifi i-gəddəl-e wəro bədima ləhəm*
 child-SNG.M RM-kill.PV-3SM.O3SM snake very large
nə-j.
 COP.NP-3SM

‘The snake that the male child killed is very large.’

- (35) *xənabi-tfifi i-səbbər-ə-ja-ju sini tək’ nə-j.*
 child-SNG.M RM-break.PV-3SM-O3SM-DEF cup expensive COP.NP-3SM

‘The cup which the male child broke is expensive.’

- (36) *xənaβ-ti lə-gənət imi-t-afəlħə-l-ja k'əħəwa*
 child-SNG.F for-Genet RM-3SF-boil.IPV-BEN-O3SF coffee
ʃerrəħ-ətʃtʃ.
 buy.PV-3SF

'The girl bought the coffee that she is making for Genet.'

The head nouns *azunirja* 'lunch' in (33), *wəro* 'snake' in (34), *sini* 'cup' in (35) and *k'əħəwa* 'coffee' in (36) all function as direct object in the relative clause. They do not occur in the relative clause overtly but their function is recoverable through the 3SM object agreement marker attached to the verb in (33), (34) and (35). If the object agreement marker had been omitted, the sentences were ungrammatical. That means, that the main strategy to mark relativized direct object is the use of object agreement markers on the verb to indicate their function which very much resembles the pronoun-retention type discussed in 2.2.3.3. However, the direct object in (36) is not referred to by 3SM object agreement marker on the verb; instead *-la* the 3SF benefactive marker occurs on the verb which emphasizes the adjunct constituent *ləgənət* 'for Genet' within the relative clause. This distribution suggests that relativized direct objects are only referred to by object agreement markers on the verb if there is no additional prominent adjunct constituent in the relative clause. Thus, the relativization of direct objects most frequently employs the pronoun-retention strategy but may also use the gapping strategy.

Indirect objects in Argobba can be relativized as follows:

- (37) *kəbiri-tʃʃi kitab i-haw-ə-ja aster təwik' nə-tʃʃ.*
teacher-SNG book RM-give.PV-3SM-O3SF Aster clever COP.NP-3SF
'Aster to whom the teacher gave the book is clever.'

In Argobba, the indirect object usually precedes the direct object in simple sentences. In the above sentences (37), the relativized indirect object is Aster. The relative clause verb *ihawəja* 'to whom he gave' is a ditransitive verb; semantically it requires two internal arguments, namely a patient argument, *kitab* 'book', and an addressee, *lastər* 'for Aster'. The addressee is marked by the prefix *lə-* as indirect object. However, when relativized it does not occur overtly in the relative clause but it is only recoverable from the use of the object agreement marker on the verb.

Ditransitive verbs, thus, mark overt indirect objects with the dative/benefactive prefix *lə-* but definite direct objects with the accusative marker *-n*. Indefinite direct objects are not case marked but occur in their citation form. However, both direct and indirect objects are referred to by common object agreement markers on the verb. The verb *itəl* 'be paid' is ditransitive in Argobba and marks, thus, the indirect object by the prefix *lə-*, as in (38).

- (38) *lə-kəsab-i-tʃʃ minda itəll-em.*
for-worker-?-PL salary be_paid.PV-3SM.O3P
'The salary for the workers was paid (to them).'

- (41) *dəbdabe i-mətt'-ə-l-o kassa bə-indig*
 letter RM-come.PV-3SM-BEN-O3SM Kassa LOC-very
idessət.
 be-happy.PV.3SM

'Kassa for whom a letter came is very happy.'

In the simple sentence (40), the beneficiary is marked overtly by the prefix *lə-* attached to the proper noun Kassa. Furthermore, this constituent is referred to by the benefactive marker on the verb so that the whole construction conveys the meaning that something happened to the advantage of Kassa. When this adjunct constituent is relativized it leaves an empty position in the clause but is obligatorily referred to by the benefactive applicative marker on the verb, as in (41). The strategy used for relativizing benefactive adjuncts is, therefore, the pronoun-retention strategy.

Malefactive adjuncts are referred to by the suffix *-b* on the verb while the overt constituent occurs in the accusative case, as in (42).

- (42) *xənabi-ɬɬfi aster-n wəza amət't'-ə-ab.*
 child-SNG.M Aster-ACC problem bring.PV-3SM-O3SF

'The male child brought a problem to Aster.' (i.e., 'The male child has a problem with Aster.')

When malefactive adjuncts are relativized, they leave an empty position in the relative clause but are obligatorily referred to by the suffix *-b* on the verb, as in (43).

- (43) *aster-n wəza im-ittə-ab xənabo*
 aster-ACC problem RM-3SM.abandon.IPV-O3SF child
kilbilb nə-j.
 fast COP.NP-3SM
 ‘The child who abandoned a problem to Aster (i.e., who troubles Aster) is fast.’

Beside the malefactive, also other non-beneficiary adjuncts, like locatives, instruments, etc. are referred to by the suffix *-b* on the relative clause verb:

- (44) *kəbiri- tʃfi timaje kitab i- ferraħ-ə-ab mega*
 teacher-SNG.M yesterday book RM-buy.PV-3SM-LOC.O3SM Mega
gər nə-j.
 far COP.NP-3SM
 ‘The Mega (shop) in which the teacher bought a book yesterday is far.’

- (45) *lə-k’əratʃf hasaw im-ak’ərawa-b-em kabir*
 for-student.PL mathematics RM-3SM.teach.IPV-LOC-O3P teacher
mət’
 come.PV.3SM

‘The teacher who teaches mathematics for (his) students came.’

So, as with indirect objects, relativized adjuncts are always marked by non-subject agreement markers on the verb. The only distinction between them is that the indirect objects use the common object agreement markers while the adjuncts are referred to by additional applicative suffixes.

4.4 Typology of Relative Clauses in Argobba

Restrictive relative clause is the common type of relative clause type in the world languages and in Argobba.

(46) *i-mot-e* *dori-tfifi* *alak'ū ləhəm imbər*
 RM-die.PV-3SM.O3SM chicken-SNG very big COP.PAST.3SM
 'The chicken which died was big.'

(47) *sini i-səbbər* *xənabo ibedadm nə-j.*
 cup RM-break.PV.3SM child strong COP.NP-3SM
 'The child who broke the cup is strong.'

(48) *nəgan dəbdabi-tfifi-n im-adərs-əb* *xənabo*
 tomorrow letter-SNG.M-ACC RM-3SM-deliver.IPV-LOC.3SM child
bədima fətan nə-j
 very fast COP.NP-3SM
 'The child who will deliver the letter tomorrow is very fast.'

In (46), (47) and (48), the respective relative clauses restrict the number of possible referents for the head nouns. Thus, these clauses do not give new information about their head nouns but provide essential information about them. Hence they serve for identifying the entity denoted by the head noun. Without this information it is difficult to know who or what is meant about the head noun.

Argobba lexically headed relative clauses are always prenominal, as it is a SOV language.

(49) *wəro i-gəddəl kəbir kəbədə ibbehal-əl*
 snake RM-kill.PV.3SM teacher Kebede 3SM.be_called.IPV-AUX.NP
 'The teacher who killed a snake is called Kebede.'

- (50) *ahməd i-xed mādina addis abāba nə-j.*
 Ahmed RM-go.PV.3SM town Addis Ababa COP.NP-3SM
 ‘The town to which Ahmed went is Addis Ababa.’

- (51) *məkina i-sərrək’ leba k’əxih nə-j.*
 car RM-steal.PV.3SM thief red COP.NP-3SM
 ‘The thief who stole the car is red.’

- (52) *k’əhəwa im-i-dəd xənabo bə-addis abāba-ma xed.*
 coffee RM-3SM-love.IPV child to-Addis Ababa-? go.PV.3SM
 ‘The child who likes coffee went to Addis Ababa.’

In the above sentences (49) to (52), the respective head nouns are overtly uttered following the restrictive relative clause. Thus, these relative clauses are external, prenominal lexically-headed relative clauses.

Free headed or headless relative clauses are those relative clauses in which the head noun is not phonetically realized, as in the examples below.

- (53) *timaje i-mət’-han intəw-addis abāba nə-j.*
 yesterday RM-come.PV-1S.O3SM from-Addis Ababa COP.NP-3SM
 ‘It is from Addis Ababa that I came yesterday.’

- (54) *i-xed addis abāba fərji lə-mə-fərrəh nə-j.*
 RM-go.PV.3SM Addis Ababa material for-VN-buy COP.NP-3SM
 ‘That he went is for buying material in Addis Ababa.’

Headless relative clauses usually function as adverbial modifiers in the embedding matrix clause.

In contrast to restrictive relative clauses, non-restrictive relative clauses give additional or supplementary information for the head noun. Thus, there is no syntactic difference between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses but only a semantic or pragmatic one.

- (55) *tīmaje bəxəra i-serraħ-ə-ja-ju kassa xə mud*
 yesterday ox RM-buy.PV-3SM-O3SM-DEF Kassa fat
nə-j.
 COP.NP-3SM

‘The (one) Kassa who bought the ox is fat.’

- (56) *k’əħəwa im-itt-afəlh-əla həlima ik’af-ətfj.*
 coffee RM-3SF-boil.IPV-BEN.3SF Halima be_angry.PV-3SF

‘Halima who is making coffee for her is angry’

- (57) *gizif i-hill-ə-ja aster intə-kəmise mətt’-ətfj.*
 money RM-exist.NP-3SM-O3SF Aster from-Kemise come.PV-3SF

‘Aster who has money came from Kemise.’

- (58) *kitab i-haw-ex-əlo muħəməd indig gudəra*
 book RM-give.PV-2SM-BEN.O3SM Mohamed very tall
nə-j.
 COP.NP-3SM

‘Mohamed to whom you gave a book is very tall.’

In the above sentences (55) to (58), the relative clauses are headed by proper nouns which itself usually provide sufficient information for identifying their referents. However, these proper names are preceded by a relative clause,

which consequently, provides additional information to the head nouns which is not necessary to identify them.

Chapter 5: Cleft Constructions in Argobba

There exist a relationship between cleft constructions and relative clauses in Argobba.

- (59) *almaz nə-tʃʃ kitab i-səʔəm-ətʃʃ.*
Almaz COP.NP-3SF book RM-sell.PV-3SF
'It is Almaz who sold a book.'

- (60) *kassa nə-j kitab i-səʔəm.*
Kassa COP.NP-3SM book RM-sell.PV.3SM
'It is Kassa who sold a book.'

In (59) and (60) above, the relativized head nouns are the proper nouns Almaz and Kassa which function as subjects in the relative clause. In contrast to the relative clauses discussed above, these head nouns do not follow the relative clause but precede it with an intersected copula which agrees in person, number and gender with the head noun. Any constituent of the relative clause, except the verb, can be clefted, i.e. placed in front of a copula which is followed by a relative clause, like the direct object in (61).

- (61) *kitab nə-j almaz i-haw-ətʃʃ-əj*
book COP.NP-3SM Almaz RM-give.PV-3SF-O3SM
'It is a book that Almaz gave to him.'

The cleft construction in Argobba is used for focusing on the constituent/head noun preceding the copula.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion

In the first chapter, the language and the people, the objectives, the significance, the scope and the methodology of the research were presented. In the subsequent chapter, a review of literature on Argobba and on relative clause were presented.

In the chapters three, four and five the Argobba data were presented. Chapter three discusses the formation of relative clause verbs by prefixing *i-* or *im-* to perfective or imperfective verbs, respectively. These prefixes indicate that the verb in question is relative clause verb but do not function as a relative pronoun because they do not provide any information about the underlying grammatical role of the head noun in the relative clause. Argobba relative clauses are prenominal in which a head noun follows the relative clause because Argobba is a SOV language. In chapter four, it was shown that basically two strategies are used to relativize sentence constituents in Argobba: the gapping strategy and the pronoun-retention strategy. The gapping strategy applies to relativized subjects and less frequent to relativized direct objects. The pronoun-retention strategy is the most frequently used strategy to relativize direct objects and obligatory in the relativization of indirect objects and adjuncts. While relativized direct and indirect objects are referred to by common or simple object agreement marker on the verb, adjuncts use additional applicative suffixes.

Argobba relativizes its subject, object (direct and indirect) and adjuncts. Consequently, the accessibility hierarchy of relative clause formation proposed

by Keenan/Comrie (1977) has been justified. The most frequent function of relative clauses in Argobba is to restrict the number of possible referents of the head noun. Relative clauses in Argobba are usually external, prenominal lexically headed but there are also headless relative clauses in Argobba. Non-restrictive relative clauses seem to be not common in Argobba but may occur with proper nouns as head nouns.

Relative clauses frequently occur in cleft constructions their head noun represents a focused constituent while the relative clause contains background information.

References

- Abebe Kifleyesus. 2006. *Tradition and Transformation: The Argobba of Ethiopia*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Ahmed Muhammed Ibrahim. 2007. *bəitjop'ja jəmakzumajtinna jəhafimajt wəlasma sirwə mængist sillit'anenna tarik*. Addis Ababa: no printing press.
- Andrews, Avery D. 2007. Relative Clauses. In Shopen, Timothy (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 206-236.
- Appleyard, David L. 1989. The Relative Verb in Focus Construction: An Ethiopian Areal Feature. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 34, 291-305.
- Bache, K. and Leif, K. Jakobsen. 1980. On the Distinction between Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Relative clause in Modern English. *Lingua* 52: 3/4, 243-267.
- Baye Yimam. 1986. Relative Clause in Oromo. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 20, 60-74.
- Borsely, M. 1997. Relative Clause and the Theory of Phrase Structure. *Linguistics Inquiry* 28, 629-647.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1981. *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology*. Oxford: University of Chicago Press.
- Comrie, Bernard and Kuterva, Tania. n.d. *Relativization Strategies*. Retrieved on 15 January 2010 from <http://email.eva.mpg.de/~cysouw/teaching/graz/122.pdf>
- Cristofaro, Sonia. 2003. *Subordination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crystal, David. 1997. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CSA – Central Statistical Authority. 2007. *Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census*. Addis Ababa: CSA.
- Culicover, Peter W. 1976. *Syntax*. New York: Academic Press.
- Downing, Bruce T. 1978. Some Universals of Relative Clause Structure. In Greenberg Josef (ed.), *Universals of Human Language*. California: Stanford University Press, 375-418.
- Dryer, Matthews. 2005 *Order of Relative Clause and Noun*. Retrieved on 15 January 2010 from <http://wals.info/feature/90>.
- Fabb, N. 1990. The Difference between English Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses. *Journal of Linguistics* 26, 57-78.
- Fleming, Harold C. 1976. Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia. In Bender, Lionel M. (ed.), *Language in Ethiopia*. London: Oxford University Press, 34-53.
- Getahun Amare. 2009. *Argobba Verb Morphology and Syntax: A Documentation with Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar as Analytic Frame Work*. Doctoral Theses: NTNU Norwegian University.
- Girma Awgichew. 2001. The Ethio-Semitic Languages: Re-Examining the Classification. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 34, 57-93.

- _____. 2005. *The Ethiopian Languages*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
- _____. 2006a. The Pragmatics and Morphosyntax of Non-Subject Agreement Elements in Amharic. *Ethiopian Languages Research Centre Working Papers 2*, 2: 237-268.
- _____. 2006b. sirat t'ifət bəargobbijna. *Ethiopian Languages Research Centre Working Papers 2*, 3: 388-414.
- Hailu Fulass. 1972. On Amharic Relative Clauses. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 35, 497-513.
- _____. 1984. Cleft Constructions. *Studies in African Linguistics, Supplement 9* (Precis from the 15th Conference on African Linguistics UCLA, March 29-31, 1984.), 128-134.
- Hayward, Richard J. 2000. Afroasiatic. In Heine, Bernd and Derke Nurse (ed.), *African Languages: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 74-98.
- Hetzron, Robert. 1972. *Ethiopic Semitic: Studies in Classification*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hudson, Grover. 1997. Amharic and Argobba. In Hetzron, Robert (ed.), *The Semitic Languages*. London/New York: Routledge, 457-485.
- Hussien Mohammed, Linda Joradon, Boone Ryan and Netzley Jillian. 2006. Sociolinguistic Survey among Ethnically Argobba Communities. Draft Paper.
- Jackendoff, R. 1977. *X-Syntax: A Study Pharse Structure*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kapeliuk, Olga. 1988. *Nominalization in Amharic*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Keenan, Edward. L. 1985. Relative Clause. In Shopen Timothy (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 41-170.
- Keenan, Edward and Bernard Comrie. 1977. Noun Phrase Accessibility and Universal Grammar. *Linguistic Inquiry* 8, 63-99.
- Kornfilt, Jaklin. 2008. *Agreement-Subject Case Correlations in Turkish and Beyond*. Retrieved on 15 January 2010 from <http://www.Kornfilt&Syr.edu>.
- Lehman, Christian. 1986. On the Typology of Relative Clause. *Linguistics Inquiry* 24, 663-680.
- Leslau, Wolf. 1957. Arabic Loanwords in Argobba (South Ethiopic). *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 77, 36-39.
- _____. 1959. A Preliminary Description of Argobba. *Annales de'Ethiopie* 3, 251-273.
- _____. 1978. Argobba Vocabulary. *Rassegna di Studi Ethiopici* 26, 21-43.
- _____. 1995. *Reference Grammar of Amharic*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- _____. 1997. *Ethiopic Documents: Argobba: Grammar and Dictionary*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Miller, J. 2006. Focus. In Brown, Keith (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Elsevier, 511-517.
- Nikotaeva, I. 2006. Relative Clauses. In Brown, Keith (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Elsevier, 501-511.

- Palmer, F. R. 1962. Relative Clauses in Tigrinya. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 7, 36-43.
- Payne, Thomas G. 1997. *Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Radford, Andrew. 2006. *Minimalist Syntax Revisited*. Retrieved on 13 June 2009 from <http://docs.ksu.edu.sa/PDF/Articles44/Article440935.PDF>.
- The Leipzig Glossing Rules*. 2004. Retrieved on 21. 08. 2008 from <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/files/morpheme.html>.
- Van Valin, Robert D. Jr. 2004. *An Introduction to Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Voigt, Rainer. 2007. North vs. South Ethiopian Semitic. 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Trondheim, 2-7 July 2007. Retrieved on 07. 10. 2008 from <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/ices2007>.
- Wetter, Andreas. 2006. The Argobba of T'ollaha a Comparative Overview. In Uhlig, S. (ed.), *Proceedings of the 15th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg July 20-25, 2003*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 899-907.
- Yri, Kjell. 2005. Cleft Sentences in Amharic with Special Reference to Reference. *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 56:3, 41-58.
- Zelealem Leyew. 1994. *Argobba: The People and the Language*. (Survey of Little-known Languages of Ethiopia. Linguistic Report No. 22.) Addis Ababa: SIL and Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other universities and that all sources of information used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Name: Mitike Asrat

Signature: 

Date: September 2010

Place: AAU