

Factors for Hyperactivity in Tigrinya

Jason Overfelt
Oakland University

1 Introduction

- **Hyperactivity in Tigrinya.** Nominal constituents in Tigrinya (Ethiopia and Eritrea, Semitic; SOV) display hyperactive behaviors, engaging in multiple A-relations, including agreement and movement, within and between clauses.

- (1) *pro* [_{CP} **?it-a** **səbajti** n=ət-om təmharo kəmzi-rəxab-ət-tom] rəsiŋ-om-**wa**
 3MP ACC=DIST-FS woman DIST-MP student.PL COMP-meet.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3MP forget.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS
 ‘They forgot that the woman met the students.’
- (2) **?it-i** məmhir **n=ət-om** **təmharo**₁ [_{IP} **t**₁ ni=ki-xəjd-**u**] ji-dilj-**om**
 DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP students ACC=IRR-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3FS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 ‘The teacher wants the students to read the book.’
- (3) [_{IP} **?it-a** **sebajti** n-ət-ən dəbdabe-tat ki-**ti**-ts’ihif-ən] ji-gibba?-**a**
 DIST-FS woman ACC=DIST-FP letter-PL SBJV-SM.3FS-write.IPFV-OM.3FP SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 ‘The woman needs to write the letters.’

Predicting Hyperactivity in Tigrinya Patterns of hyperactivity in Tigrinya are predictable on the basis of the argument structure of the embedding predicate and the type of clausal complement.

The Factors for Hyperactivity Patterns in Tigrinya

	<i>ki</i> -CLAUSE	<i>kəmzi</i> -CLAUSE
TRANSITIVE	Hyperraising-to-Object	Long-Distance Hyperagreement
UNACCUSATIVE	Long-Distance Hyperagreement	—

• **Implications from Tigrinya.** The usual suspects for the (non-)hyperactive behavior of nominal constituents—including Case-licensing and defectiveness—do not contribute to an account of hyperactivity patterns in the language.

Licensing without Deactivation in Tigrinya

Nominal-licensing features and concepts of defectiveness are neither explanatory nor predictive of hyperactivity patterns.

Hyperactivity as the Null Hypothesis. Given similar conclusions elsewhere (e.g., Nevins 2005, Carstens & Diercks 2013, Keine 2018), perhaps hyperactivity should start to represent the default behavior of nominal constituents, while theories work to derive nominal *hypoactivity*.

Towards Theories of Nominal Hypoactivity

Constraints on multiple A-relations do not reflect properties of nominal constituents in Tigrinya.

2 Background on Tigrinya

2.1 Ethnographic Information

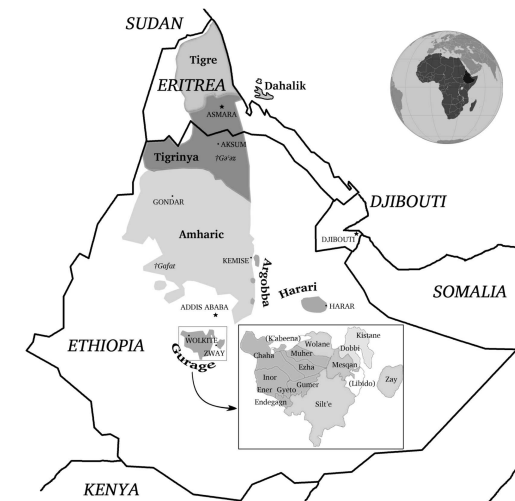
Classification. Tigrinya is an Ethio-Eritrean language on the Semitic branch. It is closely related to Tigré and Amharic and more distantly to Arabic and Hebrew.

Distribution. Tigrinya is spoken predominantly in central highland Eritrea and the Tigray region of Northern Ethiopia on the Horn of Africa. Diaspora populations exist world-wide.

Population. There are approximately 10 million speakers. Tigrinya is not endangered, although it is arguably a minoritized language.

Variation. There is non-trivial variation between multiple dialect groups that remain under-explored, with the notable exceptions of Tsehay 2009 and Niguss 2021.

Consultants. Data were elicited from an individual from the Tigray region of Ethiopia and four individuals from the Eritrean regions of Debub, Gash-Barka, and Maekel.



Credit: Ronny Meyer (Weninger 2011)

2.2 Basic Morphosyntax

Agglutinating Synthetic Morphology. Verbs commonly carry prefixal morphology marking finiteness, mood, valency alternations, as well as affixal markers that cross-reference the subject, objects, and applied arguments (Leslau 1941, Nazareth 2011, Tesfay 2016).

- | | |
|---|---|
| (4) Yonas n=ət-a t'irmuz səbir-u-wa
Yonas ACC=DIST-FS bottle break.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS
'Yonas broke the bottle.' | (5) ?it-a t'irmuz tə-səbir-a
DIST-FS bottle INTR-break.GER-SM.3FS
'The bottle broke.' / 'The bottle was broken.' |
|---|---|

Nominative-Accusative Alignment. Subjects of transitive and intransitive predicates are aligned with respect to both case and agreement. Internal arguments are differentially accusative marked on the basis of definiteness/specificity and relative prominence (Nazareth 2011).

Head-Final Word Order. The default word order is SOV with a strongly head-final verbal domain.

- (6) ?it-i təmaharaj biqilt'uf məts'haf ji-nibib ?all-o
 DIST-MS student quickly book SM.3MS-read.IPFV AUX.NPST-SM.3MS
 'The student is quickly reading a book.'

Object Marking and Object Shift. Objects that are marked with accusative case morphology are obligatorily cross-referenced by object marking on the main verb and are preferentially shifted to a predicate-initial position.

- (7) ?it-i təmaharaj n=ət-a məts'haf₁ biqilt'uf t₁ ji-nibib-a ?all-o
 DIST-MS student ACC=DIST-FS book quickly SM.3MS-read.IPFV-OM.3FS AUX.NPST-SM.3MS
 'The student is quickly reading the book.'

Information-Structural Fronting. Operations of Topicalization and Scrambling may place phrasal constituents in a clause-initial position. Accusative case marking is generally optional on clause-initial nominal constituents.

- (8) ?it-a məts'haf₁ ?it-i təmaharaj biqilt'uf t₁ ji-nibib-a ?all-o
 DIST-FS book DIST-MS student quickly SM.3MS-read.IPFV-OM.3FS AUX.PRES-SM.3MS
 'The book, the student is quickly reading it.'

3 Patterns of Hyperactivity in Tigrinya

3.1 Long-Distance Hyperagreement into *kəmzi*-clauses

Clausal Complements of Factive Predicates. Factive predicates take clausal complements that are headed by the prefixal complementizer *kəmzi*- and that preferably (%) control object marking (Tesfay 2016, Spadine 2020, van Urk 2024, Cacchioli in preparation).

- (9) a. *pro* [_{CP} ?it-a səbajti n=ət-om təmharo **kəmzi**-rəxab-ət-tom] rəsiŋ-om-(wo)
 3MP DIST-FS woman ACC=DIST-MP student.PL COMP-meet.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3MP forget.GER-SM.3MP-OM.3MS
 ‘They forgot that the woman met the students.’
- b. *pro* [_{CP} ?it-a səbajti **kəmzi**-xəd-ət] fəlit’i-na-(jo)
 1P DIST-FS woman COMP-leave.PRF-SM.3FS know.GER-SM.1P-OM.3MS
 ‘We knew that the woman had left.’

Hyperagreement into Factive Predicates. A logical argument of the embedded clause can control agreement on the embedded predicate and object marking the matrix predicate.

- (10) *pro* [_{CP} ?it-a **səbajti** n=ət-om təmharo **kəmzi**-rəxab-ət-tom] rəsiŋ-om-**wa**
 3MP DIST-FS woman ACC=DIST-MP student.PL COMP-meet.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3MP forget.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS
 ‘They forgot that the woman met the students.’

Unselectivity of Hyperagreement. Long-distance agreement is generally optional and can cross-reference any eligible nominal constituent. Hyperagreement with an argument corresponds with an “emphatic” or topicalized interpretation for the cross-referenced argument.

- (11) ?*pro* [_{CP} ?it-a səbajti **n=ət-en** **dəbdabe-tat** kəmzi=nbib-et-**ən**] fəlit’i-na-**jən**
 1P that-FS woman ACC=that-FP letter-PL COMP=read.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3FP know.GER-SM.1P-OM.3FP
 ‘We knew that the woman read the letters.’

Schematization of Hyperagreement. The observations to come suggest that the hyperactive nominal controls agreement in the matrix clause from its grammatical argument position in the embedded *kəmzi*-clause.

- (12) [_{TP} ... VERB-**AGR** ... [_{TP} ... **NOM** ... VERB-**AGR**]]
-

3.2 Hyperraising-to-Object from *ki*-clauses

Clausal Complements of Intensional Predicates. Intensional predicates take clausal complements that are marked with the subjunctive prefix *ki*- (Cacchioli & Overfelt in preparation, Cacchioli in preparation).

- (13) a. ʔit-i məmh̃ir [_{IP} ʔit-om təmh̃aro ***ki-xəjd-u***] ***ji-dəlli***
 DIST-MS teacher DIST-MP students SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3MS-want.IPFV
 ‘The teacher wants the students to leave.’
- b. *pro* [_{IP} ʔit-om təməharo n=ət-a məts’haf ***ki-nbib-u-wa***] ***ti-ts’əbbə***
 3FS DIST-MP student.PL ACC=DIST-MP book SBJV-read.IPFV-SM.3MP-OM.3FS SM.3FS-expect.IPFV
 ‘She expects the students to read the book.’

Hyperraising-to-Object of Intensional Predicates. The logical subject of the embedded *ki*-clause can control subject marking on the embedded predicate and object marking on the matrix predicate while being marked for accusative case.

- (14) ʔit-i məmh̃ir ***n=ət-om*** ***təmh̃aro***₁ [_{IP} ***t***₁ (ni=)***ki-xəjd-u***] ***ji-dilj-om***
 DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP students ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3FS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 ‘The teacher wants the students to leave.’

Selectivity of Hyperraising. Raising-to-Object and the associated case marking are generally optional and contribute the typical topicalization interpretation associated with object marking. Notably, only the logical subject of the embedded predicate can control matrix object marking.

- (15) **pro* [_{IP} ʔit-om təmh̃aro ***n=ət-a*** ***məts’haf*** ***ki-nbib-u-wa***] ***ti-ts’ebij-a***
 3FS that-MP student.PL ACC=that-FS book SBJV-read.IPFV-SM.3MP-OM.3FS SM.3FS-expect.IPFV-OM.3FS
 ‘She expects the students to read the book.’

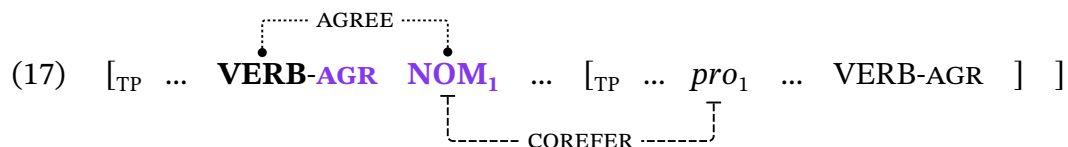
Schematization of Hyperraising-to-Object. The observations to come suggest that an embedded subject that controls agreement in the embedded *ki*-clause becomes a derived object of the matrix clause.

- (16) [_{TP} ... VERB-**AGR** **NOM** ... [_{TP} ... **NOM** ... VERB-**AGR**]]
-

3.3 Initial Considerations Against Prolepsis/Control

Alternative Configurations. We have seen feasible alternative structures in which no nominal engages in more than a single A-relation.

- **Prolepsis / Control** : The target nominal is a constituent of the matrix clause and controls a coreferential (possibly null) pronominal element in the embedded clause.



Ordering with Modifiers. Nominals with the potential for hyperactivity are able to follow modifiers of the embedded predicate, suggesting that they are arguments of the embedded predicate.

- (18) ?*pro* [_{CP} *ts'ibah* ?*it-a* *səbajti* *ki-t-xəjjid* *kəmzi-nəbər-a*] *rəsiŋi-na-(ja)*
 1P tomorrow DIST-FS woman SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PST-SM.3FS forget.GER-SM.1P-OM.3MS
 'We forgot that the woman would leave tomorrow.'

- (19) ??*it-i* *məmhir* [_{IP} *biq'ilt'uf* ?*it-om* *təmharo* *ki-xəjd-u*] *ji-dəl-j-(om)*
 DIST-MS teacher quickly DIST-MP student.PL SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3MS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 'The teacher wants the students to quickly leave.'

Topicalization Constituency. Nominals with the potential for hyperactivity are able to be fronted along with the embedded clause in topicalization constructions, suggesting that they are constituents of the embedded clause.

- (20) [_{CP} ?*it-a* *səbajti* *ts'ibah* *ki-t-xəjjid* *kəmzi-nəbər-a*]₁ ?*it-om* *səb-at* *t₁* *rəsiŋ-om-wa*
 DIST-FS woman tomorrow SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PST-SM.3FS DIST-MP person-PL forget.GER-SM.3MP-OM.3FS
 'Those people forgot that the woman would leave tomorrow.'

- (21) [_{TP} ?*it-om* *təmharo* *n=ət-a* *mets'haf* *ki-nbīb-u-wa*]₁ ?*it-i* *məmhir* *t₁* *ji-dəllij-(om)*
 DIST-MP student.PL ACC=DIST-FS book SBJV-read.IPFV-SM.3MP-OM.3FS DIST-MS teacher SM.3MS-want.IPFV-S.OMP
 'The teacher wants the students to read the book.'

Interpretive Properties. The generic bare nominal *səb* ‘person, people’ is restricted to subject positions but appears in the same grammatical position as nominals with the potential for hyperactivity, suggesting they can serve as the grammatical subjects of the embedded clauses.

(22) ʔit-a səbajti [CP **səb** kəmzi-xəd-ə] rəsiŋ-a
DIST-FS woman person COMP-leave.PRF-SM.3MS forget.GER-SM.3FS
‘The woman forgot that people left.’

(23) ʔit-a səbajti [IP **səb** ki-Ø-xəjjid] ti-dellij
DIST-FS woman person SBJV-SM.3MS-leave.IPFV SM.3FS-want.IPFV
‘The woman wants people to leave.’

(24) a. **səb** *pro* həgiz-u-ni
person 1S help.GER-SM.3MS-OM.1S
‘Someone helped me.’

b. *pro* *(**ni**=)**səb** həgiz-e
1S person help.GER-SM.1S
‘I helped people.’

3.4 Distinguishing Hyperagreement and Hyperraising

Paths to Hyperactivity in Tigrinya. There are at least two separate constructions in which a single nominal argument of an embedded clause controls agreement on the embedded predicate and the matrix predicate.

(25) *pro* [CP **ʔit-a** **səbajti** n=ət-om təmharo kəmzi-rəxab-**ət**-tom] rəsiŋ-om-**wa**
3MP ACC=DIST-FS woman DIST-MP student.PL COMP-meet.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3MP forget.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS
‘They forgot that the woman met the students.’

(26) ʔit-i məmħir **n=ət-om** **təmharo**₁ [IP **t**₁ ni=ki-xəjd-**u**] ji-dilj-**om**
DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP students ACC=IRR-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3FS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
‘The teacher wants the students to read the book.’

Different Instantiations of Hyperactivity. Different complement clauses in Tigrinya show different patterns of hyperactivity.

The Factors for Hyperactivity Patterns in Tigrinya

<i>ki</i> -CLAUSE	<i>kəmzi</i> -CLAUSE
Hyperraising-to-Object	Long-Distance Hyperagreement

Case-Marking the Nominal. Only the hyperactive nominal argument of the *ki*-clause complement of an intensional predicate, not the argument of *kəmzi*-clause, can be marked with accusative Case, reflecting the fact that Raising-to-Object only targets *ki*-clauses.

- (27) *ʔit-om səb-at [CP **n=ət-a səbajti** ki-**t-xəjjid** kəmzi-nəbər-a] rasiŋ-om-(**wa**)
 DIST-MP person-PL DIST-FS woman SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PST-S3FS forget.GER-S-3MP-OM.3FS
 Intended : ‘Those people forgot that the woman would leave.’

- (28) ʔit-i məmhir **n=ət-om təmharo₁** [IP **t₁** ni=ki-xəjd-u] ji-dilj-**om**
 DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP students ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3MS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 ‘The teacher wants the students to leave.’

Remnant Predicate-Fronting. A *ki*-clause under an intensional predicate, but not a *kəmzi*-clause, can undergo remnant topicalization to the exclusion of the hyperactive nominal, suggesting that Raising only targets *ki*-clauses.

- (29) *[CP ki-**t-xəjjid** kəmzi-nəbər-a]₁ ʔit-om səbat **ʔit-a səbajti** **t₁** rasiŋ-om-(**wa**)
 SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PST-S3FS DIST-MP people DIST-FS woman forget.GER-SM.3MP-OM.3FS
 Intended : ‘Those people forgot that the woman would leave.’

- (30) [IP **t₁** ni=ki-xəjd-u]₂ ʔit-i məmhir **n=ət-om təmharo₁** **t₂** ji-dilj-**om**
 ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP students SM.3MS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 ‘The teacher wants the students to read the book.’

Promotion under Passive. The hyperactive nominal argument of the *ki*-clause complement of an intensional predicate, but not the argument of a *kəmzi*-clause, can be promoted to subject by passivizing the matrix predicate, reflecting that Raising-to-Object only targets *ki*-clauses.

- (31) ***ʔit-a səbajti** b=it-om səb-at [CP **t₁** kəmzi-xəd-ət] tə-rəsiŋ-**a**
 DIST-FS woman INS=DIST-MP people COMP=leave.GER-SM.3FS INTR-forget.GER-SM.3FS
 Intended : ‘The woman was forgotten to have left.’

- (32) **ʔit-om təmharo** b=it-i məmhir [IP **t₁** ni=ki-xəjd-u] tə-dəlīj-**om**
 DIST-MP student.PL INS=DIST-MS teacher ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP DT-want.GER-SM.3MP
 ‘The students are wanted by the teacher to leave.’

Minimality. The arguments of a *ki*-clause under an intensional predicate, but not a *kəmzi*-clause, are subject to Minimality effects with respect to being cross-referenced by matrix object marking, which is consistent with the proposed A/ \bar{A} distinction.

- (33) ?*pro* [_{CP} ?it-a səbajti **n=ət-en** **dəbdabe-tat** kəmzi=nbib-et-ən] fəlit'i-na-jən
 1P that-FS woman ACC=that-FP letter-PL COMP=read.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3FP know.GER-SM.1P-OM.3FP
 'We knew that the woman read the letters.'
- (34) a. **pro* [_{IP} ?it-om təmharo **n=ət-a** **məts'haf** ki-nbib-u-wa] ti-ts'ebij-a
 3FS that-MP student.PL ACC=that-FS book SBJV-read.IPFV-SM.3MP-OM.3FS SM.3FS-expect.IPFV-OM.3FS
 'She expects the students to read the book.'
- b. **pro* **n=ət-a** **məts'haf** [_{IP} ?it-om təmharo **t₁** ki-nbib-u-wa] ti-ts'ebij-a
 3FS ACC=that-FS book that-MP student.PL ACC-SBJV-read.IPFV-SM.3MP-OM.3FS SM.3FS-expect.IPFV-OM.3FS
 'She expects the students to read the book.'

3.5 Interim Summary

Different Instantiations of Hyperactivity. Different complement clauses in Tigrinya show different patterns of hyperactivity.

The Factors for Hyperactivity Patterns in Tigrinya

<i>ki</i> -CLAUSE	<i>kəmzi</i> -CLAUSE
Hyperraising-to-Object	Long-Distance Hyperagreement

The Analytical Questions. This state of raises two questions regarding the analytical and theoretical picture here (Zyman 2023).

- **Interrogating the GAC** : What factors predict and explain the ability for a nominal constituent to engage in multiple A-relations?
 - **Interrogating the PIC** : What properties of clauses predict and explain that they are differentially permeable for A-relations?
- (35) **Generalized Activity Condition (GAC)**
 A nominal constituent that is formally licensed under AGREE is inactive, making it inaccessible to A-relations.
- (36) **Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC)**
 The complement of a phase head X^0 is inaccessible to syntactic positions that are outside XP.

4 Non-Predictive and Non-Explanatory Factors for Hyperactivity

Accounting for Variation in Hyperactivity. Parameterization along different dimensions has been claimed to offer an account for the (non)-hyperactivity of nominal constituents cross-linguistically.

(37) **Generalized Activity Condition (GAC)**

A nominal constituent that is formally licensed under AGREE is inactive, making it inaccessible to A-relations.

• **Predicting and Explaining Hyperactivity.** The usual suspects for the (non-)hyperactive behavior of nominal constituents—including Case-licensing and defectiveness—do not contribute to an account of hyperactivity patterns in the language.

Licensing without Deactivation in Tigrinya

Nominal-licensing features and concepts of defectiveness are neither explanatory nor predictive of hyperactivity in Tigrinya.

4.1 Case-Licensing and Nominal Deactivation

Parameterizing Case And Activity. Hyperactivity has been proposed to be a symptom of languages in which traditionally-understood Case is *not* involved in nominal licensing, as has been argued for Bantu languages (Carstens 2011, Carstens & Diercks 2013, Sheehan & van der Wal 2018).

(38) **Abaana** **ba**-labika [**ba**-beera mu-nyuumba eno]

2.children 2MS-seem 2MS-live 18-9.house 9.DEM

‘The children seem to live in this house.’

(Luganda; Sheehan & van der Wal 2018:541, (27b))

Case and Licensing in Tigrinya. Along with other Semitic languages, Tigrinya shows several indicators of being a Case-licensing language (Weldu 2004, Nazareth 2011; see Sheehan & van der Wal 2018 for general discussion).

- **Accusative Case** : Definite/specific objects are typically morphologically marked and undergo Object Shift (Nazareth 2011, Overfelt 2022).

(39) ?it-i təmaharaj n=ət-a dəbdabe qolt’ifu ts’ihif-u-wa

DIST-MS student ACC=DIST-FS book quickly read.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS

‘The student quickly wrote the book.’

- **Preposition/Applicative Case Alternation** : Oblique arguments are marked either with a preposition or they are Case marked and cross-referenced with an applicative agreement marker on the verb (Nazareth 2011).

(40) **?ab=t-i** **?arat** mətə's'haf ?anbir-u
 LOC=DIST-MS bed book put.GER-SM.3MS
 'He put the book on the bed.'

(41) **n=ət-i** **?arat** mətə's'haf ?anbir-u-lu
 ACC=DIST-MS bed book put.GER-SM.3MS-A.3MS
 'He put the book on the bed.'

- **Passive Agent Marking** : The demoted agent of a passive construction must be marked with a preposition.

(42) **?it-i** **təmaharaj** n=ət-a dəbdabe ts'ihif-u-wa
 DIST-MS student ACC=DIST-FS book read.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS
 'The student wrote the letter.'

(43) **?it-a** dəbdabe **b=it-i** **təmaharaj** tə-ts'ahifa
 DIST-FS letter INS=DIST-MS student PASS-write.GER-SM.3FS
 'The letter was written by the student.'

- **Free v. Construct State Possessives** : Possessive constructions alternate between a prepositional possessor frame or fronted possessee DP frame (Nazareth 2011; though see Gebregziabher 2013).

(44) [_{DP} **?it-i** [_{PP} **naj=t-i** **məmhir**] mətə's'haf]
 DIST-MS GEN=DIST-MS teacher book
 'the book of the teacher.'

(adapted from Gebregziabher 2013:116, (37a))

(45) [_{DP} [_{DP} **?it-a** **hafti**] **?it-i** **t₁** **məmhir**]
 DIST-FS sister.F DIST-MS teacher
 'the teacher's sister'

(adapted from Gebregziabher 2013:254, (68b))

Case-Licensing without Deactivation. Nominal constituents that are accessible to additional A-relations are appropriately case-marked and licensed within the embedded clause. The optionality of the hyperactive behaviors indicates that they are not for licensing purposes.

(46) **?it-om** səb-at [_{CP} **?it-a** **səbajti** ki-t-xəjjid kəmzi-nəbər-a] rəsif-om-wa/wo
 DIST-MP person-PL DIST-FS woman IRR-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PST-SM.3FS forget.GER-SM.3MP-OM.3FS/3MS
 'Those people forgot that the woman would leave.'

(47) **?it-i** **məmhir** [_{IP} (**?biq'ilt'uf**) **?it-om** **təmharo** ki-xəjd-u] ji-dəlij-(om)
 DIST-MS teacher quickly DIST-MP student.PL SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3MS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 'The teacher wants the students to quickly leave.'

No Case Discrimination. Hyperactive phenomena are not case discriminating (see Bhatt 2005, Bobaljik 2008). Thus, there is no sense in which unmarked nominative is somehow a defective or more accessible Case.

- (48) ?*pro* [_{CP} ?it-a səbajti **n=ət-en** **dəbdabe-tat** kəmzi=nbib-et-ən] fəlɪt'i-na-jən
 1P that-FS woman ACC=that-FP letter-PL COMP=read.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3FP know.GER-SM.1P-OM.3FP
 'We knew that the woman read the letters.'

Moving away from Case-Licensing. Tigrinya adds to results that should push us away from theories of hyperactivity that rely on Case or Case-licensing (see Carstens & Diercks 2013 on Bantu languages and Keine 2018 on Hindi-Urdu).

Hyperactivity despite Case-licensing

Case-licensing nominals is neither explanatory nor predictive of the hyperactivity of nominals in Tigrinya.

4.2 Defective Domains and Non-Deactivation

No Deactivation in Defective Domains. The hyperactivity of nominal constituents is an expected property of a language in which categories that might otherwise license and deactivate nouns are defective within particular domains (Chomsky 1981, 2000).

(49) Defectivity Condition

A featurally incomplete head is defective, making it unable to license and deactivate nominal constituents.

4.2.1 Defective Φ -Agreement

Incomplete Φ -Agreement. While it has been claimed that incomplete ϕ -agreement does not result in Case-licensing (Chomsky 2000, Ferreira 2009), Carstens (2001) and Nunes (2008) point out that it can be difficult to predict which subset(s) of ϕ -features result in Case-licensing and when.

- (50) **Elle est** mort-**e**
 she be.3SG dead-FSG
 'She is dead.'

(*French*; Carstens 2011:148, (1))

- (51) **o João₁ disse** [que **t₁ comprou** um carro]
 the João said.3SG that bought.3SG a car
 'João said that he bought a car.'

(*Brazilian Portuguese*; Nunes 2008:87, (4))

Agreement Paradigms in Tigrinya. Tigrinya is relevant in this respect because agreement is (almost) always ϕ -complete and transparently shows (almost) entirely non-syncretic morphology for each combination of ϕ -features (Leslau 1941).

Subject	Imperfective	Gerundive	Perfect
SM.3MS	ji-säbbir	säbir-u	säbär-ä
SM.3MP	ji-säbir-u	säbir-om	säbär-u
SM.3FS	ti-säbbir	säbir-a	säbär-ät
SM.3FP	ji-säbir-a	säbir-än	säbär-a
SM.2MS	ti-säbbir	säbir-ka	säbär-ka
SM.2MP	ti-säbir-u	säbir-kum	säbär-kum
SM.2FS	ti-säbir-i	säbir-ki	säbär-ki
SM.2FP	ti-säbir-a	säbir-kin	säbär-kin
SM.1S	ʔi-säbbir	säbir-ä	säbär-ku
SM.1P	ni-säbbir	säbir-na	säbär-na

Table 1: Subject marker paradigms in Tigrinya

Object	Imperfective	Gerundive	Perfect
OM.3MS	ji-k'ätl-o	k'ätil-u-wo	k'ätäl-Ø-o
OM.3MP	ji-k'ätl-om	k'ätil-u-wom	k'ätäl-Ø-om
OM.3FS	ji-k'ätl-a	k'ätil-u-wa	k'ätäl-Ø-a
OM.3FP	ji-k'ätl-än	k'ätil-u-wän	k'ätäl-Ø-än
OM.2MS	ji-k'ätlä-kka	k'ätil-u-kka	k'ätäl-ä-kka
OM.2MP	ji-k'ätlä-kkum	k'ätil-u-kkum	k'ätäl-ä-kkum
OM.2FS	ji-k'ätlä-kki	k'ätil-u-kki	k'ätäl-ä-kki
OM.2FP	ji-k'ätlä-kkin	k'ätil-u-kkin	k'ätäl-ä-kkin
OM.1S	ji-k'ätlä-nni	k'ätil-u-nni	k'ätäl-ä-nni
OM.1P	ji-k'ätlä-nna	k'ätil-u-nna	k'ätäl-ä-nna

Table 2: Object marker paradigms in Tigrinya

Hyperactivity is not Φ -Discriminating. Nominal constituents that control ϕ -complete agreement within an embedded clauses remain accessible to additional A-relations; observe that all agreement relations in hyperactive contexts are ϕ -complete.

- (52) ʔit-ən ʔanəʃti [CP *pro* **nət-om** **təmharo** kəmzi-rəxab-a-ʔom] rəsiʔ-ən-ʔom
 DIST-FP women 3FTP DIST-MP student.PL COMP-meet.PRF-SM.3FP-OM.3MP forget.GER-SM.3FP-OM.3MP
 ‘The women forgot that they met the students.’

- (53) ʔit-i məmhir **n=ət-om** **təmharo**₁ [IP **t**₁ ni=ki-xəjd-u] ji-dilj-om
 DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP students ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3MS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 ‘The teacher wants the students to read the book.’

Independence of Φ -Completeness and Activity. Tigrinya adds to results that should push us away from theories of hyperactivity that rely on the ϕ -completeness of licensing heads (see Carstens 2001, 2011 on Bantu languages).

Hyperactivity Despite Φ -Complete Agreement

The completeness of ϕ -agreement is neither explanatory nor predictive of the hyperactivity of nominals in Tigrinya.

4.2.2 Tense and Defectiveness

No Case-Licensing without Tense. Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1999) argue that the lack of semantic tense on T^0 in embedded subjunctive clauses is responsible for the lack of nominative case, motivating raising beyond an initial agree relationship.

- (54) *Ta pedhia arxisan* [*na trexoun (*avrio)*]
 the children started.3PL SBJV run.3PL tomorrow
 Lit. ‘The children started [to run (*tomorrow)].’ (Greek; as cited in Zyman 2023:33–34, (10)–(11))

Distribution of Tense Auxiliaries. Embedded complement clauses in Tigrinya differ on the basis of whether they are able to contain tense-expressing auxiliary verbs as part of complex tense-aspect constructions, which presumably reflects the realization/presence of T^0 .

- (55) *?it-om səbat* [_{CP} *?it-a səbajti* *ki-t-xəjjid* *kəmzi-nəbər-a*] *rasiŋ-om-wa*
 DIST-MP people DIST-FS woman IRR-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PST-S3FS forget.GER-S-3MP-OM.3FS
 ‘Those people forgot that the woman would leave.’
- (56) **?it-a məmhir n=ət-om təmharo₁* [_{IP} *t₁ ji-nəbib-u* *ki-?all-om*] *ti-dəlj-om*
 DIST-FS teacher DIST-MP student.PL SM.3MP-read.IPFV-SM.3MP SBJV-AUX.NPST-SM.3MP SM.3FS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 Intended : ‘The woman wants the students to be reading.’

Semantic Tense. The possibility for temporal adverbs that differ from the matrix time of evaluation offers evidence that *ki*-clauses generally express semantic tense, even if they are structurally reduced.

- (57) [*?it-a məmhir n=ət-om təmharo₁* [_{IP} *t₁ ts’ibah* *ki-xəjd-u*] *dəlij-a-tom* *nəjr-a*]
 DIST-FS teacher DIST-MP student.PL tomorrow SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP want.GER-SM-3FS-OM.3MP AUX.PST-SM.3MS
 ‘The woman needed to leave tomorrow.’

Hyperactivity is not Tense-Discriminating. Nominal constituents that are licensed in embedded clauses that express Tense remain accessible to additional A-relations. Observe, however, that we can partially predict hyperraising from the morphosyntactic expression of Tense.

Independence of Tense and Activity. Tigrinya adds to results that should push us away from theories of hyperactivity that rely on the morphosyntactic and semantic expression of Tense (see Zeller 2006 on Zulu).

Hyperactivity Despite Variation in Tense

The expression of Tense is neither explanatory nor predictive of the hyperactivity of nominals in Tigrinya.

4.3 Interim Summary

- **Predicting and Explaining Hyperactivity.** The usual suspects for the (non-)hyperactive behavior of nominal constituents—including Case-licensing and defectiveness—do not contribute to an account of hyperactivity patterns in the language.

Licensing without Deactivation in Tigrinya

Nominal-licensing features and concepts of defectiveness are neither explanatory nor predictive of hyperactivity in Tigrinya.

Non-Predictive and Non-Explanatory Factors. The major approaches for constraining and restricting hyperactivity cross-linguistically do not contribute to an account of hyperactivity patterns in Tigrinya.

- **Interrogating the GAC** : Nominals in Tigrinya appear to be exempt from the Generalized Activity Condition. (58) **Generalized Activity Condition (GAC)**
A nominal constituent that is formally licensed under AGREE is inactive, making it inaccessible to A-relations.
- **Interrogating the PIC** : Embedded clauses that appear to be non-defective are differentially permeable for A-relations. (59) **Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC)**
The complement of a phase head X^0 is inaccessible to syntactic positions that are outside XP.

5 The Factors for Hyperactivity in Tigrinya

Predicting Hyperactivity in Tigrinya Patterns of hyperactivity in Tigrinya are predictable on the basis of the argument structure of the embedding predicate and the type of clausal complement.

The Factors for Hyperactivity Patterns in Tigrinya

	<i>ki</i> -IP	<i>kəmzi</i> -CP
TRANSITIVE	Hyperraising-to-Object	Long-Distance Hyperagreement
UNACCUSATIVE	Long-Distance Hyperagreement	—

5.1 Hyperactivity under Argument Structure Alternations

Different Predicate Types. We observe variation in hyperactivity patterns with *ki*-clauses as a function of the argument structure of the matrix predicate, suggesting that properties of the matrix predicate determine hyperactivity patterns in Tigrinya.

5.1.1 Long-Distance Hyperagreement under Unaccusatives

Clausal Complements of Pseudo-Modal Predicates. Pseudo-modal predicates also take *ki*-clause complements (Tesfay 2016, Gebregziabher 2021, Cacchioli & Overfelt in preparation, Overfelt & Cacchioli under review).

- (60) a. *expl* [_{IP} ?it-a səbəjti ki-ti-xəjjid] ji-gibba?
 DIST-FS woman.F SBJV-S3FS-leave.IPFV SM.3MS-need.IPFV
 ‘The woman needs to leave.’
- b. *expl* [_{IP} ?it-a səbəjti ki-ti-xəjjid] nəjr-u-wa (ʔall-o-wa)
 DIST-FS woman.F SBJV-S3FS-leave.IPFV have.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS have.IPFV-SM.3MS-OM.3FS
 ‘The woman had to leave.’

Unaccusative Predicates. Pseudo-modal predicates that take *ki*-clause complements show several indicators for being unaccusative constructions (Cacchioli & Overfelt in preparation).

- **No External Argument** : The obligatory 3MS subject marking on the strong modals cannot be interpreted as a contentful subject, suggesting the predicate does not introduce a subject argument. This similarly suggests that there is no Raising-to-Subject.

- (61) (*nissu) [?it-a səbəjti ki-ti-xəjjid] ji-giba?-a
 3MS.NOM DIST-FS woman.F SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 Intended: ‘He needs the woman to leave.’

- **Unpassivizeable** : The inability to express an agent as a prepositional phrase demonstrates that these predicates cannot be passivized, suggesting they are unaccusatives.

- (62) *ʔit-om təmharo₁ b=it-a məmhir [_{IP} t₁ ki-xejd-u] ji-giba?-u
 DIST-MP student.PL INS=DIST-FS teacher SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3MP
 Intended : ‘The students were needed by the teacher to leave.’

Hyperagreement into Pseudo-modal Complements. A logical argument of the embedded clause can control agreement on the embedded predicate and object marking the matrix predicate. For reasons that are not clear, this is obligatory for the predicate /hlw/.

- (63) a. [IP **?it-a** **sebajti** n-ət-ən dəbdabe-tat ki-**ti**-ts'ihif-ən] ji-gibba?-(**a**)
 DIST-FS woman ACC=DIST-FP letter-PL SBJV-SM.3FS-write.IPFV-OM.3FP SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 'The woman needs to write the letters.'
- b. [IP **?it-om** **k'olʃu** bihidat ki-Ø-nbib-**u**] ?all-o-**wom**
 DIST-MP children calmly SBJV-SM.3MP-read.IPFV-SM.3MP have.IPFV-SM.3MS-OM.3MP
 'The boys have to read calmly'

Against Prolepsis / Control. Familiar observations suggest that the hyperactive nominal is generated as an argument of the embedded predicate, not as an argument of the pseudo-modal matrix clause predicate.

- **Ordering with Modifiers** : The hyperactive nominal follows modifiers of the embedded predicate.

- (64) *expl* [IP **bi=bikeri** **səgen** maj ki-**t**-sətti] ji-giba?-**a**
 INS=cup Segen water SBJV-SM.3FS-drink.IPFV SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 'Segen needs to drink water with a cup.'

- **Bare Nominal səb** : The subject-locked bare nominal *səb* serves as the hyperactive logical subject of the embedded predicate.

- (65) *expl* [IP **səb** ni=gəz-u ki-Ø-xəjjid] ji-gibo?-(**o**)
 person LOC=house-POSSM.3MS SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3MS
 'Someone needs to go to his house.'

Against Hyperraising-to-Object. Familiar observations suggest that the hyperactive nominal remains a constituent of the embedded clause and is not a derived argument of the pseudo-modal matrix clause predicate.

- **Non-Minimality** : The lack of minimality effects suggests that the hyperactive behaviors do not involve Raising.

- (66) [TP **?it-a** **səbajti** n=ət-om mətʃ-haf-**ti** ki-**ti**-nbib-om] ji-giba?-**a/om**
 that-FS woman that-MP book-PL IRR-S.1S-read.IPFV-O.3MP S.3MS-need.IPFV-O.3FS/3MP
 'I need to read the book.'

- **Case-Marking** : The fact that the hyperactive nominal displays the case marking expected from its grammatical role in the embedded clause suggests that it does not undergo Raising.

(67) **expl* [*n=ot-a* *səbajti* ki-ti-xəjjid] ji-gibba?-(a)
 ACC-DIST-FS woman SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 ‘The woman needs to leave.’

5.1.2 Raising-to-Subject under Passives

No Raising-to-Subject under Unaccusatives. The obligatory default 3MS subject marking on an unaccusative that selects a *ki*-clause suggests that there is no Raising-to-Subject in these contexts. Indeed the logical subject cannot control subject marking on the matrix predicate.

(68) **?it-a* *səbajti* [*t₁* ki-*ti*-xəjjid] *ti*-gibba?
 DIST-FS woman.F SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 Intended: ‘The woman needs to leave.’

Raising-to-Subject under Passives. But there is no blanket constraint against Raising-to-Subject in the language; we observe exactly this in passive constructions.

(69) *?it-om* *təmhəro* b=i-t-i memhir [IP *t₁* ni=ki-xəjd-*u*] tə-dəlij-*om*
 DIST-MP student.PL INS=DIST-MS teacher ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP DT-want.GER-SM.3MP
 ‘The students are wanted by the teacher to leave.’

The Composition of Predicates. These differences can be taken to reveal that predicates with different argument structures are compositionally distinct (e.g., Pylkkänen 2008, Alexiadou et al. 2015, Kastner 2016, Sokol 2025) and drive different hyperactivity patterns.

- **Transitive Predicates** : Transitive predicates contain a derived object position that can be targeted by Raising and agreement.
- **Unaccusative Predicates** : Unaccusative predicates lack a derived object position and shows only agreement with an embedded argument.
- **Passive Predicates** : Passive predicates contain a derived object position that can be targeted by Raising.

5.2 Clause Type and Hyperactivity Patterns

Different Clause Types. Complement *kəmzi*-clauses and *ki*-clauses can be distinguished on the basis of several factors, suggesting that differences amongst clause types determine hyperactivity patterns in Tigrinya.

Expression of Tense. The *kəmzi*-clause complement of a factive predicate, but not the *ki*-clause complement of an intensional predicate, is capable of hosting auxiliaries that express morphosyntactic tense.

- (70) ?it-om səbat [CP ?it-a səbajti ki-t-xəjjid kəmzi-nəbər-a] rasiŋ-om-wa
 DIST-MP people DIST-FS woman IRR-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PST-S3FS forget.GER-S-3MP-OM.3FS
 ‘Those people forgot that the woman would leave.’
- (71) *?it-a məmhir n=ət-om təmharo₁ [IP t₁ ji-nəbib-u ki-?all-om] ti-dəlj-om
 DIST-FS teacher DIST-MP student.PL SM.3MP-read.IPFV-SM.3MP SBJV-AUX.NPST-SM.3MP SM.3FS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 Intended : ‘The woman wants the students to be reading.’
- (72) *[IP ?it-a səbajti ti-nəbib ki-?all-a] ji-giba?-a
 DIST-FS woman.F SM.3FS-read.IPFV IRR-AUX.NPST-SM.3FS SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 Intended : ‘The woman needs to be reading.’

Default Agreement. The *kəmzi*-clause complement of a factive predicate, but not the *ki*-clause complement of an intensional predicate, is capable of triggering default object marking in the matrix clause.

- (73) pro [CP ?it-a səbajti n=ət-om təmharo kəmzi-rəxab-ət-om] rəsiŋ-om-(wo)
 3MP DIST-FS woman ACC=DIST-MP student.PL COMP-meet.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3MP forget.GER-SM.3MP-OM.3MS
 ‘They forgot that the woman met the students.’
- (74) *?it-a məmhir [IP ?it-om təmharo ni=ki-xəjjid-u] ti-dəlj-o
 DIST-FS teacher DIST-MP student.PL ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3FS-want.IPFV-OM.3MS
 Intended: ‘The teacher wants the students to leave.’

Clausal Object Shift The *kəmzi*-clause complement of a factive predicate, but not the *ki*-clause complement of an intensional predicate, can appear in a derived object position.

- (75) $[_{CP} \text{ʔit-a} \quad \text{səbajti} \quad \text{ki-t-xəjed} \quad \text{kəmzi-nəbər-a} \quad]_1 \text{timali} \quad t_1 \quad \text{rəsiŋ-na-jo}$
 DIST-FS woman SBJV-SM.3FS-leave.IPFV COMP-AUX.PAST-SM.3FS yesterday forget.GER-SM.1P-OM.3MS
 ‘Yesterday we forgot that the woman would leave.’
- (76) $*\text{ʔit-a} \quad \text{məmhɪr} \quad [_{IP} \text{n=ət-om} \quad \text{təmharo} \quad \text{ki-xejjɪd-u} \quad]_1 \text{timali} \quad t_1 \quad \text{delij-a-ttom} \quad \text{nəjr-a}$
 DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP student.PL SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP yesterday want.GER-SM.3FS-OM.3MP AUX.PAST-SM.3FS
 Intended: ‘Yesterday the teacher wanted to students to leave.’

The Composition of Clauses. These differences reveal that complement clauses are compositionally distinct (e.g., Halpert 2019).

- ***kəmzi*-clause CPs** : CPs headed by *kəmzi*- satisfy the EPP features of functional heads and are targets for A-relations.
- ***ki*-clause IPs** : IPs headed by *ki*- do not satisfy the EPP features of functional heads and are not targets for A-relations.

5.3 Functional Heads Driving Hyperactive Behaviors

Explanatory Factors for Hyperactivity. Hyperactivity patterns in Tigrinya reflect the interactions of the formal properties of embedded clauses and the v^0 that is probing them (e.g., Pylkkänen 2008, Alexiadou et al. 2015, Kastner 2016, Sokol 2025).

The Factors for Hyperactivity Patterns in Tigrinya

		<i>ki</i> -CLAUSE	<i>kəmzi</i> -CLAUSE
TRANSITIVE	v^0 : [EPP , ϕ]	Hyperraising-to-Object	Long-Distance Hyperagreement
UNACCUSATIVE	v^0 : [ϕ]	Long-Distance Hyperagreement	—
PASSIVE	v^0 : [EPP]	Hyperraising-to-Subject	CP Promotion to Subject

Argument Structure Drives Syntax. Tigrinya employs a series of v^0 heads that differ in their specification for a movement-licensing [EPP] feature and ϕ -features and these determine the deployment of A-operations.

5.3.1 Hyperraising-to-Object under Transitives

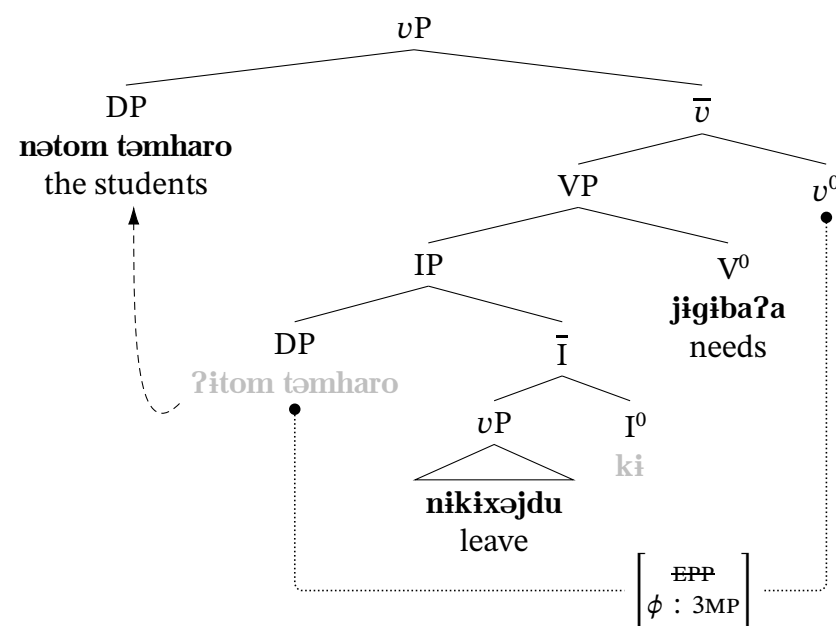
Φ -Features and EPP on Transitive v^0 . A nominal argument in the *ki*-IP complement of transitive intensional predicate satisfies the [EPP , ϕ] features of the matrix v^0 and undergoes Hyperraising-to-Object.

- (77) ?it-i məmħir **n=ət-om** **təmharo_1** [_{IP} **t_1** ni=ki-xəjd-u] ji-dilj-om
 DIST-FS teacher ACC=DIST-MP students ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP SM.3FS-want.IPFV-OM.3MP
 ‘The teacher wants the students to read the book.’

(78) Analysis of Hyperraising-to-Object in (77)

- Matrix v^0 probes to satisfy [EPP] and [ϕ :].
- The highest nominal argument can satisfy [EPP].
- The highest nominal argument values [ϕ : 3FS].
- The probed argument raises to the matrix object position.

(79)



5.3.2 Long-Distance Hyperagreement into *kəmzi*-CPs

Transitive v^0 with *kəmzi*-CP. The *kəmzi*-CP complement of a factive predicate satisfies the [EPP] of the matrix v^0 but does not value [ϕ :]. An optional second probe identifies the highest eligible nominal to value [ϕ :].

- (80) *pro* [_{CP} **?it-a** **səbajti** n=ət-om təmharo kəmzi-rəxab-ət-tom] rəsiŋ-om-wo/**wa**
 3MP ACC=DIST-FS woman DIST-MP student.PL COMP-meet.PRF-SM.3FS-OM.3MP forget.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS/3MS
 ‘They forgot that the woman met the students.’

(81) Analysis of Long-Distance Agreement in (80)

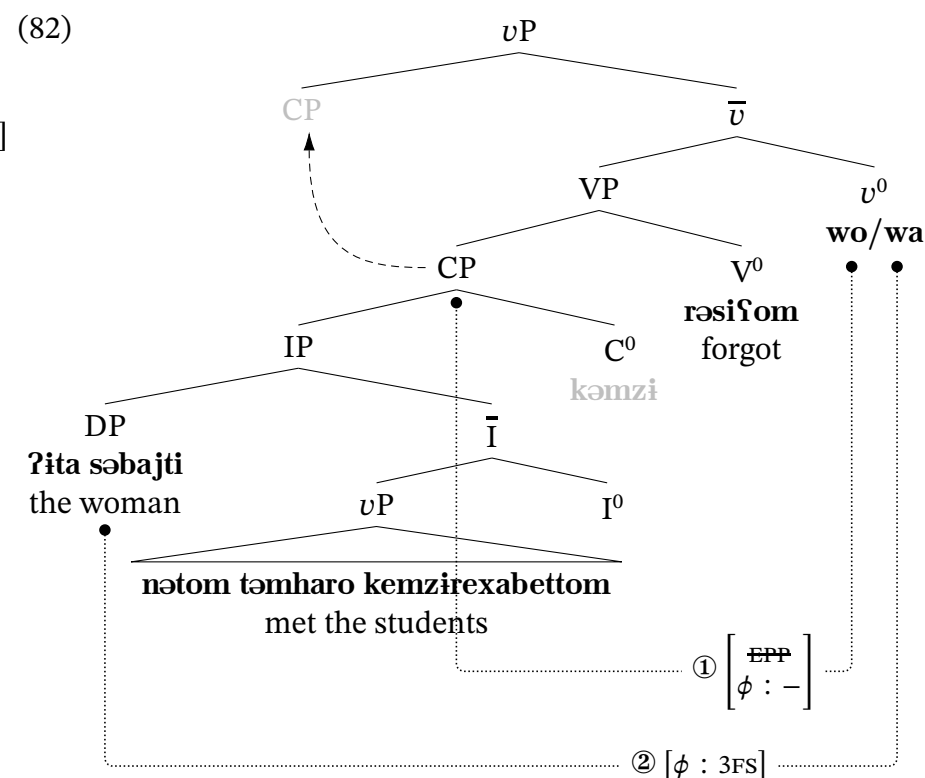
- Matrix v^0 probes to satisfy [EPP] and [ϕ :].
- The *kəmzi*-CP is the highest object that can satisfy the [EPP]
- The *kəmzi*-CP cannot value the [ϕ :]

① Default Agreement

- Default 3MS features are inserted to satisfy [ϕ :].
- The *kəmzi*-CP shifts to matrix object position.

② Long-Distance Agreement

- Matrix v^0 probes again to satisfy [ϕ :].
 - The *kəmzi*-CP is not an intervener for ϕ -probing.
 - The highest eligible nominal argument values [ϕ :].
- The *kəmzi*-CP shifts to matrix object position.



Interaction and Satisfaction. Like the analysis in Halpert (2019), the idea presented here is built upon a model of agree that allows a head to interact with multiple features but only be satisfied by a subset of those features (see Deal 2023).

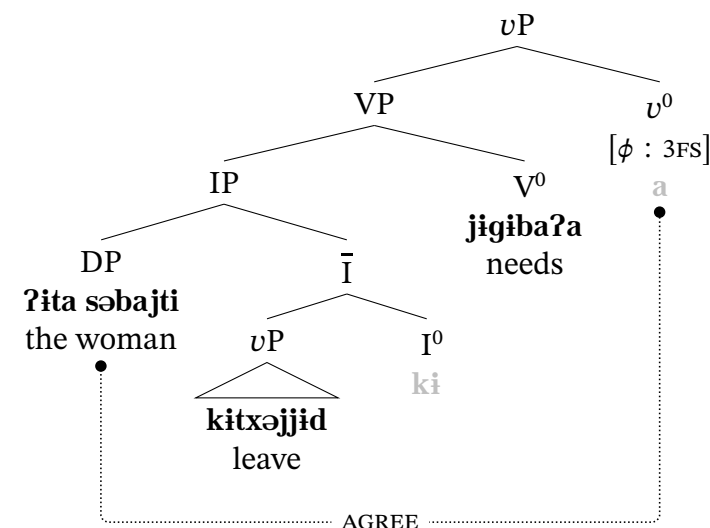
5.3.3 Long-Distance Hyperagreement under Unaccusatives

No EPP on Unaccusative v^0 . A nominal argument in the *ki*-TP complement of an unaccusative pseudo-modal controls matrix object agreement to satisfy $[\phi :]$ of the matrix v^0 .

- (83) *expl* [_{IP} **?it-a səbəjti** ki-ti-xəjjid] ji-giba?-**a** (85)
 DIST-FS woman.F SBJV-S3FS-leave.IPFV SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FS
 ‘The woman needs to leave.’

(84) **Analysis of Long-Distance Hyperagreement in (83)**

- Matrix v^0 probes to satisfy $[\phi :]$.
- The highest eligible nominal values $[\phi : 3FS]$.



Blocking Hyperraising-to-Subject. Something still has to be said for why there is no Hyperraising-to-Subject here. We might stipulate that null expletives are generated low in non-[EPP] positions and serve as targets for ϕ -agreement (Deal 2009), and therefore as interveners.

Comments on the Alternatives. The fact that long-distance agreement can target nominals that the embedded verb does not agree with suggests that hyperagreement is not verbal concord.

- (86) *?expl* [_{IP} *pro* **?it-ən** **birfo-tat n=ət-i** **temaharaj** ki-Ø-hib-**o**] ji-giba?-**en**
 1S DIST-FP pen-PL ACC=DIST-MS student SBJV-SM.1S-give.IPFV-OM.3MS SM.3MS-need.IPFV-OM.3FP
 ‘I need to give the student the pens.’

And while Cyclic Agreement (Legate 2005) and Read-Only Phases (Agarwal 2022) may generate long-distance agreement constructions in Tigrinya, these approaches neither predict nor explain the different instantiations of hyperactivity as a function of argument structure.

5.3.4 Raising-to-Subject under Passives

Only EPP on Passive v^0 . A nominal argument in the *ki*-TP complement of a passive predicate satisfies the [EPP] of the matrix v^0 .

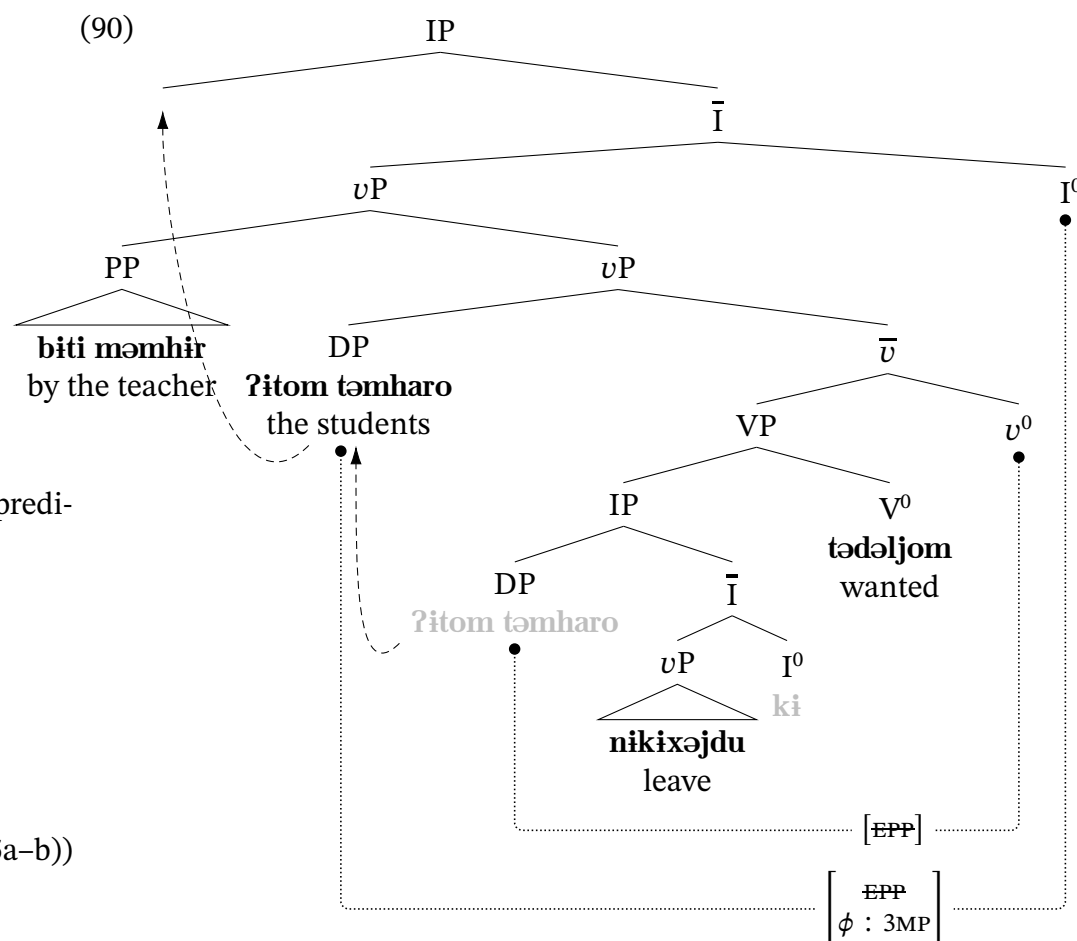
- (87) **?it-om təmharo** b=it-i memhir [_{IP} **t₁** ni=ki-xəjd-u] tə-dəlɨj-om
 DIST-MP student.PL INS=DIST-MS teacher ACC=SBJV-leave.IPFV-SM.3MP DT-want.GER-SM.3MP
 ‘The students are wanted by the teacher to leave.’

(88) Analysis of Raising-to-Subject in (87)

- Matrix v^0 probes to satisfy [EPP].
- The highest nominal argument can satisfy [EPP].
- The probed argument raises to the matrix object.
- Matrix I^0 probes to satisfy [EPP, ϕ].
- The highest nominal argument can satisfy [EPP].
- The highest nominal argument can value [ϕ].
- The probed argument raises to the matrix subject.

Lack of Object Marking. That the v^0 of a passivized transitive predicate lacks ϕ -features on passivized transitive predicates.

- (89) a. Yonas n=ət-a t'irmuz səbir-u-wa
 Yonas ACC=DIST-FS bottle break.GER-SM.3MS-OM.3FS
 ‘Yonas broke the bottle.’
 b. ?it-a t'irmuz tə-səbir-a
 DIST-FS bottle INTR-break.GER-SM.3FS
 ‘The bottle broke.’ / ‘The bottle was broken.’
 (Nazareth 2011:56, (55a–b))



6 Conclusion

Implications from Tigrinya. The usual suspects for the (non-)hyperactive behavior of nominal constituents—including Case-licensing and defectiveness—do not contribute to an account of hyperactivity patterns in the language.

Licensing without Deactivation in Tigrinya

Nominal-licensing features and concepts of defectiveness are neither explanatory nor predictive of hyperactivity patterns.

Predicting Hyperactivity in Tigrinya Hyperactivity patterns in Tigrinya reflect the interactions of the formal properties of embedded clauses and the v^0 that is probing them (e.g., Pytkänen 2008, Alexiadou et al. 2015, Kastner 2016, Sokol 2025).

The Factors for Hyperactivity Patterns in Tigrinya

		<i>ki</i> -CLAUSE	<i>kəmzi</i> -CLAUSE
TRANSITIVE	v^0 : [EPP , ϕ]	Hyperraising-to-Object	Long-Distance Hyperagreement
UNACCUSATIVE	v^0 : [ϕ]	Long-Distance Hyperagreement	—
PASSIVE	v^0 : [EPP]	Hyperraising-to-Subject	CP Promotion to Subject

Motivating Patterns of Hyperactivity. Patterns of hyperactivity in Tigrinya can be explained on the basis of the formal requirements of verbal functional heads in the matrix clause (Zyman 2018, Halpert 2019, Fong 2019, Lohninger et al. 2022, Lee & Yip 2024, Halpert & Zeijlstra 2024).

Enlightened Self-Interest of Functional Heads

Patterns of hyperactivity in Tigrinya reflect properties of the embedded clauses and the probes attempting to access them.

References

- Agarwal, Hashmita. 2022. Phases are read-only. Doctoral Dissertation, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.
- Alexiadou, Artemis, & Elena Anagnostopoulou. 1999. Raising without infinitives and the nature of agreement. In *Proceedings of the 18th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, ed. Sonya Bird, Andrew Carnie, Jason D. Haugen, & Peter Norquest, 15–25. Somerville, MA: Cascadia.
- Alexiadou, Artemis, Elena Anagnostopoulou, & Florian Schäfer. 2015. *External arguments in transitivity alternations: A layering approach*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bhatt, Rajesh. 2005. Long distance agreement in Hindi-Urdu. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 23:757–807.
- Bobaljik, Jonathan. 2008. Where's phi? Agreement as a post-syntactic operation. In *Phi theory: Phi-features across interfaces and modules*, ed. Daniel Harbour, David Adger, & Susana Béjar, 295–328. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Cacchioli, Gioia. in preparation. The syntax of clausal prefixes in Tigrinya. Doctoral Dissertation, Université de Genève, Geneva.
- Cacchioli, Gioia, & Jason Overfelt. in preparation. *The syntax of verbal modality in Tigrinya*. Université de Genève and Oakland University, Geneva and Rochester, MI.
- Carstens, Vicki. 2001. Multiple agreement and case deletion: Against ϕ -incompleteness. *Syntax* 4:147–163.
- Carstens, Vicki. 2011. Hyperactivity and hyperagreement in Bantu. *Lingua* 121:721–741.
- Carstens, Vicki, & Michael Diercks. 2013. Parameterizing Case and Activity: Hyper-raising in Bantu. In *Proceedings of NELS 40*, ed. Seda Kan, Claire Moore-Cantwell, & Robert Staubs, 99–118. Amherst, MA: UMass GLSA.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1981. *Lectures on government and binding*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Foris.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2000. Minimalist inquiries: The framework. In *Step by step: Essays on Minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*, ed. Roger Martin, David Michaels, & Juan Uriagereka, 89–156. MIT Press.
- Deal, Amy Rose. 2009. The origin and content of expletives: Evidence from “selection”. *Syntax* 12:285–323.
- Deal, Amy Rose. 2023. *Current models of Agree*. University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.
- Ferreira, Marcelo. 2009. Null subjects and finite control in Brazilian Portuguese. In *Minimalist essays on brazilian portuguese syntax*, ed. Jairo Nunes, 17–50. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Fong, Suzana. 2019. Proper movement through spec-CP: An argument from hyperraising in Mongolian. *Glossa* 4:1–42.
- Gebregziabher, Keffyalew. 2013. Projecting possessors: A morphosyntactic investigation of nominal possession in Tigrinya. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada.
- Gebregziabher, Keffyalew. 2021. Clitics or agreement markers: A view from Tigrinya clausal possession and modal necessity. In *Celebrating 50 years of ACAL: Selected Papers from the 50th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, ed. Akinbiyi Akinlabi, Lee Bickmore, Michael Cahill, Michael Diercks, Laura L. Downing, James Essegbey, Katie Franich, Laura McPherson, & Sharon Rose, 73–119. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Halpert, Claire. 2019. Raising, unphased. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 37:123–165.
- Halpert, Claire, & Hedde Zeijlstra. 2024. *Off phases: It's all relative(ized)*. Ms., University of Minnesota and Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, <https://lingbuzz.net/lingbuzz/008323>.
- Kastner, Itamar. 2016. Form and meaning in the Hebrew verb. Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, New York, NY.
- Keine, Stefan. 2018. Case vs. positions in the locality of A-movement. *Glossa* 3:1–34.
- Lee, Tommy Tsz-Ming, & Ka-Fai Yip. 2024. Hyperraising, evidentiality, and phase deactivation. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 42:1527–1578.

- Legate, Julie Anne. 2005. Phases and cyclic agreement. In *Perspectives on Phases*, volume 49, 147–156. Cambridge, MA: MIT Working Papers in Linguistics.
- Leslau, Wolf. 1941. *Documents Tigrigna*. Paris: La Société de Linguistique de Paris.
- Lohninger, Magdalena, Iva Kovač, & Susanne Wurmbrand. 2022. From prolepsis to hyperraising. *Philosophies* 7:1–40.
- Nazareth Amlesom Kifle. 2011. Tigrinya applicatives in Lexical-Functional Grammar. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Bergen, Bergen.
- Nevins, Andrew. 2005. Derivations without the Activity Condition. In *Mit working papers in linguistics* 49, ed. Martha McGinnis & Norvin Richards, 287–310. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Niguss Weldezgu Mehari. 2021. A grammar of Rayya Tigrinya. Doctoral Dissertation, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Nunes, Jairo. 2008. Inherent case as a licensing condition for A-movement: The case of hyper-raising constructions in Brazilian Portuguese. *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* 7:83–108.
- Overfelt, Jason. 2022. Asymmetrical symmetry in Tigrinya object marking. In *Angles of Object Agreement*, ed. Andrew Nevins, Anita Peti-Stantić, Mark de Vos, & Jana Willer-Gold, 135–163. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Overfelt, Jason, & Gioia Cacchioli. under review. Hyperagreement and Case-licensing in Tigrinya. In *Selected Papers from the 55th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Pylkkänen, Liina. 2008. *Introducing arguments*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Sheehan, Michelle, & Jenneke van der Wal. 2018. Nominal licensing in caseless languages. *Journal of Linguistics* 54:527–589.
- Sokol, Coleman. 2025. The *ti-* in Tigrinya: An analysis of valence-decreasing morphology in Tigrinya. In *Queen Mary's Occasional Papers Advancing Linguistics*, 54, 1–30. London, UK.
- Spadine, Carolyn. 2020. The structure of attitude reports: Representing context in grammar. Doctoral Dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, MA.
- Tesfay Tewolde Yohannes. 2016. *DPs, Phi-features and tense in the context of Abyssinian (Eritrean and Ethiopian) Semitic languages*. Firenze, Italy: Firenze University Press.
- Tsehaye Kiros Mengesha. 2009. A comparison of Wajerat Tigrinya vs. Standard Tigrinya. Master's thesis, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- van Urk, Coppe. 2024. *The morphological consequences of complementizer placement in Tigrinya*. Talk presented at Affixation in Afroasiatic, Paris. October 3.
- Weldu Michael Weldeyesus. 2004. Case marking systems in two Ethiopian Semitic languages. In *Colorado research in linguistics*, volume 17, 1–16. Boulder: University of Colorado.
- Weninger, Stefan, ed. 2011. *The Semitic Languages: An international handbook*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Zeller, Jochen. 2006. Raising out of finite cp in Nguni: The case of *fanele*. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 24:255–275.
- Zyman, Erik. 2018. On the driving force for syntactic movement. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA.
- Zyman, Erik. 2023. Raising out of finite clauses (hyperraising). *Annual Review of Linguistics* 9:29–48.