

Intervention Effects: Why Amharic Patterns Differently

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1. Introduction

Attempts to determine the underlying cause of intervention effects, in which a quantificational or focusing element *c*-commanding a *wh*-phrase leads to ungrammaticality, have run the gamut from syntactic (Pesetsky 2000), through semantic (Beck 2006), to information-structural accounts (Tomioka 2007). By presenting novel data from Amharic, a Semitic *wh*-in-situ language, this paper shows that the empirical basis of these accounts is lacking, and that intervention effects are sensitive to hierarchical structure in a manner not previously considered. Specifically, I claim that in Amharic potential interveners are positioned above the Q operator in C^0 , allowing the necessary relation between Q and the *wh*-phrase to be established, and hence no intervention effects are found in the language.

2. Background

Intervention effects arise when a quantificational or focusing element, labeled the intervener, *c*-commands a *wh*-phrase, and both the intervener and *wh*-phrase are *c*-commanded by the Q operator in C^0 , as illustrated in (1):

(1) *[Q_i [... [intervener [... *wh*-phrase,...]]]] (Beck 2006:5)

Beginning with Hoji (1985), this phenomenon has garnered a great deal of attention in the theoretical literature, from which we may glean a number of generalizations. First, there exist four primary types of interveners: certain quantificational elements (2), focused phrases (3), negative polarity items (NPIs) (4), and disjunctive NPs (5).

(2) a. ??nukuna-ka ônú kyosu-lûl chonkyôngha-ni?
 everyone-NOM which professor-ACC respect-Q
 b. ônú kyosu-lûl nukuna-ka chonkyôngha-ni?
 which professor-ACC everyone-NOM respect-Q
 'For which x, x a professor: everyone respects x?' (Korean; Beck 2006:4)

(3) a. *Minsu-man nuku-lûl po-ass-ni?
 Minsu-only who-ACC see-PAST-Q
 b. nuku-lûl Minsu-man po-ass-ni?
 who-ACC Minsu-only see-PAST-Q
 'Who did only Minsu see?' (Korean; Beck 2006:3)

(4) a. *amuto muôs-ûl ilk-chi anh-ass-ni?
 anyone what-ACC read-CHI not.do-PAST-Q
 b. muôs-ûl amuto ilk-chi anh-ass-ni?
 what-ACC anyone read-CHI not.do-PAST-Q
 'What did no one read?' (Korean; Beck 2006:4)

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- (5) a. ???[John-ka Bill]-ga nani-o yon-da-no?
 John-or Bill-NOM what-ACC read-past-Q?
 b. nani-o [John-ka Bill]-ga yon-da-no?
 what-ACC John-or Bill-NOM read-past-Q
 'What did John or Bill read?' (Japanese; Tomioka 2007:1571)

Second, despite the existence of crosslinguistic variation in the exact elements that give rise to intervention effects (Beck 2006), there seems to be a core set of crosslinguistically stable interveners, identified by Kim (2002) and Beck (2006) as those focusing operators which correspond to English *only*, *even*, and *also*, as well as NPIs (see also Tomioka 2007). Beck (2006) further conjectures that the effect itself is universal, and thus an explanation for it should be sought in the basic properties of the grammar. Indeed, intervention effects have been documented in a wide range of genetically and typologically distinct languages: Asante Twi, Bangla, Dutch, English, French, German, Hindi-Urdu, Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin, Passamaquaddy, Persian, Thai, and Turkish (Kim 2002, Simpson & Bhattacharya 2003, Beck 2006, Kobele & Torrence 2006)¹. Lastly, the (b) versions in examples (2)-(5) above illustrate an important observation; namely, that the effects are eliminated if the *wh*-phrase is scrambled over the intervener.

3. Existing analyses of intervention effects

Early analyses of intervention effects considered them evidence for a distinction between overt movement and movement at LF, so that Beck (1996), for example, claimed that intervening quantifiers block LF movement of an in-situ *wh*-phrase. These approaches have been abandoned, since the basic assumptions underlying them are no longer thought to hold: the restrictions on overt movement and LF movement are nowadays believed to be identical (Chomsky 1993), and in any case, many current theories do not assume that in-situ *wh*-phrases move at all (e.g., Tsai 1994). In addition, the early approaches did not provide a clear definition for the set of interveners.

Most current analyses begin by addressing the latter issue, presuming that identifying the unique properties of interveners will provide a correct perspective on the subject as a whole. Thus, Beck (2006) proposes that interveners are the set of operators which can have focus affected readings, i.e., they come with the focus operator \sim in the sense of Rooth (1992). In the general case, when the operator \sim applies to its complement, it resets the focus semantic value of the c-commanding node to its ordinary semantic value, and hence alternatives introduced below the operator cannot be used by operators higher up. *Wh*-phrases, however, only introduce alternatives into the computation (i.e., the set of answers to the question) and lack an ordinary semantic value. Accordingly, when \sim takes a *wh*-phrase as its argument the resulting value is undefined, this undefinedness is inherited by the entire question, and the result is ungrammatical. *Wh*-phrases require the Q operator, which uses the focus semantic value and outputs it as the ordinary semantics of the question. The clear, crosslinguistically applicable prediction arising from this theory is that "a *wh*-phrase may never have a focus-sensitive operator other than the Q operator as its closest c-commanding potential binder" (Beck 2006:46).

Beck (2006) introduces a syntactic aspect to her theory by adopting Pesetsky's (2000) classification of the types of movement available in natural language. Specifically, she maintains that of the three types of movement identified by Pesetsky, overt phrasal movement, covert phrasal movement and feature movement, only the latter detects intervention effects, because it leaves *wh*-phrases in a position c-commanded by \sim at LF. Pesetsky provides us with further diagnostics to probe the type of movement *wh*-phrases in Amharic undergo, as demonstrated in table 1. We thus derive the following predictions as particularly relevant to Amharic *wh*-phrases, whose behavior will be described in section 4: A configuration that lacks intervention effects (1) licenses *wh*-phrases through covert phrasal movement; (2) will exhibit Superiority effects; (3) will not allow *wh*-phrases inside islands.

¹ For many of these languages, the examples provided involve only one type of intervener, and in particular an NPI. What to make of this is unclear, since NPIs are known to behave differently from other interveners (see below; Tomioka 2007). More data from a wider range of languages is obviously needed.

Feature Movement	Covert Phrasal Movement
– Doesn't license Antecedent Contained Deletion (ACD)	– Licenses ACD
– No Superiority effects	– Superiority effects
– Intervention effects	– No intervention effects
– No Subjacency effects ²	– Subjacency effects
– Obeys Attract Closest	– Obeys Attract Closest

Table 1: Properties of Feature Movement vs. Covert Phrasal Movement (Pesetsky 2000)

Before ending this section, it is important to note that even under purely syntactic approaches to intervention effects, the underlying cause is often considered to be a problem in establishing the relation between C^0 and the *wh*-phrase. Thus, according to Kim (2005), intervention effects are Relativized Minimality effects (Rizzi 1990), in which a focus operator with an interpretable focus feature blocks the Agree relation between C^0 and the *wh*-phrase.

4. The absence of intervention effects in Amharic

Amharic is a Semitic, SOV and *wh*-in-situ language. Unlike any other language documented until now, and contra the descriptive generalization suggested in Beck (2006) whereby intervention effects are universal, Amharic does not exhibit ungrammaticality when a quantificational or focusing element *c*-commands a *wh*-phrase, regardless of whether or not the latter is nominal (6), adverbial (7), or a D-linked 'which'-phrase (8)^{3,4}.

- (6) a. haile bəčča mən anəbbāb-ä?^{5,6} (only + nominal *wh*-phrase)
 Haile only what read.PER-3MS
 b. mən haile bəčča anəbbāb-ä?
 'What did only Haile read?'
- (7) a. haile bəčča lāmən ya-n mäs'haf anəbbāb-ä? (only + adverbial *wh*-phrase)
 Haile only why that-ACC book read.PER-3MS
 b. lāmən haile bəčča ya-n mäs'haf anəbbāb-ä?
 'Why did only Haile read that book?'

² Although Soh (2005) claims that in Mandarin, feature movement is sensitive to Subjacency while phrasal movement is not, this type of crosslinguistic parameterization seems undesirable.

³ Some languages exhibit distinctions among these categories. In Mandarin, for example, intervention effects do not occur with nominal *wh*-phrases, at least for some speakers, but rather only with 'which'-phrases and *wh*-adverbs (Soh 2005, Beck 2006).

⁴ Amharic has an additional, oft-used *wh*-question formation strategy, in which the *wh*-phrase is clefted. This strategy enables one to circumvent the intervention configuration by placing the *wh*-phrase above the potential intervener (ia), but it also allows word order variants which are *prima facie* expected to give rise to intervention effects and yet are perfectly acceptable, as in (ib) and (ic).

- (i) a. mändən nāw haile bəčča y-anəbbāb-ä-w?
 what it.is haile only REL-read.PER-3MS-DEF
 b. haile bəčča mändən nāw y-anəbbāb-ä-w?
 c. haile bəčča y-anəbbāb-ä-w mändən nāw?
 'What is it that only Haile read?'

⁵ The following abbreviations are used for the Amharic data: ACC = accusative, AUX = auxiliary, DEF = definite, F = feminine, IMP = imperfect, M = masculine, NEG = negation, subscribed O = object, P = prepositional suffix, PER = perfect, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, REL = relative marker, S = singular, TOP = topic.

⁶ The fact that the focus particle *bəčča* 'only' is post-nominal and derived from the adverb 'alone' does not seem relevant to the analysis, since these properties are not unique to Amharic. Many of the languages discussed here use post-nominal particles (e.g., Korean in (3)), and their equivalents of 'alone' in its exclusive particle function also give rise to intervention effects (e.g., Japanese; Satoshi Nambu, p.c.). Moreover, even if *bəčča* were somehow unique this would not extend to the entire set of potential interveners.

- (8) a. haile bəčča yätəññaw-ən mäs'haf anəbbäb-ä? (only + which-phrase)
 Haile only which-ACC book read.PER-3MS
 b. yätəññaw-ən mäs'haf haile bəčča anəbbäb-ä?
 'Which book did only Haile read?'

This is true of (almost) all potential interveners: *bəčča* 'only', as illustrated in (6)-(8), *dägmo* and *-mm* 'also', *ənkʷan* 'even', *hullum* 'everyone'⁷, *hullu* NP 'every NP', *säw* 'someone', *zäwätər* 'often', *hulgize* 'always', *abzañaw* 'most', *yätäwässänu* 'few', *kä-X yannäsu* 'less than X', *əskä* 'at most', negation, and disjunctive NPs. Thus, if these elements appear in a *wh*-question, the preferred order is the one in which the *wh*-phrase remains in situ and is c-commanded by the potential intervener, on a par with run-of-the-mill *wh*-questions. There is one class of interveners for which judgments are less clear: some speakers prefer a *wh*-phrase to remain in situ following an NPI (9a, 10a, 11a), while others prefer it scrambled above the NPI (9b, 10b, 11b).

- (9) a. mannəmm mən al-anəbbäb-ä-mm? (NPI + nominal *wh*-phrase)
 anyone what NEG-read.PER-3MS-NEG
 b. mən mannəmm al-anəbbäb-ä-mm?
 'What did no one read?'
- (10) a. mannəmm lämən ya-n mäs'haf al-anəbbäb-ä-mm? (NPI + adverbial *wh*-phrase)
 anyone why that-ACC book NEG-read.PER-3MS-NEG
 b. lämən mannəmm ya-n mäs'haf al-anəbbäb-ä-mm?
 'Why did no one read that book?'
- (11) a. mannəmm yätəññaw-ən mäs'haf al-anəbbäb-ä-mm? (NPI + *which*-phrase)
 anyone which-ACC book NEG-read.PER-3MS-NEG
 b. yätəññaw-ən mäs'haf mannəmm al-anəbbäb-ä-mm?
 'Which book did no one read?'

Given the observations above, the obvious question is what could explain the exceptionality of Amharic. The semantics of these constructions seems to be an unlikely candidate: the interpretation of focus operators and *wh*-phrases is not amenable to crosslinguistic parameterization, but rather derives from the universal foundations of natural language grammar. Syntactic structure, however, could vary in ways that bear on the presence vs. absence of intervention effects. In particular, if the Q operator in C⁰ is indeed the closest c-commanding potential binder to the *wh*-phrase, intervention effects are predicted to be absent, regardless of the manner in which the *wh*-phrase is licensed.

5. Amharic clausal structure: potential interveners don't intervene

Before going into the analysis we will adopt, it is crucial to rule out the simple solution whereby Amharic *wh*-phrases are licensed through covert phrasal movement and therefore do not create intervention effects (Pesetsky 2000). Recall that in Pesetsky's classification, *wh*-phrases which undergo covert phrasal movement should exhibit Subjacency effects. However, Amharic *wh*-phrases in situ are acceptable inside islands (12a)⁸; (12b) shows that a relative clause is indeed an island for movement in Amharic.

- (12) a. haile astämari-w lä-man yä-sät't'-ä-w-ən mäs'haf anəbbäb-ä?
 Haile teacher-DEF to-who REL-give.PER-3MS-DEF-ACC book read.PER-3MS
 b. *lä-man haile astämari-w yä-sät't'-ä-w-ən mäs'haf anəbbäb-ä?
 to-who Haile teacher-DEF REL-give.PER-3MS-DEF-ACC book read.PER-3MS
 'Who is the person x such that Haile read the book that the teacher gave to x?'

⁷ Questions with *hullum* 'everyone' allow a single-answer and a pair-list reading, regardless of the position of the *wh*-phrase (unlike German, where an intervening *jeder* 'every(one)' rules out a single-answer reading; Beck 1996).

⁸ This is true of relative clause and adjunct islands. I illustrate with *wh*-nominals and leave the issue of whether *wh*-adverbials pattern differently in islands for future research (for this distinction in Mandarin see Tsai 1994).

Accordingly, we conclude that *wh*-phrases are licensed through feature movement, and hence remain below the focus operator at LF. I claim that intervention effects nevertheless do not occur in Amharic because the focus operator, i.e., the potential intervener, is not in the trajectory between the *wh*-phrase and the Q operator in C⁰. Rather, interveners, like subjects in general, are adjoined to CP, thus allowing *wh*-phrases to be bound by Q.

I provide three pieces of evidence to support the proposal that Amharic clausal structure positions subjects in the C domain, rather than in SpecIP. The first relevant observation is that Amharic is a null subject language with obligatory, rich subject agreement: (13) shows that the subject does not need to be overtly expressed, while (14) establishes that subject agreement is necessary.

- (13) sak'-äčč.
laugh.PER-3FS
'She laughed.'
- (14) aster doro-wa-n arräd-*(äčč).
Esther hen-DEF-ACC butcher.PER-3FS
'Esther butchered the hen.'

Following Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998) and many others, we can assume that agreement is pronominal in null subject languages, indicating that an overt subject is not in SpecIP, but rather adjoined in a higher position in the C domain.

The second piece of evidence comes from adverb placement: sentential adverbs may follow the subject in Amharic, as in (15) and (16).

- (15) polis-u däggännätu leba-w-ən yaz-ä.
police-DEF fortunately thief-DEF-ACC catch.PER-3MS
'Fortunately, the police caught the thief.'
- (16) mannəmm mənäləbatə mäs'haf-u-n al-anäbbäb-ä-mm.
anyone probably book-DEF-ACC NEG-read.PER-3MS-NEG
'Probably, no one read the book.'

Assuming that this class of adverbs is adjoined to IP (Jonas & Bobaljik 1993), we can infer that the subject is positioned higher up. Unfortunately, the behavior of other types of adverbs does not allow such a straightforward conclusion. Although manner adverbs in Amharic can appear between the subject and verb/object (17-18), in order for this to bear on the position of the subject, one has to adopt a set of debatable assumptions, namely, that Amharic has V-to-I movement, on a par with other null subject languages (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998) or rich subject-verb agreement languages (Platzack 2003), and that adverbs cannot adjoin to the X' level (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998).

- (17) aster tolo čäffär-äčč.
Esther quickly dance.PER-3FS
'Esther danced quickly.'
- (18) aster bät'ənək'uk'ə bär käffät-äčč.
Esther carefully door open.PER-3FS
'Esther carefully opened a door.'

Lastly, Amharic possesses a construction which, I argue, displaces elements in the C domain, but nonetheless allows them to remain below the subject. That is, this construction, which I label string-vacuous clitic-left-dislocation (CLLD), has syntactic and interpretive consequences but no necessary surface reflex with respect to the subject (Eilam 2007; see, e.g., Simpson & Bhattacharya 2003 for a similar proposal regarding "masked" movement). (19a) is a standard declarative sentence in Amharic with a transitive verb, while (19b) illustrates CLLD: the object marker *-w* is suffixed to the verb, referring to the object *anbäsawən* 'the lion', which has raised to the C domain but remains below the subject.

(19) a. yonas anbäsa-w-ən gäddäl-ä.
Jonas lion-DEF-ACC kill.PER-3MS
'Jonas killed the lion.'

b. yonas anbäsa-w-ən gäddäl-ä-w.
Jonas lion-DEF-ACC kill.PER-3MS-3MS_o
'Jonas killed the lion.'

(Demeke 2003b:66)

Object marking (OM) as in (19b) is restricted in a way that is expected if the NP referred to is a topic, and hence arguably in the C domain, the component of the clause structure which licenses discourse dependencies⁹. First, nonreferential pronouns and *wh*-words are incompatible with OM, as shown in (20) and (21), respectively. The ungrammaticality of (20) derives from the fact that referentiality is an obligatory property of topics (Reinhart 1981, Lambrecht 1984, a.o.), while in (21) a *wh*-phrase, being inherently focused, cannot also serve as a topic (Polinsky & Potsdam 2001).

(20) aster and nəgər ayy-äčč-(*əw).
Esther a thing see.PER-3FS-3MS_o
'Esther saw something.'

(Amberber 1996:139)

(21) aster mən ayy-äčč-(*əw)?
Esther what see.PER-3FS-3MS_o
'What did Esther see?'

(Amberber 1996:139)

Second, the forms used as reflexive pronouns can only have their nonreflexive interpretation if referred to by OM, so that in (22b) *rasun* is understood as meaning 'his head' rather than the reflexive 'himself'. Reflexive pronouns are not possible topics due to their nonreferentiality (Polinsky & Potsdam 2001).

(22) a. haile ras-u-n ayy-ä.
Haile head-POSS.3MS-ACC see.PER-3MS
'Haile saw himself.'

b. haile ras-u-n ayy-ä-w.
Haile head-POSS.3MS-ACC see.PER-3MS-3MS_o
'Haile saw his head/*himself.'

Although OM has no necessary reflex in terms of linear order *vis-à-vis* the subject, it does have syntactic consequences when referring to a constituent base-generated below an object, since the latter is not in the high left periphery. Consider (23), for example: (a) is the base-generated order, in which the direct object is higher than the instrumental PP, while in (b) the prepositional suffix *-(ə)bb-* and OM *-ät* referring to the PP have been added to the verb. Crucially, the PP must then precede the direct object. (23c) illustrates the same point with a slightly different structure, in which the PP surfaces without a preposition, and instead takes the accusative/topic marker *-ən*¹⁰.

(23) a. aster bet-u-n bā-mät'rägiya-w t'ärräg-äčč.
Esther house-DEF-ACC with-broom-DEF clean.PER-3FS
'Esther cleaned the house with the broom.'

(Yabe 2007:80)

b. aster <bā-mät'rägiya-w> bet-u-n <^{??}bā-mät'rägiya-w> t'ärräg-äčč-əbb-ät.
Esther with-broom-DEF house-DEF-ACC with-broom-DEF clean.PER-3FS-P-3MS_o
'Esther cleaned the house with the broom.'

⁹ For discussion of the discourse function of Amharic OM see Haile (1970), Hetzron (1971), and Gasser (1983).

¹⁰ It is not clear which of its two functions the suffix *-ən* fulfills here. In any case, pace Yabe (2007), (23c) is not an applicative construction (Eilam 2007).

- c. aster <mät'rägiya-w-ən> bet-u-n <*mät'rägiya-w-ən> t'ärräg-äčč-əbb-ät.
 Esther broom-DEF-ACC/TOP house-DEF-ACC broom-DEF-ACC/TOP clean.PER-3FS-P-3MS₀
 'Esther cleaned the house with the broom.' (Yabe 2007:82)

I claim that the relation between OM and movement is in fact a bidirectional entailment: movement of a constituent is a necessary correlate of OM, as established by (23), and OM is required when a non-subject constituent is moved. The latter is demonstrated in (24), where OM is necessary because the object is visibly displaced in a pre-subject position.

- (24) wəšša-w-ən_i aster t_i mätt-äčč-*(əw).¹¹
 dog-DEF-ACC Esther hit.PER-3FS-3MS₀
 'Esther hit the dog.' (Amberber 1996:138)

To summarize, Amharic possesses a CLLD construction on a par with other Semitic languages (see, e.g., Alexopoulou, Doron & Heycock 2004). The fact that it does not necessarily place the phrase which has undergone CLLD in the clause-initial position, unlike these other languages (and most languages in general; van Riemsdijk 1997), falls out from the assumption that the subject is also displaced in the high left periphery.

Before wrapping up, I discuss an additional piece of data which is predicted under the account laid out until now, and thus serves to reinforce it. If, as claimed here, lexical subjects in declarative sentences occupy a CP-adjoined position in Amharic, there is no a priori reason other types of elements could not also be placed in such a position. Furthermore, Amharic clausal structure should allow multiple elements of this type, given the recursive nature of adjunction. Indeed, I claim that this is exactly what we find in multiple *wh*-questions.

Although Amharic is a *wh*-in-situ language, we can observe movement of *wh*-phrases when more than one such phrase is involved. Crucially, this movement does not obey Superiority: (25) shows the assumed underlying order of a question with three *wh*-phrases, and (26a) illustrates one possible permutation of this order, where *mäčē* 'when' has raised above *man* 'who', and which should thus be ungrammatical if Superiority applies.

- (25) man mäčē mən gäzz-a?
 who when what buy.PER-3MS
 'When did who buy what?'
 (26) a. mäčē_i man t_i mən gäzz-a?
 when who what buy.PER-3MS
 'When did who buy what?'
 b. tənant Kassa mäs'haf gäzz-a.
 yesterday Kassa book buy.PER-3MS
 'Yesterday Kassa bought a book.' (Demeke 2003a, in Aboh 2007)

Two important comments are in order. First, other variants of (25) are also possible, in which both *mäčē* 'when' and *mən* 'what' raise above *man* 'who', and can flip positions amongst themselves (see Aboh 2007). From the fact that all these Superiority-violating examples are perfectly grammatical in Amharic we can conclude that movement of the *wh*-phrases is motivated by something other than checking the [+wh] feature of C; i.e., focus movement (Bošković 2002) or *wh*-topicalization (Jaeger 2004, a.o.)¹², both of which are known to disregard Superiority. Second, (26b) shows that these kinds of questions allow single-answer readings, rather than just pair-list readings, indicating that none of the *wh*-phrases occupy SpecCP (Bošković 2002). Accordingly, I argue that *wh*-phrases in multiple *wh*-questions in Amharic move to the same CP-adjoined positions targeted by lexical NPs in declaratives.

¹¹ There is some interspeaker variation in the acceptability of (24) without OM, which is expected if at least some speakers have the option of scrambling the object without OM. I leave this issue for future research.

¹² According to Demeke (2003a), the leftmost *wh*-phrase in Amharic multiple questions is the most "prominent". While for Aboh (2007) this implies that it is a focused *wh*-phrase, topicalized *wh*-phrases are also known to indicate what a question primarily requests information about (Jaeger 2004). I leave this issue for future research.

6. Remaining issues and conclusions

There remain two issues to be dealt with. First, Amharic also does not show intervention effects in contexts where the potential intervener is a non-matrix subject (27) or a non-subject (28).

- (27) girma haile bəčča mən ənd-anəbbäb-ä y-asəb-all?
Girma Haile only what that-read.PER-3MS 3MS-think.IMP-AUX.3MS
'What does Girma think that only Haile read?'
- (28) girma lä-haile bəčča mən sät't'-ä?
Girma to-Haile only what give.PER-3MS
'What did Girma give only to Haile?'

There are two possible ways to address this observation. On the one hand, one could maintain that both the matrix subject and the potential intervener are adjoined to CP, explaining why neither interferes with the relation between C^0 and the *wh*-phrase. Although this would be in line with the claim that the recursive operation of adjunction is involved, as was also argued for in the case of multiple *wh*-phrases, it muddles the proposed relation between verbal marking, whether subject agreement or object marking, and displacement in the C domain. Moreover, the well-known correlation between subjecthood and topichood (Chafe 1976) renders the C domain position of the matrix subject in Amharic plausible, while the same cannot be said of embedded subjects and non-subjects. According to an alternative point of view, (27)-(28) are expected given that intervention effects with non-matrix subject and non-subject interveners in other languages are also weak or non-existent (Tomioka 2007). Thus, we can restrict our hypothesis regarding CP-adjunction in Amharic to matrix subjects alone, whereas the lack of intervention effects with interveners in other positions requires an independent, crosslinguistically applicable explanation, whatever this may be.

A second open question pertains to NPIs: recall from (9)-(11) in section 4 that configurations in which an NPI c-commands a *wh*-phrase are dispreferred by some speakers, but not by others. A first tack would be to claim that NPIs in Amharic are the only class of elements which cannot appear in a left-peripheral position, but rather must remain below C^0 , at least for those speakers who exhibit intervention effects with NPIs. However, there is clear evidence against such an idea; for example, an object which has undergone CLLD may be preceded by an NPI. A more plausible hypothesis is that the behavior of NPIs is regulated by some additional factor, as in other languages; be it syntactic (Hwang 2007) or phonological (Tomioka 2007).

The proposed analysis of Amharic clausal structure, whereby subjects are adjoined to CP, allows us to maintain Beck's (2006) insights regarding the defining property of interveners, the underlying cause responsible for intervention effects, and the relevance of hierarchical structure for the phenomenon at hand, as well as Pesetsky's (2000) classification of various types of movement and their correlates. Intervention effects can still be thought of as a universal phenomenon, deriving from the basic properties of the grammar, and yet be subject to crosslinguistic variation, even to the extent that some languages would never exhibit them.

Many open questions and issues remain for future work, beyond searching for additional cases in which intervention effects are unexpectedly lacking and examining whether the structural explanation suggested here could apply to them. Research with crosslinguistic applications could include testing nonstructural approaches to intervention effects, such as Tomioka (2007), against the data from Amharic. Work on specific properties of Amharic should attempt to catalog the entire range of left-peripheral constructions in Amharic, their properties, and how they are similar to and different from parallel constructions in other Semitic languages and crosslinguistically.

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