Article

A Pilot Study on the Relationship between Topicality and Differential Object Marking in Mesqan[*]

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Abstract

This article deals with Differential Object Marking in Mesqan, a Gurage language. It is reported that topicality drives DOM in many languages such as North-East Neo-Aramaic (Coghill 2014) and Guarani (Shain 2009). This article tries to reveal if topicality is relevant to DOM in Mesqan too, considering topicality in two different ways: i) as a binary feature and ii) as a graded feature. While the data dealt with in this research is quite limited, this article suggests that 1) topicality as a binary feature does not explain the presence/absence of the markers, 2) topicality as a graded feature may work in explaining the presence/absence of the head-marking marker but the hypothesis is too hard to accept. In other words, we have no clear evidence supporting the idea that DOM in Mesqan is driven by the topicality of the object NPs.

1   Introduction

Mesqan is an Ethiosemitic language spoken in East Gurage zone, Central Ethiopia Regional State, Ethiopia. It is one of the languages called "Gurage languages". The internal classification of the group is still a matter of discussion, and the exact position of Mesqan in Gurage languages is not sure (cf. Leslau 2004: XIII; Meyer 2011: 1221–1223; Meyer 2019: 227).

As reported by Hara (2018), Mesqan has four different ways to indicate transitive verbs' direct objects. They are illustrated in example (1): without any marker (1a), with prepositional *jä-* before object noun phrase (1b), with the pronominal suffix on the verb (1c), and the combination of these two markers (1d) respectively.

(1) Object marking in Mesqan, from Hara (2018: 5–6), glossing modified.

   a.   *huti*   *mäkina*   *säddädä*
       he   car   chase.PF.3SGM
       "He chased a car."

   b.   *huti*   ***jä****-mɨss*   *säddädä*
       he   **ACC**-man   chase.PF.3SGM
       "He chased a man."

   c.   *huti*   *mäkina-i*   *säddädä****-n***
       he   car-DF   chase.PF.3SGM-**3SGM.OM**
       "He chased the car."

   d.   *huti*   ***jä****-mɨss-i*   *säddädä****-n***
       he   **ACC**-man-DF chase.PF.3SGM-**3SGM.OM**
       "He chased the man."

This can be considered as an example of Differential Object Marking (or shortly DOM). DOM is defined as "the phenomenon of distinct realization of different types of direct objects (Schwenter and Silva 2002: 578)". As many studies show, DOM can be observed in many languages. For example, in Spanish, direct objects indicating human are marked with preposition *a*, while non-human objects cannot be (2). In Persian, only definite objects can be marked with the postposition *-rā* (3).

(2) Example of Spanish, from Ormazabal & Romero (2013: 222), glossing modified.

   a.   *He*   *encontrado*   ****(a)***   *la*   *nigna*
       AUX.1SG   found   **ACC**   DF   child
       "I found the girl."

   b.   *He*   *encontrado*   ***(*a)***   *el*   *libro*
       AUX.1SG   found   **ACC**   DF   book
       "I found the book."

(3) Example of Persian, from Comrie (1989: 133), glossing modified.

a. *Hasan*   *ketāb-**rā***   *dīd*
   Hassan   book-**ACC**   saw
   "Hassan saw the book."

b. *Hasan*   *ketāb*   *dīd*
   Hassan   book   saw
   "Hassan saw a book."

Adding to these examples, head-marking languages also may hold a phenomenon like DOM. In head-marking languages, the phenomenon parallel to DOM in dependent-marking languages can be called "Differential Object Agreement," or "Differential Object Indexation" (cf. Iemmolo and Klumpp 2014: 272). In this article I simply call it DOA, the abbreviation for the former. An example of DOA is shown in (4), from Swahili.

(4) Swahili example of DOA, from Iemmolo and Klumpp (2014: 272), citing Vitale (1981: 123–124), glossing modified.

a. *Juma*   *a-li-**m**-piga*   *risasi*   *tembo*   *jana*   *usiku*
   Juma   SM-PST-**OM**-hit   bullet   elephant   yesterday   night
   "Juma shot an/the elephant last night."

b. *risasi*   *i-li-piga*   *mti*   *karibu*   *na sisi*
   bullet   SM-PST-hit   tree   near   us
   "The bullet struck the tree near us."

According to Sinnemäki (2014), in many languages, the presence or absence of the object marker is controlled by animacy or definiteness, or both, of object nouns. For the examples above, Spanish differentiates objects according to animacy (human/non-human animate and inanimate) and Persian makes a distinction between definite objects and indefinite ones. An example in which both animacy and definiteness are relevant is Syriac. In Syriac, the higher on the two-dimensional scale of animacy and definiteness an object is, the more likely it may take object markers, which are prepositional *l-* and pronominal suffix on the verb[1] (Hara 2022).

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[1] Usually, a pronominal suffix agreeing with object noun, i.e. head-marking object marker, co-occurs with prepositional *l-*, i.e. dependent-marking one, while the latter is often used without the former.

(5) Examples of Syriac, from Hara (2022: 112, 115), glossing translated and modified.

  a. An example of a human definite object

    waḥzāy   *ldayānā*

    wa-ḥzā-y   *l-dayānā*

    and-see.PF.3SGM-**3SGM.OM**   **ACC**-judge

    "And he saw the judge"

  b. An example of an inanimate indefinite object

    wansab   *paygā*   *ḥad*   *saypā*

    wa-nsab   *paygā*   *ḥad*   *saypā*

    and-take.PF.3SGM   soldier   INDF   sword

    "And a soldier took a sword"

In my previous studies on Mesqan DOM, it was suggested that, like Syriac above, both animacy and definiteness of object are key to DOM: objects higher in the hierarchy of animacy/definiteness are likely to take the markers, while those lower are less likely to do so (Hara 2018, Hara 2019, Hara 2020). The exact condition where object markers are allowed, however, is still unclear. Besides, there is an unsolved question on the reason for the alternation of the ways to indicate direct objects. In this paper, I reconsider the data I presented previously in Hara (2019) and Hara (2020) where I analyzed them in relation to objects' animacy and definiteness, focusing on topical features of the object nouns.

2   Differential Object Marking and Topicality

For some languages, it is reported that topicality is relevant to DOM. For example, Coghill (2014) reports that in the Telkepe dialect of North-East Neo-Aramaic object markers on the verb[2] are allowed when the object is definite and serves as a primary topic (Coghill 2014: 361). Shain (2009) shows that, in Guarani, human-referring topic objects are more likely to have the object marker *-pe*, while non-topical objects do not (Shain 2009: 102, 117).

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[2] As example (6) shows, there are two types of object markers in the Telkepe dialect: the one attached to the object noun (dependent-marking type) and the one put to the verb and agrees to the object (head-marking type).

(6) DOM in NENA, Telkepe dialect, Coghill (2014: 341), glossing modified.

a. *šqəl-lə*   **barānʋ**
took-3SGM   **ram**
"He took a/the ram." (lit. "He took ram.")

b. *kəm-šāqəl-**lə***
PST-take.3SGM-**3SGM.OM**
"He took it."

c. *kəm-šāqəl-**lə***   **barānʋ**
PST-take.3SGM-**3SGM.OM**   ram
"He took the ram." (lit. "He took it ram.")

d. *kəm-šāqəl-**lə***   *ta*   *barānʋ*
PST-take.3SGM-**3SGM.OM**   ACC   **ram**
"He took the ram." (lit. "He took it to ram.")

(7) DOM in Guarani, Shain (2009: 104), glossing modified.

a. *Ha*   *upéi*   *o-hecha*   *sapy'a*   *Juan-chi*
CONJ   then   SM-see   suddenly   PN-DIM

ha   *Pirulo*   *ju'í-pe*
CONJ   PN   frog-OM

"And then Juan and Pirulo suddenly saw the frog."

b. *O-heka*   *tukumbo*
SM-search   rope
"She searched for a rope."

   These two studies, however, treat topicality in different manners. Coghill (2014), on the one hand, regards it as a binary feature [±topic] like Lambrecht (1994). This means that it is possible to determine whether a noun is topic ([+topic]) or not ([-topic]). According to Coghill (2014), the definiteness of object nouns is a trigger for DOM in the Telkepe dialect. Not all definite objects, however, take object markers. In case the object is in narrow focus, even if it is definite, markers are absent (Coghill 2014: 351). The ones serving as a primary topic, on the contrary, take agreement markers on the verb[3].

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[3] But not dependent-marking ones (Coghill 2014: 351). Conditions where the two types of object markers co-occur are not entirely known, but the dependent marking type one may have a disambiguating function (Coghill 2014: 354).

On the other hand, Shain (2009) considers the topicality as a graded feature, as Givón (1983). Shain (2009) measures topicality of an object using several scales listed below: Referential Distance, the number of clauses between the object NP and the nearest reference to the same referent, and Topic Persistence, the number of clauses which refer to the same referent. Nominal topicality is graded according to these scales: if the value of RD is smaller or of TP is larger, the more topical the NP is. In other words, it is assumed that NP is more topical when it is mentioned sooner again or more repeatedly. Shain (2009) examines what triggers DOM in Guarani from several points of view besides topicality. According to Shain (2009: 117), DOM in the language is conditioned by animacy[4] and topicality: Topical[5] human objects are the most likely to be marked, and non-topical humans the second, while non-human objects are rarely marked, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Humanness, binary topicality, and *-pe-* marking in Guarani
(Shain 2009: 102, mistakes corrected)

		Topical		Non-Topical		Total	
		+pe	-pe	+pe	-pe	+pe	-pe
Human	# of objects	16	4	8	15	24	19
	& marked	80%		35%		56%	
Non-Human	# of objects	0	23	3	164	3	187
	& marked	0%		2%		2%	
Total	# of objects	16	27	11	179	27	206
	& marked	37%		6%		12%	

In this paper, I first examine the data from the point of view of Lambrecht (1994)'s binary topicality, and then of Givón (1983)'s graded topicality.

3   Data and Discussion

In this presentation, I use two texts of folktales which I published in Hara (2019) and Hara (2020), which I call A and B respectively. As they are with glossing and translation only in Japanese, I present them with English glossing and translation, with some corrections, in the appendix.

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[4] As inanimates and non-human animates are similar regarding the rate of marked/unmarked, Shain (2009) treats them as one category [-human].

[5] "Topical" or "non-topical" here means "those higher/lower in topicality" and not binary [±topic] (cf. Shain 2009: 101 etc.). For the cutoff, see Shain (2009: 101).

Among the two texts, there are 11 cases of direct object nouns found[6]. 3 of 11, all of which are examples of *mɨt'* "labor pain" from text B, are problematic to me: I do not have enough information on case government of the verbs *t'äbbät'ä*[7] and *at'addäfä* so it is not clear whether the marker -*ʷn*- agrees with its direct object *mɨt'* or with an other entity[8]. Due to this problem, these 3 examples are not taken into consideration here. The other 8 examples are listed in the table below, with their animacy/definiteness status. Table 3 indicates which marker is or can be present for each example.

(8) All examples analyzed in this article.

  a. Indefinite animate object from A(1)

bat	*mädär*	*at*	*gʷäčä*	*at*	*zangʲära*	*räkkäbä*
b-at	*mädär*	*at*	*gʷäčä*	*at*	*zangʲära*	*räkkäbä*
in-INDF	place	INDF	hyena	INDF	baboon	get.PF.3SGM

  "In a (certain) place, a hyena got a baboon."

  b. Definite animate object from A(2)

zangʲärai	*jɨbʷäränne*		*tizzägaǧǧ*
zangʲära-i	*jɨbärä-ʷn-e*		*tizzägaǧǧ*
baboon-DF	eat.IMPF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-PROS		be.ready.IMPF.3SGM

  "It is ready to eat the baboon."

  c. Definite object referring to body parts from A(4)

...*afäwta*	*käffätäm*...
...*af-äwta*	*käffätä-m*...
... mouth-POSS.3SGM	open.PF.3SGM-CONV...

  "...opened his mouth, ..."

  d. Indefinite animate object from B(4)

zogara	*räkkäbä*
zogara	*räkkäbä*
leopard	get.PF.3SGM

  "It found a leopard."

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[6] Since *näbr* in B (2) is the speaker's mistake (Amharic word) which is corrected in continuing 2 utterances, it is to be ignored here. To count the number of clauses, I ignored the relevant part to this correction, namely B (3) and the last part of B (2). Also, we do not include the example with a verbal noun *wäznɨb* because it differs from other examples here in quality.

[7] We have another example of the verb "*addaɲi k'äst t'äbbät'äm...*", in which the verb apparently has its subject *addaɲi* and object *k'äst*. Considering this example, we can say that *mɨt'* is object.

[8] The marker -*ʷn*- may agree with either direct object or indirect object.

e. Indefinite human object from B(6)

bähi	*zor*	*tibur*		*at*	*addaɲ*	*räkkäbä*
bähi	*zor*	*ti-jibur*		*at*	*addaɲ*	*räkkäbä*
then	turn	TEMP-say.IMPF.3SGM		INDF	hunter	get.PF.3SGM

"Then when it made a turn it found a hunter."

f. Indefinite inanimate object from B(7)

addaɲi	*k'äst*	*t'äbbät'äm...*
addaɲ-i	*k'äst*	*t'äbbät'ä-m...*
hunter-DF	bow	have.PF.3SGM-CONV...

"The hunter held a bow, ..."

g. Definite inanimate object from B(13)

...addaɲi	*k'ästi*	*gäffwärän*
...addaɲ-i	*k'äst-i*	*gäffär-ä-ʷn*
... hunter-DF	bow-DF	release.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM[9]

"...then the hunter released the bow."

h. Definite animate object from B(14)

tigäfr		*dingät*	*jäzogarai*
ti-jigäfr		*dingät*	*jä-zogara-i*
TEMP-release.IMPF.3SGM		suddenly	ACC-leopard-DF

kʷät't'ärän
k'ät't'ärä-ʷn
kill.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM

"As he released (the bow), suddenly he killed the leopard."

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[9] Object suffix pronouns can indicate either direct objects or indirect objects (Leslau 2004: 27). Thus this -ʷn may also be interpreted as a dative pronominal suffix. I rejected this reading according to the English translation by my informant from whom I gathered the story, in which it was understood as DO marker.

Table 2: Direct object NPs in the texts

number	object noun	governing verb	in:	Animacy	Definiteness
(8a)	*at zangʲära*	*räkkäbä*	A (1)	anim.	indefinite
(8b)	*zangʲärai*	*jɨbʷäränne*	A (2)	anim.	definite
(8c)	*afäwta*	*käffätäm*	A (4)	*body parts	definite
(8d)	*zogara*	*räkkäbä*	B (4)	anim.	indefinite
(8e)	*at addaɲ*	*räkkäbä*	B (6)	human	indefinite
(8f)	*k'äst*	*t'äbbät'äm*	B (7)	inanim.	indefinite
(8g)	*k'ästi*	*gäffʷärän*	B (13)	inanim.	definite
(8h)	*jäzogarai*	*k'ʷät't'ärän*	B (14)	anim.	definite

Table 3: Object NPs and their marking

number	[±dpM][10]	[±hdM]	other possibilities
(8a)	-	-	[+dpM][-hdM]
(8b)	-	+	[+dpM][+hdM]
(8c)	-	-	[-dpM][+hdM]
(8d)	-	-	none
(8e)	-	-	none
(8f)	-	-	none
(8g)	-	+	none
(8h)	+	+	none

3.1 Topicality as a Binary Feature

In this section, I analyze whether topicality as a binary feature may explain DOM in Mesqan or not. Before focusing on each example, it is necessary to confirm how the topic constituent is expressed in Mesqan in order to make clear whether topic constituents are identified formally or not. As far as we take a look into the data in Hara (2019, 2020), we find no topic marker except *-m-*, which expresses contrastive topic as in (9).

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[10] Instead of writing "presence/absence of the markers in text", I rather abbreviate them as "[±dpM]" for dependent-marker and "[±hdM]" for head-marker respectively.

(9) examples of contrastive topic marker[(?)] *-m-* from Hara (2020: 21)

znabmi	*zännäbä*
znab-m-i	*zännäb-ä*
rain-TOP-DF	rain.PF-3.SG.M.SBJ

ɨsätmi	*t'äffa*
ɨsät-m-i	*t'äffa*
fire-TOP-DF	be.extinguished.PF.3.SG.M.SBJ

addaɲimmi	*säkkjä*
addaɲ-m-i	*säkkj-ä*
hunter-TOP-DF	run.away.PF-3.SG.M.SBJ

ginbämmi	*bäsälam*
ginbä-m-i	*bä-sälam*
antelope-TOP-DF	in-peace

jič'äɲne	*čalä*
jɨ-č'äɲɲ-e	*čal-ä*
3.SG.M.SBJ-give.birth.IMPF-PROS	can.PF-3.SG.M.SBJ

"About the rain, it rained. About the fire, it was extinguished. About the hunter, he ran away. About the antelope, it could give birth peacefully."

For other Gurage languages, several researchers mention topic(ality). For example, Meyer (2011: 1249) states that "the common order of constituent in all Gurage varieties is subject – object – verb whereby the clause-initial position usually contains the topic constituent." Muher, which is spoken in the north-west of the area where Mesqan is spoken (cf. Leslau 2004: XIX), has a strict Topic-Comment order (Meyer 2019: 246–247).

Considering these studies, we can assume that the parameter [±topic] of the topic constituent is indicated by word order in Mesqan, like other Gurage languages. This assumption brings us a hypothesis on the relationship between DOM and binary topicality: if marked objects come in front of the sentence and unmarked ones after other constituents, DOM in Mesqan is driven by objects' [±topic]. However, the data are too few to show whether this hypothesis works or not: only utterance (8b) has an object that may be [+topic][11].

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[11] The object in (8d) also comes in the leftmost position: this one, however, cannot be considered as [+topic] because this utterance is correcting an error in the previous utterance, as mentioned in the footnote above. The information status of the object is therefore the same as *näbr* in the mistaken utterance shown below, which is not the topic there: *ginbäi … dibr tigäba näbr räkkäbä / ginbä-i … dibr*

We still might think that it would not work. In the data shown in (8), we have only three utterances with object markers, namely (8b), (8g), and (8h). Among them, (8b) alone has its object in the leftmost position, where the constituent is considered topicalized, and objects do not come to that position in (8g) and (8h). Moreover, the object referants in (8gh) are not the ones the sentences are talking about. Thus we have no strong reason to consider the objects in (8gh) are [+topic]. Regarding the fact that [-topic] objects, including those in (8gh), can be occasionally marked, although we have only one example with [+topic] object and are unable to make sure whether [+topic] objects are always marked or only optionally marked, we can state that binary topicality alone does not explain DOM in Mesqan.

3.2 Topicality as a Graded Feature

In this section, we examine whether topicality as a graded feature can explain the data or not. The values of Referential Distance and Topic Persistence for each example are shown in Table 4. In the table not only RD and TP but also Forward RD and Backward TP are displayed. The reason is that, Shain (2009: 75) also mentions, RD and TP have asymmetry, where RD considers the distance between the NP in question and the previous mention to its referent ("look-back"), and TP counts how many times it is mentioned after the NP in question ("look-ahead"). To solve the problem, as Shain (2009) did, we also consider Forward RD (F-RD) and Backward TP (B-TP). Adding, total RD (RD + F-RD) and total TP (TP + B-TP) are shown. In calculation, I counted the number of main clauses.

Table 4: Measuring topicality of the object NPs

number	RD	F-RD	total RD	TP	B-TP	total TP
(8a)	0	0	0	6	0	6
(8b)	0	7	7	5	1	6
(8c)	0	0	0	1	0	1
(8d)	0	2	2	3	0	3
(8e)	0	0	0	6	0	6
(8f)	0	5	5	1	0	1
(8g)	5	0	5	0	1	1
(8h)	6	0	6	1	2	3

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ti-ji-gäba näbr räkkäb-ä / antelope-DF ... forest TEMP-3.SG.M.SBJ-enter.IMPF leopard(Amharic) find.PF-3.SG.M.SBJ / "The antelope ... find a leopard when it entered the forest."

I measured topicality using these values. Tables 5 and 6 indicate which NP was more/less topical. The hierarchy shown in Table 5 is calculated based on total RD and in Table 6 based on TP respectively. We need to acknowledge that the orders in the two tables are not identical: while (8ae) are the highest in both tables, there are also several cases that the object is more topical based on RD or TP but less based on the other like (8b).

Table 5: Topicality ranking based on total RD

topicality	based on total RD	[±dpM]	[±hdM]	other possibilities
higher	(8a) (0)	-	-	[+dpM][-hdM]
	(8c) (0)	-	-	[-dpM][+hdM]
	(8e) (0)	-	-	none
	(8d) (2)	-	-	none
	(8f) (5)	-	-	none
	(8g) (5)	-	+	none
	(8h) (6)	+	+	none
lower	(8b) (7)	-	+	[+dpM][-hdM]

Table 6: Topicality ranking based on total TP

topicality	based on total TP	[±dpM]	[±hdM]	other possibilities
higher	(8a) (6)	-	-	[+dpM][-hdM]
	(8b) (6)	-	+	[+dpM][-hdM]
	(8e) (6)	-	-	none
	(8d) (3)	-	-	none
	(8h) (3)	+	+	none
	(8c) (1)	-	-	[-dpM][+hdM]
	(8f) (1)	-	-	none
lower	(8g) (1)	-	+	none

If graded topicality triggers the presence/absence of the markers, we can predict that those objects with higher topicality are more likely marked, which is suggested by several researches such as Shain (2009) and Coghill (2014). The facts are, however, not like that: the dependent marker *jä-* appears only in (8h), the second lowest in RD (total RD = 6) and in TP (total TP = 3). The marker *jä-* may be used in (8ab), the highest in total TP, but in the original text it was absent. This does not directly mean that topicality

is not related to this phenomenon because our data are too few to decide. Yet we can say that it is difficult to explain its usage by means of (graded) topicality.

On the head marker (-*ʷn*-), on the other hand, we may have a clearer idea. It appears in (8gh), which are not highly topical (8g: total RD = 5, total TP = 1, 8h: total RD = 6, total TP = 1) and in (8b), whose total RD is 7 and total TP is 6. Considering the former two examples, the usage of the marker could be explained by topicality: it can be used when the object is not highly topical. However, this hypothesis is so weak since (8f), which is as topical (or rather non-topical) as (8g) , does not have the marker. We also have a problem in dealing with (8b), which is higher in Table 6 but lower in Table 5, and (8c), which is higher in Table 5 but lower in Table 6. Are these "more topical" or not? The answer is different depending on the factor we focus on. Curiously, (8bc) are both examples where the head marker may be present or absent. This fact may be interpreted as: the less topical object is marked by the head marker but it may drop the marker when it is highly topical based on the other factor, which supports the hypothesis above. This hypothesis is, however, still too weak to accept because the data is so small that we cannot deny that the observations here are just coincidence. Further, in many languages, properties triggering DOM usually demand marking when the object is higher in those properties, and not lower objects. Thus, from a typological point of view, we cannot support the hypothesis above. Moreover, the data suggest that the usage of the head marker can simply be explained by means of definiteness[12]: the marker can be used when the object is definite while indefinite objects do not take it. Example (8c), where definite NP *afäwta* "his mouth" does not necessarily have the marker -*ʷn*-, may be explained as follows: inanimate definite nouns (or definite nouns indicating body parts?) can drop it.

To conclude, we do not have any positive evidence showing that (graded) topicality triggers DOM in Mesqan, considering both the dependent marker and the head marker(s)[13].

4   Conclusion

From the discussion above, we can state that we have no clear evidence that indicates topicality triggers DOM in Mesqan. In 3.1. we discussed DOM in Mesqan assuming that topicality is a binary feature. Judging from our small database, binary topicality does not explain the usage of either the head marker or the dependent marker. In 3.2. we then considered topicality a graded feature and analyzed the data. Our data give no idea on the

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[12] This explanation has already been suggested by Hara (2018).

[13] The data we dealt with have only examples of -*ʷn*- and zero, but theoretically, singular feminine form and plural form can also be used.

relationship between topicality and the usage of the dependent marker *jä-*. On the head marker, they may suggest a hypothesis that it is more likely used for less topical objects. This hypothesis is, however, difficult to accept because it does not match the typological tendency that more topical objects are marked in topicality-driven DOM languages.

To conclude, we found no evidence supporting the hypothesis that DOM in Mesqan is driven by topicality, neither as a binary feature nor as a graded one. Our data are, however, too few to be decisive. We need more data in order to make a conclusion on this problem.

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Appendix

Text A *A Hyena and a Baboon*: from Hara (2019)

(1) *bat*   *mädär*   *at*   *gʷäčä*   *at*   *zangʲära* *räkkäbä*

    b-at   *mädär*   *at*   *gʷäčä*   *at*   *zangʲära* *räkkäbä*

    in-INDF   place   INDF   hyena   INDF   baboon   get.PF.3SGM

    "In a (certain) place, a hyena got a baboon."

(2) *zangʲärai*   *jibʷäränne*   *tizzägaǧǧ*

    zangʲära-i   *jibärä-ʷn-e*   *tizzägaǧǧ*

    baboon-DF   eat.IMPF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-PRO   be.ready.IMPF.3SGM

    "It is ready to eat the baboon."

(3) *ta:w*   *attbre:*   *bädengahä*

    ta:w   *a-t-bre:*   *bä-denga-hä*

    stop.IMPR   NEG-eat.JUS.2SGM   by-children-POSS.2SGM

    tɨrähɨbb   *jɨbun*

    tɨrähɨbb   *jɨbun*

    get.good.thing.IMPF.2SGM   say.IMPF.3SGM

    " 'Stop, don't eat! You'll get good things by your children' it (=the baboon) said."

(4) | *gʷäčäi* | *min* | *denga* | *jatkešɨ* | | *ɨjjä* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *gʷäčä-i* | *min* | *denga* | *jatkeši*[14] | | *ɨjjä* |
| hyena-DF | what | children | call.IMPF.3SGM | | I |

äbärähäjjäw	*baräm*
äbärä-häjjäw	*barä-m*
eat.IMPF.1SG-?	say.PF.3SGM-CONV

afäwta	*käffätäm*
af-äwta	*käffätä-m*
mouth-POSS.3SGM	open.PF.3SGM-CONV

jɨbʷäränne	*tizzägağğ*
jɨbärä-ʷn-e	*tizzägağğ*
eat.IMPF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-PROS	be.ready.IMPF.3SGM

"The hyena said 'Children are irrelevant.[15] I shall eat you(?).', opened his mouth, and is ready to eat it."

(5) | *ta:wuš* | *bädengahä* | | *tɨrähɨbb* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ta:wuš* | *bä-denga-hä* | | *tɨrähɨbb* |
| please | by-children-POSS.2SGM | | get.good.thing.IMPF.2SGM |

bʷaränm		*aj*	*baräm*
bar-ä-ʷn-m		*aj*	*bar-ä-m*
say.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-CONV		no	say.PF.3SGM-CONV

zälläläm	*jɨbʷäränne*
zällälä-m	*jɨ-bärä-ʷn-e*
jump.PF.3SGM-CONV	eat.IMPF.3SGM-3.SG.M.OBJ-PROS

e:llam	*bädɨngät*	*bafäwta*
e:lla-m	*bädɨngät*	*bä-af-äwta*
want.PF.3SGM-CONV	suddenly	in-mouth-POSS.3SGM

ač'č'ä	*gäbba*
ač'č'ä	*gäbba*
branch	stick.PF.3SGM

" 'Please. You'll get good things by means of your children.' said (the baboon), but 'No.' said (the hyena), jumped, wanted to eat it, and then suddenly a branch stuck into his mouth."

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[14] The ending -i might be a mistake.

[15] lit. "What does call children?"

(6)   *ač'č'ä*   *gäbbawä*   *t'äbbʷät'än*

      ač'č'ä   *gäbba-wä*   *t'äbbät'-ä-ʷn*

      branch   stick.PF.3SGM-BEN.3SGM?   keep.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM

      "A branch stuck into his mouth and kept it (open)."

(7)   *bähi*   *jawät'anä*   *k'äbbät'ä*

      bähi   *jawät'a-nä*   *k'äbbät'-ä*

      then   remove.IMPF.3SGM-3SGF.OM?   fail.PF-3.SG.M.

      "Then the hyena (tried to) remove it but couldn't."

(8)   *bähi*   *jäzängʲära*   *mɨn*   *bʷarän*

      bähi   *jä-zängʲära*   *mɨn*   *barä-ʷn*

      then   to-baboon   what   say.PF.3SGM-3SGM.DAT

      "Then what did he (the hyena) say to (the) baboon?"

(9)   *bädengahä*   *bahem*   *bannä*

      bä-denga-hä   *bahem*   *bannä*

      by-children-POSS.2SGM   say.PF.2SGM+1SG.OM   AUX

      " 'By your children' you have said to me."

(10)   *ahʷä*   *bämɨn*   *mɨn*   *jit'äk'ɨl*   *bʷarän*

      ahʷä   *bä-mɨn*   *mɨn*   *jit'äk'ɨl*   *barä-ʷn*

      now   by-what   what   be.better.IMPF.3SGM   say.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM

      " 'Now what is better by what' said the hyena."

(11)   *ɨjjä*   *abbahä*   *jäšäkʷätän*   *k'ar*

      ɨjjä   *abba-hä*   *jä-šäkät-ä-ʷn*   *k'ar*

      I   father-POSS.2SGM   REL-do.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM   thing

      mɨn   *ähir*   *baräm*   *gäffʷärännɨm*

      mɨn   *ähir*   *barä-m*   *gäffärä-ʷn-m*

      what   know.IMPF.1SG   say.PF.3SGM-CONV   leave.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-CONV

      zängʲära   *säkkʲä*   *jɨburi*

      zängʲära   *säkkʲä*   *jɨburi*

      baboon   run.away.PF.3SGM   say.IMPF.IP

      " 'Do I know what your father did? (I don't know.)' said the baboon, left him (the hyena), and ran away. This is the story."

Text B: *A Pregnant Antelope*: from Hara (2020)

(1)   *ginbä*   *tädɨbre*   *tijar*   *bannä*

      ginbä   *tä-dɨbr-e*   *ti-jar*   *bannä*

      antelope   tä-forest-e[16]   TEMP-go.IMPF.3SGM   AUX

      "An antelope was going toward a forest."

(2)   *ginbäi*   *mɨt'*   *t'äbbᵂät'änɨm*

      ginbä-i   *mɨt'*   *t'äbbät'ä-ᵂn-m*

      antelope-DF   labor.pain   have.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-CONV

      dɨbr   *tigäba*   *näbr*   *räkkäbä*

      dɨbr   *tɨ-jɨgäba*   *näbr*   *räkkäbä*

      forest   TEMP-enter.IMPF. 3SGM   leopard[17]   get.PF.3SGM

      "The antelope had labor pains, and when it entered (the) forest it found a leopard."

(3)   *zogara*   *jɨburi*

      zogara   *jɨburi*

      leopard   say.IMPF.IP

      "It is called 'zogara' (in Mesqan)."

(4)   *zogara*   *räkkäbä*

      zogara   *räkkäbä*

      leopard   get.PF.3SGM

      "It found a leopard."

(5)   *dinäbbät'ä*

      dinäbbät'ä

      be.surprised.PF.3SGM

      "It was surprised."

(6)   *bähi*   *zor*   *tibur*   *at*   *addaɲ*   *räkkäbä*

      bähi   *zor*   *tɨ-jɨbur*   *at*   *addaɲ*   *räkkäbä*

      then   turn   TEMP-say.IMPF.3SGM   INDF   hunter   get.PF.3SGM

      "Then when it made a turn it found a hunter."

(7)   *addaɲi*   *k'äst*   *t'äbbät'äm*   *ahᵂa*

      addaɲ-i   *k'äst*   *t'äbbät'ä-m*   *ahᵂa*

      hunter-DF   bow   have.PF.3SGM-CONV   now

---

[16] circumposition *tä-N-e* "toward" (cf. Hetzron 1977: 55)。
[17] Amharic word. Correction is made in (3) and (4).

ginbäi   *mɨt'*   *at'addäfʷänɨm*

ginbä-i   *mɨt'*   *at'addäf-ä-ʷn-m*

antelope-DF   labor.pain   have.labor.pains.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM?-CONV

lɨkk   *täzamme*   *tijaž*   *zogara*   *nänä*

lɨkk   *tä-za-m-e*   *tɨ-jaž*   *zogara*   *nänä*

just   tä-that-TOP-e   TEMP-see.IMPF.3SGM   leopard   exist.PF.3SGM

"The hunter held a bow, at that time the antelope went into labor, and when it looks on that side, there is a leopard."

(8)   *täzɨmme*   *tijaž*   *addaɲi*   *nänä*

tä-zɨ-m-e   *tɨ-jaž*   *addaɲ-i*   *nänä*

tä-this-TOP-e   TEMP-see.IMPF.3SGM   hunter-DF   exist.PF.3SGM

"And when it looks on this side, the hunter is there."

(9)   *dɨbr*   *wust'u*   *jannä*

dɨbr   *wust'-u*   *jannä*

forest   inside-COP.PRES.3SGM   exist.IMPF.3SGM?

"It is in the forest."

(10)   *mɨt'*   *t'äbbʷät'änɨm*

mɨt'   *t'äbbät'ä-ʷn-m*

labor.pain   have.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-CONV

äga   *äddijä*   *bät'ägäwta*   *nänä*

äga   *äddijä*   *bät'ägä-äwta*   *nänä*

water   river   near-POSS[18].3SGM   exist.PF.3SGM

"It had labor pains, and there was a river near it."

(11)   *äddijäi*   *mälläm*   *täsämei*   *tijaž*

äddijä-i   *mällä-m*   *tä-säme-e*   *tɨ-jaž*

river-DF   fill.PF.3SGM-CONV   *tä*-sky-*e*[19]   TEMP-see.IMPF.3SGM

znäb   *čäɲɲäm*   *dɨbri*   *bäsat*

znäb   *čäɲɲä-m*   *dɨbr-i*   *bä-ɨsat*

rain   come.PF.3SGM-CONV   forest-DF   by-fire

tät'abbät'äm   *sädäd*   *ɨsat*   *t'äbbʷät'änɨm*

tät'abbät'ä-m   *sädäd*   *ɨsat*   *t'äbbät'ä-ʷn-m*

be.hold.PF.3SGM-CONV   wild   fire   have.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM-CONV

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[18] Morpheme boundary is not sure.

[19] The actual utterance was *-i* but considering its meaning it is assumed that it has *-e* in its deep form.

ahʷa	*gra*	*gäbbʷän*
ahʷa	*gra*	*gäbbä-ʷn*
now	dilemma	enter.PF.3SGM-3SGM.DAT?

"The river filled (with water), and when the antelope looks at the sky it rains. The forest caught a fire and wild fire holds it. Now it gets into dilemma."

(12)

ginbäi	*jannän*	*ammarač*
ginbä-i	*jannä-ʷn*	*ammarač*
antelope-DF	exist.IMPF.3SGM-3SGM.DAT	choice

bäza	*mädär*	*wät'äɲ*	*bɨččaw*
bä-za	*mädär*	*wät'äɲ*	*bɨččaw*
in-that	place	giving.birth	only

"To the antelope the only choice is to give birth at that place."

(13)

lɨkk	*jɨč'äɲɲe*
lɨkk	*jɨč'äɲɲ-e*
just	give.birth.IMPF.3SGM-PROS

at'addäfʷänɨm
at'addäfä-ʷn-m
have.labor.pains.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM?-CONV

jɨč'äɲɲe	*tɨjella*
jɨč'äɲɲ-e	*tɨ-jella*
give.birth.IMPF.3SGM-PROS	TEMP-strain.IMPF.3SGM

addaɲi	*k'ästi*	*gäffʷärän*
addaɲ-i	*k'äst-i*	*gäffär-ä-ʷn*
hunter-DF	bow-DF	release.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM?DAT?

"At that time it had labor pains to give birth and strained to give birth, then the hunter released the bow (to it?)."

(14)

tɨgäfr	*dɨngät*	*jäzogarai*
tɨ-jɨgäfr	*dɨngät*	*jä-zogara-i*
TEMP-release.IMPF.3SGM	suddenly	ACC-leopard-DF

k'ʷät't'ärän
k'ät't'ärä-ʷn
kill.PF.3SGM-3SGM.OM

"As he released (the bow), suddenly he killed the leopard."

(15) *zogarai*   *mʷatä*

  zogara-i   *mʷatä*

  leopard-DF   die.PF.3SGM

  "The leopard died."

(16) *addaŋi*   *miss*   *dɨnäbbät'äm*   *säkkʲä*

  addaŋ-i   *miss*[20]   *dɨnäbbät'ä-m*   *säkkʲ-ä*

  hunter-DF   man   be.surprised.PF.3SGM-CONV   run.away.PF.3SGM

  "The hunter <man?> was surprised and ran away."

(17) *znabi*   *wäznɨb*   *k'ärräsä*

  znab-i   *wäznɨb*   *k'ärräsä*

  rain-DF   raining   start.PF.3SGM

  "It started raining."

(18) *za*   *sädäd*   *ɨsät*   *t'äffa*

  za   *sädäd*   *ɨsät*   *t'äffa*

  that   wild   fire   be.extinguished.PF.3SGM

  "That wild fire was extinguished."

(19) *ginbäi*   *č'äŋŋä*   *bäsälam*

  ginbä-i   *č'äŋŋ-ä*   *bäsälam*

  antelope-   give.birth.P   peacefully
  DF   F.3SGM

  "The antelope gave birth peacefully."

(20) č'äŋŋä   bäza   mädär

  č'äŋŋ-ä   bä-za   mädär

  give.birth.PF.3SGM   in-that   place

  "It gave birth at that place."

(21) *znabmi*   *zännäbä*

  znab-m-i   *zännäbä*

  rain-TOP-DF   rain.PF.3SGM

  "The rain went on."

(22) *ɨsätmi*   *t'äffa*

  ɨsät-m-i   *t'äffa*

  fire-TOP-DF   be.extinguished.PF.3SGM

  "The fire was extinguished."

---

[20] I could not understand its function.

(23) *addaɲimmi*   *säkkʲä*
      addaɲ-m-i   *säkkʲä*
      hunter-TOP-DF   run.away.PF.3SGM
      "The hunter ran away."

(24) *ginbämmi*   *bäsälam*   *jič'äɲŋe*
      ginbä-m-i   *bäsälam*   *jɨč'äɲŋ-e*
      antelope-TOP-DF   peacefully   give.birth.IMPF.3SGM-PROS

      čalä   *jɨburi*
      čalä   *jɨburi*
      can.PF.3SGM   say.IMPF.IP

      "And the antelope could peacefully give birth. This is the story."