

Theme Construction in Af Ashraaf and Standard Somali

ROBERTO AJELLO

University of Pisa - Pisa

1. One of the main differences between Af Ashraaf (AA) and Standard Somali (StS) lies in the personal pronoun system: although both languages possess parallel series of personal pronouns, namely 3 series which sound similar in both languages, with only little formal differences, they differ in one main point: the 3rd person object pronoun. Here is the scheme:

Extensive form of subject pronoun in StS:

1 st sg.	<i>aniga</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>adiga</i>
3 rd sg.M.	<i>isaga</i>
3 rd sg.F.	<i>iyada</i>
1 st pl.incl.	<i>innaga</i>
2 st pl.excl.	<i>annaga</i>
2 nd pl.	<i>idinka</i>
3 rd pl.	<i>iyaga</i>

Extensive form of subject pronoun in AA:

1 st sg.	<i>an</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>at</i>
3 rd sg.M.	<i>as (us)</i>
3 rd sg.F.	<i>isha</i>
1 st pl.	<i>annuun</i>
2 nd pl.	<i>asiin</i>
3 rd pl.	<i>ishoon</i>

Restrictive form of subject pronoun in StS:

1 st sg.	<i>aan</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>aad</i>
3 rd sg.M.	<i>uu</i>
3 rd sg.F.	<i>ay</i>
1 st pl.	<i>aan</i>
2 nd pl.	<i>aad</i>
3 rd pl.	<i>ay</i>

Restrictive form of subject pronoun in AA:

1 st sg.	<i>an</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>at</i>
3 rd sg.M.	<i>as (us)</i>
3 rd sg.F.	<i>ay</i>
1 st pl.	<i>an</i>
2 nd pl.	<i>at</i>
3 rd pl.	<i>ay</i>

Object personal pronouns in StS:

1 st sg.	<i>i</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>ku</i>
3 rd sg.	\emptyset
1 st pl.incl.	<i>na</i>
1 st pl.excl.	<i>ina</i>
2 nd pl.	<i>idin</i>
3 rd pl.	\emptyset

Object personal pronouns in AA:

1 st sg.	<i>i</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>ku</i>
3 rd sg.M.	<i>su</i>
3 rd sg.F.	<i>sa</i>
1 st pl.	<i>noo</i>
2 nd pl.	<i>sii</i>
3 rd pl.	<i>soo</i>

As we can see from the above scheme, the difference between the two languages concerns the set of Object personal pronouns, and in particular the presence in AA of 3rd person pronouns, as opposed to the zero-form for 3rd person in StS: in AA the 3rd person Object pronoun distinguishes M from F in the singular, but has got one single form in the plural. Compare the following sentences:

- (1) AA *Ciise su deyti-waa? Ee, su deyi*
Ciise him did (you) see? Yes him (I) saw
« Did you see Ciise? Yes, I saw him »
- (1a) StS *Ma aragtay Ciise? Haa, waan arkay*
Did (you) see Ciise Yes vF+I saw
« Did you see Ciise? Yes I saw him »
- (2) AA *Fadumo sa deyti-waa? Ee, sa deyi*
Faaduma her did (you) see? Yes her (I) saw
« Did you see Faaduma? Yes I saw her »
- (2a) StS *Faadumo ma aragtay? Haa, waan arkay*
Faaduma did (you) see? Yes vF+I saw
« Did you see Faaduma? Yes I saw her »
- (3) AA *Naagaayta soo deyti-waa? Ee, soo deyi*
Women-the them did (you) see? Yes them (I) saw
« Did you see the women? Yes, I saw them »
- (3a) StS *Naagaha ma aragtay? Haa, waan arkay*
Women-the did (you) see? Yes vF+I saw

- « Did you see the women? Yes, I saw them »
 (4) AA *Nimanaayta soo deyti-waa? Ee, soo deyi*
 Men-the them did (you) see? Yes them (I) saw
 « Did you see the men? Yes, I saw them »
 (4a) StS *Nimanka ma aragtay? Haa, waan arkay*
 Men-the did (you) see? Yes vF+I saw
 « Did you see the men? Yes, I saw them »
 (5) AA *Geela su deyti-waa? Ee, su deyi*
 Camel-the him did (you) see? Yes him (I) saw
 « Did you see the camel? Yes I saw him »
 (5a) StS *Geela ma aragtay? Haa, waan arkay*
 Camel-the did (you) see? Yes vF+I saw
 « Did you see the camel? Yes I saw him ».

As results evident from the comparison between the same answers in the two languages, AA has got pronouns for 3rd person-object with anaphoric value, i.e., pronouns which are able to recall a certain NP previously mentioned, while StS doesn't have such a possibility and is compelled to use Subject extensive pronouns when it wants to emphasize the object, as in:

- (6a) StS *Isagaan arkay*
 He nF+I saw
 « I have seen *him* » (not her)

where the aim may be for instance a contrastive one, as in a discourse context as the following one:

- (7a) StS *Ma aragtay Cali iyo xaaskiisa? Haa, isag(a ay)aan arkay ee*
 Did (you) see Cali and wife-his Yes he + nF + I saw but
iyada ma arkin
 she (I) didn't see
 « Did you see Cali and his wife? Yes, I saw *him*, but I didn't see *her* ».

The anaphoric value of 3rd person pronouns in StS is possessed on the contrary by the restrictive subject pronouns which accompany the Verbal Complex and thus constitute a double marking for the subject together with the verbal endings as can be seen in the examples (1a-7a). The situation presented by StS looks then exactly specular to that of AA, but there is a further difference: anaphoric 3rd person subject pronouns in StS co-refer with NPs of any kind without any restriction, while in AA there is a restriction for the coreference of 3rd person object pronouns. The restriction concerns the feature [+animate] of the nouns referred to. Thus the AA pronouns *su*, *sa*, *soo* are used only if they refer to nouns which are characterized by the feature [+animate]: if the coreferent noun is characterized as [-animate], it cannot be referred to by an object pronoun, as can be seen in the following example:

- (8) AA *Iibsati-waa meesita? Ee, iibsati*
 Did (you) buy table-the? Yes (I) bought
 « Did you buy the table? Yes I did »

while in StS the subject pronoun *uu* can refer also to [-animate] nouns, as in:

- (9a) StS *Maxaa ku dhacay miiska? Wuu jabay*
 What-Int. to happened table-the? vF+he broke
 « What happened to the table? It got broken »

In StS the form of the 3rd sg. subject pronoun follows the grammatical gender

of the coreferent noun, i.e. in (9a) it is masculine because the [-animate] noun is masculine, otherwise the agreement is different, as in:

(10a) StS *Maxaa ku dhacay irrida? Way jabtay*

What-Int. to happened door-the? vF + she broke

« What happened to the door? It got broken ».

On the contrary, the possibility in StS to emphasize the extensive 3rd person subject pronoun, when it is used as object, is limited to [+animate] coreferent nouns, as is evident from the following example:

(11a) StS * *Ma cuntay cambaha iyo mufada? Haa, iyad(a ay)aan cunay*

Did (you) eat mango-the and bun-the Yes she + nF + I ate

In this case, it isn't possible to contrast one NP as opposed to the other one, using the extensive pronoun, because extensive subject pronouns refer only to [+animate] nouns, and so the only possibility here would be:

(12a) StS *Ma cuntay cambaha iyo mufada? Haa, mufad(a ay)aan*

Did (you) eat mango-the and bun-the Yes bun-the + nF + I
cunay

ate

« Did you eat the mango and the bun? Yes, I ate the bun ».

i.e. repeat the noun.

The difference between extensive and restrictive 3rd person subject pronouns in StS lies in the fact that extensive forms co-refer only to [+animate] nouns, while restrictive forms co-refer to all sorts of nouns.

In AA. as we have said, the 3rd person object pronoun is coreferent only of [+animate] nouns, but still, since there are [+animate] nouns whose grammatical gender does not coincide with the sex of the animate being expressed, a problem arises as to which 3rd sg. object pronoun is used. The cases of lack of overlapping of the categories of gender and sex are two:

a) common-gender nouns: i.e. nouns that may indicate both male and female referents, but possess only one grammatical gender, such as: *dumaashi (-ta)* which means both « brother-in-law » and « sister-in-law »

b) the phonological conditioning of grammatical gender: nouns ending in a vowel or diphthong get the definite article *-ta*, which is the form of the feminine (the masculine one sounds in most cases *-a*; it sounds *-ka* after nouns ending in *-n*), whatever the sex expressed by the referent noun is, p. ex., *beenlow* « liar » which has the ending *-ow*, typical of male referents and contrasting with the ending *-ey*, typical of female referents, gets the definite article *-ta*, which indicates feminine gender. Thus, both *beenlow*, literally « he-liar », and *beenley*, literally « she-liar », get the same feminine article *-ta*.

In the two cases above indicated as a) and b), the anaphoric 3rd sg. object pronoun used never agrees with the grammatical gender of the referent noun, but with the sex of the animate being, as in:

(13) AA *Beenlow-tii su deyti-waa? Ee, su deyti*

He-liar-that(F) him did (you) see? Yes him (I) saw

« Have you seen that liar? Yes, I have seen him ».

This kind of agreement between referent noun and anaphoric object pronoun based upon the category of sex, not upon the category of gender, is perfectly in line with the agreement between subject and verb. Also in this latter case, since the 3rd person sg. of the verbs distinguishes between masculine and feminine, we are faced with a similar agreement problem when the subject is a noun belong-

ing to one of the categories indicated as a) and b). Agreement between singular subject noun of categories a), b) and verb does not follow grammatical gender but the category of the sex attributed to the referent expressed by the noun, as in:

(14) AA *Cali dumaashitiis kooyi*

Cali brother-in-law-his came (M)

« Cali's brother-in-law has come »

as opposed to:

(15) AA *Cali dumaashitiis kooyti*

Cali sister-in-law-his came (F)

« Cali's sister-in-law has come »

2. If we consider AA sentences (1-5) in their first parts, namely the interrogative parts of them, and we compare them with sentences (14-15), which differ in that (1-5) are two-argument sentences, while (14-15) have only one argument, we notice that 3rd person object pronouns are used in (1-5) although the object NP is overtly expressed. Other examples will confirm this syntactic construction:

(16) AA *Beesatii waxa su sishi ninka oo at su deyow haasey*

Money-that thing-that him (I) gave man-the who thou him see

« I have given the money to the man you see »

(17) AA *Ninka kan naagtii (oo) sa jacallay sa furyi*

Man-the this woman-that (who) her (he)loved her divorced

« This man has divorced the woman he loved »

(18) AA *Gabar quraxbadan sa deyi*

Girl beautiful her (I) saw

« I have seen a beautiful girl »

(19) AA *Gabar (oo) orodyatey sa deyi*

Girl (who) ran her (I) saw

« I have seen a girl who was running »

(20) AA *Naagaay oo ooyaween soo deyi*

Women who cried them (I) saw

« I have seen women who were crying »

(21) AA *Gabarta (oo) sa jacli sa deyi*

Girl-the (who) her (I) love her (I) saw

« I have seen the girl I love »

(22) AA *Duqtii (oo) beesata in siitii sa deyi*

Old-woman (who) money-the me-to gave her (I) saw

« I have seen the old woman who gave me the money »

(23) AA *Cali dumaashitiis su devi / Cali dumaashitiis sa deyi*

Cali brother-in-law-his him (I) saw/C. sister-in-law-his her (I) saw

« I have seen Cali's brother-in-law / I have seen Cali's sister-in-law »

(24) AA *Cali dumaashiyaaytiis soo deyi*

Cali brothers-in-law-his them (I) saw

« I have seen Cali's brothers (or sisters)-in-law »

(25) AA *Cali annuun noon deyi*

Cali we us saw

« Cali has seen us »

(26) AA *Cali at ku deyi*

Cali thou thee saw

« Cali has seen you »

(27) AA *Cali us su deyi*

- Cali he him saw
« Cali has seen him »
- (28) AA *Cali isha sa deyi*
Cali she her saw
« Cali has seen her »
- (29) AA *Cali asiin siin deyi*
Cali you(S) you(O) saw
« Cali has seen you »
- (30) AA *An asiin beesata siin sishi*
I you money-the you (I) gave
« I have given you the money »
- (31) AA *An beesata ishoon soo sishi*
I money-the they them (I) gave
« I have given them the money »
- (32) AA *Gabarta kee sa deyti?*
Girl-the which her did you see?
« Which girl have you seen? »
- (33) AA *Igaara kee su deyti?*
Boy-the which him did you see?
« Which boy have you seen? »
- (34) AA *Ninka kaas oo jiran su deyi*
Man-the that who sick him (I) saw
« I have seen that sick man ».
- (35) AA *Ninka kaas oo taajira ah su deyi*
Man-the that who merchant-the is him (I) saw
« I have seen that rich man »
- (36) AA *Ninkii taajira ahay su deyi*
Man-that merchant-the was him (I) saw
« I have seen that rich man (we know of) »

We desume from the above examples that the plain two-argument sentence in AA has got the following structure;

NP Subject - NP Object - Object Pronoun - Verb

Where NP Subject and NP Object may be substituted by subject personal pronoun, as can be seen by comparing:

- (37) AA *Cali gabarta sa deyi*
Cali girl-the her saw
« Cali has seen the girl »

with:

- (38) AA *Us isha sa deyi*
He she her saw
« He has seen her »

In the case then that the Object is represented by personal pronouns of 1st or 2nd person, singular or plural, two forms of personal pronouns will occur in the sentence: the personal pronoun in its extensive subject form and the object pronoun that indicates its syntactic relationship with the Verb, as in the already quoted examples:

- (25) AA *Cali annuun noon deyi*
Cali we us saw
« Cali has seen us »

- (26) AA *Cali at ku deyi*
 Cali thou the saw
 « Cali has seen you »
- (29) AA *Cali asiin siin deyi*
 Caly you (S) you (O) saw
 « Cali has seen you »

The structure of AA sentences then doesn't allow syntactic roles to be evidenced by NPs whose function seems to be simply that of providing a framework inside which the main predication is performed. The syntactic relationships are given in the Verbal Complex and precisely they are indicated by the occurrences of the anaphoric object pronouns, which have a fixed position inside the sentence, i.e. they occur immediately before the Verb.

When the relationship of the second argument to the Verb is one of Indirect Object or Adverbial, the Verb is preceded by a preposition linked to the Object pronoun; so we get the following structure:

NP Subject - NP Indirect Object (or NP Adverbial) - Object Pronoun + Preposition - Verb

as in:

- (39) AA *Sula hadley ninka (oo) qahwata gadow haashey*
 Him-with (I) spoke man-the (who) coffee-the sells
 « I spoke with the man who sells coffee »
- (40) AA *Ma ogi Cali ninkii sula cuney dooney*
 Not (I) know Cali man-that him-with eat will
 « I don't know whom Cali is going to eat with »
- (41) AA *Shineema in baxyewa, ka bacdi Cali sun tagyewa*
 Cinema to (I) go, afterwards Cali him-to (I) go
 « I am going to the cinema, then to (see) Cali »
- (42) AA *At Cali aad suku xoosanid (xoosan tihid)*
 Thou Cali more him-from fat-are
 « You are fatter than Cali »
- (43) AA *Cali Fadma (aad) saka taajirsan yehey*
 Cali Faduma (more) her-from rich is
 « Cali is richer than Faduma »

In sentences with more than two arguments, the « preposition », which should be rather called « preverb », although it is formally linked with the Object pronoun in preverbal position, may not be in syntactic relationship to the NP coreferent of the Object pronoun, but to another NP Adverbial in the sentence, as in:

- (44) AA *Gabarta kaas at jida saka deyow haasey*
 Girl-the that thou street her + in seeing are
 « You see that girl in the street »
- (45) AA *Ninka kan at jida suku deyow haasey*
 Man-the this thou street him + in seeing are
 « You see that man in the street »

where the preposition *ka* (or *ku* in (45), due to vowel harmony) refers to the NP *jida* « street » and not to the NP *gabarta kaas* (44) or *ninka kan* (45) which are coreferent of Object pronouns.

The Verbal Complex contains then all the syntactic indications of the sentence, while nominals, including extensive pronouns, are dislocated either on the left or on the right and, since they do not carry case marking but occur in an 'absolute

form', provide only the lexical meaning. The nominals then perform the function of « topic » or better of « theme » if we follow the indications of the functional grammar, i.e. « the function of specifying the relevant universe of discourse of its comment; the range of things with respect to which it makes sense to assert that comment » (Dik 1979: 140). The Theme construction in AA appears to have been grammaticalised to the extent of becoming the unmarked way of producing sentences. This means that the nominal functioning as Theme must be such that it could also appear in the place of the pronominal element, i.e. it must conform to the semantic selection restrictions imposed on the argument position marked by the pronominal element within the predication.

But there are further restrictions upon the Theme construction, which can be summarized as follows:

1) The Theme construction is feasible only if the object-nominal is characterized as [+animate]: as we have already seen, in AA the anaphoric Object pronoun can refer only to [+animate] nouns and consequently the Theme construction applies when the object-nominal is [+animate]. Compare (46) with (47), (48) with (49) and (50) with (51):

- (46) AA *Ninkii taajira ahay su deyi*
Man-that merchant-the was him (I) saw
« I have seen that rich man »
- (47) AA *Moosa kaas oo ceerinka ah cuni*
Banana-the that which unripe-the is (I) ate
« I have eaten that unripe banana »
- (48) AA *Eriyaay badan soo deyi*
Goats many them (I) saw
« I have seen many goats »
- (49) AA *Biyo badan dhammi*
Water much (I) drank
« I have drunk much water »
- (50) AA *Eriyaayta kan oo dhan an soo lihi*
Goats-the these which all I them possess
« All these goats are mine »
- (51) AA *Meesita (oo) at deyow haasey Xamar ka iibsati*
Table-the (which) thou see Mogadisho in (I) bought
« I have bought in Mogadisho the table you see »

In the above examples, (46), (48) and (50) have [+animate] object nominals which allow the Theme construction, while such a construction is not feasible in (47), (49) and (51) because the object nominal is characterized as [-animate].

2) Inside the category of [+animate] nominals, the Theme construction applies when the nominal is a proper noun or is determined, either by an article or a deictic element or any determinant whatsoever or is substituted by an extensive subject pronoun. In case of an undetermined nominal, the Theme construction doesn't apply. If we consider the following examples:

- (52) AA *An hal igaar qaba*
I one son have
« I have a son »
- (53) AA *Fadma hal eey qabta*
Faduma one dog has
« Faduma has a dog »

(54) AA *At hal naag quraxbadan sa qabtid*

Thou one wife beautiful her have

« You have a beautiful wife »

(55) AA *Nin (oo) qahwo gadyabey su deyi*

Man (who) coffee sells him (I) saw

« I have seen a man who sells coffee »

we see that the different structure of (52-53) compared to that of (54-55) consists in the presence of a determinant of the Theme in (54-55) which entails the occurrence of the anaphoric pronoun, while in (52-53) the object nominal is undetermined and cannot constitute the Theme of the sentence.

To sum up, we can conclude that AA more-than-one-argument sentences are characterised by the « theme » construction that involves either a Direct or Indirect Object NP or an Adverbial NP if this NP has got the feature [+animate] and is determined.

In a specular way, StS is also characterised by the « theme » construction, but in the case of Subject nominal. Moreover StS knows fewer restrictions than AA: the « theme » construction applies both with [+animate] and [-animate] nominal subjects, but the only indispensable condition is that the nominal be determined. While a sentence like:

(56a) StS *Cali gabar ayuu garaacay*

Cali girl nf + He beat

« Cali has beaten a girl »

is grammatical, because the anaphoric pronoun refers to the nominal « Cali » which is a proper noun, and thus inherently determined, the following sentence:

(57a) StS **Nin gabartaas ayuu garaacay*

Man, girl-that nF + He beat

is ungrammatical, because the anaphoric pronoun refers to an undetermined nominal; the simple addition of a determiner is sufficient to transform (57a) into a grammatical sentence:

(58a) StS *Ninka gabartaas ayuu garaacay*

Man-the girl-that nF + He beat

« The man has beaten that girl »

The distinction between Subject NP and Non-Subject NP in StS is marked by 2 different segmental items:

1) the Subject NP gets the nominative mark -u, -i

2) the Subject NP is either left- or right- dislocated, and its function is indicated by the anaphoric pronoun.

If we analyze all the theoretically possible combinations of the items that may be involved in the construction of a two-argument sentence in StS, namely: S = Subject, O = Object, V = Verb, in = indicator of nominal focus, iv = indicator of verbal focus, s = nominative mark, p = anaphoric pronoun, we get the following 72 combinations:

1 - <i>waranka libaaxa waa duray</i>	S	O	iv	V
2 - <i>waranka libaaxa wuu duray</i>	S	O	ivp	V
3 - <i>waranka waa duray libaaxa</i>	S	iv	V	O
4 - <i>waranka wuu duray libaaxa</i>	S	ivp	V	O
5 <i>*libaaxa waranka waa duray</i>	O	S	iv	V

6 *libaaxa waranka wuu duray	O	S	ivp	V
7 *libaaxa waa duray waranka	O	iv	V	S
8 *libaaxa wuu duray waranka	O	ivp	V	S
9 *waa duray libaaxa waranka	iv	V	O	S
10 - waa duray waranka libaaxa	iv	V	S	O
11 *wuu duray libaaxa waranka	ivp	V	O	S
12 - wuu duray waranka libaaxa	ivp	V	S	O
13 *waranku libaaxa waa duray	Ss	O	iv	V
14 *waranku libaaxa wuu duray	Ss	O	ivp	V
15 - waranku waa duray libaaxa	Ss	iv	V	O
16 - waranku wuu duray libaaxa	Ss	ivp	V	O
17 *libaaxa waranku waa duray	O	Ss	iv	V
18 *libaaxa waranku wuu duray	O	Ss	ivp	V
19 *libaaxa waa duray waranku	O	iv	V	Ss
20 *libaaxa wuu duray waranku	O	ivp	V	Ss
21 *waa duray libaaxa waranku	iv	V	O	Ss
22 - waa duray waranku libaaxa	iv	V	Ss	O
23 *wuu duray libaaxa waranku	ivp	V	O	Ss
24 - wuu duray waranku libaaxa	ivp	V	Ss	O
25 - waranka ayaa libaaxa duray	S	in	O	V
26 *waranka ayuu libaaxa duray	S	inp	O	V
27 - waranka ayaa duray libaaxa	S	in	V	O
28 *waranka ayuu duray libaaxa	S	inp	V	O
29 *waranka libaaxa ayaa duray	S	O	in	V
30 - waranka libaaxa ayuu duray	S	O	inp	V
31 *waranka duray libaaxa ayaa	S	V	O	in
32 *waranka duray libaaxa ayuu	S	V	O	inp
33 *libaaxa ayaa waranka duray	O	in	S	V
34 - libaaxa ayuu waranka duray	O	inp	S	V
35 - libaaxa waranka ayaa duray	O	S	in	V
36 *libaaxa waranka ayuu duray	O	S	inp	V
37 *libaaxa ayaa duray waranka	O	in	V	S
38 - libaaxa ayuu duray waranka	O	inp	V	S
39 *libaaxa duray waranka ayaa	O	V	S	in
40 *libaaxa duray waranka ayuu	O	V	S	inp
41 *duray libaaxa ayaa waranka	V	O	in	S
42 *duray libaaxa ayuu waranka	V	O	inp	S
43 *duray libaaxa waranka ayaa	V	O	S	in
44 *duray libaaxa waranka ayuu	V	O	S	inp
45 *duray waranka ayaa libaaxa	V	S	in	O
46 *duray waranka ayuu libaaxa	V	S	inp	O
47 *duray waranka libaaxa ayaa	V	S	O	in
48 *duray waranka libaaxa ayuu	V	S	O	inp

49 - waranku ayaa libaaxa duray	Ss	in	O	V
50 *waranku ayuu libaaxa duray	Ss	inp	O	V
51 - waranku ayaa duray libaaxa	Ss	in	V	O
52 *waranku ayuu duray libaaxa	Ss	inp	V	O
53 *waranku libaaxa ayaa duray	Ss	O	in	V
54 - waranku libaaxa ayuu duray	Ss	O	inp	V
55 *waranku duray libaaxa ayaa	Ss	V	O	in
56 *waranku duray libaaxa ayuu	Ss	V	O	inp
57 *libaaxa ayaa waranku duray	O	in	Ss	V
58 - libaaxa ayuu waranku duray	O	inp	Ss	V
59 - libaaxa waranku ayaa duray	O	Ss	in	V
60 *libaaxa waranku ayuu duray	O	Ss	inp	V
61 *libaaxa ayaa duray waranku	O	in	V	Ss
62 - libaaxa ayuu duray waranku	O	inp	V	Ss
63 *libaaxa duray waranku ayaa	O	V	Ss	in
64 *libaaxa duray waranku ayuu	O	V	Ss	inp
65 *duray libaaxa ayaa waranku	V	O	in	Ss
66 *duray libaaxa ayuu waranku	V	O	inp	Ss
67 *duray libaaxa waranku ayaa	V	O	Ss	in
68 *duray libaaxa waranku ayuu	V	O	Ss	inp
69 *duray waranku ayaa libaaxa	V	Ss	in	O
70 *duray waranku ayuu libaaxa	V	Ss	inp	O
71 *duray waranku libaaxa ayaa	V	Ss	O	In
72 *duray waranku libaaxa ayuu	V	Ss	O	inp

The grammatically acceptable sentences can be formalized in this way:

Focus upon the Subject:

- a) S(s) in O V
- b) S(s) in V O
- c) O S(s) in V

Focus upon the Object:

- d) S(s) O inp V
- e) O inp V S(s)
- f) O inp S(s) V

Focus upon the Verb:

- g) S O iv(p) V
- h) S(s) iv(p) V O
- i) iv(p) V S(s) O

From the above scheme we get the following conclusions:

1) the nominative mark is absolutely unnecessary and its usage is optional. In one case (g), its usage would even give an ungrammatical sentence.

2) The « theme » construction with consequent occurrence of anaphoric pronoun, is:

- a) compulsory, when the Focus is upon the Object
- b) ungrammatical, when the Focus is upon the Subject

c) unnecessary and optional, when the Focus is upon the Verb.

Since the nominative mark is optional, of the two segmental items that mark the Subject, the really effective one is the anaphoric Subject pronoun which entails the « theme » construction with shift of the Subject nominal. But the « theme » construction can apply, provided the Subject is not focalized, for the obvious reason that the very same NP cannot be in the meantime the « theme » and the « focus » of the sentence. This explains also the reason why the focalized Subject cannot be shifted to the right of the Verb, as happens in case of the s.c. « Tail » construction (Dik 1979:153), which is a subcategory of the « theme » construction, because simply the focalized Subject cannot be the « theme » of the sentence. The « theme » applies compulsorily when the focus is upon an NP other than the Subject, and this shows that in StS too the « theme » construction has been grammaticalised to the extent of becoming the neutral way of building a sentence. In this case the Subject can be displaced either to the left or to the right of the Verb, in this latter case (e) giving a construction which is more properly called a « tail » construction.

The verbal focus seems to make unnecessary both the segmental items that mark the Subject: the nominative mark is optional and even ungrammatical in (g), and optional is also the usage of the anaphoric pronoun. This means that, when the « new information » is represented by the Verb, the information conveyed by the NPs is less important and no particular need is felt of specifying which of the NPs constitutes the framework inside which the predication is carried out. The position of the various components of the sentence is sufficient to indicate which NP is the Subject, because the Subject either occurs in first position or immediately after the Verb, when the Verb is in first position.

As we have already pointed out, a further restriction for the usage of the « theme » construction is represented by the determinedness of the Subject nominal, while the feature [+animate], or [-animate] is not relevant.

References

- Chafe, W.L. 1976, « Givenness, Contrastiveness, Definiteness, Subjects, Topics, and Point of View » in C.N.Li (ed.), *Subject and Topic*, New York-San Francisco-London, pp. 25-55.
- Dik, S.C. 1979, *Functional Grammar*, Amsterdam-New York-Oxford.
- Givón, T. 1976, « Topic, Pronoun, and Grammatical Agreement », in C.N.Li (ed.) *Subject and Topic*, New York-San Francisco-London, pp. 149-188.
- Hale, K. 1983, « Warlpiri and the Grammar of Non-Configurational Languages », *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 1: 5-47.
- Hoekstra, T., H. Van der Hulst, and M. Moortgat, (eds.) 1981, *Perspectives on Functional Grammar*, Dordrecht.
- Li, C.N. (ed.) 1976, *Subject and Topic*, New York-San Francisco-London.
- Moreno, M.M. 1953-1954, « Il dialetto degli Ashraaf di Mogadiscio », *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, XII: 107-138 and XIII: 5-19.
- Moreno, M.M. 1955, *Il somalo della Somalia, grammatica e testi del Benadir, Darod e Dighil*, Roma.