

# Summer School on Language Typology- Leipzig 2010

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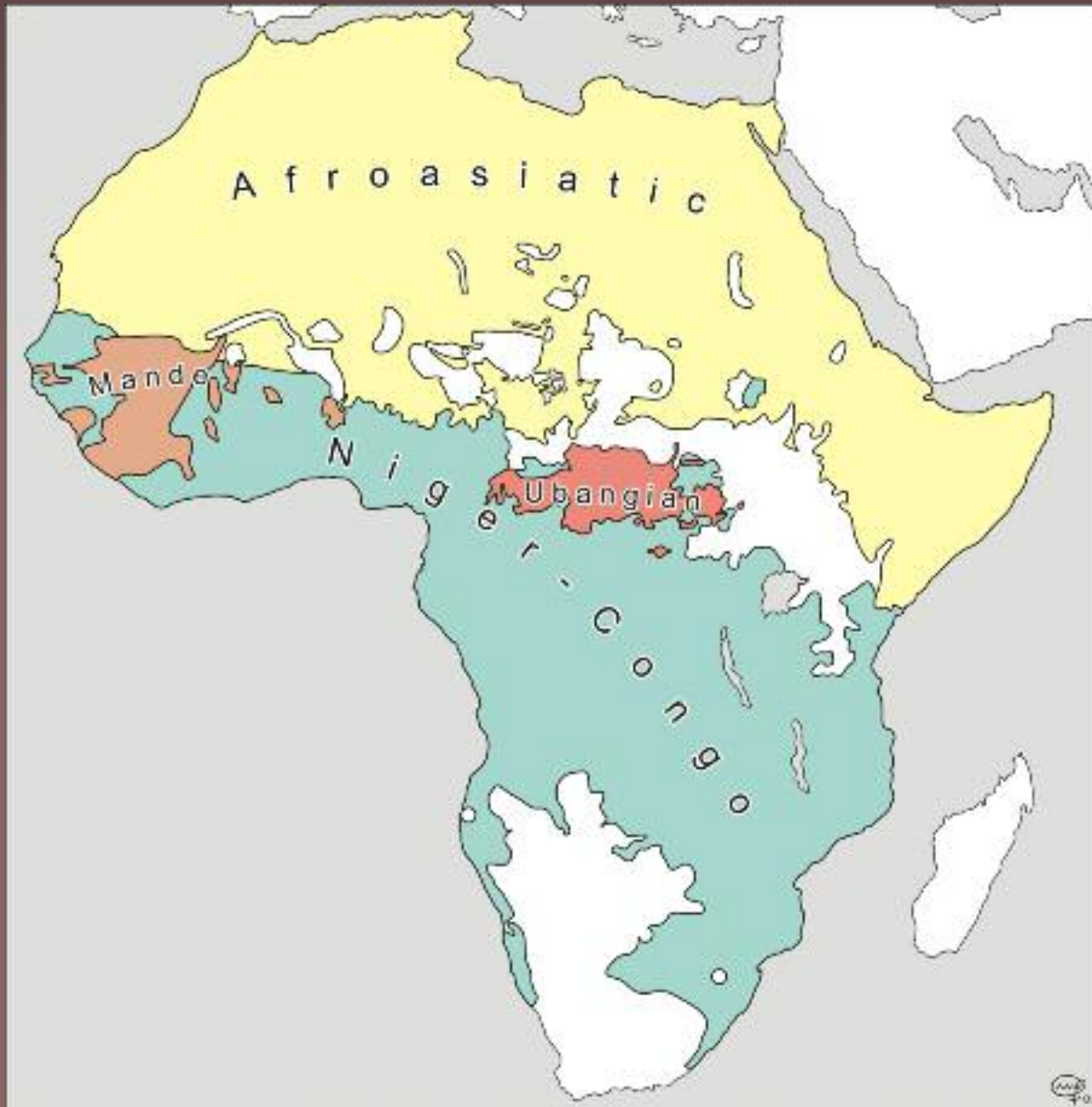
# Introduction

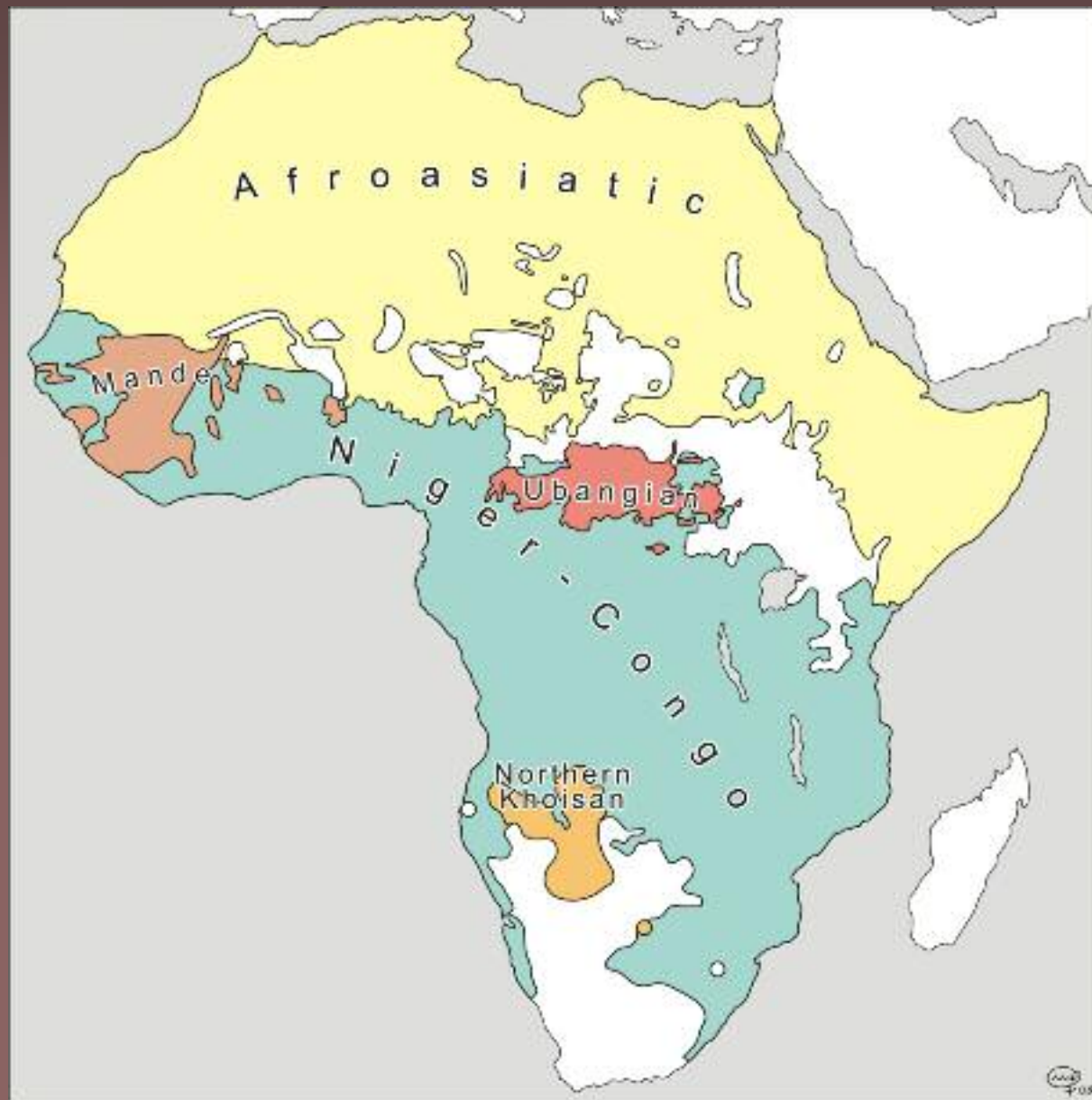
## The genetic picture

































Focus on Nilo-Saharan and Afrosiatic languages  
(mainly Omotic) in northeastern Africa

Main reasons for the selection of themes:

- A former contact zone (typological coherence)
- Interesting areal and genetic variation in the expression of argument structure and discourse structure

- “Dynamic comparison” in the sense of Greenberg (1978) allows one to establish changes in grammatical systems between genetically related languages (intragenetic comparison), whereas intergenetic comparison allows one to establish areal dimensions or more universal properties of human language.

Greenberg, Joseph H. 1978. “Some methods of dynamic comparison”. In *Substance and Structure of Language*, J. Puhvel (ed.), 147-203. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- (You would go crazy otherwise with all these languages and plethora of forms)

- A former contact zone (Heine 1976)

Heine, Bernd. 1976. *A Typology of African Languages Based on the Order of Meaningful Units*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.



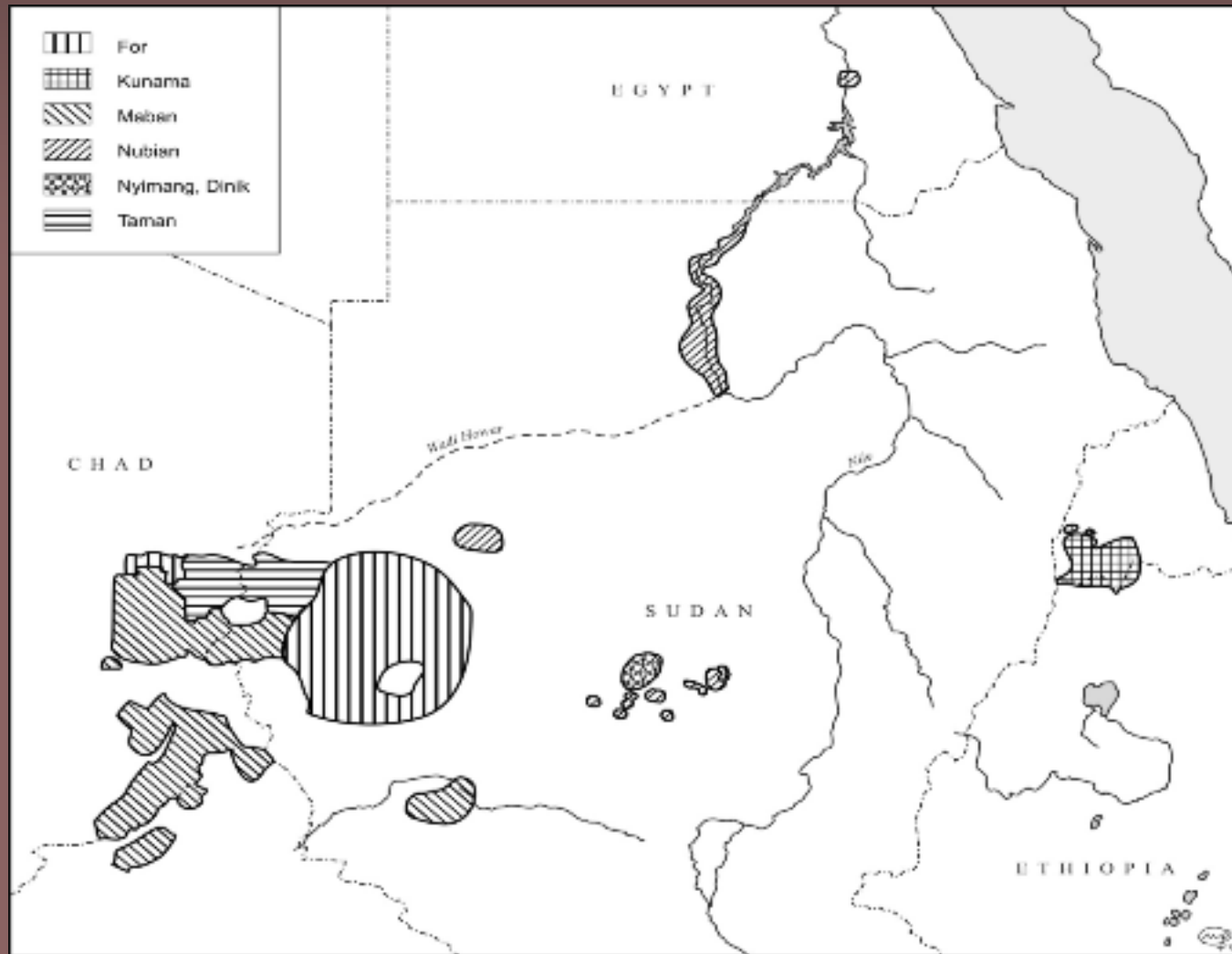
A (former) typological zone:  
Cushitic, Omotic, Ethiopian  
Semitic, Nilo-Saharan  
languages from Chad in the  
West to Ethiopia and Eritrea  
in the East

- Constituent order: Type D (verb-final languages)
- Extensive case marking

- **Extending the typology (Dimmendaal 2008):**

- Converbs ('having bought a ticket, having taken the train to Leipzig, having found the hotel, having refreshed herself a bit, she went to the university')
- Frequent use of coverb plus light verb ('coverb plus do/say') as a lexical strategy
- (• Other areal features include the number marking system: singulatives, collectives, transnumeral forms)

## A brief note on the cultural-historical background:





## The Yellow Nile (Wadi Howar) as a former riverine system between:

- The Ennedi Mountains (Chad) and the Nile between approximately 8000 BC and 1000 BC
- Archaeological evidence for the spreading of material culture in this area
- Exchange of material culture presupposes language contact and (under normal circumstances) multilingualism
- Spreading of typological features as a linguistic reflex

Reference: Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. 2007. Eastern Sudanic and the Wadi Howar and Wadi El Milk diaspora. *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 18:37-67.

## ■ Greenberg (1963) as a classic contribution

- Statistically relevant correlations between the position of the verb and the position of adpositions or auxiliaries
- Greenberg, Joseph H. 1963. Some universals of word order with particular reference to the order of meaningful units. In Joseph H. Greenberg (ed.), *Universals of Language*, pp. 73-113. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## The limited value of word order (or constituent order) typology from a modern typological perspective

- Numerous counter examples
- Not always easy to determine the “basic word order / constituent order” in a language
- Constituent order predictor of very few other, e.g. morphosyntactic properties of a language

■ An example (see Dimmendaal 2008 for further discussion):

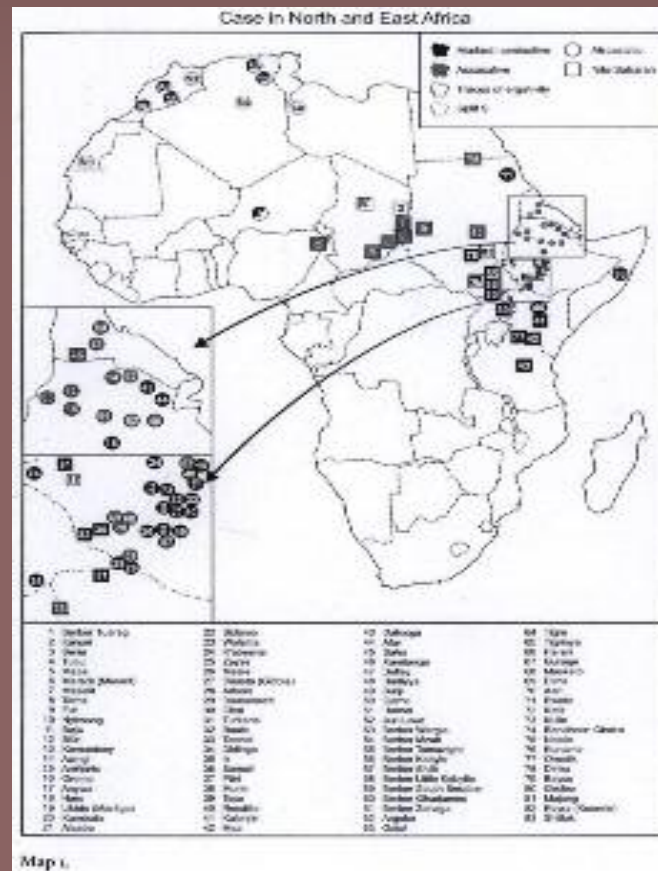
- Ijo: Verb-final languages in the Niger-Delta (Nigeria) share very few typologically interesting features with verb-final languages in north-eastern Africa:
- Case versus its absence in Ijo (and rigidity of constituent order)
- Syntactic behaviour of major categories such as the noun, the verb, or postpositions rather different
- Verb serialization (Ijo) as a lexical and syntactic strategy as against case marking (or marking on the verb)
- Major differences in narrative discourse

# Topics:

1. Case: Focus on Differential Object Marking (in order to understand some of the dynamics behind the reinterpretation of case-marking systems)
2. Case: Focus on ergativity and Marked Nominative systems (as a separate development, and, in the case of Marked Nominatives, universally rare feature)
3. Active alignment as a neglected property of languages in the area
4. Converbs as a discourse strategy (again, as a neglected property, and as an interesting discourse feature)



# 1. DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING



# Case in Africa- Christa König

**Table 2.23** The behavior of nominative and accusative in African accusative languages

Case function of NOM	Language
a S & A obligatory	Unrestricted in all obligatory type 1, without split (Awngi, Bilin, Masketo, Hamar, Dime, Aari, Nobiin, Mararit, Nyimang, Ebang, Nama), and with split (Amharic, Argobba, Gafat, Tigre, Tigrinya, Harari, Gurage, Ge'ez, Kemantney; Xamtanga); Restricted in all split type 2 languages to the context where case is not neutralized; In Ik in certain clause types only with S/A = third person
b S & A not obligatory	All non-obligatory type 2 languages, such as Kunama, Teda-Daza, Kanuri
c citation form	All, except all type 2 languages (*Kemantney, *Kanuri, *Teda-Daza, *Kunama), but Ik
d Nominal predicate	Tubu, Masalit, Fur, Nyimang, Kemantney, Amharic (for definite nouns only) *Nobiin—copula case; *Ik various cases, copula case; *Kanuri caseless form; *Kunama caseless form at least if indefinite
e O, if indefinite	All type 1 split def languages: Amharic, Argobba, Gafat, Tigre, Tigrinya, Harari, Gurage, Ge'ez
f S, A, O	Dullay, except topic O; Xamtanga PL+M; Ik in certain clause types, for S/A ≠ third person
g S & A if definite	Kemantney with M.SG only, Maba

Case functions of ACC	Language
a O = obligatory	Awngi, Bilin, Masketo, Hamar, Dime, Aari, Nobiin, Mararit, Nyimang, Ebang, Nama, Xamtanga F SG; Ik in certain clause types only with S/A = third person
b O, if definite only	Amharic, Argobba, Gafat, Tigre, Tigrinya, Harari, Gurage, Ge'ez, Kemantney
c O = not obligatory	Dullay, Xamtanga, Fur, Masalit, Kunama, Teda-Daza, Kanuri, Tama
d S, A, O	Ik in certain clause types, such as relative clauses

a case specified for the function nominal predicate, called copulative; this applies to Nobiin and Ik. In Ik the situation is more complex. Different copulas have developed different case schemas, two of them, expressing existence, also taking the nominative for this function (see table 2.16). If the language has not grammaticalized a specific case for the function nominal predicate, the following holds: In type 1 languages, regardless of whether split or not obligatory, the nominal predicate is covered by the nominative. This applies to Masalit, Fur, and Nyimang. In type 2 languages, the nominal predicate will most likely be covered by the caseless form. This applies to Kanuri, Teda, and Kemantney, if the noun is indefinite. Definite nouns appear in the nominative when used as nominal predicates.



**Table 5.8** Case marking in Ethiopian languages

**A. Languages with object marking [= ACC language of type 1<sup>15</sup>]**

**Ethio-Semitic**

<b>Ge'ez:</b>	-a, ~-hä; -la
<b>Tigre:</b>	ʔəgəl- ~ ʔəl- (DEF O only; indirect O too)
<b>Tigrinya:</b>	nə- (DEF O only; indirect O too)
<b>Amharic, Argobba, Gafat:</b>	-n (DEF O only)
<b>Harari:</b>	-u (-w after V; DEF O only; in Old Harari INDEF O too)
<b>Gurage:</b>	PWG (Gyeto, Ennemor, etc.): ä-; other Gurage: yä- (Soddo also lä-, nə-; DEF O only; optional; indirect O too)

**Central Cushitic:**

<b>Bilin:</b>	M: -s(i); F: -t(i)
<b>Awngi:</b>	-e/-i; -wa /V__ ; -o ~ -wa /C__
<b>Xamtanga:</b>	F: -t (O = ABS in M and Pl nouns)

**East Cushitic:**

<b>Dullay:</b>	-n (opt.; usual with topicalized O)
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**Omotic:**

<b>Gonga (Kefoid):</b>	
<b>Kefa:</b>	-n (optional)

**Ometo:**

<b>Basketo:</b>	-n
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**East Omotic (Aroid):**

<b>Aari:</b>	-m
<b>Dime:</b>	-im (also INDEF ?)
<b>Hamer:</b>	-(d)am

## B. Languages with subject marking [= MNOM, type 1]

### Eastern Cushitic:

#### Omo-Tana:

- Somali:** final H tone becomes non-H ( $\cdot' \rightarrow \cdot'$ ); F nouns in C: -i
- Rendille:** F nouns in C -é
- Bayso:** -ø (only nouns in -r ?; opt. ?)
- Dhaasanac:** -i and/or tone non-H with M nouns (?)
- Arbore:**
1. M nouns in C and F in V: subject = ACC
  2. F nouns in C: -é
  3. nouns in V with final H tone (all Pl's and a few M's): ( $\cdot' \rightarrow \cdot'$ )
- ?Afar:** M nouns in V: -i
- Saho:** "stressed" nouns and with final -V are marked by the change of final V to /i/ and loss of stress
- Oromo**  
(Southern): nouns /adj's in -VV: -ni; M nouns/Adj's in -V: -ii(ni); F nouns in -V: -tii(ni)
- Dirayta**  
(Gidole): M nouns not in -t: ACC + -(V)t; F and Pl nouns: subjects = ACC

(cont.)



### C. Languages with both subject and object marking [type 2 languages]

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#### Central Cushitic:

**Kemantney:** subject: M: *-i/a*; = NOM (/C\_\_); F: subject = ACC; O (DEF): M: *-s*; F: *-t*

#### Omotic:

**Janjero**<sup>16</sup>: subject: *-u* (opt?); O: *-n*

**Gimira:** subject: *-i<sup>3</sup>*, *-a<sup>3</sup>*; O: *-is<sup>3</sup>* (obligatory only with "specific" nouns; N.B.: superscript numbers indicate tone)

#### Kefoid:

**Bworo**<sup>17</sup>: subject: M: *-a*, F: *-ni*; O: *-a*

**Kefa:** subject: *-y* (emphatic?); O: *-n* (optional)

#### Ometo:

##### North Ometo:

**Welaita**<sup>18</sup>: *-i*, *-y*, *-wi*; O: *-a*

**Kullo:** subject: *-i*; O: *-n*

- Bossong, Georg. 1985. *Empirische Universalienforschung: Differentielle Objektmarkierung in den neuiranischen Sprachen*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Amberber, Mengistu. 2009. Differential case marking of arguments in Amharic. In Malchukov and Spencer (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Case*, pp. 742-755.

- In spite of its widespread nature in the Nilo-Saharan phylum, the differential marking of objects as constituents with or without an explicit case marker has gone virtually unnoticed in the typological literature (Dimmendaal 2010).

# DOM in Amharic

- (10) a. *ləmma and t'ərmus səbbər -ə*  
Lemma one bottle break.PRF-3M  
'Lemma broke one bottle'
- b. *ləmma t'ərmus-u-n səbbər -ə*  
Lemma bottle-DEF-ACC break.PRF-3M  
'Lemma broke the bottle'

- (11) *ləmma and liʃ-(\*in) ayy-ə*  
Lemma one child-(ACC) see.PRF-3M  
'Lemma saw one child'

In (11) the direct object is animate but indefinite. It cannot be marked by the accusative case. Notice also that while there is a subject agreement marker on the verb, there is no corresponding object marker. However, the verb is optionally marked for object agreement provided that the direct object is definite:

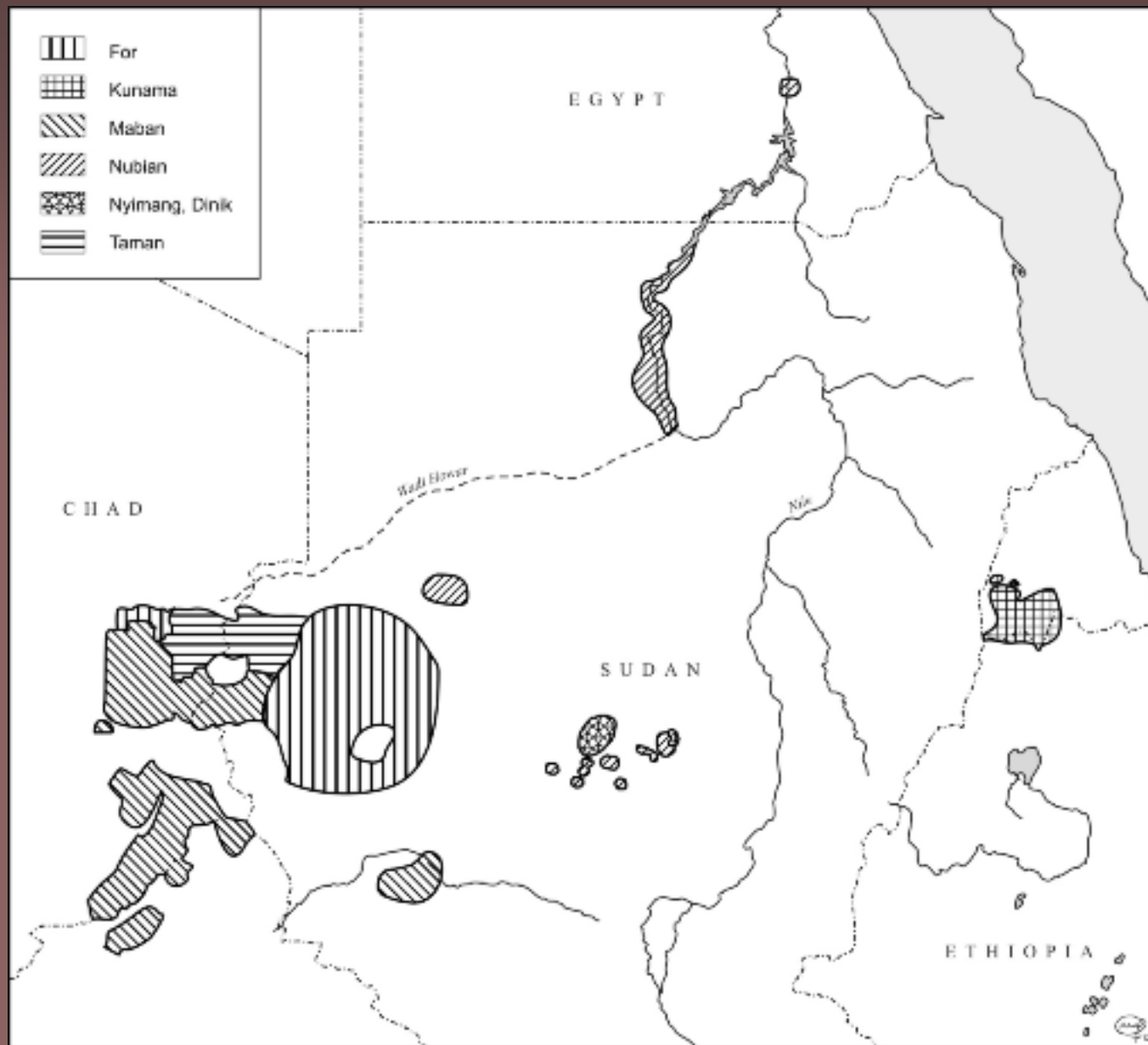
- (12) a. *ləmma t'ərmus-u-n səbbər-ə-(w)*  
Lemma bottle-DEF-ACC break.PRF-3M-3MO  
'Lemma broke the bottle'
- b. *ləmma and t'ərmus səbbər-ə-(\*w)*  
Lemma one bottle break.PRF-3M-(3MO)  
'Lemma broke one bottle'

## 51.4.2 The distribution of the object/indirect object agreement suffix

The accusative suffix *-n* can also be used to mark the recipient of a three-place predicate such as 'give'. Thus compare the following constructions:

- (17) a. *ləmma lə-lij-u məs'haf sət't'-ə-(w)*  
Lemma to-child-DEF book give.PRF-3M-3MO  
'Lemma gave a book to the child'
- b. *ləmma lə-lij-u məs'haf-u-n sət't'-ə-(w)*  
Lemma to-child-DEF book-DEF-ACC give.PRF-3M-3MO  
'Lemma gave the book to the child'
- (18) *ləmma lij-u-n məs'haf sət't'-ə-\*(w)*  
Lemma child-DEF-ACC book give.PRF-3M-3MO  
'Lemma gave the child a book'





- Nilo-Saharan
- I. Central Sudanic
- II. Northeastern Nilo-Saharan
- Saharan
- Maban
- Berta
- Fur
- Kunama
- Eastern Sudanic
  - Northern subgroup (Taman, Nubian, Nimang and Affiti, Nara)
  - Central (Jebel languages)
  - Southern (Daju group, Temein and Keiga Jirru, Surmic, Nilotic)

Table 2. Accusative markers and related case forms in Nilo-Saharan

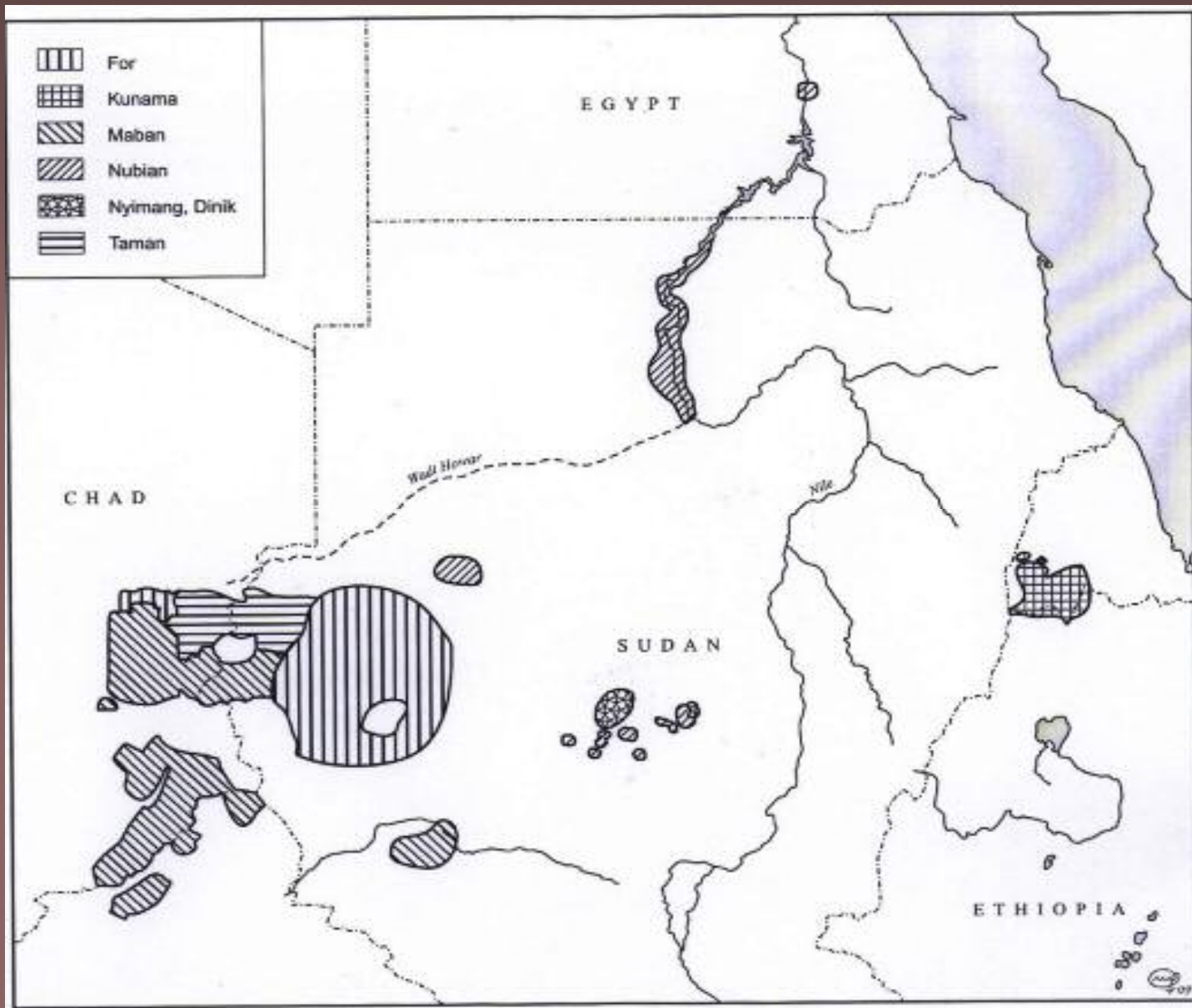
Saharan	Kanuri	ga, a		
	Tubu	ga		
Maban	Maba		-gu	
	Masalit	-ko		
Taman	Tama		-ŋ, -kuŋ	
Nubian	Ghulfan		-gi	
	Kadaru	-ga	-gi	
	Dongolese		-gi	
	Old Nubian	-ka		
Nyimang			-uŋ	
Kuliak (Rub)		-k <sup>a</sup>		
Fur			(-gi)	-si
Kunama			(-k-)	-si

### Accusative case marker (dependent-marking strategy)

Nichols, Johanna. 1986. Head-marking and dependent-marking grammar. *Language* 62:56-119.

# Tama basic properties:

- **Verb-final**
- **Case: Morphologically unmarked  
Nominative**
- **DOM**
- **Summary of Dimmendaal (2010); on cd-rom as pdf-file**



## 6.1. Case

The following set of case markers occur in Tama:

Table 4. Tama case markers

Nominative	zero
Accusative	-iη, -iη (plus other allomorphs)
Locative	-ta
Instrumental-comitative	-gi
Instrumental-mediative	-ε, -e
Genitive	-ηo, -a, -i (plus allomorphs)
Ablative	-in (plus allomorphs)
Comparative	-inda

- (46) wàl-tá                      wàl    ànáá-tá  
house-LOC                    house underneath-LOC  
'in the house'                'underneath the house'
- (47) bɪɾɪk-ír-in                bɪɾɪk    dùút-ír-in  
river-SPEC-ABL              river    big-SPEC-ABL  
'from the river'                'from the big river'
- (48) óhón àràbíyéér-gí        óhón    àràbíyé á<sup>s</sup>súúr-gí  
our car.SPEC-INSTR        our    car    new.SPEC-INSTR  
'with our car'                'with our new car'



Animacy:                    Human > animate > inanimate  
Definiteness:            Personal pronoun > proper name > definite NP > indefinite specific NP  
   > non-specific NP

Whether objects in Tama are inflected for the Accusative case, depends on the inherent semantic properties of the noun (in a noun phrase) or pronoun involved. Accusative marking is:

1. obligatory with pronominal objects;
2. obligatory with proper names as objects;
3. obligatory with objects performing the semantic role of Recipient, Beneficiary;
4. not obligatory from a syntactic point of view with object NP's, regardless of whether they carry a specifier or not;
5. excluded with complements (or so-called converbs) forming a complex predicate with (transitive) light verbs.

Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. 2009. Tama. In Gerrit J. Dimmendaal (ed.), *Coding Participant Marking: Construction Types in Twelve African Languages*, pp. 305-329. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

- (12) *tààmù-ŋó bòò-ŋ gèè-ŋé*  
 Taama-GEN words-SPEC difficult-PL  
 'the Tama language is difficult'
- (17) *híná ìi-r tààt-ír-íŋ lɔɔ-wéy*  
 my wife-SPEC baby-SPEC-ACC drink.CAUS-3SG  
 'my wife is feeding the baby'
- (20) *wá tòòjì illíŋ kús ʰnɔ-ʰɔné*  
 1SG:NOM children small four 1SG-see  
 'I see four small children'
- (21) *lɪlɪ-ɪl wíi nék*  
 donkey-SPEC return do:IMP  
 'return the donkey!'
- (22) *ánáá-tá wút nú-ŋó*  
 down-LOC fall 1SG.say-PERF  
 'I fell down/on the ground'
- (23) *sállá nɔk*  
 prayer do.VEN:IMP  
 'pray, prostrate!'
- (24) *sállá nék*  
 prayer do:IMP  
 'lead the prayer (as imam)!'
- (26) *wá gáán-ír nì-kíʰtáy*  
 1SG:NOM wood-SPEC 1SG-split  
 'I am splitting wood'
- (27) *ʰsón gèèn-úk kíʰíŋé*  
 3PL:NOM wood-PL 3PL:split.PLUR.PL  
 'they are splitting wood'
- (30) *wíi nék* 'return!' (imperative)  
*wíi nók* 'come back!' (imperative)

With some verbal predications only the derived form (with the ventive marking) occurs, as in the following light verb construction with 'say' expressing manner:

(31) *hár núk* 'curse (imperative)'

\**hár nek*

(33) *bààr nú-<sup>1</sup>nú-ló*

anger 1SG-say-NEG

'I am not angry'

(38) *è̀sì wáár-é kú¹nú-ηά*  
3SG:NOM evening-INSTR 3SG:COME-PERF  
'(s)he came in the evening'

(39) *wâ kàál ní-sík-á nà-lí*  
1SG:NOM water 1SG-want-COMP 1SG-drink  
'I want to drink water'

(40) *wâ nóórú-¹gó, ì úú¹nú-ηά*  
1SG:NOM 1SG.COME-TEMP 2SG:NOM 2SG.COME-PERF  
'after I (had) left, you came'

**Converbs** may express sequential or simultaneous events, or manner:

- (41) *wâ jaàr-nîn sià-nú-ηò*  
1SG slow-1SG.say breath-1SG.say.VEN-PERF  
'I was breathing slowly'
- (43) *èsi ηάρικίτ-έ girnéè*  
3SG sleep-CONV 3SG:snore  
'(s)he snores while/when (s)he is sleeping'
- (44) *lífl-fr-ìη kàál isín-gó líy-ôn*  
donkey-SPEC-ACC water give-TEMP drink-SP  
'give the donkey water to drink'

- (50) *wâ áy-<sup>1</sup>kúŋ kítâb nîsî<sup>1</sup>nîŋó*  
 1SG 2PL-ACC book 1SG:give:PERF  
 'I gave you (PL) a book'
- (51) *wâ súúk-<sup>1</sup>ír-ín ájálár-<sup>1</sup>gí nŭŭ<sup>1</sup>nî-ŋá*  
 1SG market-SPEC-ABL bike-COM 1SG.COME-PERF  
 'I came from the market on my bike'
- (52) *bîsî-ír-gí mààlágáá-r-gí tí*  
 knife-SPEC-COM spoon-SPEC-COM take  
 'take the knife and the spoon'
- (53) *ééŋ àt-ír kùbáyít-tá gîí-ŋ kóóyéy*  
 that person-SPEC glass-LOC milk-ACC pour:3SG  
 'that person is pouring the milk into a glass'
- (56) *wâ Khartoum-ín nŭŭ<sup>1</sup>nî-ŋá*  
 1SG Khartoum-ABL 1SG.COME-PERF  
 'I came from Khartoum'
- (57) *íŋ íŋ-índà wál nîi*  
 this this-COMP good say:3SG  
 'this one is better than this one'

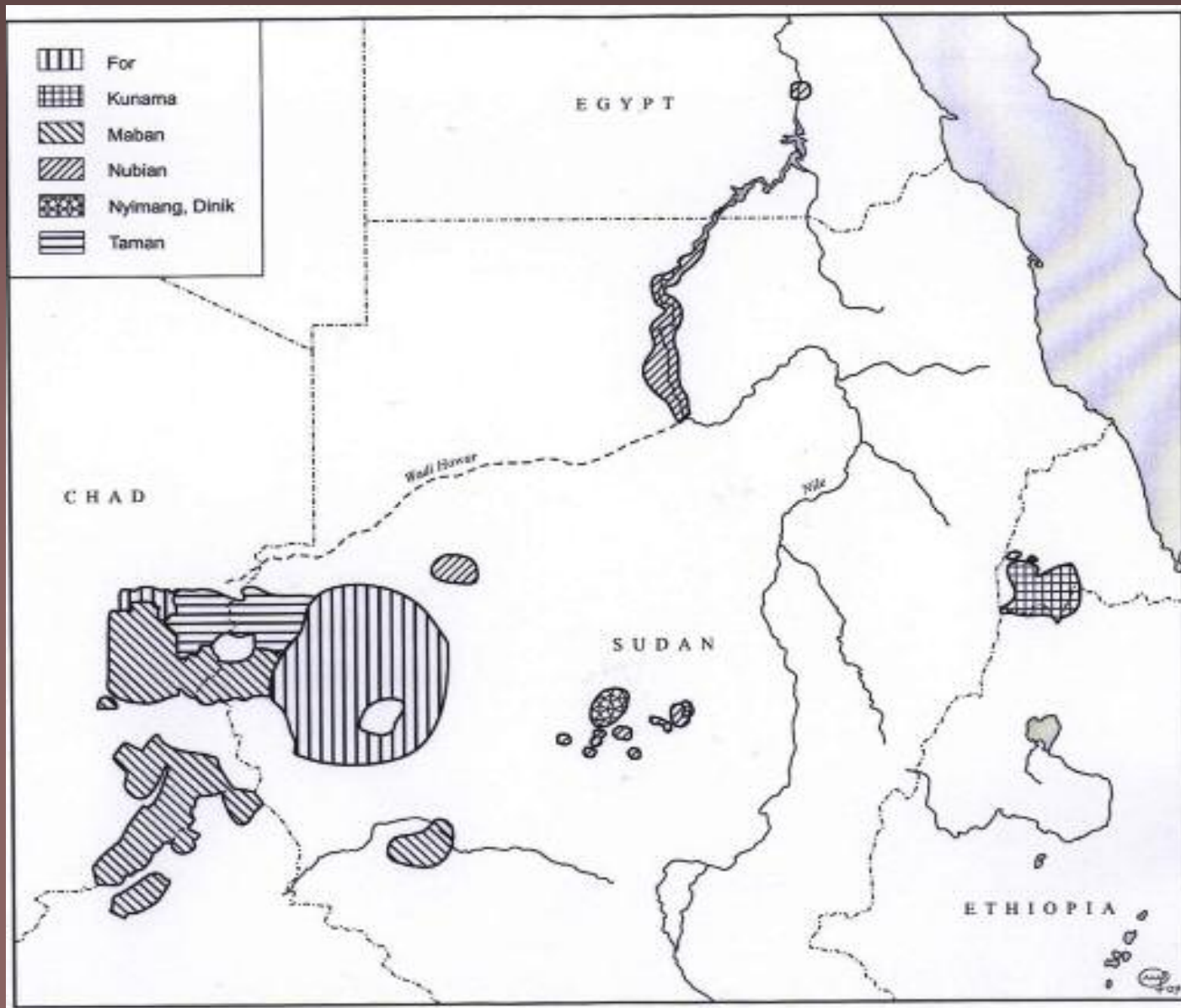


The Comparative marker presumably contains the Ablative marker plus some other morpheme (-*da*) whose etymological origin is not known.

- (58) *Gèzífréér Khàrtóúm-índà nànáǵé*  
 Gaziira Khartoum-COMP cool  
 'Geziira is cooler than Khartoum'
- (66) *wâ-né kòbá<sup>4</sup>ít-ír ní-<sup>4</sup>síké*  
 1SG-FOC glass-SPEC 1SG-want  
 'I want a glass'
- (67) *l<sup>4</sup>sí-ŋɔ́ ní-<sup>4</sup>síké*  
 three-FOC 1SG-want  
 'I want three' (answer to: 'How many do you want?')
- (68) *náyé-<sup>4</sup>ŋɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́*  
 where-FOC 2SG:go  
 'where are you going?'
- (69) *jét-ŋɔ́ dùút-éy*  
 very-FOC big-be  
 'it is huge/very big'
- (71) *é<sup>4</sup>sí tààtír-<sup>4</sup>íŋ ɔ́ɔ́t<sup>4</sup> dùút-gí kɔ́<sup>4</sup>ɔ́m ír-áǵá*  
 3SG:NOM child-ACC stick big-INSTR hit do-PERF  
 '(s)he hit the child with a big stick'
- (77) *wâ Nimeiri-ŋ kòbá<sup>4</sup>ít-ír ní-sí<sup>4</sup>ní-ŋò*  
 1SG:NOM Nimeiri-ACC glass-SPEC 1SG-give-PERF  
 'I gave Nimeiri the glass'
- (78) *wâ kíriŋén-ír ès-íŋ dǔól<sup>4</sup> ná-ŋá*  
 1SG:NOM door-SPEC 3SG-ACC OPEN 1SG.do-PERF  
 'I opened the door for her/him'

# Fur basic properties:

- Verb-final
- Case: morphologically unmarked Nominative
- Accusative case marker as a clitical element (as is common across Nilo-Saharan)
- Cross-reference marking for A and S on verb
- Waag, Christine. To appear. *The Fur Verb and its Context*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.



Fur:

(1) ká bá wě-el ʔálanj bəwtên-ín para díg ʔandɪ  
1SG just 1SG.want.IPF hoe-GEN handle one 1SG.cut.SJV

'I just want to cut a handle for a hoe'

(2) nuŋ b-ámɪ-lá  
food 2PL-eat.COP.Q

'have you eaten?'

(3) d-áí-ŋ pága-` sí ʔâl kule  
SG-1PL-GEN ocra-ACC REP 3HPL-trade.PF-3PL.PF

'our okra has been sold'

(4) nârna-`sɪ                      namá lɪa      k-âm                      kí-dole´                      tɔkke  
 food.in.market-ACC      then      later      1PL-eat.SJ                      with-sun                      hot  
 'eating at the market we can do later on when it is midday'

(5) ki      suuru-`sí                      lóó-`sí                      kalas                      ʔm      duó-`sí-s                      k-wa  
 1PL      ground-ACC                      place-ACC                      already                      this      man-ACC-TR                      1PL-say.PF  
 'as far our land, we already talked to this man about the place'

(6) d-íí-ŋ                      lɛɛl- sí                      ʔillâ-s                      barmândɪ                      j- əwǵí  
 SG-2SG-GEN                      donkey-ACC                      there.far-TR                      iron post                      2SG-peg.PF  
 'fix the post for your donkey over there!'

(7) dáíŋ                      belê-sí                      naa      ʔása                      dɔmbɔreŋa                      káa  
 SG-1PL-GEN                      language-ACC                      now      REP.TR books                      1PL-do.PF  
 'we now make books for our language'



- Sasse (1987: 568)

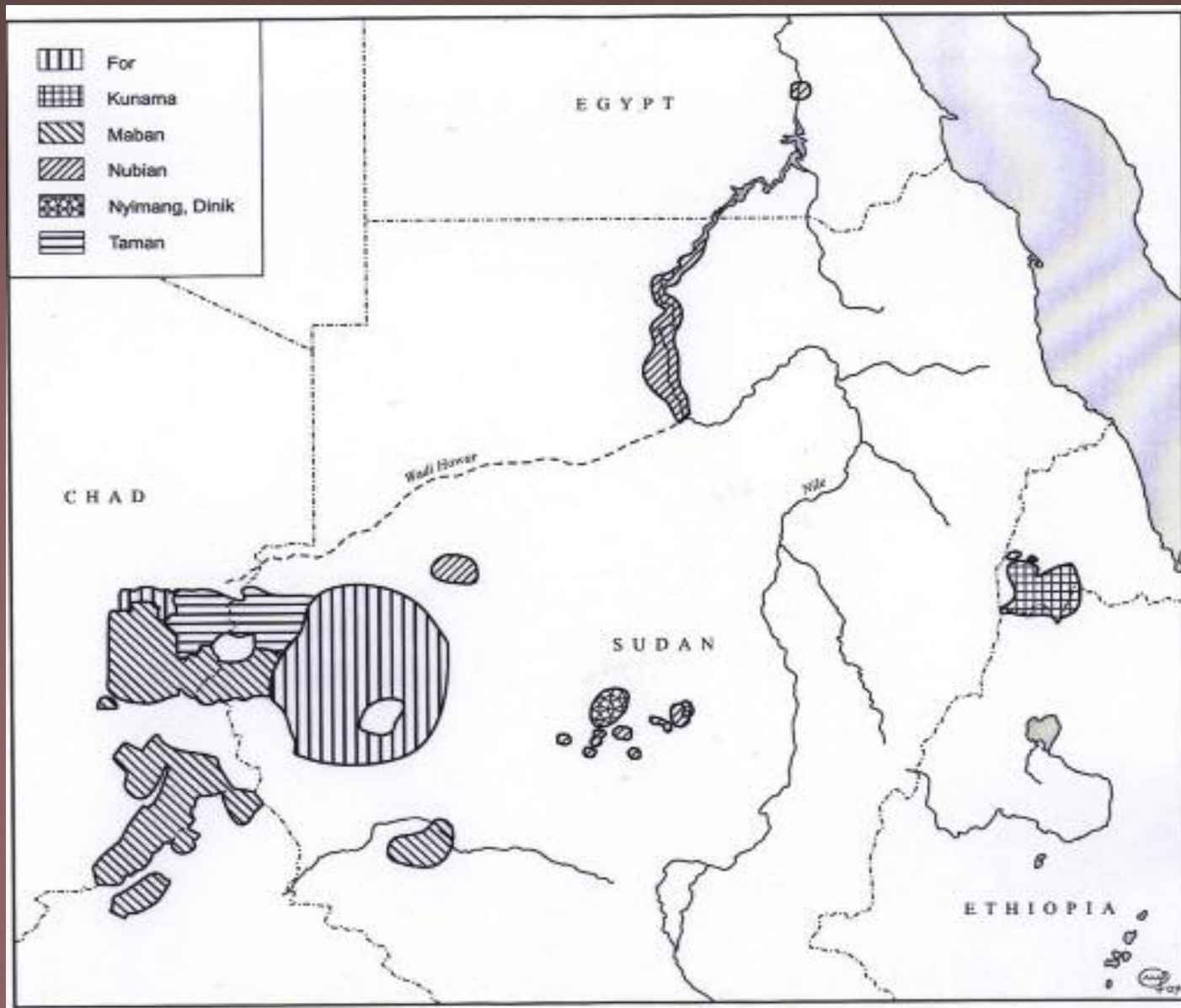
“...we can say that thethetic type of statement is used whenever the speaker assumes that the hearer expects unitary information to be given about the whole situation in question, and the categorical type of expression is used whenever he assumes that the hearer expects information units about the constituent parts to be built up successively.” An alternative way of presenting this condition would be by saying that in athetic statement the speaker wants the hearer to interpret the utterance as unitary information, whereas with a categorical statement the speaker wants the hearer to build up the information units successively. Sasse (1987: 511) further points out that “...categorical sentences contain a predication base about which some state of affairs is predicated, whilethetic sentences are simple nonpredicative assertions of states of affairs.”

Sasse, Hans-Jürgen. 1987. Thethetic/categorical distinction revisited. *Linguistics* 25: 511-580.



# Maba basic properties:

- Verb-final
- Case: morphologically unmarked Nominative
- Cross-reference marking on verb for S, A, and O
- Weiss, Doris. 2009. Phonologie et morphosyntaxe du maba. Thèse de doctorat, Université Lumière Lyon 2.



(1) t-ìṣíṣ                      mílì:    t-éndé:l-á-ṣ-à

3SG-mother    name    3SG-choose-V-SG-PAST  
'her/his mother chose a name'

(2) ò:lì-gù                      sùṅgó:-nú-gù    mbòkódt-ír-ì

wind.SG.DEF    tree-DEF-ACC    break : 3SG-AUX:PAST-DCL

'the wind has destroyed the trees'

(3) àm    tì:-gù                      sùṅgó:    á-ntám-ì

1SG    3SG-ACC                      wood    1SG-CAUS.cut-DCL

'(as for me), I made him cut wood..

(4) mùjòŋ-gù                      àm-gù                      fárdé: ònd-ùy-ó  
 woman.SG-SG.DEF            1SG-ACC                      skirt            3>1SG-give-PAST

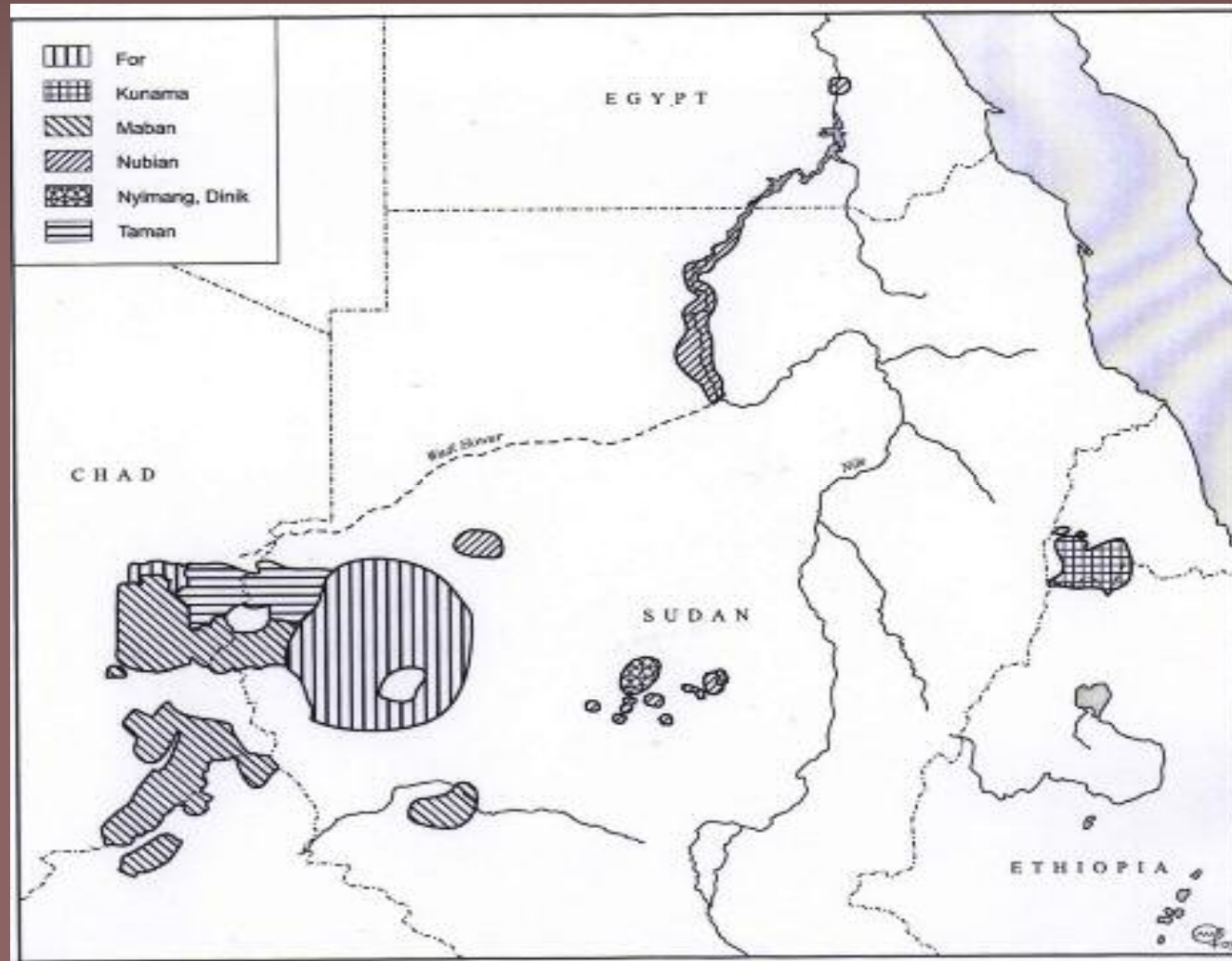
'the woman gave me a skirt'

(5) sów-nú-gù                      èndí  
 flour-DEF-ACC                      3SG > 1SG.give.IMP  
 'give me flour !'

(6) t-únún,                      kàkàlá-g                      t-èné-gù                      májí-g t-òŋ-ó  
 3SG-father                      daughter-SG                      3SG-POSS-ACC                      person 3SG-give-PAST

'as for the father, he gave his daughter to somebody/a person'

# Ghulfan (Uncunwee)



## Source:

- Jakobi, Angelika. 2009. Differential Object Marking in Uncunwee (Kordofan Nubian). Paper presented at the 6th World Congress of African Linguistics, University of Cologne.



(31) **yě gīrjū́lú bīg-éérē**  
I money.PL lose.PASTI.1SG  
'I lost money.'

(32) **yě gīrjū́lú-gí bīg-éérē**  
I money.PL-ACC lose.PASTI.1SG  
'I lost the money.'

(33) **yě ànàbáŋ bījè kòtá-ní-ébé**  
I my.grandparent beer bring-APPL-PASTII.1SG  
'I brought beer to [one of] my grandparent[s].'

(34) **yě à dúk-kèrè**  
1SG 2SG:ACC beat-FUT.1SG  
'I will beat you.'

(35) **yě à-gì qúk-kèrè**  
1SG 2SG-ACC beat-FUT.1SG  
'I will beat *you* (picked out of a group of people).'

(36) **zéynàb-b èl-èrèé**  
Zeynab-ACC find.PASTI.1SG  
'I found Zeynab.'

Moreover, case marking is also obligatory in Ghulfan with inalienable possession, whereas with alienable possession, the use of DOM again depends on definiteness.

(37) **ól íj-jì kún-è**  
breast-PL milk-ACC have.INALIEN-PRES.3PL  
'The breasts contain milk.'

# Hierarchy as proposed by Aissen (2003)

Personal pronoun > proper name > definite NP > indefinite specific NP > non-specific NP

Aissen, Judith. 2003. Differential Object Marking: Iconicity versus Economy. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 21: 435-483.

- There are no categories of nominals or pronominal forms in Ghulfan for which object marking is obligatory except for proper names. This contradicts the hierarchy proposed in Aissen (2003), where pronouns are ranked higher than proper names on the definiteness scale, and thus are more likely to be marked for case.

- Disambiguation of argument roles is a crucial function of DOM cross-linguistically. Animate and specific (definite) noun phrases and pronouns, as highly prominent constituents in the discourse, are more likely to be overtly case-marked than other constituents in this respect.
- Næss (2007):

The prototypical Agent is [+volitional] [+instigating] [–affected]. Volition requires animacy. Therefore, a prototypical transitive situation involves two participants, which are both human beings, or at least animate.

- DOM marks the object in a situation in which A(gent) and O(bject) are maximally semantically distinct as in the prototypical transitive situation (i.e. with O as a [–volitional][–instigating] [+affected] participant).
- The Accusative case should be regarded as a marker of high affectedness of objects. Where the case marker correlates with definiteness and/or animacy, this is a consequence of the way these properties are used as criteria for judging the degree of affectedness of an object .
- A situation is most significant if the affected participant is a human being and the least significant for inanimate items.

Næss, Åshild. 2007. *Prototypical Transitivity*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Næss, Åshild. 2007. *Prototypical Transitivity*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

# Tama

- (49) *híná íí-r      tààt-ír-ín      lóówéy*  
my wife-SPEC baby-SPEC-ACC 3SG:drink.CAUS  
'my wife is feeding the baby'
- (50) *wâ    íy-<sup>+</sup>kún    kítâb nísí<sup>+</sup>nínó*  
1SG 2PL-ACC book 1SG:give:PERF  
'I gave you (PL) a book'
- (72) *dùktír léék-<sup>+</sup>ín    fàsúún<sup>+</sup>éy*  
doctor urine-ACC check.3SG  
'the doctor will check the/your urine'
- (73) *èsi àna<sup>+</sup>ár-ín      fú<sup>+</sup>té*  
3SG ground.SPEC-ACC sweep.3SG  
'(s)he is sweeping the floor' (also grammatical without case suffix)
- (74) *nín    bóòr      lúó*  
those words.SPEC destroy  
'don't say that (lit. destroy these words)!'



- (75) *èrk-ít únóór <sup>+</sup>mísí*  
 shoe-SG your.SPEC put.on  
 ‘put on your shoe’
- (76) *wâ kánár-<sup>+</sup>í búr-<sup>+</sup>út-úr ná-<sup>+</sup>tírí*  
 1SG canal-AGEN swimm-ing-SPEC 1SG-like  
 ‘I like swimming in the irrigation canal (lit. canal-swimming)’
- (77) *wâ Nimeiri-η kùbá<sup>+</sup>ít-ír nì-sí<sup>+</sup>ní-ηó*  
 1SG:NOM Nimeiri-ACC glass-SPEC 1SG-give-PERF  
 ‘I gave Nimeiri the glass’
- (78) *wâ kírinén-ír ès-îη dúúł <sup>+</sup>ná-ηá*  
 1SG:NOM door-SPEC 3SG-ACC OPEN 1SG.do-PERF  
 ‘I opened the door for her/him’

# Also compare Hopper and Thompson (1980):

Hopper, Paul J., and Sandra A. Thompson. 1980. Transitivity in grammar and discourse. *Language* 56:251-299.

“Transitivity involves a number of components, only one of which is the presence of an object of the verb.” (S. 251)

	HIGH	LOW
(1) A. PARTICIPANTS	2 or more participants, A and O. <sup>1</sup>	1 participant
B. KINESIS	action	non-action
C. ASPECT	telic	atelic
D. PUNCTUALITY	punctual	non-punctual 2.5
E. VOLITIONALITY	volitional	non-volitional 2.4
F. AFFIRMATION	affirmative	negative
G. MODE	realis	irrealis
H. AGENCY	A high in potency	A low in potency
I. AFFECTEDNESS OF O	O totally affected	O not affected
J. INDIVIDUATION OF O	O highly individuated	O non-individuated

# Food for theoreticians:

- **DOM-marking is not restricted to prototypical Patient roles. It extends to Beneficiary, Recipient, but also to Direction, and Time.**

Fadicca (Nubian)

ay issa-g ka kab-is

I just-ACC have eaten

‘I have just eaten’

- The same phenomenon is attested for Old Nubian, where -ka is used as an Accusative marker expressing Patient or Direction , but also temporal expressions denoting duration.
- Kievit and Kievit (2009: 56) mention the fact that in the Semitic language Tigrinya the Accusative case marker ni- or nä- may be attached to nominal phrases expressing Patient roles, but also to phrases expressing Direction, Purpose, Addressee, Recipient and Beneficiary of an action.

Kievit, Dirk, and Saliem Kievit. 2009. Differential object marking in Tigrinya. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 30: 45-71.

- (1) a. **may tsämi-u silä**  
 water be.thirsty\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CV B because  
**zi-näbärä**  
 REL-be.3MSG.SBJ.PRF  
 'because he was thirsty' [because he thirsted water]
- b. **tjä(ru) ru ?inda-hadän-ku**  
 bird(PL) while-hunt\PRF-1SG.SBJ.PRF  
 'while I was hunting birds'
- c. **ri?is-u ?inda-näq'~näq'-ä=n**  
 head-3MSG.GEN while-nod\PRF~ITER-3MSG.SBJ.PRF=COORD  
 'and while nodding his head again and again'
- d. **ni=näbs-a ?ab farat**  
 ACC=body-3FSG.GEN on bed  
**därbi-yät-a**  
 throw\PRF-3FSG.SBJ.PRF-3FSG.OBJ  
 'she threw herself on the bed' [she threw her body on the bed]
- e. **ni=ts'iyon t'amät-Ø-a**  
 ACC=Tsiyon look.at\PRF-3MSG.SBJ.PRF-3FSG.OBJ  
 'He looked at Tsiyon'
- f. **ni=fä?a mis rä?ay-ät**  
 ACC=3FSG.PRO when see\PRF-3FSG.SBJ.PRF  
 'when she saw it (i.e., the kerchief)'



The basic word order for Tigrinya is SOV. Example (2) illustrates the word order in a subordinate clause.

- (2) [ʔadä=n wädi=n]<sub>S</sub> [nä=z-i xul-u]<sub>O</sub>  
 mother=COORD son=COORD ACC=this-MSG all-M.SG  
 [ʔinda-täʕazäb-u ʔink-äläw]<sub>V</sub>  
 while-observe\PRF-3MPL.SBJ.PRF while-AUX.3MPL.SBJ  
 'while the mother and (her) son were observing all of this'

In example (3) word order is the only way to identify the object. Even though the object is marked on the verb, the masculine singular object suffix (underlined) could refer to either one of the two (masculine) personal names.<sup>3</sup>

- (3) ʔermiyas tedros hiq'uf ʔa-bil-u  
 Ermiyas Tedros hug(ADJ) CAUS-say\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CVB  
 yi-siʕimm-o  
 3MSG.SBJ.PRS-kiss\PRS-3MSG.OBJ  
 'Ermiyas, having hugged Tedros, kissed him.'  
 [Ermiyas, having hugged Tedros, kisses him]

Surprisingly, there is only one instance of OSV in the first chapter (4). This sentence is disambiguated by the presence of the object marker on the first nominal.

- (4) ni=mama ʔamharay ʔab ʕarat ʔa-wdiq'-u  
 ACC=mama Amhara on bed CAUS-fall\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CVB  
 yi-q'ättil-a ʔal-o  
 3MSG.SBJ.PRS-kill\PRS-3FSG.OBJ AUX\PRS-3MSG.SBJ.AUX.PRS  
 'The Amhara, having thrown mama on the bed, is killing her.'



- (5) a. **nä=t-a** **figut'** **dänin-u**  
 ACC=ART-FSG pistol bow.down\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CVB  
**?inda-rä?ay-Ø-a**  
 while-look.at\PRF-3MSG.SBJ.PRF-3FSG.OBJ  
 'while he was looking down at the pistol' [while having bowed  
 down he was looking at the pistol]
- b. **ni=ts'iyon=in** **tedros=in** **?ab ts'imwa** **ʕaläm**  
 ACC=Tsiyon=COORD Tedros=COORD in lonely world  
**rahrih-i-wom**  
 abandon\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CVB-3MPL.OBJ  
 'having abandoned Tsiyon and Tedros in the lonely world'

*Table 1.* Verbal object markers

1SG	harim-u-ni	'he hit me'
2MSG	harim-u-ka	'he hit you (msg)'
2FSG	harim-u-ki	'he hit you (fsg)'
3MSG	harim-u-wo	'he hit him'
3FSG	harim-u-wa	'he hit her'
1PL	harim-u-na	'he hit us'
2MPL	harim-u-kum	'he hit you (mpl)'
2FPL	harim-u-kin	'he hit you (fpl)'
3MPL	harim-u-wom	'he hit them (m)'
3FPL	harim-u-wän	'he hit them (f)'

- (7) a. **tedros ni=xunätat ?abbo-?u t'ät'äw**  
 Tedros ACC=condition father-3MSG.GEN turn  
**?il-u tä?azäb-ä**  
 say\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CV B observe\PRF-3MSG.SBJ.PRF  
 'having turned, Tedros saw the condition of his father'
- b. **ts'iyon dima ni=tedros**  
 Tsiyon CONN ACC=Tedros  
**hazil-a**  
 put.on.one's.back.to.carry\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CV B  
 'Tsiyon having put Tedros on her back to carry him'

The nominal marker is not restricted to human objects. Example (8) illustrates the marker with a variety of objects: human (a), (nonhuman) animate (b), and inanimate (c), including abstract concepts (d).

- (8) a. **ni=megza?ti harim-e-yo**  
 ACC=colonizer hit\CVB-1SG.SBJ.CV B-3MSG.OBJ  
 'I hit the colonizer!'
- b. **nä=t-i ; kelbi gesets'-et-o**  
 ACC=ART-MSG dog rebuke\PRF-3MSG.SBJ.PRF-3MSG.OBJ  
 'She rebuked the dog'
- c. **nä=t-i ' zi-tä-wahib-o ?injära**  
 ACC=ART-MSG REL-PASS-give\PASS-3MSG.OBJ injera  
**?inda-bäl?-ä**  
 while-eat\PRF-3MSG.SBJ.PRF  
 'while he was eating the *injera* which he had been given'
- d. **ni=mot z-ey-Ø-ferh-u**  
 ACC=death REL-NEG-3PL.SBJ.PRS-fear\PRS-3MPL.SBJ.PRS  
 'who did not fear death'

Table 5. Marking on the definiteness scale

	Pronouns		Personal names		Definites		Specifics		Non-specifics	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
marked	5	0	22	1	100	142	1	4	0	93
%	100	0	96	4	41	59	20	80	0	100

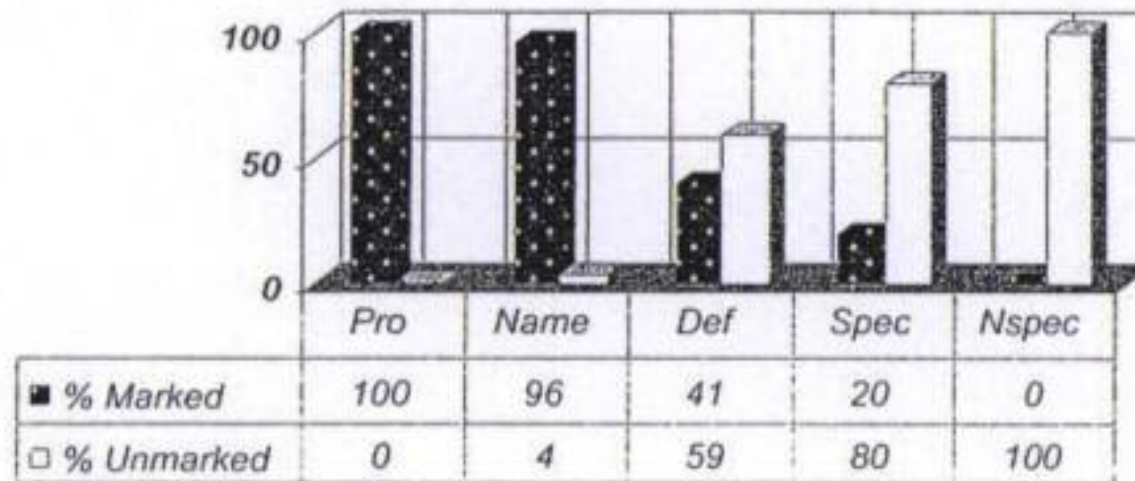


Figure 1. Marking on the definiteness scale

Table 6. Marking on the animacy scale

marked	Human		Animate		Inanimate	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
totals	46	17	1	8	81	215
%	73	27	11	89	27	73

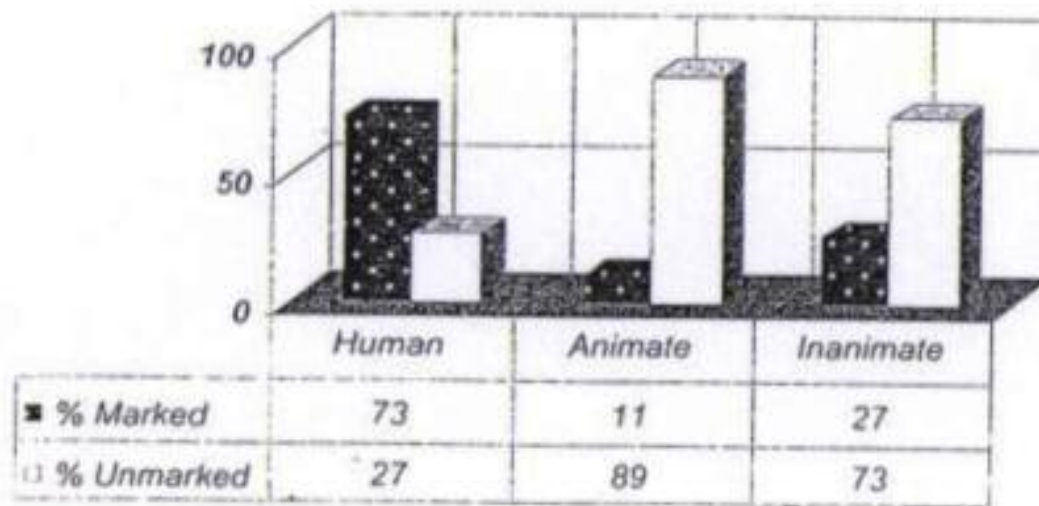


Figure 2. Marking on the animacy scale



- (23) *Constraint Hierarchy: Animacy*  
 \*Oj/Hum > \*Oj/Anim > \*Oj/Inan

As a result, the iconicity constraint, preventing the absence of case marking, is strongest where the constraint is most serious, that is for human objects, and weakest for inanimate objects.

- (26) a. **ni=gälä kab-ʔatän bi-ʔid-u**  
 ACC=some from-3FPL INS-hand-3MSG.GEN  
**ki-Ø-hiz-än bizuh**  
 FUT-3MSG.SBJ.PRS-catch\PRS-3FPL.OBJ much  
**fätän-ä**  
 try\PRF-3MS.SBJ.PRF  
 'He tried hard to catch some of them (i.e. birds) with his hand'
- b. **gälä kab-t-i ʔab märet wädiq'-u**  
 some from-ART-MSG on ground fall\CVB-3MSG.SBJ.CVB  
**zi-näbär-ä bi-ʔid-u**  
 REL-AUX\PRF-3MSG.SBJ.PRF INS-hand-3MSG.GEN  
**ʔinda-haz-ä**  
 while-hold\PRF-3MSG.SBJ.PRF  
 'while he was holding in his hand some (of the fruit) which had fallen on the ground'

# Conclusion:

- Within Afroasiatic, Differential Object Marking (DOM) is found in Central Cushitic. Context between Afroasiatic languages belonging to this type and Nilo-Saharan may have resulted in the development of case and DOM Nilo-Saharan.
- The governing principles in these Nilo-Saharan languages are in accordance with more general principles of discourse prominence, involving features like animacy and definiteness.
- But the data from this phylum also suggest that this two-dimensional system needs to be extended into another dimension, the categorical/thetic contrast. In other words, assignment of Accusative case is semantically and pragmatically based.