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3. Simple sentences

This chapter describes the basic structure of simple sentences. It presents simple verbal sentences, adjectival sentences, subject clitics, nominal sentences and cleft sentences.

3.1. Verbal simple sentences

Verbal simple affirmative declarative sentences may contain overt subjects, verb roots with (affirmative or negative) subject clitics and inflectional suffixes. There is no marking to show that a sentence is declarative. They are only characterised by a sentence-final falling intonation (Ongaye 2000). The basic word order in simple sentences is SOV. This is shown in (1):

(1a)  \text{atti\-ʔ }\chiəʃa iʔ=ɗam-ni
2SG.PRO-NOM beans 2=eat-IPF.PRES
‘You (SG) eat beans.’

(1b)  \text{anti-ʔ} kulleeta-siʔ in=ʛeeɗ-a
1SG.PRO-NOM hood-DEF.M/F 1=take-IPF.FUT
‘I will take the hood.’

As is apparent in the above examples, (1a) contains the overt subject ?atti ‘you (SG)’, the overt object \text{χəʃa} ‘beans’, the second person subject clitic \text{iʔ=} , the verb root \text{ɗam-} ‘eat’, and the aspect marker -ni. Similarly, (1b) contains the overt subject \text{anti} ‘I’, the overt object kulleeta-siʔ ‘the hood’, the first person subject clitic \text{in=} , the verb root \text{ʛeeɗ-} ‘take’ and the imperfective future aspect marker -a on the verb.

Overt subjects, such as \text{anti} ‘I’ and \text{atti} ‘you (SG)’ in (1) can be optionally left out because they are understood from the type of the subject clitics and the gender agreement markers on the verb. For instance, example (2a) and (2b) are such versions of the example in (1a) and (1b), respectively.

(2a)  \text{χəʃa iɗɗammi}
\text{χəʃa} iʔ=ɗam-ni
beans 2=eat-IPF.PRES
‘You (SG) eat beans.’

(2b)  kulleeta-siʔ in=ʛeeɗ-a
hood-DEF.M/F 1=take-IPF.FUT
‘I will take the hood.’
A simple verbal sentence with transitive verb roots may also occur with covert subjects and objects. As mentioned earlier, covert subjects are understood from the type of subject clitics and the gender agreement markers on the verb. For covert objects, there are no such clues. They are understood only from an earlier mention in a discourse. For instance, if we omit the subject and object of the examples in (1), we get the sentences in (3):

(3a) \[ iɗɗammi \]
    \[ iʔ =dam-ni \]
    \[ 2 =eat-IPF.PRES \]
    ‘You (SG) eat (it).’

(3b) \[ in =ɗeeɗ-a \]
    \[ 1 =take-IPF.FUT \]
    ‘I will take (it).’

In the literature on Konso, various terms have been used for subject clitics: preverbal (Black 1973; Ongaye 2000, 2004), person indices (Sim 1977, Daudey & Hellenthal 2004). In this work, I choose the term “subject clitics” because they are clitics and always indicate the person value of the subject.

Most sentences contain one subject clitic. The position of subject clitics in the sentences is mainly with the verb of the sentence. However, they can be procliticised or encliticised to other constituents of a sentence, as we shall see below. The subject clitics do not distinguish gender or number; they only distinguish person. Gender (and person/number) is marked by the inflectional suffix on the verb. Without an overt subject, it is only the subject clitics that distinguish between second person singular and third person singular feminine, which have the same verb form, as shown below.

(4a) \[ iʔʔanti \]
    \[ iʔ =an-t-i \]
    \[ 2 =go-2-PF \]
    ‘You (SG) went.’

(4b) \[ iʔanti \]
    \[ i =an-t-i \]
    \[ 3 =go-3F-PF \]
    ‘She went.’

We identify different forms of affirmative and negative subject clitics for various persons depending on the sentence/clause type. The following table presents these forms.
Table 1: Forms of subject clitics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence/Clause type</th>
<th>Affirmative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal/Adjectival</td>
<td>in= iʔ= i=</td>
<td>an= aʔ= in=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>an= aʔ= -</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optative/Imperative</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td>in= in=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With explicit subject and object, the subject clitics may occur in any of the following four positions: as a proclitic to the verb as in (5a), as an enclitic to the object as in (5b), as a proclitic to the object as in (5c), or as an enclitic to the subject as in (5d).

(5a) \( \text{inuk kuufa inhaʔni} \)
\( \text{inu-ʔ kuufa in=haaɗ-n-i} \)
1PL.PRO-NOM cow.dung.pile 1 = carry-1PL-PF
‘We carried a cow dung pile.’

(5b) \( \text{inuk kuufan haaʔni} \)
\( \text{inu-ʔ kuufa=in haaɗ-n-i} \)
1PL.PRO-NOM cow.dung.pile=1 carry-1PL-PF
‘We carried a cow dung pile.’

(5c) \( \text{inuʔ ñinkuufa haaʔni} \)
\( \text{inu-ʔ in=kuufa haaɗ-n-i} \)
1PL.PRO-NOM 1 = cow.dung.pile carry-1PL-PF
‘We carried a cow dung pile.’

(5d) \( \text{inun kuufa haaʔni} \)
\( \text{inu=in kuufa haaɗ-n-i} \)
1PL.PRO=1 cow.dung.pile carry-1PL-PF
‘We carried a cow dung pile.’

In the following examples, the subjects are implicit and the subject clitics are negative.

(6a) \( \text{akkaltu} \)
\( \text{aʔ=kal-t-u} \)
2NEG = return.home-2-NEG.IPF.FUT
‘You (SG) will not go home.’

(6b) \( \text{χarʃasíʔ ñandammi} \)
\( \text{χarʃa-síʔ ñan=dam-n-i} \)
beans-DEF.M/F 1NEG = eat-NEG-PF
‘I did not eat the beans.’
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(6c) χαρʃasiʔ ʔinɗammi
χarʃa-siʔ in=ɗam-n-i
beans-DEF.M/F 3NEG = eat-NEG-PF
‘He/She/They did not eat the beans.’

(6d) aʔʔanni akkittu
aʔ=ʔan-ni aʔ=kit-t-u
2NEG = go-IPF 2NEG = be-2-NEG
‘You (SG) do not go.’

3.2. Adjectival sentences

Adjectives differ from verbs in that both number and gender are marked on the former (see 4.1.4). Adjectives are like verbs with regard to hosting subject clitics. Like the independent verbal sentences, affirmative adjectival sentences occur with the same subject clitics: in= for first person, iʔ= for second person, and i= for third person. Singular subjects are not marked but plural subjects are marked by reduplicating the adjectival root’s initial C1V(C1). Adjectival sentences, like nominal sentences (see 3.4), have no copula. Both nominal and adjectival sentences have subject clitics, but these differ in form. Moreover, adjectival sentences may occur with overt or covert subjects. For example, the example in (7a) has the overt subject inantasiʔ ‘the girl’ and the one in (7b) has hellaasiniʔ ‘the children’. The adjectival root in both examples is ɗer-‘be tall’.

(7a) inantasiʔ ?iɗeri
inan-ta-siʔ  i=ɗer-i
girl-DEF.M/F 3 = be.tall-PF
‘The girl is tall.’

(7b) hellaasiniʔ ?iɗeɗɗeri
hellaa-siniʔ  i=ɗeɗ-ɗer-i
children-DEF.P 3 = PL-be.tall-PF
‘The children are tall.’

First person plural and second person plural take the suffixes -nna and -ttan, respectively, in addition to reduplication on the adjectival roots as shown in (8).

(8a) inuʔ ?iɗedɗerinna
inu-ʔ  i=ɗed-ɗer-i-nna
1PL.PRO-NOM 1 = PL-be.tall-PF-1PL
‘We are tall.’
Adjectival sentences may occur without an overt subject. We can show this by omitting the overt subjects inantasi? ‘the girl’ and hellaasiniʔ ‘the children’ in the above examples. With the absence of an overt subject we only know the number of the implicit subject from reduplication and also from the suffixes -nna and -ttan for first person and second person plural. Examples:

(9a)  in=ɗer-i-nna
     1=PL-be.tall-PF-1PL
     ‘We are tall.’

Negation in adjectives is marked by negative subject clitics as well as by negative suffixes on the verb ‘be, exist’.

(10a)  andereen co
       an=ɗer-i=an kiy-o
       1NEG=be.tall-PF=1NEG be-NEG
       ‘I am not tall.’

Negative adjectival sentences in which adjectival roots serve as predicates differ from adjectival affirmative sentences in the following ways:

- They require the existential verb kit- ‘to be, exist’ in addition to the adjectival predicate;
- Except third persons, the other persons do attach negative subject clitics on the adjectival predicates;
- All persons have negative subject clitics on the verb ‘be, exist’;
- Except for second person plural and third person plural, negation is also marked on the verb kit- ‘to be, exist’.
The following are illustrative examples of negative adjectival sentences.

(11a) **andären** anco

\[
\begin{align*}
&an = \text{đer-i} & an = \text{kiy-o} \\
&1\text{NEG} = \text{be.tall-PF} & 1\text{NEG} = \text{be-NEG} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘I am not tall.’

(11b) **addđđđeri akkittan**

\[
\begin{align*}
&aʔ = \text{đer-i} & aʔ = \text{kit-t-a-n} \\
&2\text{NEG} = \text{PL-be.tall-PF} & 2\text{NEG} = \text{be-2-PF-P} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘You are not tall.’

The negative subject clitics of the verb kit- ‘to be, exist’ mainly occur as enclitics with the adjectival predicate. This leftward movement omits the glottal stop for all persons. This in turn causes vowel coalescence for first and second persons: \(i + a = ee\). For third persons, the vowel \(i\) is elided, and negation is marked only by the suffix \(-n\). Below I provide some illustrative examples.

(12a) **andereen** co

\[
\begin{align*}
&an = \text{đer-i=an} & \text{kiy-o} \\
&1\text{NEG} = \text{be.tall-PF=1NEG be-NEG} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘I am not tall.’

(12b) **addđđđeri** kittu

\[
\begin{align*}
&aʔ = \text{đer-i=aʔ} & \text{kit-t-u} \\
&2\text{NEG} = \text{be.tall-PF=2NEG be-2-NEG} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘You (SG) are not tall.’

(12c) **đđđđeri** can

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{đđđđer-i=în} & \text{kiy-a-n} \\
&\text{PL-be.tall-PF=3NEG be-IPF.FUT-P} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘They are not tall.’

The position of subject clitics is restricted in content questions and conditional clauses when the conditional conjunctions are not expanded with the suffix \(-n\), for which I could not find the grammatical function or semantic content (but see 12.2.1 for details on conditional conjunctions). In content questions, subject clitics are attached only to the content-question word as shown in (13). The examples in (14) are unacceptable because the subject clitics have moved to the verbs.

(13a) **maanann** ifađ daafja

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{maana}=\text{in} & \text{ifa}=? & \text{daaf-a} \\
&\text{what}=1 & \text{him-DAT} & \text{give-IPF.FUT} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘What shall I give him?’
Subject clitics are also restricted in their position of occurrence when the adverb *amma* ‘now’ follows the discourse marker *asu* ‘just’. The adverb *amma* ‘now’ has an inherent emphasis and as a result only hosts subject clitics when followed by *asu* ‘just’ as in (16a). The example in (16b) is unacceptable because the subject clitic has moved from the adverb to the verb.
So far, I have discussed about the presence of subject clitics in sentences. Now, I return to presenting cases where subject clitics are absent. Subject clitics are absent in affirmative imperatives and optative sentences. They are also absent in cleft sentences. Since various sections are dedicated to each of these sentence types in this work, here, I only provide illustrative examples to show that subject clitics are absent in these sentence/clause types.

The examples in (17) illustrate imperatives (see imperatives in 6.4.1). They, however, differ in the presence or absence of subject clitics. The example in (17a) does not have a subject clitic because it is an affirmative imperative. In contrast, the example in (17b) has a subject clitic because it is a negative imperative. Notice that the form of the negative subject clitic of the negative imperative is identical to that of the first person affirmative subject clitic in affirmative verbal sentences.

(17a)  alleesip poota  
        alleeta-siʔ  poot-a  
        hut-DEF.M/F  demolish-IMP.PL  
        ‘(You (PL)) Demolish this hut!’

(17b)  alleesiʔ ʔimpoootan  
        alleeta-siʔ  in=poot-a-n  
        hut-DEF.M/F  2NEG=demolish-IMP.PL-NEG  
        ‘(You (PL)) Do not demolish this hut!’

Optative sentences are illustrated in (18) (see also Section 6.4.2). The affirmative optative in (18a) does not have subject clitics whereas the negative optative in (18b) has a subject clitic. Again, notice that the form of the negative subject clitic of the negative optative is identical to that of the first person affirmative subject clitic in affirmative verbal sentences.

(18a)  a  kal-u  
        REL  return.home-OPT  
        ‘Let him return home.’
(18b) \(in = \text{kali-n}\)
\[3\text{NEG} = \text{return home-OPT-NEG}\]
‘Let him not return home.’

In non-cleft verbal sentences, the subject pronoun has a nominative suffix, and the verb has the subject clitic, gender suffix and aspect marker as in (19a). On the other hand, in cleft sentences, the subject occurs in the form of an accusative pronoun followed by a cleft sentence marker. Moreover, the verb has no subject clitic and gender/person marker. It only has the verb root and invariable aspect marker as shown in (19b-c).

(19a) \(i\text{feenna? ?ikalti}\)
\(i\text{feenna-?} \quad i = \text{kali-t-i}\)
\[3\text{SGF.PRO-NOM} \quad \text{return.home-3F-PF}\]
‘She returned home.’

(19b) \(i\text{feenna-á kal-ay}\)
\[3\text{SGF.PRO[ACC]-CLF return.home-PF[3M]}\]
‘It’s her who returned home.’

(19c) \(ke-é kal-ay\)
\[2\text{SG.PRO.ACC-CLF return.home-PF}\]
‘It’s you (SG) who returned home.’

In the preceding sections, I have presented the forms of affirmative as well as negative subject clitics in various sentence/clause types. In these sentence/clause types, subject clitics are flexible with regard to their placement in most verbal sentences. This flexibility in the placement of the subject clitics renders subtle differences in meaning. Further research should be done in order to understand these differences. It seems that the explanation lies in information structure.

Content question words host subject clitics as in (20a) (see also Section 10.3). The example in (20b) is ungrammatical because the subject clitic has moved from the content question word.

(20a) \(\text{anti? ?aynu konso supa erka}\)
\(\text{anti-?} \quad \text{aynu = in konso-opa erk-a}\)
\[1\text{SG.PRO-NOM who = 1 Konso to send-IPF.FUT}\]
‘Whom shall I send to Konso?’

(20b) \(^*\text{anti? ?aynu konso supa inerka}\)
\(\text{anti-?} \quad \text{aynu konso-opa in = erk-a}\)
\[1\text{SG.PRO-NOM who Konso to 1 = send-IPF.FUT}\]
(intended: ‘Whom shall I send to Konso?’)
Inherent emphasis can be obtained from the adverb amma ‘now’ when followed by asu ‘just’ as in (21).

(21) \[ \text{antiʔ ?amman asu koɗaasiɗ dikkifay} \]
\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{antiʔ} \quad \text{amma = in} \quad \text{asu} \quad \text{koɗa-siʔ} \\
1\text{SG.PRO-NOM} \quad \text{now = 1} \quad \text{just} \quad \text{work-DEF.M/F} \\
\end{array} \]
\[ \text{dikkif-ay} \]
\[ \text{finish-PF[3M]} \]
\[ \text{‘I have just finished the work now.’} \]

3.3. Nominal sentences

A citation form of a noun serves as a base for a nominal sentence for third person singular as in (22a). When the first person singular or second person singular is the subject of such nominal sentences, the nouns occur with subject clitics as in (22b-c). The forms of the subject clitics are: \( \text{an=} \) and \( \text{aʔ=} \) for first person and second person, respectively. Notice that the forms of the nominal subject clitics for first and second persons are identical to the negative subject clitics of the verbal sentences. For first and second person plurals, however, overt pronouns are mandatory in addition to the subject clitics, as illustrated in (22d-e).

(22a) \( \chiorma \)
\[ \text{‘(a) bull’ or ‘It is a bull.’} \]

(22b) \( \text{an=} \chiorma \)
\[ 1 = \text{bull} \]
\[ \text{‘I am a bull (i.e. I am brave.)’} \]

(22c) \( \text{aʔ=} \chiorma \)
\[ 2 = \text{bull} \]
\[ \text{‘You (SG) are a bull (i.e. You are brave.)’} \]

(22d) \( \text{inuʔ ?anχormadaa} \)
\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{inuʔ} \quad \text{an=} \chiormadaa \\
1\text{PL.PRO-NOM} \quad 1 = \text{bulls} \\
\end{array} \]
\[ \text{‘We are bulls (i.e. We are brave).’} \]

(22e) \( \text{iʃinaʔ ?aʔχormadaa} \)
\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{iʃinaʔ} \quad \text{aʔ=} \chiormadaa \\
2\text{PL.PRO-NOM} \quad 2 = \text{bulls} \\
\end{array} \]
\[ \text{‘You (PL) are bulls (i.e. You (PL) are brave).’} \]
Derived nominals such as the agentive also form nominal sentences. Such nominal sentences occur with subject clitics for first and second persons. Examples:

(23a) \( an = akim-itta \)
\( 1 = \) treat-AGENT.M
‘I am a physician.’

(23b) \( aʔ = akim-itteeta \)
\( 2 = \) treat-AGENT.F
‘You (SG.F) are a physician.’

(23c) \( akim-iyyaa \)
\( \) treat-AGENT.PL
‘They are physicians.’

Nominal sentences do not have negative subject clitics. Rather they have a negative nominal suffix \(-n(nin)\).

(24a) \( iʃa\chiχormannin \)
\( ifa-ʔ\chiχorma-nnin \)
\( 3SGM.PRO-NOM bull-NEG \)
‘He is not a bull (i.e. He is not brave).’

(24b) \( iʃina\ʔ\ʔaʔʔoraayaaannin \)
\( ifi\na-ʔ\aʔ=oraayaa-nnin \)
\( 2PL.PRO-NOM hyenas-NEG \)
‘You (PL) are not hyenas (i.e. You are not greedy).’

3.4. Cleft sentences

As mentioned in the preceding section, cleft sentences do not take subject clitics. Furthermore, they are characterised by not having gender markers on the verb. The forms of the aspect markers do not vary. In cleft sentences, all nouns with short final vowels lengthen the final vowel. When personal pronouns are used, they occur in the object form.

Below, I provide paradigms to show the above characteristics of cleft sentences, using the verb root \( ɗam- \) ‘eat’. Interlinear glossing and translation are given for the first person singular in each of the paradigm.

(25a) \( anaa dammi \)
\( ana-a \quad dam-ni \)
\( 1SG.PRO.ACC-CLF eat-IPF.PRES \)
‘It is me who eats (it).’
With transitive verbs, the object is marked with a high tone (see also 4.12.1 for nominative-accusative case distinction).
(27a) ineen goyraawu
   ini-en goyra-awu
   this-CLF tree-1SG.POSS.M/F
   ‘It’s this one which is my tree.’

(27b) ijeenna-an akimi-tteeta
   3SGF.PRO[ACC]-CLF treat-F
   ‘It’s her who is a physician.’

(27c) helloosineen kere?ta
   hellaa-oosinin-en kere?ta
   children-DEM.P-CLF thieves
   ‘It’s these children who are thieves.’