

Discontinuous agreement in imperatives in Amharic: a haplology approach

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Like in many Semitic languages, subject agreement is discontinuous in Amharic: part of it is expressed with a prefix and another part with a suffix. However, in imperative verbs, the prefix disappears and the suffix remains. This talk explores why and how this happens within the framework of Distributed Morphology, proposing that the prefix disappears under haplology with the 2nd person features on an imperative head. I show how a haplology approach explains the distribution of the prefix across various kinds of imperatives and furthers our understanding of morphological operations. A haplology approach also allows us to differentiate between two different analyses of discontinuous agreement in Semitic, providing evidence against a linearization-based approach (Harbour 2008) and in favor of a Metathesis approach (Hewett 2020).